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## *The Clinic of the Borromean Knot\**

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The clinical pertinence of Lacan's topology will here be illustrated with a number of examples, referring to what we can call a clinic of the Borromean knot, a clinic of supplementations [*suppléances*], which paves the way for a new differential clinic.

### GENERALIZED FORECLOSURE AND SUPPLEMENTATIONS

If Lacan considers, as early as his article "On a Question Preliminary to Any Possible Treatment of Psychosis," that a supplementation to the "void suddenly perceived of the inaugural *Verwerfung*"<sup>1</sup> (p. 221, Sheridan, *trans. mod.*) is conceivable, it is only at the end of his teaching that he gives full extension to this term, to this function of supplementation. This emphasis, this generalization

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\*Translated by Ellie Ragland and Véronique Voruz, from *La Revue de l'Ecole de la cause freudienne*.

of supplementation, is indeed correlative to the displacement of the status of the Other effected by Lacan when he no longer takes his bearings from the Other, but from the One, that is to say, from an axiomatic of *jouissance*.

In Schema L, as in the formulations of the *preliminary question*, Lacan still relies upon the hypothesis of a dialectic subject/Other; and the Other, in this respect, is complete and consistent, it is the true and absolute Other which could annul the subject itself; it includes its own guarantee. The Other of the signifier is completed by the Other of Law. There is an Other of the Other which lays down the law for the Other. Its signifier is the Name-of-the-Father: "That is to say, the signifier [which] in the Other, as locus of the signifier, is the signifier of the Other as locus of the law" (Sheridan 221, *trans. mod.*). At this point in Lacan's elaboration, the Other thus contains its own signifier; the Other of the Other exists.

It is from his Seminar on *The Ethics* onwards that Lacan brings out that in the process of symbolization, of absorption of the Thing in the Other, where language erases *jouissance* and soaks it up, there is a remainder; this remainder is the object *a*, surplus-*jouissance* [*plus-de-jour*], irreducible to a signifier.

In this respect, *a* is not an element of the Other, but it must be conceived as included in the Other, like the *agalma* within the Silenus to which Alcibiades compares Socrates in *The Symposium*.

The Other thus becomes a concept organized around a kernel, a vacuole of *jouissance* which lodges itself there in a point of extimacy [*extimité*], at the most intimate point, which nonetheless remains radically heterogeneous.

From then on, the Other is marked by a central lack: that of *jouissance* as signifier. Lacan introduces  $S(\emptyset)$  in this place, the signifier of the lack in the Other, a signifier which is different from the others; it is the signifier without which the others would represent nothing, but it can itself only be conceived as extimate in relation to the Other, as J.-A. Miller underlined.<sup>2</sup> Consequently, the Other can but be marked either by inconsistency—due to the fact that only a heterogeneous element can come in the place of its lack—or by incompleteness.

Lacan can then formulate, in *Subversion of the Subject and Dialectic of Desire*, that the Other does not exist—with respect to *jouissance*—and that there is no Other of the Other. This amounts to bringing out the foundational function of the fault in the universe, as we emphasized earlier.

From then on, what remains as Other in the Other, what founds the alterity of the Other, is the object *a* as non-symbolized remainder of the Thing.

The path followed by Lacan takes him from an axiomatic of desire, from a point of departure in the Other, to an axiomatic of *jouissance*, which, for its part, is fundamentally acephalic, autistic. By the same token, this also leads him to think of speech, no longer as addressed to the Other, as a vehicle of communication, but as a vehicle of *jouissance*. It is in this respect that Lacan proposes the concept of *lalangue* at the end of the Seminar *Encore*, namely a Symbolic disjoined from the Other and referred to the One. To lay emphasis on the One, on this “There is such a thing as One” (“*Y a d’l’Un*, cf., *Seminar XX*, English trans. p. 5) which Lacan formulates, and which marks the last period of his teaching, amounts to posing *jouissance* and *lalangue* as prior to language as structure, prior to an Other which henceforth becomes problematic.

It is then that Lacan can draw the ultimate consequences of the division of the Other, of  $\emptyset$ , and of the function of  $S(\emptyset)$ . From then on, the Name-of-the-Father appears as a stopper of this  $\emptyset$ ; the function of the father, however operative it may be, is only a Freudian myth. It is not unique. Hence the pluralization of the Names of the Father as supplementations to the structural fault in the Other.

