

# A clinic of links and limits

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On the radio earlier this year I heard Shane Howard, the lead singer of Goanna band describe waking up in Central Australia some years ago to realize what it is to be on someone else's land. He also commented that the phrase 'living on borrowed time' in a central desert language translated as: 'standing the wrong way'.<sup>1</sup> 'Living the wrong way' or standing in the wrong way is associated with being out of place. A few months earlier I heard that some indigenous elders were starting to illustrate the void in paintings to the consternation of others who considered this too dangerous for white fellas to see. That something – a void- can be marked (like the empty set in the series of counting) and then covered indicates its function in knowledge. Freud had noted the asemantic void at the navel of the dream. We can see the networks of signifiers presented in a dream rather like the marks on a painting serving to surround and cover this real. When as a void it emerges through the fabric of social links, casting a shadow of the object over the ego as Freud wrote in his paper on melancholy,<sup>2</sup> the subject unmoored from a signifier or representation that might represent them in the light of satisfaction, may experience

an extimacy with regard to being and life, feeling outside, excluded from the everyday life of others.

These aspects of time are an effect of the subject's link with the object and how that link is clothed. Whether one feels grounded standing (or living) the 'right way' or feels dissociated from community in life depends on the proximity of the object and its form. The subject where represented by a signifier that moves in dialectic with others, with other signifiers, can form those marking links around the object that may otherwise threaten to emerge as the asemantic void, a vortex consuming the sense of possibility in life. In this paper I would like to address how these marking links may emerge from the work in analysis. (We hear it in testimonies of the pass, such as those by Anne Lysy and Florencia Shanahan.<sup>3</sup>) Here I want to address three moments – regarding life, the body, place and what knots them together. First some general comments about the idea of madness.

When we say someone is mad, it is a way of indicating they are in some way outside the social link, not just momentarily but in some more sustained way. Anthropologists cite this explaining when hearing

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1 Shane Howard brings Goanna back for national tour, ABC Radio National Breakfast, Tuesday 15/3/2022.

[https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/breakfast/shane-howard-brings-goanna-back-together-for-national-tour/13796550?utm\\_campaign=abc\\_radionational&utm\\_content=mail&utm\\_medium=content\\_shared&utm\\_source=abc\\_radionational](https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/breakfast/shane-howard-brings-goanna-back-together-for-national-tour/13796550?utm_campaign=abc_radionational&utm_content=mail&utm_medium=content_shared&utm_source=abc_radionational)

2 Freud, S. Mourning and Melancholia, *Standard Edition* 14, p.249.

3 Anne Lysy, What words. What body, *The Lacanian Review* 9, 2020, pp.75-80, p. 78; Florencia F.C. Shanahan, *Dejar Que Pase*, *The Lacanian Review* 9, pp.95-104, p.103.

voices is culturally normative and when it is not, for example. So what does it say to suggest 'we are all mad here'? That there is a point of *jouissance* and aspects of the impossible unique to each of us, moments the substance of which cannot be shared, contained or covered by a social link. If the substance of these moments cannot be shared, they may nonetheless be contained, social links are connections that help to contain. Wilfred Bion's recognition of this in work with the small groups of returned soldiers in wartime England led Lacan to later advocate the formation of cartels.<sup>4</sup> So what is a social link?

The title 'a clinic of links and limits' highlights that one depends on the other, a link requires a limit to be able to function or continue to function. Where the limits blow out, the link is liable to collapse. In the clinic of the latter Lacan, we are interested in how the Borromean knot of a subject is woven and may be re woven after a break, which can happen in different structures. The question is how what is unraveled might be returned, restructured, stitched together again, tied back in. The Borromean knot was referred to in chapter 8 of *Seminar XX*, which Miller designates as the beginning of Lacan's later work, is introduced in *The Third* in 1974 and used again in Seminar 23, *The Sinthome*, the following year in December 1975. Here it is designated a link – the Borromean link (Figure 1).<sup>5</sup>

