

ON THE TRUTH OF *LOGOS*:  
LACAN MEETS HEIDEGGER

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Let me start by recalling the scene when Lacan met Heidegger in the 50s, not only in person but prior to it in an analytic session. It will allow us to situate the discourse of psychoanalysis and with it the truth of *logos* as Heidegger elaborated it in his writings. The relation between the two, psychoanalysis and ontology, is not a happy one in so far as the mismatch occurs at several levels at once. I will approach them as they echo in what psychoanalysis takes a starting point – the body.

Frustrated by the analyst's silence, Jean Beaufret, says to Lacan, his analyst, that he had met with Heidegger in Freiburg and told him about Lacan. Without hesitation Lacan asks: 'what did he say to you?' Roudinesco claims that by breaking his silence Lacan fell for it. But Lacan responded at the level where Beaufret's unconscious was trying to please the master and therefore kept the Other silent. Lacan did not ask him what Heidegger said about him, Lacan, but about what he said to him, Beaufret. Of course, Lacan knew that Beaufret was at that time responsible for bringing the master of Freiburg over to France to spread his word, which he did with success. But he was obviously less successful in his session having to insist on breaking the analyst's silence. Lacan did not respond to this narcissistic tease but followed his desire by inquiring about Heidegger's – 'what did he say to you?'. Lacan's interest at the time had to do with Heidegger's reflections on language starting with *Logos*.

Lacan did not believe in philosophy which did not prevent him from reading texts like *Sein und Zeit*. But it would not be surprising if he took up this *sein* at the level of the signifier, which is where the unconscious makes it resonate for the subject, to arrive at a completely different sense it produces in French. While Heidegger's attachment to *sein* stretched to a lifelong meditation on its meaning, for Lacan it may have been a passing encounter with a signifier, perhaps not without some amusing effects he heard in his own mother tongue. Nevertheless, Lacan's growing distance to philosophy does not seem to me to be the result of a sense of

disappointment one gathers from the fact that among the philosophers, beginning with Plato, can be found the most prolific liars. That's precisely what interested Lacan: the lies that give us a glimpse of truth, the lies told for the love of truth.

At the beginning of his teaching the intellectual scene of his time was changing. The discontents of civilisation, and therefore of the subject, were no longer treated by theory alone. Philosophical theories of psychoanalysis, like that of Badiou, were no longer a satisfactory 'treatment' of and a response to the malady of the subject. The philosopher's 'love of truth' had more of a status of Platonic love that shuns the real, rather than an encounter with the real of *jouissance* that language impacts on the body. A shift was taking place from writing theory to a living articulation, and no one more than Lacan was contributing to this shift and to the change of scene. Lacan was interested in whisking out the minutest traces of the unconscious by means of the living signifier, which cannot be said of writing and its high priests at the time. He was thus bringing back, following Freud's early work with the hysterics, the experience of the signifier in the body, moving from writing towards speech not as a commentator or spokesperson of the former but as a primary and immanent manifestation of the speaking subject. He was putting the ear of the Other to use, and through this rendered the subject's ears the instrument of resonance and of transmission of knowledge. In a certain sense the ear replaced the pen, no longer the mightiest but precisely as 'mightless' as speech.

For Lacan in the 50s the legacy of philosophy gave into the discourse of the unconscious otherwise known as the discourse of the master. Was not Lacan picking up the debris of what after the death of God in those times appeared as what might be called the *discourse of mourning* of which Heidegger, with his nostalgia for Being and belief in the fundamental guilt, was perhaps the master proponent? Here I will limit myself to that crucial moment in Lacan's teaching where he takes up and translates the only evertext by Heidegger, and it is not so much about *sein* as about *logos*. What then truly interested Lacan in Heidegger's work?

### **From the cause of truth to the truth as cause**

Where does Lacan seek the truth of *Logos* if not by first referring to Aristotle to put into a test the latter's notion of the cause? Aristotle formulated his theory of the cause by elaborating four causes: material, final, efficient and formal, as they appear in his *Physics*. This is a little ikebana of causes offered to us by Aristotle. This in effect allowed him to give an account of genesis for each thing, namely establish an aetiology with respect to what each thing comes into being. Aristotle provides four answers to the question which are the four causes. Today

we would say that a car is made with a view to be driven on the road, which is its final cause. But it is also made of the material for it to be a car, which is the material cause and so on. Lacan was interested in language, in the truth in speech, and this led him to consider the question of the cause or causes of the signifier. What we find in his *Science and Truth* is a consideration of the truth in relation to the cause starting with Aristotle. This consideration was therefore not without accounting for the position of the subject in relation to the lack, which is the lack in being, and to the Other which is the locus of the signifier. Lacan marks the ambiguous relation between truth and cause by passing, as it were, the truth *as* cause through the four corners of Aristotle's ikebana.

As far as truth as cause is concerned, it acquires a value of revelation. With Lacan taking on truth as having a value of revelation, we no longer need to draw support from the metalanguage of Aristotle's logic that rests on the opposition of true and false. Truth in psychoanalysis is not opposed to falsity or lying but appears as immanent opening of the unconscious. Once it passes through consciousness – it lies. This truth of revelation, or truth as revelation, is the speaking truth. Truth is therefore linked to speech and the order of the signifier. As such it produces an analytical effect that is final. In other words, the final cause of revelation would be that which has an effect of a discovery and realisation: 'Eureka!' Whatever the revelation and its circumstances, the final cause of truth occurs at the moment of discovery. The material cause is something else.

What Lacan accentuates in the analytic experience is truth as cause. Let's not count it as the fifth one in the Aristotelian series because it is not a category. Lacan rearranges Aristotle's ikebana by marking the truth as a cause that has an effect. The truth is only a cause when it causes an effect, a speech effect. But that's not all. Lacan passes truth as cause through four contemporary discourses of magic, religion, science and psychoanalysis, to formulate in each what kind of truth orients and causes them. Let's note that his definition of discourse at this point is a structuralist one, namely of the relation between signifiers, which means that it is not to do with the evaluation of the ideal but with an encounter of language with the real. This has an effect of rendering signifiers as equal in value, all having the same dignity. Only from this perspective the definition of the work of the signifier in magic, science and religion becomes justified with respect to the truth as cause. For Lacan psychoanalysts become qualified to speak about magic, science and religion not because they account for them from the analytic point of view but because each of the four is oriented by the truth effect of the signifier within. And this settles the nonexistence of metalanguage. There is no truth about

truth because what speaks is the truth to the extent there is no way to say it all, as Lacan remarked a few years later. What then is the truth in the analytic experience?