In other words, that its own signifier should lack in the Other, be foreclosed, is a fact of structure. This amounts to a generalization of foreclosure as something structurally lacking. In this respect, the Name-of-the-Father appears as an addition [*en plus*], a complement. And should it fail, a supplementation, which is always a supplementation [*suppléance*] of a supplement [*supplément*], can come to remedy this fault. Thus, supplementation is correlative to a universal clinic of delusion.

## THE BORROMEAN KNOT

And indeed, this is what is presented by the topology of the Borromean knot, with which Lacan reformulates the very concept of structure solely on the basis of the categories of analytic experience: Real, Symbolic, and Imaginary.

The Borromean knot is an effort to think structure, the Symbolic, without any reference to the Other. It is also, as noted by J.-A. Miller, a reformulation of the structure of the Other as the condition of possibility of the analytic experience itself: this is what Lacan indicates in *R.S.I.* (18/03/75):<sup>3</sup> “If there is a real Other, it is nowhere else than in the knot itself, and this is why there is no Other of the Other.”

Lacan’s aim thus consists in circumscribing the One, *jouissance*, on the basis of the three registers: Real, Symbolic, Imaginary, insofar as they are fundamentally three heterogeneous registers. Yet, the speaking being is supported by these three registers, and as a result, something of a *jouissance* finds itself enclosed, wedged. It is to account for this that Lacan used the Borromean knot, as indicated in his Seminar *Encore* (p. 101).

His problem thus lies in elaborating, in situating the common measure necessary to these three absolutely heterogeneous registers. It is on this point that a fourth term intervenes; the four is already there, in the Borromean knot.

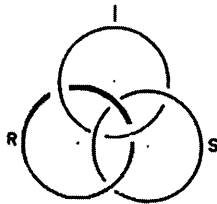


Figure 11-1.

Each one of the rings which support R, S, and I is not linked to any one of the other two. When taken two by two they are free, yet in the Borromean knot they hold together.

The common measure between the three resides in the possibility of their being knotted, knotted in a Borromean manner, and the knotting, the Borromean knot, is a fourth, new entity: it is the common measure *a minima*, in a way the perfect solution. But this does not imply that it be the only one, or even that it should be placed at the level of an ideal, or even mythical solution.

Lacan points out that in Freud's work, these three registers are left independent from each other, adrift; and to make his theoretical construction hold, Freud needs something which he calls "psychical reality," and which is nothing other than the Oedipus complex: namely a fourth term which knots the three independent terms, the three discrete rings, R, S, and I (R.S.I., 14/01/75).

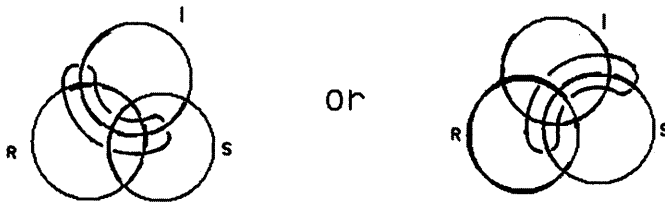


Figure 11-2.

What the Oedipus complex accomplishes here, in this figuration of the four-ring knot, is what the Borromean knot implicitly realizes in the three-ring knot.

The fourth ring, as an explicit fourth, comes here to remedy the unknotting where foreclosure is designated.

In the unknotting, it is the Borromean character which is foreclosed; the unknotting, as -1 of the knotting, is structural: it is exactly equivalent to posing the function of  $S(\emptyset)$ .

The Borromean knotting of the three as implicit, ideal fourth, being de facto foreclosed, an explicit, supplementary fourth is required to reconstitute the structure of Borromean knotting, and this term is a supplementation.

This is what the fourth ring achieves, as Oedipus complex in Freud and Name-of-the-Father in Lacan, but also with reference

to “the radical function of the Name-of-the-Father, which is to name things with all the consequences that it implies, including notably with regard to enjoyment [*jouir*]” (6, *R.S.I.*, 11/03/75), as nomination, as naming [*le donner-nom*]: Lacan says that this is where “speech knots itself to something of the real.”

In the perfect solution of the three-ring Borromean knotting, “the Names of the Father are the symbolic, the imaginary and the real; these are the primary names insofar as they name something.” That is to say that not only is each one of them a name, gives a name, but it also knots the other two, and as a third it equally carries the efficiency of the knotting as the implicit fourth.