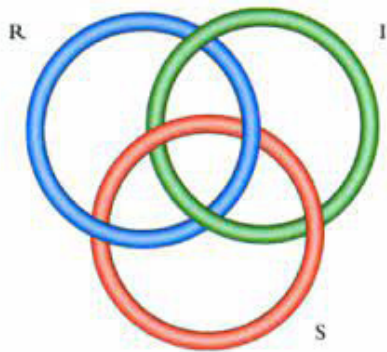


Figure 1, The Borromean link

In two sessions of his seminar from 2008 published under the title 'Everyone is Mad', (in the only volume

of *Culture/Clinic*, 'We are all mad here'), Jacques-Alain Miller spells out that this statement of Lacan's that "Everyone is mad, that is, delusional" was not a reference to the clinic of psychosis.<sup>6</sup> It is rather a mark of Lacan's later work where the symbolic is no longer given precedence, with the equivalence of the three registers of the symbolic, imaginary and real in the clinic of knotting. This equivalence is illustrated in the diagram above. In *The Third*, for example, Lacan says, "Perhaps, analysis will introduce us to the world as it really is: imaginary. This can only be done by reducing the so-called function of representation, by putting it where it is: namely, in the body".<sup>7</sup> We are in Kleinian territory with this statement. The idea of paranoia as a primary relation to the Other<sup>8</sup> is also a Kleinian idea; Lacan pushes it further with an equation of paranoia and personality, a point we shall return to.

In this later clinic, psychosis is no longer seen as an exception and "the category of the 'not-all' provides an alternative to the concept of foreclosure".<sup>9</sup> Indeed as *jouissance* can never be completely named by a signifier, (not even a Name of the Father as Freud had imagined), the Other is barred and foreclosure is in this way generalized in both neurosis and psychosis. This 'non-deficit approach' to psychosis is a correction, a shift in thinking from the structuralist bent of the 1950's and while Lacan's later work might normalize the delusion of each one, insofar as the ego is on the side of paranoia and personality, this desegregation whereby neurosis is no longer the standard by which others are excluded, does not mean there is a continuity between neurosis and psychosis as there is in the Kleinian field where psychotic anxieties are seen to pervade each of us in a paranoid schizoid phase of development. That we are all paranoid insofar as we have personalities does not mean we all have psychotic structures.<sup>10</sup> Rather the clinical or structural distinction remains, the stigma (hopefully) is lifted, and the question of what allows for stabilization expanded.

The term clinic here refers to the differentiation that there are different types of symptoms and that sometimes symptoms precisely need to be built. This

4 Laurent, E., The real and the group, *Psychoanalytical Notebooks* 33, *The Real and the Social Bond*, 2019, pp. 61-84.

5 Lacan, J., *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan Book XXIII, The Sinthome*, Cambridge, UK & Malden MA, USA: Polity, 2016, p. 36.

6 Miller, J-A., We are all mad here, *Culture/Clinic*, pp.17-42. P. 39.

7 Lacan, J., The Third, *The Lacanian Review* 7, 2019, pp. 83-108. P. 89.

8 Miller, J-A., Paranoia, Primary relation to the Other, *The Lacanian Review* No 10, 2020, p. 89.

9 Brousse, M.-H., Ordinary psychosis, *The Lacanian Review* 7, 2019, pp.113-118. P. 115.

10 Marret-Maleval, S., We're all mad, but not necessarily paranoids, *TLR* 10, pp.35-39. P. 39.

was the Kleinian know how or savior faire we witness in her case of working with the autistic boy she called Dick or again in Bion's work. I don't subscribe to the content and manner of Kleinian interpretation (where everything is returned or reduced to the idea of attacks on the maternal body) but it seems to me what occurs there is a linking of the living body, sense and symbolic albeit by imposing a discourse of the analyst's own making. Where a metaphorical substitution has not taken place to allow some grounding for the subject, Kleinians speak in terms that introduce an imaginisation of the object and introducing signifiers to mark the subject's place. The problem is that this occurs too much on the side of a fixation of meaning.