In the analytic experience the real wrongfoots the stream of associations, causing disconnections and breaking the chain of associations. In this way the effect of wrongfooting is produced by the real impact of the signifier. The truth effect should therefore in this instance be called material because it has material consequences for the subject. Lacan spoke of the material effect as *moterielle*, *mot* being a word, which is the material we are made of, the building block of the speaking being provided we distinguish the matter of language from meaning. That is why Lacan uses the term cause in the specific sense of *causent tout l'effect*, causing the whole effect. For Lacan, there is no truth without a relation to the real. Dogmatic as it may seem, it may need some clarification. In philosophy the real has always been bumping against the wall, producing for a subject an effect of repetition that leads to more repetition. The limit of a reflection called philosophical can be found in the safety net of the imaginary as it provides the field of an unlimited *speculum*. In effect the philosophical theorisation remains linked to the formal cause Lacan found as determinant in science. The philosopher's love-of-truth affair with psychoanalysis indeed has a platonic character.

When Aristotle asks *ti to on*; he does not even employ a verb 'to be' lest he presupposes the answer. His question focuses on what kind of thing or thingness determines being. Is the subject a substance or an attribute? Is being a substance or a predicate? Lacan will take up these questions in the light of the relation between being and truth as cause. If truth is 'causing the whole effect' this must have a bearing on the subject that comes to existence in the rupture of the chain. For Lacan the subject is not a cause, but an effect caused by the materiality of the signifier that moves it along while representing it. Lacan finds the basis of his subversive approach in the analytic experience. While responding to Aristotle, and indirectly to Parmenides' love of Being, he narrows down his ontological scope to Heidegger where these Ancients found a mooring. In this respect Lacan's take on truth as cause – which is to be incorporated into every discourse as animated by them – subverts Heidegger's ontology of Being as the cause of all causes or a ground for a cause. Lacan's position, by his own admission as anti-philosopher, is subsequently matched by the one of anti-ontologist. There is a fundamental disparity between language and ontology which Lacan already marked defining desire as a relation of Being to lack. The signifier is to be situated, and the subject with it, in the lack in Being. Heidegger maintains a relation between Being and truth and by this token founds Being as a *priori* to all causes. His answer to Aristotle can be summed as follows:

for things to exist with respect to their finality, materiality, efficiency and formality there has to be that which is in the sense *that* it is, Being. Nothing could be further from the analytic experience of desire and lack Lacan was teaching us about.

The question of causality is not the only time when the Heideggerian trace runs into the Lacanian field. My second juncture concerns the encounter with which I started, and which brought Lacan to translate in 1951 Heidegger's inquiry into *Logos* as the origin of language. In his commentary on an aphorism by Heraclitus, Heidegger invites us to enter a landscape of living soil where works are carried out of ploughing, planting seeds, harvesting and gathering the harvest. From the mother Earth to the storehouse represents for Heidegger a route leading from the matrix of language to *Logos* as a storage of knowledge. He constructs a lure in the form of a half mythical, half nostalgic scene of the real that consists of growth, collection and gathering of the crops. The process perennially leads to the satisfaction of the One. And this for the Greeks came to be known as *Logos*. The term preceding it, and the name of the process, the penultimate term is *legein* – to speak, state, enunciate, utter, argue, etc. But this bucolic scenery of gathering crops, turning them into flour as a material for making bread that can be shared, has farther implications.

Heidegger constructs the final effect of the process on the basis of its cyclical repetition. But the cycle would not run its course were it not for the lost origin of the seed. The gathering and bringing together the sesame of knowledge is an effect of an unceasing conversation, *legein*. At the same time the collecting, gathering and bringing together of words is the condition of an agora where the conversation takes place. On the one hand, *Logos* is what leads to and facilitates the conversation between subjects and their signifying representations. On the other hand, *Logos* forms the final result of the signifying relations, the ultimate knowledge as a repository of the effects and remainders of the cycle of conversations.

This is how Heidegger presents the formation of *Logos* as a principle of language emerging against the backdrop of Being. The emergence and formation of language effects for him are no longer what I called the ikebana of Aristotle's causes. We are dealing here with a process that Lacan followed to the letter by translating Heidegger's text. The rural and idyllic scenes are not isolated in Heidegger's life and work. It is not the task of psychoanalysis to rectify the nostalgic and bucolic metaphors of philosophy. If Lacan followed their development, it was to demonstrate *Logos* as a condition of synchronic differentiation in the play of the signifiers. Heideggerian *Logos*, understood as a process and effect of gathering of the signifiers under

the roof of all-is-one, runs contrary to the signifying differentiation in the life of the suffering subject ploughing his history back and forth. In the course of his discourse, the speaking subject is confronted with what is lost in the field of knowledge, which is the field of the Other, and what he seeks to re-find. These were some of Lacan's concerns when he met Heidegger. They come down to a temptation of Being as a *jouissance* outside language, which Lacan will later take up as a feminine *jouissance*. But let's take one step at a time.

### **Being dizzy**

What emerged from Lacan's encounter with Heidegger echoes in the term Lacan concocted in his later teaching – *parlêtre*, a speaking being to the extent that a being is implicated in language. The verb that gives rise to *logos*, *legein*, 'speaking', supports *parlêtre* by making it audible. *Legein* stands for an instance of synchronic production of the signifying chain. In this respect it is to be distinguished from the letter and writing. The letter is what reposes, comes to a stop, a real that can be read when it is seen. The letter is what anchors it to the ground, what brings the process of articulation to a halt. The signifier, as representing the subject for another signifier, produces an effect in the real by causing other signifiers where significations are made. Having no meaning in itself, the signifier produces sense without being. An artist paints a picture not with being but by dropping it, forgetting it until the picture can hang there against being, almost like a hole in Being.

