

Lacan: balanced directedness

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An interesting way to secure directedness was proposed by Lacan. I had occasion to listen to and later to assist to his presentations, in his seminar lectures. Lacan was interested in conditions that would secure survival, as he estimated it, of the psychoanalytic discourse. In his view, this was a specific setting, as compared to other discourses or ways of engagement, which can be characterized through permutations of basic givens proper to each discourse: master signifier S1, knowledge S2, the barred subject S/, and the playful excess of enjoyment a. Each of these discourses or social bounds (analytic, master, hysteric, university), possible social arrangements and engagements, consists of relations where things go smoothly, and of other kinds of relations, where one stumbles in encountering a kind of obstacle on the road, an impossibility. So master discourse involves a smooth relation of master signifier to knowledge (S1 → S2), but this is supported through a stumbling relation between the barred subject and (his) excess of enjoyment (S/ < a), where < indicates a kind of impossibility of real relation. Psychoanalytic discourse or social link starts from excess of enjoyment, but has its own stumbling block supporting relation. Anyway, Lacan was anxious to secure a balance between several dimensions that are involved in discourse, here psychoanalytic discourse. He called them the Real, the Symbolic and the Imaginary (RSI). At the beginning of his career, he put heavy weight upon language, as he claimed that unconsciousness is language, and he considered language to be guided in its relevance through the signifiers or through one master signifier (S1). But his attitude has always been that the balance of the psychoanalytic discourse is very fragile. Language and talk ultimately will not do. So in the end he tried to secure the needed balance through the topological adjustment of the involved RSI dimensions. His last lecture years weren't lectures at all in the sense that they would be spoken, narrated. Rather, he turned to the topological written matters, to the borromean knot and its variations, which he would write on the blackboard with practically no spoken commentary. Before that, the idea was that the three dimensions RSI should be united in a topological borromean knot manner, *without* that there would be an excess of *non-directed*, i.e. erring language involvement. This was illustrated with the case of James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* and beyond, where there is no real consistency secured by some leading principle. So, there is the fourth circle here besides RSI, namely the *symptom*. And this one disturbs the fragile RSI balance. Lacan characterized this with the title *Les non-dupes errent*, meaning that the ones which are not committed (to the RSI balance, we would say) have lost their direction. In French, this has the same pronunciation as *Le nom du pere*, i.e. fathers name, which involves *symptom* (*Saint Thome*, i.e. *synthome* in French equivocation manner). So the balance between the important involved dimensions is disturbed, and the *direction* towards what is *relevant* is lost, through the addition of the fourth circle to the straight borromean topological knot RSI. This means that Lacan was up to search for *directness* of *relevance*, which he supposed was there in the balanced RSI topological arrangement -- of what can be mathematically sketched upon the two-dimensional surface to give the feeling of topologically curved space in which things happen. As said, the directedness upon the

relevant point in space is through the topological balance of what is *written*, without the excess of the erring spoken or language bound story. This is supported by such attitudes of Lacan as his practice of psychoanalytic sessions with no time interval (the analysant comes and there is no communication, the session is over in an instant: perhaps he then searches himself the answer at his own quest: *tua res agitur*, as reflected from the Other place), and by his deletion of analytic society (*Delenda* (i.e. Carthago delenda est) was a name of a journal he established). Anyway, the lesson is that the *directedness*, the *relevant* directedness was searched first by Lacan through the engagement in signifier endowed linguistic practice, and that later, realizing the shortcomings of such approach, he searched for *directedness* in the *relevant* direction through the *balance* between limited number of dimensions (RSI), just appropriate in order to fit to the topological balance point. This may be a never ending story, for the balance needs to be found in a rich dynamical environment, where the relevant point shifts in respect to its position upon the multidimensional landscape. In a manner, the just sketched Lacan's shift may be read as the criticism of the post-structuralist excess in language variation enjoyment, perhaps such as proposed by Derrida, Kristeva, Barthes and Sollers. So this would be *directedness* towards a balanced setting of matters at expense of *narrative* engagement -- which, at the start, was there as the point of departure, a signifier's involvement in language bound *narration*. Psychoanalysis started as a search for meaning through narration, but in topological RSI balance both of these are put under question. Anyway, the search for the *relevant directedness* remains the primary engagement, should it be achieved through *narration* or without it.