In the 1950's Bion addresses what he calls a psychotic part of the personality, evident in particularly intense "Attacks on Linking", the title of a paper from 1957. Following Klein's account of the infant's splitting of its object by the mechanism of projective identification where "parts of the personality are split off and projected into external objects",<sup>11</sup> Bion describes what he imagines are "phantasised attacks on the breast as prototype of all attacks on objects that serve as a link and projective identification as the mechanism employed by the psyche to dispose of the ego fragments produced by its destructiveness".<sup>12</sup> He notes that the mechanism of projective identification is something each child needs to have the opportunity to develop and that it can become persecuting where the Other cannot receive or contain it.<sup>13</sup> He explains that he uses the term 'link' because he wants to discuss "the patient's relationship with a function rather than with the object that subsumes a function". His "concern is not only with the breast, or penis, or verbal thought, but with their function of providing the link between two objects".<sup>14</sup> Now at this point

we could follow Lacan's reading of Freud's paper on *Negation* as a way of critiquing the Kleinian frame as Lacan did throughout the fifties. But let's consider that Lacan's later work shifts to a clinic of semblants which means, says Gueguen, "that human beings can never totally separate the imaginary and symbolic registers, the object itself being a semblant, that is, an imaginary part of the body, symbolically elevated in the fantasy to an equivalent of the real".<sup>15</sup> This is I think also an apt description of Kleinian work. I won't go over Lacanian critiques of the Kleinian frame here – they are well set out by Laurent in a paper from 1999, except to say that Bion's papers are a challenging and strange read trying to sort through his language and his account of the interpretations he makes can be rather shocking both in content and in its apparently confrontational approach. Being a Kleinian he doesn't waste a minute to tell the patient they are thinking of their parents having sex, and in one instance this produces a convulsion in a patient's body. It is exactly what you *would not do* to someone where there aren't signifiers to manage or cover the hole with which the patient is confronted, there where the name of the father doesn't work or where the impossibility of inscribing a sexual relationship in the sense of the sexual non rapport is exposed.<sup>16</sup>

Bion notes he is not concerned with typical resistance to interpretations but seeking to isolate what is particular to what he calls "destructive attacks on verbal thought itself".<sup>17</sup> He also notes the examples he gives are taken from the advanced stages of two analyses and that "observations of the patient's disposition to attack the link is simplified because the analyst has to establish a link with a patient and does this by verbal communication and his equipment of psychoanalytical experience".<sup>18</sup> This reference to his 'psychoanalytical equipment' is similar to Lacan's

11 Bion, W., *Attacks on Linking*, *Melanie Klein Today*. Developments in theory and practice. Volume 1. Edited by Elizabeth Bott Spillius. London: Routledge, 1988, pp.87-101. P. 87.

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid., p.98.

14 Ibid., p.95.

15 Guéguen, P-G., Who is Mad and who is not? On differential diagnosis in psychoanalysis. *Culture/Clinic* 1, 2013, pp. 66-85. P. 72.

16 "The nomination of the primal scene is precisely what Lacan seeks to avoid when he says that Melanie Klein installs the Oedipus. He is aiming therewith to make us forget the necessity of naming the primal scene from the beginning and of confronting the psychotic child with an enjoyment which he has no means of symbolising, thus making him suffer all the more." Laurent, E. *Rethinking Kleinian Interpretation: What difference does it make*, *The Klein-Lacan Dialogues*, Edited by Bernard Burgoune & Mary Sullivan. New York: Other Press, 1999, pp.187-212. P. 190.

17 Bion, *Attacks on linking*, p. 88.

18 Ibid.

reference to his 'little machine' of the Borromean knot.<sup>19</sup> Lacan indeed comments that "the imaginary, the symbolic, and the real are made to help those in this mob who follow me make their way in analysis".<sup>20</sup>

Reading Bion's paper, along with Lacan's *The Third* and *Seminar X*, provides a way of thinking through the function of links and limits and the role interpretation can play in touching the fixation of jouissance that cause suffering. Here I will take some points from the latter before referring to the *reconstitution of the link* set out in the last chapter of *Seminar XXIII*. This addresses how jouissance and 'bits of the real' (which I think is what Bion's work identifies) may be pacified as the signifiers that point to them are identified, isolated and encouraged to exist, while imaginary traces of the subject other – social bonds are woven in and over as the metaphor of weaving conveys. This is to say the imaginary has an important role, as becomes evident in Lacan's later work, where the Borromean knot throws light on, helps us see, the "unique structure of the singular invention for knotting oneself to life".<sup>21</sup> This is also to say there is no natural relation between life and subjectivity in the speaking being. "There could even be as" as Paloma Blanco Díaz noted "a certain antagonism between these two terms, requiring some sentiment, an imaginary to link them together, to join them".<sup>22</sup> This function of linking is a facet of highlight in the Borromean clinic where it touches directly on the question of how to knot oneself to life.