*Legein* facilitates the position of the speaking subject that exists in the gap between signifiers as a divided subject. When the signifier passes in the chain, when it addresses the Other, the chain circumvents the gap that Lacan called *manque à être*, want to be or a lack in Being. In this way the subject's existence between the signifiers gives support to a blunder and a misunderstanding, in general called parapraxes. What does it imply? It implies that the Lacanian subject is never what it wants to be or says what it wants to say. The subject for Lacan, apart from being divided along the axis of the lack that inhabits it, is also a nomadic subject. It moves from one place to another, while being discontinuous all the time, and this movement is determined by the serendipitous discovery, a stumbling, a mishit that is its motor. In this sense, subject's desire is mobilised by a pursuit of the desire of the Other, which is the question of what the Other wants, but caused by the object called *a* in so far as it belongs neither to the subject nor to the Other. What we have come to call the Lacanian subject, both as a subject of the unconscious and as a speaking subject whose desire presents itself as a reversal of the desire of the Other around the object *a*, exists subject to a blunder. This allows me to say that the Lacanian subject comes to existence only as a mistake. In the first analysis,

then, the Lacanian subject glides over the Heideggerian Being. From this perspective of the gap in being it is not so much Being as a cause of all causes that we found in the work of Aristotle but the object *a* as a cause of desire. Lacan spoke of truth as cause, and now he will speak about the object *a* as cause.

For Lacan the subject is constituted in the *lesein* of the discourse in which is dissolved the image of natural development. It was more or less at the same time in the early 1950s that Lacan was already working on and defining the triad of the Symbolic, Imaginary and Real. In particular, he perceived the imaginary as a register accounting for the relation between the species of similar colours, shapes and other external features that make birds of feather fly together. The imaginary is essentially responsible for identifications that arise from what we by and large call 'natural world'. This is what Lacan extracted from the repetitive displays of plumage and movement of the members within same species. In the case of speaking beings, the imaginary is guided by the relation to the body image but supported by the symbolic in so far as it is through the Other of language and voice where this imaginary relation is cemented. To presuppose a growth and a cycle that occurs 'naturally' or by inertia, cancels any dialectic of the subject within which the fundamental differentiations of positions, values, preferences, etc. are decided. It was evident that Lacan and Heidegger were not from the same flock and that they never flew together.

There was one occasion, however, when Heidegger was on his visit to France, invited by Beaufret who could at last fulfil his wish, and Lacan took him for a ride by car. Heidegger sat at the front, their wives in the rear, and off they went with a speed that made Heidegger dizzy. As Lacan stepped on it, the wives' protest grew stronger and louder. Heidegger was at this point left clinging to all he had left at this instant, to wit nothing more and nothing else but being-Heidegger. This is what we do when we have no choice and the driver steps on it. We are reduced to the last drop of our being that is left there, carried in all directions without any guarantee of a safe voyage to the point of destination. So, we put the seatbelt on, crack a joke, protest – anything the subject can do. Such a voyage at speed can take us all the way to our being and back to the subject.

Heidegger's reflection on the origin of language took him all the way to the bucolic scene of country life where things by and large stand still. It was a portrait at rest, drawing which Heidegger wanted to break a new ground and capture the origin of *Logos*. Inevitably, in his reading of the *Logos* of Heraclitus, he was interested in the sutures of the subjective divisions

that Lacan opened up before him. And one of these I found in the famous ride that gave Heidegger a headache or simply had an effect of dizziness. Being dizzy became the name of Heidegger's destination at the time. His meditation on *Logos* and his search for the parentage of language come to a stop, following the cycle of nature, before the *jouissance* of the Other, the satisfaction the mother draws from having all the off-springs by her and with her. She has gathered them together around her, as mother does, folding them into this moment that lasts eternity. With the fulfilment of *Sein*, there was nothing left for Heidegger to say.

### **The invention of lies: from alienation to separation and back**

At that time, Lacan was interested in the *beyond* of the imaginary idyll of nature and in the beyond of the ontological presuppositions. He found the truth in psychoanalysis by linking it to the material cause, and he started by exploring the relation between truth and lie not as opposites but as correlative. Lacan was not able to find any causal relations with being or consider being as a cause. What Lacan found was the Other of language and its link to the lack in being. When the truth, as Lacan will say in the 70s, passes through the traps of the imaginary relations, it lies. The truth speaks and lies – this was Lacan's discovery. Freud spoke of the first lie, *protos pseudos*, when commenting on the case of a girl, Emma, in 1895. Emma went to the shop where she was laughed at by some old men and ran away in panic. This was her second visit to the shop, which evoked, retroactively, her first visit. At that time, she had been pinched sexually by an old man, which emerged in her encounter with the real some years later when she returned to the same shop. She flinched. The flight from the shop was the primary defence. The signifier is first a lie that occurs at the site of the real. The first lie in this sense is a fall from being, from the primordial nature which Heidegger, for his part, kept going back to. What is this flight of Emma, this failure to stay put if not a representative of the subject's failed encounter with the real of the body, to which she is brought back nevertheless by being confronted with the master signifier, the first lie as a negation, and which Lacan situated as a condition of the mechanism of repression? What else does Emma run back to if not to a signifying inkling of her existence where there is no idyll or bucolic celebration because the encounter with sexuality intimates of a failure with language as a signifier? We can say with Lacan that at the beginning there is a lie, because the lie as a negation I have already mentioned tears the subject away from being. The same happens in torture. The aim of torture is to force the body of the Other to tell the truth. But in effect of such an assault on the subject, which is also an assault on truth as cause, what emerges is a lie, necessarily, that makes the subject. It can only be a lie, any lie, as long as it relieves the body from pain. Today some governments are so much in love with truth about the subject that they will not



stop at any torture to extract it. In the end it can amount to a dentist's operation that takes place where the subject is foreclosed. When the truth does not speak and lie, it is because the subject has been foreclosed.