### Defining a symptom: there is *Nothing more real than life*

If we look at the diagram of the Borromean knot in planar form from *The Third* (Figure 2), we see life and the symptom both designated in the field of the real. "How did I come to write the word life at the level of the circle of the real?" Lacan asks. It is, he says, "because, apart from this vague expression that consists in speaking of enjoying" life [*jouir de la vie*], "we clearly know nothing about" it.<sup>23</sup>

The unconscious and the drive set psychoanalysis apart from other practices and theories of knowledge;

the subject and the object  $a$ , to which the unconscious and the drive be reduced, are associated with 'fragmentation' and 'breakdown' as "they go against any accord"<sup>24</sup> The subject identified as a knowing subject cannot be united with either the unconscious or the drive and this want of being with regard to knowledge may be articulated as a complaint about

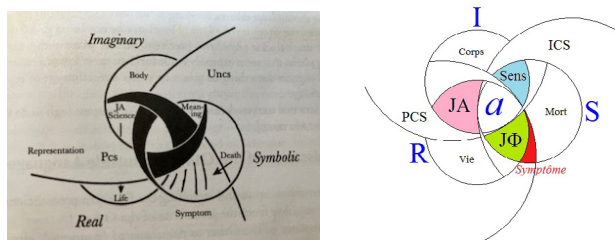


Figure 2

knowing how to be a person or as a complaint about life itself, the phenomena of living. The impossibility of life, where there is a struggle to hold a place in existence, takes many forms.

A patient complains that no one, not her parents, and particularly not her mother had taught her 'how to be a person'. This might sound like a call to a missing S1, a call to a trait taken as a signifier from the speech of the Other that might represent her in the place of the ego ideal, a place where she could see herself seen as worthy of love. As she returns to particular scenes regarding her position as a child in relation to her parents, the jouissance marking the idea of the parental couple left her too full - left her, at least momentarily, without a lack to orient access to her own desire. The sense of being excluded is not, however, a sense of being outside life. It is rather a form of defense faced with this jouissance – "to be there only in the form of an absence"<sup>25</sup> particularly when trying to make sense of the nonexistence of sexual rapport.

The enigma that joins the subject's life to the couple that produced her can be marked as a trauma through the effects of speech. Where "there is life but not yet a subject", and that existence is *not* inscribed in the Other, there can be a hole, that of the desire

19 Lacan, J., The Lacanian Phenomena, *The Lacanian Review* 9, p.35.

20 Lacan, J., The Third, *The Lacanian Review* 7, 2019, pp. 83-108. p. 87.

21 Blanco Díaz, P., Editorial, Discontinuity-Continuity. From the Oedipal Clinic to the Borromean Clinic, *Papers* 7, No. 3, 2018, p.2.

22 Ibid.

23 Lacan, J., The Third, *The Lacanian Review* 7, p. 106.

24 Miller, J.-A., We are all mad here, *Culture/Clinic*, p.21

25 Miller, J.-A., We are all mad here, *Culture/Clinic*, p.23.

to live.<sup>26</sup> This is what the ‘trauma of birth’ denotes in a way. The struggle can also be tied by an inaugural knot regarding how the subject’s existence *is* inscribed in the Other – illustrated by Sophie Gayard for example in her account of the effect of the words said by her father in response to her cry as an infant: ‘I wanted to throw you out the window’ reverberating in to be thrown, to hate, to be silent. Registering the homophonic repetition of these words in French (*je tais,...*) and the jouissance they carry, lets her enter analysis.<sup>27</sup> In analysis through the repetitions carried in speech as it is addressed to another, fixations of jouissance may be recognised and distilled in the letters of each subject’s *lalangue*.

Miller pinpoints the disturbance occurring “at the inmost juncture of the subject’s sense of life” from the aspect of three externalities: social, bodily and subjective.<sup>28</sup> Ordinary psychosis is characterized by difficulties with the social link, where social disconnection is marked in a particular way or where the strangeness of the body is more pronounced than in hysteria. He comments that differential diagnosis here is a matter of tone: it is a ‘clinic of tonality’ where one registers a tone that “exceeds the possibilities of hysteria” which is “constrained by the limits of neurosis,” it’s limited by the minus phi, the function of phallic signification in determining a lack, a subtraction of jouissance. He says that “in spite of the rebellion and disarray, hysteria is always constrained, whereas”...“you feel the infinite in the gap present in the relation” of the subject of psychosis to his or her body.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, he adds that “the inmost disturbance is a gap where the body is un-wedged, where the subject needs some tricks to re-appropriate his own body, where the subject is led to invent” a bond “to tie his body to itself.”<sup>30</sup> For example, an analysand uses a series of tattoos to remind her that she is worthy of love – the marking is there to both protect the body ego and to produce it as a protective shield for the subject. So when people testify to a void they

experience in themselves we can consider whether it is a hysterical void on the side of the barred subject in neurosis or a hole on the side of psychosis.<sup>31</sup> Where the sense of a void, emptiness or vagueness that might also be found in neurosis takes on a non-dialectisable quality, a ‘special fixity’, and where a structure of neurosis isn’t identified, it may, as Miller sets out, be a dissimulated, veiled or ordinary psychosis. In addition to the subjective externality evident in the fixity of a non-dialectical quality of the void, one may notice the fixity of an identification with the object as waste. This identification is not symbolic but real as “it is without metaphor”. The subject may transform himself into a reject, neglecting himself to the utmost point.”<sup>32</sup> Miller calls this “a real identification because the subject goes in the direction of realizing the weight in his own person”.<sup>33</sup> Taking the weight of the object as one’s own body identified in the real as waste dissociates it from the body as a surface of the ego and from the imaginary clothing of the object.

In *Seminar XX*, Lacan notes that “it is only on the basis of the clothing of the self-image that envelops the object cause of desire that the object relation [*rapport objectal*] is most often sustained – this is the very articulation of analysis.”<sup>34</sup> (In this passage the words for object relation were *rapport objectal* rather than the usual *relation d’objet*.) These distinctions were at work in *Seminar X* where the object *a* is first formally defined, its presentation manifest as anxiety. With the death of a loved one a hole in the real opens and sets in motion a process of signification as memories are activated and reinscribed in the course of mourning. Freud had described how each memory associated with the person or lost object or ideal is re-inscribed in this process, this work of remembering all the ties and traits associated with the object as lost. In *Seminar X* Lacan describes mourning as “a labour carried out to maintain and sustain all those painstaking links with the aim of restoring the bond with the true object relation, the masked object, the

26 Soler, C., *The era of traumatism*. Rome: Biblink editori, 2005, p. 85. Lacan, J., *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan Book X, Anxiety*, Cambridge, UK & Malden MA, USA: Polity, 2015, p.327.

27 Gayard, S. *The Lacanian Review* 10. P.96

28 Lacan, *Écrits*, p. 466, cited by Miller, Ordinary psychosis revisited, *Psychoanalytical Notebooks* 19, p. 162.

29 Miller, J.-A., *ibid.* p. 157.

30 *Ibid.* p. 156.

31 *Ibid.* p.148.

32 *Ibid.*

33 *Ibid.*

34 Lacan, J., *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan Book XX, Encore*, New York & London: Norton & Co, 1998, p. 92.



object *a* – for which thereafter a substitute” can be found.<sup>35</sup> He is emphasizing that the aim in mourning is to maintain “the bonds whereby desire is suspended, not from the object *a*, but from *i(a)*”, the imaginary clothing of the object, in the form of the specular body image which as we know is initially authenticated by the Other in the mirror stage. Freud describes how the libido invested in the lost object eventually through this work of mourning returns to the ego allowing for reinvestment in another or in other aspects of life. In melancholia, however, the subject, says Lacan:

has to have it out with the object...[and as the *object a* is]...usually masked beneath the *i(a)* of narcissism and misrecognized in its essence, [this] means that the melancholic necessarily passes through, as it were, his own image. Initially he attacks this image so as to reach, within it, the *object a* that transcends him, whose control escapes him – and whose collapse will drag him into the suicide-rush<sup>36</sup>

a passage to the act that bypasses the social link and yet occurs within a signifying frame.