Lacan startled some of us when he said in the *Television* interview that he always tells the truth because there is no way to say it all. What surprises us in this statement of Lacan is this link and shift from 'I always tell the truth' to 'there is no way to say it all'. The truth as cause has to be approached as fragmentary, partial, incomplete, and therefore revealing and concealing. Revelation is not all there is to the truth. Apart from revealing, it also conceals, does not divulge all there is to truth. Lacan redefined the coordinates of truth in psychoanalysis by first subverting the opposition of truth and lie and turning them into an alliance of correlatives. And secondly, he starts to speak of truth as fragmentary, which means immanent and discontinuous, namely the truth one cannot tell in its entirety, the truth as not-all. Every reader of Lacan knows where I am going with this, in which direction I am pushed to go having said this. Around that time Lacan already started saying the same thing about the woman, the one who is not whole, *pas-tout*. I will come back to it.

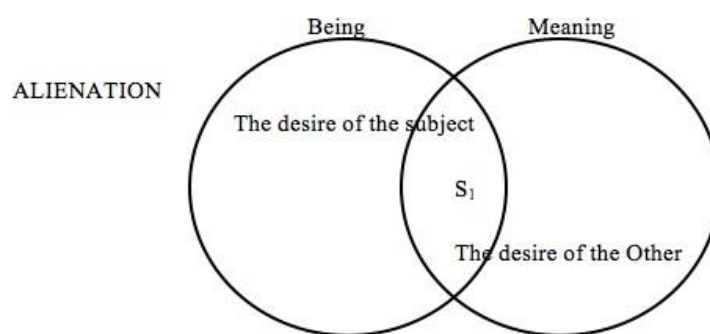
Lacan's subversion of truth led him then to the truth as cause to the extent that the cause of truth in psychoanalysis is material, namely made of the signifier and letters or simply of the unconscious as materiality. When the subject speaks in analysis to the analyst, taking him for all sorts of things and people to suppose him to have the knowledge he himself is unable to live without, a lie is told. It is a good start to analysis to begin with a lie. It was exactly the opposite in the film *The Invention of Lying* in which people live in the world where everybody tells the truth. You can imagine the amount of insults and banter that goes on there. There is certainly no shortage of anger and hatred but no lies. At some point the main character, played by Ricki Gervais, becomes convinced there should be more money on his account than the bank statement indicates. He tells the cashier about it and she confirms he is right, for why would he lie, and corrects the mistake in his favour. It is at this point he realises that everybody believes literally what is said. But it is because of his mistake that he suddenly discovers he is capable of lying and deception. Once he gains more wealth than he needs, he goes on to invent a story of God and tells it to the crowd. And everybody believes him because nobody knows he is lying. That is to say, everybody needs to believe when it comes to the matters of life, death and pain. Descartes too believed in God that does not deceive. But for

Lacan the Other is deceitful. The Other deceives because the tools of language and knowledge we have from the Other are insufficient to tell the whole truth but only enough to tell some part of it.

So, it is good to start analysis with a lie as this gives the subject some indications about the sources of deception and confusion. To start with a lie implies that there is a mistake implicated, that what led the subject to analysis was some instant of misunderstanding, slip of a tongue or pen, being cheated on, lied to and so on. Following this opening, the subject may attempt to tell the truth about the truth. The lie at the beginning shows a fall from being. One can still fall gracefully. To tell the truth about the truth implies an articulation that opens a gap in being. That was easy. It is more difficult when the traumatic real forms the starting of analysis, where the lie is already established as the repressed, and the relation between truth and lie is much closer, more intimate. Lacan called the fall from being *désêtre*, and designated it to the analyst who takes his position and knowledge from it. For Lacan the subject cannot find any comfort in being. But it finds comfort in lies. Lacan spoke of the happiness of the subject. It is the lies, which touch on the drive *jouissance*, that make the subject happy. There is only misery for the subject in the yearning for imaginary identifications of being as a whole. But once the real of sexuality breaks through the idyll of nature, the subject can be happy again. At least it is busy working, ploughing through the real and rearranging the causes of alienation in his relation to the desire of the Other. That's why Lacan's direction in the analytic process was towards des-identification, which makes room for the subject to find the way out of his alienations.

The Lacanian subject, happy and busy at the time of letting its representations run its course, seeks to initiate actions without copying them. For example, the son follows his father's, or mother's, teaching career without 'realising' it. The subject does not copy actions but initiates them. Only in initiating his actions the subject as speaking gets caught in alienation. The subject is happy in alienation. But he is not so happy following separation. After all, following separation the subject exists as divided, as having lost some satisfaction over the subtraction of the master signifier that was there only to represent the subject. Lacan oriented analysis between these two, alienation, where the signifier of the Other is assumed as the subject's property, and separation, where the subject's existence is assumed as one less, namely as a division, an *unbeing*. Lacan's famous aphorism that the desire of the subject is the desire of the Other reverberates in this passage. What the subject brings to analysis, whether neurotic or psychotic or perverse, is the desire of the Other. Lacan's formulation marks the starting

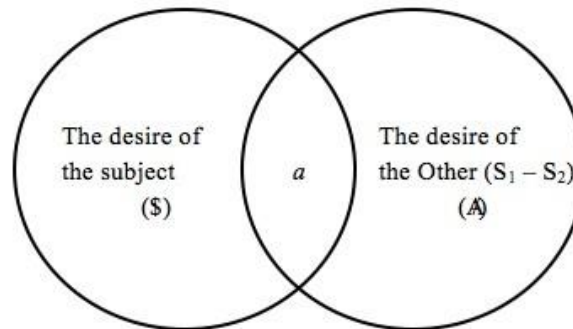
position for the subject and paves the way for the lie, namely for some form of negation once the manifestation of the Other's desire is brought forward. While Lacan's aphorism defines the structural and topological bond with the Other via desire, it is also a fundamental formula of alienation. Lacan illustrated it using the set theory of two partly overlapping circles. In this formulation we find the subject, or the subject's desire to be precise, on the left, and the Other's desire on the right. How does Lacan articulate the relation between them? The area where they overlap represents their relation in alienation, which Lacan marked with 'is', that manifests being. It is the being of subject or the solitude of the subject. In the navel of the subject's solitude in alienation Lacan places the master signifier.