The experience of an assault can also produce a hole in the imaginary – where life can't be imagined and a future is at least partially or for the time being foreclosed. The *trauma*, “as Lacan describes it, is that event which makes a hole in the speaking body when they encounter sexuality.”<sup>37</sup> Assaults attack the social link and as Marie- Hélène Brousse has pointed out, all assault is sexual. It is aimed in a hatred intended to abolish the subject at that moment and this can change the subject thereafter. Being the subject of such an attack makes it hard to hold a place, as that place of holding a body, has been directly attacked. In a serious assault (though we should note that all assaults are serious) that moment of pure hatred destroys something of and for the subject. It opens a hole in the imaginary, creating a trauma, a break which the subject doesn't want to go back to with the knowledge of what has happened - it is something he or she can't face, which appears as a blank in his or her history. Actually recognizing that something severe happened there that knocked them from the

place that they had held is a starting point from which more of their history may be constructed and brought to words. To recognise the trauma that was there, to recognise what it is, and for that ground to be restored, is a starting point.

Lacan's commentary on Joyce's account of being assaulted and its effect on the imaginary body are worth noting here. Joyce describes divesting himself of his body, detaching from it - ‘just as peel is detached’ - after he was beaten up by some of his friends. Lacan notes in Joyce's commentary that he experienced a feeling of disgust for his own body. He

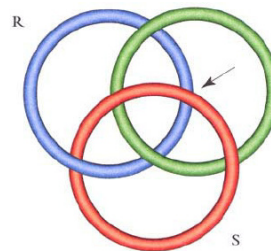


Figure 4, The botched link

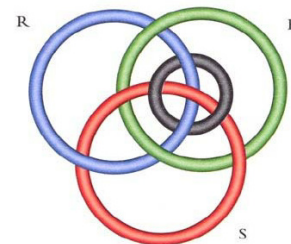


Figure 5, The rectifying Ego

then goes on to say that “the form that this dropping of the relationship with the body takes for Joyce” is indicative of the state of his ego as unsupported, for the “idea of the self, the self as a body carries weight. This is what is called the Ego.”<sup>38</sup> In either of these instances of assault or melancholia an inescapable encounter with the real, unmediated by the veil of the semblant leaves the subject exposed and rather than the idea of analysis as “a controlled decline of the imaginary”,<sup>39</sup> it is a matter of reestablishing the ego and the imaginary clothing of the object, *i(a)*, of building imaginary links, and this function of the semblant between sense and the real. Lacan takes Joyce as an example of constituting a symptom from the practice of writing that functioned to support the ego. Let's have a look at this.

In the diagram on page 130 of the *Seminar XXIII* (Figure 4) Lacan supposes the 3rd ring passes over the capital R ring instead of underneath (indicated by the arrow) allowing the Capital I of the Imaginary to just:

35 Lacan, J., *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan Book X, Anxiety*, Cambridge, UK & Malden MA, USA: Polity, 2015, p. 335.

36 Ibid.

37 Brousse, M.-H., *Psychoanalytical Notebooks 37/38*, 2021, p. 48.

38 Lacan, J., *Seminar XXIII, The Sinthome*, p.129.

39 Grigg, R. Remembering and forgetting, *Lacanian Compass* 3, Issue 2, 2016.

clear off. It slides away, in just the same way as what Joyce feels after his hiding. It slides, and the imaginary relationship has no locus... Look at the link...Nothing could be more commonly imagined than this mistake, this fault, this lapsus. Why shouldn't it happen that a knot should fail to be Borromean, that it should be botched? [In other words it is an ordinary occurrence...] You can see exactly what happens here, where I'm incarnating the Ego as rectifying the wanting relationship, namely what, in the case of Joyce, does not tie the imaginary in a Borromean fashion to the link between the real and the unconscious. Through this artifice of writing, I would say that the Borromean knot is restored.<sup>40</sup> (Figure 5)...The knot on this occasion is a link... (Figure 6) [and that by which]...the real is introduced as such.<sup>41</sup>

So from the continuity where the registers are not differentiated as such, something is isolated by this function of knotting.