The subject is represented by the master signifier,  $S_I$ , that comes from the Other be it parents, carers, educators of all sorts. But here the Other stands for the place of language that the subject uses as the tools of representation. We could say that in alienation we are also confronted with identification with the master signifier. Subject's alienation results from its identification with the master signifier, without 'realising' it, that represents the subject for another signifier. This other signifier,  $S_2$ , has often been called the master's representative, let's say its spokesperson, and it is also to be located in the Other. But before we get there, which is in fact where we started, it is worth noting that in accordance with Lacan's aphorism, the master signifier and the being of the subject are on the same side, enmeshed. We can see it in the diagram. The being of the subject as clearly unrepresented, and only showing the place in the structure, and the master signifier as coming from the Other, are in enmeshment. This being, which led philosophers like Aristotle and Heidegger by the nose, appears to belong to no one. But it does, as Lacan demonstrated, have connections with the Freudian Thing. That's why we cannot really speak of being of the subject but only of its representations that take place outside being and without being, which is the signification of the Greek *meta* provided we add 'after' to it. When Lacan defined the subject's desire as that which *is* the Other's desire, he already entangled them in alienation. The French *est*, 'is' and *et*, 'and', are a homophony.

In the definition of the subject's desire as alienation we can already hear where Lacan is taking us next – to the separation as subject's desire. From *est* to *et* shows the shortest passage Lacan takes us across from alienation to separation.

SEPARATION



Although I started with Lacan's definition of the subject's and Other's desires, it is only in separation when we find the truth of the Other as desire or as desiring. On the one hand, it has to be stressed that the Other desires as it is not a place of sexual *jouissance*. Hence the Other's desire only confirms the lack in the Other – the Other as incomplete, not whole – which in turn takes on a function in the structure once the subject's lack takes its effect. On the other hand, the Other as a place of truth, is made of the signifiers S<sub>1</sub> and S<sub>2</sub>, as two, not one, are needed for the subject to address the Other. One signifier represents the subject, which is derived from the materiality of the unconscious, and the second one is its representative in relation to the Other. With it we also stumble upon the truth of the subject. On the one hand, we have the subject as divided, which means separated from the being of the Freudian Thing that belongs to no one, and addressing the Other. On the other hand, we have the Other's desire marked by a lack in the Other. And why could we not say that Lacan's desire becomes manifest in this very equivocation of *e(s)ê*? Lacan often used equivocation to respond to the Other. Here Lacan shows us that what separated the subject from its being, with the support of the primary and secondary signifiers S<sub>1</sub> and S<sub>2</sub>, now appears as a product of this passage from alienation to separation, namely as the object *a*. Subject's separation is in effect a separation from the object whose loss can only be marked in addressing the Other as desiring. The separation, in which echoes the Freudian Thing, causes a dent in the subject, its division and its mourning. Whatever the lack in the Other, it cannot be patched up by the object *a* either because it does not come from the Other. But in love, as I said last time, it can serve as a gift.

If there is a lack on the side of the subject, there is a lack on the side of the Other. Topologically speaking, the subject and the Other are equivalent and have the same value. But they are not identical either historically or qualitatively and have different functions. In the diagram of separation, the place of the object *a* shows us where  $S_I$  used to be or, as Freud said, where it was, *es war*. That's why separation, in so far as it can be presented retroactively in relation to alienation, can be marked as 'one less' or  $-1$ . From the structural perspective the correlation of alienation and separation can be found in 'The Invention of Lying' I mentioned. First, we all tell the truth because we are all the same and, with the support of language believe in the Other. One by one, each subject is happy to tell the truth of his alienation. But, secondly, as a result of a mistake, a division occurs in the subject. Once the subject realises the difference between truth and lie, he can seek happiness again, but this time in the dialectic of truths and lies, by which he sustains his relation with the Other. And if he feels a bit guilty, having acquired a symbolic debt from the Other, he can give happiness to others by telling them stories of God. Following separation, then, does or does not the Other deceive us?

From the start the subject has to accept his powerlessness, his helplessness. The Other, on the other hand, may be as all-powerful as one chooses to believe in. The subject can only accept his position in relation to the object as lost, and therefore in fantasy, once the claim to the object's ownership is renounced. This leads me to say that the terms of the subject's relation to the object *a* in fantasy and to the desire of the Other, follow the topological terms of internal exclusion. It is not possible to 'own' the object *a*. To be more precise, these terms are to be situated as a relation of neighbourhood as defined by Freud from his earliest work. In other words, what forms part of subjectivity is topologically excluded from the subject, and what is outside the subject belongs to it. The cause of desire, and the *jouissance* the subject pursues in fantasy, are not the tenants in the subject's house. They are outsiders who appear to belong to the neighbourhood. That's how one could define a foreigner as based on Freud's *Nebenmensch*. The foreigner's abode can be found as internally excluded, and that's what Lacan tells us in the diagram of alienation. The diagram of separation, as proposed by Jacques-Alain Miller, follows from that.

The subject's powerlessness and lack in knowledge defines his position with respect to love. Love stems from giving what one does not have, as Lacan said. And given that the starting point is castration and the inexistence of the sexual relation, love would be one of the names of inquiry into the desire of the Other whereby the object *a* is an effect of castration realised in the passage from alienation to separation. Another name for love is simply this

– love wants to be One with what it does not have. Will the lovers find it in the Other’s desire?  
From alienation to separation and back.