Figure 6, Reconstitution of the link

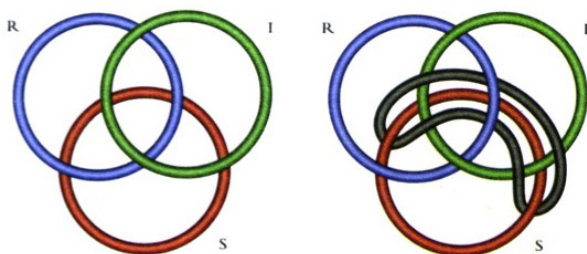


Figure 7, The three separate rings (left); the rings linked by the fourth link, the sinthom (right)

In chapter 3 of *The Sinthome* Lacan referred to continuity as the specificity of the knot in paranoia, that is to say the registers aren't differentiated (Figure 7). As Sophie Marett-Maleval spells out, he "underlines the closure of the ring, independent, self-contained, as the prevalent ego in paranoia, where the subject is not divided. He calls this knot 'personality', which is not the subject of the unconscious. The clover knot (Figure 8) hardly supports the subject; the subject becomes personality, fixed in personality."<sup>42</sup>



Figure 8, The trefoil knot (circular form)

This can be the 'as if' personality we often meet or hear about in the clinic and elsewhere, where the function of the S1 fails, and "for the subject of the unconscious to be operational it has to exist to the knotting, put into play by the fourth ring".<sup>43</sup> The specificity of this fourth ring - knotting sense to jouissance and S1 to a (S1-a) - is that it is formed within the Borromean knot and is inherent to the knotting of the three registers (Figure 7, diagram on right). It is the sinthome, which can be written as S1 over a, S1/a.<sup>44</sup> This is not a personality but that which supports the subject of the unconscious, and "the unconscious is what is excluded by personality, by paranoia." It is a matter of reintroducing something by way of a pragmatic approach that also involves a craftsmanship with language. Lacan addresses this by way of the letter and the sinthome.

**The object a as a semblant of being**

In the schema from chapter VIII of *Seminar XX, Encore* (Figure 9) the points of the triangle have letters representing the symbolic, imaginary and real just

40 Lacan, J. *Seminar 23*, p. 131

41 Ibid. p.132.

42 Sophie Marret-Maleval, "We're all mad, but not necessarily paranoiacs", *The Lacanian Review* 10, p. 38-39.

43 Ibid.

44 Ibid. p.37.

as in the Borromean knot.<sup>45</sup> On the vector going from the symbolic to the real the object *a* is inscribed as a semblance. Miller comments that here Lacan “downgrades object *a* from the register of the real.”<sup>46</sup> For in *Seminar XX* Lacan notes that “the symbolic, directing itself toward the real, shows us the true nature of

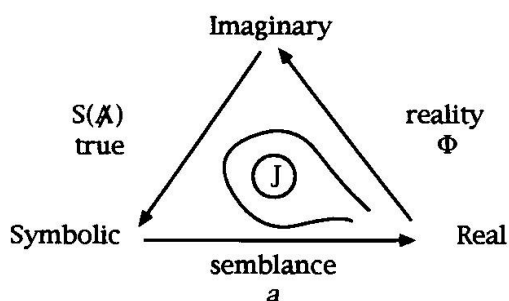


Figure 9

object *a*. If I qualified it earlier as a semblance of being, it is because it seems to give us the basis (support) of being.”<sup>47</sup> The following year he similarly notes how the point of the Borromean knot “is to be found at its heart, its centre. It’s also what undoes it, insofar as it results from a centralized, true wedging of the symbolic, imaginary, and the real.”<sup>48</sup> This “point of central wedging defines the object *a*.”<sup>49</sup>

We’ve seen that the three circles of the Borromean knot are linked by weaving or plaiting what is indeed a braid - this passing over and under is what makes them hold together. The object *a* “belongs to each of the three registers while being contiguous to the three other jouissance - each of these jouissance supposes the object *a*”<sup>50</sup> The object *a* is caught hold of from the wedging of the knot, it is a consequence of the three dimensional knotting, rather than being what holds the knot together (Figure 10).

Guyonnet gives us the case of young girl who presented to a CPCT with disorganized speech. The questions of the therapist allow for some clarification of time and place and the isolation of a hallucinatory phenomena of the voice to be differentiated and

grasped by the subject. Guyonnet notes this can occur “whether he tells us about it or not – if and only if a differentiation, and thus, a knotting between these categories of the real, the symbolic and the imaginary is effectuated.”<sup>51</sup>

In general, I suggest that through analysis, knotting occurs:

- i. by way of the subject’s speech under transference where, from bits of sentences repeated perhaps hundreds of times, guided in a warp and weft weaving, allowing for;
- ii. an ordering and / or differentiation of registers, by way of the;
- iii. isolation of signifiers and wedging of the object *a*: a condensation in the sinthome as S1/a.