### **The truth, the object in science and in psychoanalysis, and the garrulity of**

#### ***das Ding***

In the imaginary circle of Heidegger’s reflection on being it is possible to extract a grammatical function that situates the place of the object for the subject, namely being seen, being heard, being misunderstood or being-guilty which I will take up later. And what about *being-me* as Lacan names it in Seminar XX under the term *m’être*? And yet this extraction does not have anything to do with a symbolic representation as there is no grammar of being. Lacan stresses this point, which appears to me to be more akin to Aristotle’s interrogation of being than Heidegger’s. Lacan also speaks of being as the master signifier because such a function has been designated to the ontology of being in the history of the West starting with Parmenides. It is a historical fact, but I could only confirm it by saying I did not find anything in the ruins of his school in Elea. Perhaps this was the spill from being, almost nothing which points in the direction of love. The same goes for Paestum and Asclepian Academy, which is the same story but in a different place.

What does Lacan bring to our attention when he evokes the mastery of being in opposition to the remainders that led him to speak of love in the same seminar? There are of course imaginary identifications given the philosopher’s concern does not cease to rely on the image. And does not being imply a self-identity in alienation? Is it not the case that being, the Supreme Being as cause of all causes or as God, imply that this being is identical to itself? Lacan captured this in the play of the signifiers *moi* and *être*, ‘me’ and ‘being’. And he came up with *m’être*, the master of being and his narcissistic *jouissance* of being-me. That’s what we find in the first part of Shrek. Shrek, the ogre, simply loves being an ogre.

But Lacan also speaks of being as real. Is being as real self-identical? Here refers to being as the *jouissance* of the body. What body if not that of the Other, its pains, ecstasy, torture, which cannot be experienced except for delusions? What is the truth of the body of the Other? One of the references for Lacan in Seminar *Encore* is the woman’s body in so far as she is ‘contaminated’ by the mother. ‘Contaminated’ implies that there is a trace of the maternal *jouissance* that the woman carries with her. Lacan does not say she is marked by the mother. He follows this trace when he is led from the desire of the Other to the body of the Other. The body of the Other and the body of the mother appear to be the references that Heidegger’s

entire corpus revolving around *Sein* flinches and never touches upon except in silence. And this silence about the woman includes his love affair, for most of his life, with Hanna. The philosophers do not speak about the body of the woman. This can no doubt become a question for Heideggerian scholars – how did Heidegger lie about the woman’s body?

Apart from the imaginary and real modalities of being Lacan highlights, there is no symbolic ‘dimension’ of being. Lacan is adamant about it. There is no grammar of being. There is only grammar of the verb ‘to be’. There is a connection between the real and being, already discovered by the Ancients, but there is no connection between the grammar of the verb and being. The real, and one need not refer to it as primordial, is already there to the extent it does not support the grammar. If there is a being to which this real can be linked, and in which it is enmeshed, it is the body of the Other. These misunderstandings concerning being, or these mis-beings, converge in Heidegger’s reflection on the fragment by Heraclitus. It is not without significance if of all texts Lacan chose the one on *Logos*, audaciously, as he says, to translate. It is from the perspective of the audacity of the Lacanian subject, as gliding over the Heideggerian being, that we can reread the Heraclitean fragment that appears to me less obscure than in the ontological light: Listen not to me, when I attempt to touch the being of the body in the reflection that assumes its wholeness, but to the *logos* of enunciation in which speaks the touching of the form. This would be a Lacanian ‘translation’ of the *Logos* fragment as displaced from the Meaning of Being to the signifier in alienation – a signifier, let’s add, that is both meaningless and indeed, Lacan had a name for it, stupid. The displacement of *logos* from the presupposition of Meaning to the supposed enunciation was Lacan’s gift to Heidegger. We could say that Lacan delivered it in the first place during the driving lesson when the abrupt quake of the imaginary nostalgias sent the philosopher of being to the dizziness of *Dasein*. In this way Lacan introduced the real into the scene of *Logos*. In effect, during his encounter with Heidegger’s ontology, Lacan translates the truth of *Logos* into a semblance that masks the real while at the same time reveals it. In this case the real was the ineffable *jouissance* of the body of the Other or the body of the Other sex.

In *Proposition of the 9 October of the Analyst of the School* in 1967, Lacan evokes the hollow of the object through the terms *désêtre*, *unbeing*, which I already mentioned, and links to what Thomas Aquinas called *sicut palea*, ‘as dross, chaff’ but also ‘strewn, to strew’. Aquinas represented in this way what remains of the object which for the scientist speaks as self-evident. He identified with what was left from the identification with the Other as God. Lacan sometimes used the device of prosopopoeia by letting the object speak. “I, truth, speak” is an

example of an object that speaks as lost. Why is Lacan speaking about the dross or chaff if not to refer it to a hollow in which it emerges as a remainder supported by the signifier? As an analyst Lacan was concerned not only with the object *a* that the analyst embodies. He was also concerned with strewing its remains. To spread and to disseminate the object as lost, and to allow it to speak in the prosopopoeia, may have the effects of causing desire. By speaking to the audience from the position of an analysand, Lacan allowed the object to cause desire to emerge in those who heard him although often did not understand what he was saying. Sometimes to hear is just enough to awaken desire, while understanding puts it back to sleep. And by speaking of the Other sex, he caused women to come in abundance and to hear what he had to say, although sometimes this awakening of desire was accompanied by an element of protest and outrage. That's what truth, when it speaks, if you believe in the unconscious, does.

And he caused most outrage when speaking of the Woman that does not exist. In Italy in the 1970s this shook the foundations of the civilised society, causing shock waves far greater than if he said that God does not exist. One got used to the nonexistence of God because everyone has a complaint about things not going well in love and in war, so it is easy to put it on God's shoulders just in case he existed. But to say the woman does not exist was too much, and many women, especially feminists, took umbrage at his statement. But Lacan only said it after speaking about the *jouissance* of the body of the Other sex. And in doing so he stated that it cannot be written – despite the salient efforts of the scientists Masters and Jones – and that the woman's *jouissance* cannot be experienced by man, with a few exceptions, but only inferred *a posteriori*. And this rang true, so true in fact that many did not even ponder where Lacan was coming from. But it always struck me that he would not have been able to say this had he not first worked through alienation, separation to have finally given us a formulation of the object *a*. He formulated the object *a* as causing desire and, in this sense, speaking as truth. The truth about the object *a* was the preliminary step for Lacan to take before he spoke about the Woman. The object *a*, being a precondition of the subject's division, paved the way for the reception of Lacan's pronouncement *La Donna non esiste*. That's what the object does, it can cause some outrage and it can awaken desire. In the *Science and Truth*, Lacan spoke of the object *a* with the view of it not turning psychoanalysis into science. It didn't. Scientists did not prove as eagerly listened to on the subject of the woman as psychoanalysts, and for a reason. So, it was left up for the discourse of psychoanalysis to strew the remains of the object *a* in order to cause desire. This object *a* disturbs us, so Lacan spoke from there.