The letter can condense a signifying articulation to the jouissance that suspends it outside the signifying chain of the Other. In doing so it can create a knotting that holds the S, I, and R whereby the symptom or sinthome functions as a forth ring and the subject is more peaceful as evidenced in the social

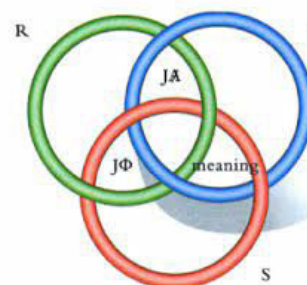


Figure 10, The three central fields of the RSI diagram

link. A limit to jouissance is found there in the singularity of each one, allowing surplus jouissance to settle into a bit more satisfaction, into some satisfaction in life, where the other may be seen as capable of love.

Miller refers to the Borromean knot as giving us the key “to what rapport is. It is the Knot itself, the knotting, as distinct from its elements, which is a rapport.”<sup>52</sup>

45 Lacan, *Seminar XX*, p. 90.

46 Miller, J.-A., Pure psychoanalysis, Applied psychoanalysis, *Lacanian Ink* 20, 2002, p.23.

47 Lacan, J., *Seminar XX*, p. 95.

48 Lacan, J., ‘The Lacanian Phenomena’, *The Lacanian Review* 9, p.31.

49 Lacan, J., The Third, *The Lacanian Review* 7, 2019, pp. 83-108. P. 105.

50 Guyonnet, D., On the use of verbal hallucination. *The Lacanian Review* 7, 2019, pp.123-130. P. 127.

51 Ibid. p. 128.

52 Miller, J.-A., Pure psychoanalysis, Applied psychoanalysis, *Lacanian Ink* 20, 2002, p.24.



Defining a symptom refers to the direction of the treatment, which is to help find a name to localize jouissance. To punctuate the sense of difficulty of life by localizing and finding a name for the symptom is to find a new quilting point by knotting these aspects together. While Freud saw conflict as an essential aspect of the symptom defined as a compromise formation between opposing forces, Miller considers that in later work Lacan sought another definition of the symptom:

to learn to think of the symptom without conflict...It is a clinic of knotting and not of opposition, a clinic of arrangements which permits satisfaction of and leads to jouissance. There is difficulty, but there is no conflict. The structure of the knots by itself does not allow the dimension of conflict to emerge...[in] this clinic what is at stake is not the resolution of the conflict as in Freud, but rather to obtain a new arrangement...for the subject.<sup>53</sup>

From the pluralization of the *Names-of-the-Father* at the end of *Seminar X* through to Lacan's later work we see the transformation of the S1 into a swarm (*essaim*) and the Name-of-the-Father enter the broader category of the sinthome. Distinct from

the Name-of-the-Father and the delusional metaphor, the sinthome allows a substitution for the absence of the sexual non-rapport, a substitution in the libidinal economy which "gives the sinthome its incurable character: it cannot be negativised. It is also generalized because there is no speaking being that does not enjoy in a singular manner. The sinthome halts the drift of meaning and anchors it in non-meaning."<sup>54</sup>

So on the one hand it is important to register, as Daniel Roy has noted, that the:

rejected object is an absolutely precious object when it is isolated in analysis because, in detaching itself from the drive in anxiety, it becomes the object cause of desire...Desires are here what constitute "the fate of the drives", [...and] as Lacan says in one of his very last seminars, on the 18th of March 1980.... desires "dispel" the drives, they defuse them as the sources of a curse, of an unhappy fate, which the subject had been complaining about until then, and they thus dry up the ferocious greed of the superego.<sup>55</sup>

And this work happens, I think we can say, by way of a love of *lalangue*.<sup>56</sup>

53 Miller notes that when the opposition between pleasure and reality is understood as an opposition between pleasure and external reality, it "led to the conception of analysis as education or pedagogy" (Miller, *Seminar of Barcelona, Psychoanalytical Notebooks 1*, 1998, pp. 11-65. P. 53) and hence Lacan's concern to take pedagogy out of psychoanalysis (pp.53-54).

54 Blanco Díaz, Op. Cit. p.5.

55 Roy, D., *Discontent and anxiety in the Clinic and in Civilisation*, 2023.

56 Berouka, S., *The sense of life, Psychoanalytical Notebooks 37/38*, 2021, pp.177-183. P.183.