It follows that in analysis, the truth has nothing to say about the truth. The truth only speaks about what causes it, from the lack, namely between the lines, in hints and allusions, as untold on the whole. Over and over again, the famous statement of Lacan that there is no truth about the truth allows us to grasp the disparity between the symbolic and the real of the body. The truth, when speaking, says what she is not. I say 'she' because it is feminine, *aletheia* or *la verité*. In English the feminine gender is attributed to women, boats, ships and cars, to what is mobile, comes and goes. Here is my little fantasy, I propose that in the English language we refer to the truth in the feminine, given she is the vehicle of movement, of coming and going. Is being-not-whole, and speaking in fragments and in allusions, the only thing that can be said about the truth?

For Freud the encounter with the real of sexuality led Emma in the direction of *protos pseudos*. It was her first lie, almost as a negation, in the face of *jouissance*, and one of many examples of the Freudian truth. Truth is authorised to speak by a lie, not just any lie but a lie in the face of the disturbing real. To speak is, first of all, to lie. After all the truth is ephemeral, or *e-feme-real* which signifies a connection between a woman and the real. The object *a*, being in the place of truth in the hysteric's discourse, has a capacity, and a skill, to divide the subject. At the same time, she remains elusive. Is it not the case, as Lacan said, that goddess Artemis, chased by the hounds of Aries, is never to be caught up with? She is never to be found because the truth of man's desire will never lead him to catch the woman as a cause. Which is why he is on the right track. She cannot be caught as the truth of man's desire for a woman fails to lead him to the truth of the love object as it was lost from the start, the flower being a beautiful reminder of the seed. Or is it the goddess of forgetfulness, *Lethe*, who dwells in *aletheia*, truth as veiled in unconcealment? Does such an opposition make the truth unforgettable? In his wonderful book *The Masters of Truth in Archaic Greece*, Detienne even went so far as to speak of *lethe* and *aletheia* as inseparable, making both an integral part of the political system, justice, religious liturgy and recitation.

For Lacan of the 1960s and 1970s, the analytic truth has the same function as the cause, the object that awakens desire. Truth as cause implicates the object *a*. To follow Lacan further in *Science and Truth*, we stumble upon the Freudian *Wo es war, soll Ich werden*. In the schema of separation, we discovered that the place of the object *a* is where the master signifier,  $S_I$ , used to be. If you like, the flower is where the seed used to be. If Lacan retranslates Freud's statement, it is on the basis of the relation between the object *a* in separation and the master signifier in alienation: where it was, where the primary signifier was, there I as subject must

return. In analysis the subject always returns where it used to be, which is where his future lies. For he never returns to the past. But when I do return, I find there what is lost because the master signifier failed to hold the whole of the subject, and what is internally excluded from it remains unrepresented. This is where Lacan sought *jouissance* in speech and where he found *jouissance* as speaking. What he found, outside the primary signifier and as speaking, unrepresented, belongs to serendipity, a lucky find. This lucky find, Lacan says, belongs to the subject. The subject is constituted through the lucky finds and if one does not find there what one expects, as Schliemann did not at first when digging for Troy, one comes back for more. The experience shows that the same happens in the relations between the sexes – when what is sought for cannot be found, one comes back for more. There is more to the Lacanian subject than the primary signifier that represents it. *Jouissance* for one as speaking remains unrepresented. The laws of representation are insufficient to isolate *jouissance* as speaking.

Going back, then, always back with a view to progressing, we return to alienation where we find the primary signifier in the place where it always was. It is there from the beginning as the first gift of the Other, the gift of love as speech. This signifier one that has always been there from the start has for its neighbour *Das Ding*. This is where Freud situated it and where Lacan takes us. Freud placed it there as mute and dumb. But for Lacan ‘mute and dumb’ did not imply that it does not speak. Lacan made it speak already in the mid-1950s, and already established a relation between the ‘mute and dumb’, *Das Ding* and truth. Before saying in the 1970s ‘I always tell the truth because there is no way to say it all’, Lacan, already in the 50s states ‘I, truth, speak’. He had different reasons for making each statement but there was a relation between them. For Freud *Das Ding* was a mute and constant part of what he called ‘Neighbour’s complex’. He also called it ‘perception complex’ because we are at the level of perception. The “Thing” is that part of the complex that is always the same, never changes place. The other part was a predicate and Lacan designated it as a signifier because it is a part of the subject’s body as marked by the Other. Not all of the subject’s body is marked by the representation of language as coming from the Other. For example, what Freud called *Das Ding* is left unmarked. This mute part Freud isolated in the perception complex in his *Project* became the one that Lacan made speak. He made it blabber away as some of Freud’s hysterics did, whether under hypnosis or not. No doubt we find in this place the sediments of being of the Ancients, and the remains of Schliemann’s Troy. But for Lacan it was the real he found, the real that speaks, the delusional *jouissance*. He later built up on this real by calling this blabber *lalangue*, the pre-syntactical speech that in alienation becomes subjected to the primary signifier of the Other. The garrulity of the ‘Thing’ ventriloquises the subject, making

it blabber away without knowing what or who and where. In speech there is for the subject what does not make sense, what speaks without knowing where it goes, what it says. And if it is left without being returned to, alone, that is to say as 'unsymbolised', it returns to the subject, as Lacan said from the start. This was the real Lacan discovered as unsymbolised, namely as that which makes no sense, yet plays a part in the subject. This both mute and blabbing real returns to the subject whenever it is left unmarked. It happens all the time, in neurosis and in psychosis, although with different implication as the belief, or its exclusion, is implicated.

### **The origin of language and semblance**

Lacan made the 'Thing' speak. We can read it in his text *The Freudian Thing* from 1955. There is also *L'Étourdit*, written in 1973, a text where the garrulity of the Freudian Thing is to be read. Is it Lacan who speaks in those texts or is it the thing speaking? It speaks as truth to which I return as subject, and for which I take responsibility. The subject is expansionist. It expands by saying more what it does not know it is talking about, and then takes responsibility for the remainder and its causal effects, whether represented or not. It is an unusual type of responsibility, and not the one you find in the speeches of politicians when they don't know what they are talking about while insisting they do. The superego insists. But the object *a* does not insist, it disturbs and wrongfoots. The subject takes his responsibility for his symptom because its insistence derives from the insistence of the garrulous real as unknown in the subject's speech, as the blabber of the Thing.

We can now say that the object *a* that appears in the place where the *SI* used to be, only emerges as an effect of some part of the subject being left unsymbolised. This object *a* is in a sense a refined remainder and reminder of *das Ding*. Lacan made the 'Thing' speak but he also allowed the object to speak to awaken desire. *Das Ding*, with its overtones to subject's prehistory and to maternal *jouissance* that contaminates women, is not the same as the object *a*. We can also say that the unforgetfulness in truth, or the *lethe* in *aletheia* that in revelation conceals, can only be found on the way back to *das Ding*, which is beyond alienation. I am trying to approach the elusive and allusive object *a* from the perspective of the Freudian *das Ding*. Perhaps it is not possible to have a grasp of the object *a* without the blabber of *das Ding*. What Lacan highlighted in relation to object *a* he nevertheless invented, is that the connection between truth and being arises solely in the passage from *das Ding* to the object, that causes subject's desire, and back. The status of the object presented in this way decides the status of psychoanalysis in relation to science.

And this leaves me with the question of the origin of language. Is it a question? It is certainly not on the cards for Lacan. But he does confront those for whom it is. When Heidegger asks about the meaning of being and about the ontological origin of *logos*, is he asking about language? Has this question not been already posed by the science of linguistics? If psychoanalysis was a science, what would it be a science of? Despite his unquestionable adherence to the laws of science of his time, it was Freud himself who put the fundamental premises of science into question. And we recall his assertion, which everyday practice confirms, that the unconscious knows no contradictions, no linearity of time. Lacan turned our attention to the real, and to the object *a* as its remainder, saying there is no science of the real which can only be said in relation to the unconscious. From it, like from the object (oral, anal, gaze and voice) that chooses its subject, arises the position of the subject as included in the supposition of the signifier. Responsibility results from this. In other words, the subject, and the symptom with it, remain implicated in the pursuits and discoveries. In psychoanalysis the question of genesis of language does not arise because the position from which it would arise is already supposed by the signifier connected to the desire of the Other. To want to know, is already a response to that desire. The question of origin as relative to the psychoanalytical knowledge or of what I can know, want to know, do not want to know, as Lacan remarked in the *Television*, interweaves the signifier as material cause and the supposition of this signifier. Hence the aim of the pursuit of knowledge can already be found at the start under such confusing and metaphorical terms as, say *Selfish Gene*, which is the title of Dawkins' book.

Let me conclude. What does Lacan say when he states at the beginning of his interview with Miller: 'I always tell the truth, there is no way to say it all?' He says the same thing he said to Beaufret: tell me the truth of what Heidegger said to you. Because what he said to you is for your ears alone. This is where desire is passed, where it crosses between the subject and the one who is in the position of the Other. So, what is said in this passage? This indeed appears to us to be the crux of the matter. In what is said there is the unsaid, the impossible to say. That's why Lacan chose the story of Artemis to illustrate the pursuit of truth. There is no way for Artemis to be caught naked by the hounds of the science before she turns into a tree. And this is also how the genius of Magritte allowed us to see what he perceived as the woman's place in man's eyes, namely as the imaginary phallus between his legs. 'There is no way to say it all', Lacan concludes. Say only what is always left to be said. If there ever was a project of a logic of completeness, to which Heidegger would doubtless bear witness, it would turn into

a 'logic of incompleteness' because it revolves around the Other's desire. What Lacan is saying to us when he constructs his discourse is that in analysis the subject can be expected to vacate the place of truth to allow the object *a* to occupy it. Only in the analyst's discourse does the object become dominant, i.e. causing desire while the place of truth is occupied by knowledge.

From the psychoanalytical point of view the project of 'human sciences' is therefore as good as collapsed from the start as it excludes any signs of the sexual real that trips the subject into believing that the semblance and the real are one and the same. What Lacan called the foreclosure of the subject in the discourse of science remains on a par with the foreclosure of the object *a* as the cause of its division and desire. Lacan doubtless read and translated, which is where I started, Heidegger's text as a 'thing' speaking, blabbing away. And in reading what he has to say Lacan sieved the chaff from the grain, the said from the unsaid. This is not how Heidegger would have wanted to read Heraclitus whom Lacan brought out from the ontological obscurity to the light of language. In effect, Lacan's reading pierced the bubble of infatuation with the being of *logos*. In this sense, his *Science and Truth* should be read not only as a supplement to any *Metaphysics* but as a thorn to any theo-ontological project whatsoever. If psychoanalysis has any value, it is because it is not concerned with the magnitude of the claims of an author, and only offers a response and an account, however ephemeral its truth, of the impact of language on the body. And it can only attempt to do so by going back to where it occurred, to read it literally. Lacan was very precise about it. Psychoanalysis is unable to correct the mistake or to find the origin of origins, but only to make the untouched, be it chaff or else, resonate for the subject. There would be no effect for the subject emerging from this repressive experience at the gist of which lies the failed encounter between language and body, if it was not for the truth speaking. But truth speaks and speaking lies. For this reason, Lacan invented *parlêtre*, the speaking being, as he was concerned with the real sediments of the said, of what in analysis remains of the said, what does not deceive.

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