In the four-ring knot, Lacan complements, supplements one of the three in its primary function, which is naming, nomination. To say it otherwise, it is in naming, in nomination, that supplementation truly resides: in other words, supplementation insofar as it responds to  $S(\emptyset)$ , to the failure of the Other.

Thus Lacan can propose “three forms of the Name-of-the-Father, those that name the imaginary, the symbolic, and the real” (*R.S.I.*, 18/03/75). He then specifies that “It is not only the symbolic which has the privilege of the Names of the Father, nomination does not have to be conjoined with the hole in the symbolic” (*R.S.I.*, 15/04/75).

Inhibition as nomination of the Imaginary and anxiety as nomination of the Real are thus added to the symptom as nomination of the Symbolic: this is what Lacan indicates at the end of his Seminar *R.S.I.*

Here is another figuration of the four-ring knot, which helps us grasp better how this fourth as supplement to one of the three, R, S, or I, can reconstitute a Borromean knotting.

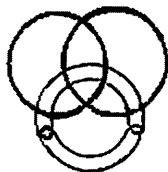


Figure 11–3.

## MODALITIES OF FAILURE, MODALITIES OF SUPPLEMENTATION

The general law then is that it fails, that it fails to constitute a three-ring Borromean knot; in other words, foreclosure is structural. This is what turns out to be the case for the neurotic; it is also what is revealed when psychosis is triggered, and it is what shows in different clinical notations on any given case.

There are many ways in which the Borromean knotting of the three registers of the Real, the Symbolic, and the Imaginary can fail, and there are as many ways of supplementing this failure: the four-ring knot we have just seen is only one among many others, if we consider that any means of securing R, S, and I is a supplementation.

What can we say of this failure with a degree of certainty?

Let us note first of all that this failure can be translated into different sorts of arrangements or rearrangements of R, S, and I:

- R, S, and I, which are fundamentally separated, disassociated, remain not knotted, or come undone: this is common madness, the “all mad” underlined by Lacan in *Les non-dupes errent* and in *R.S.I.*
- A Borromean knotting can be constituted, but a fourth element will then be required, which is fundamentally the naming, nomination: this is how Lacan defines the symptom in the four-ring Borromean knot which supports the most common case, neurosis: as nomination of the Symbolic. The fourth ring then intervenes as a supplementation of the unknotting of R, S, and I, which is structural in the generalization of foreclosure, Lacan’s point of departure at the end of his teaching.
- A fourth element comes to repair the unknotting, the total or partial failing of the knotting, at the very point of error: R, S, and I remain knotted, but the knot is no longer Borromean. This is the function of the *sinthome* as fourth ring which Lacan brings forth on the basis of the case of Joyce.

- Two of the consistencies remain interlaced, and the third does not hold: taking the ideal solution of the three-ring Borromean knot for reference, this is what a single error produces—localizable at the point of overlapping in the flat [*mise à plat*] version of the knot. This is, for example, what the thrashing episode reveals of Joyce's structure prior to the production of the *sinthome*, which will prevent the slipping away of the Imaginary, that is to say, of the relationship to the body.
- There is a three-ring knot of R, S, and I that is not Borromean: this is the case for the Olympic knot, which Lacan situates in *Les non-dupes errent* as the characteristic of the neurotic insofar as it illustrates its indestructible dimension. One can cut R, S, or I, he says, but it holds together anyway. Let us however note that between *Les non-dupes errent* and *R.S.I.*, Lacan's construction has evolved.
- By putting R, S, and I in continuity with each other, the knotting transforms itself into diverse forms of knottings or unknottings with only one or two consistencies, with potential sinthomatic repairs occurring here too. For example, simply putting R, S, and I in continuity with one another, starting with the three-ring Borromean knot, leads to the trefoil knot which, as Lacan indicates, supports the structure of personality, which is nothing other than the paranoiac position.

These are only a few of the possible rearrangements of R, S, and I, among many others indicated by Lacan in the Seminars which follow Joyce, *Le sinthome*.

These remarks lead logically to some questions on the different orders of causality for the failure which they suggest, and on the distinction between what is the cause and what is the agent of this failure.

Indeed, the three- or four-ring Borromean knotting may fail:

- because one of the registers no longer holds and lets go, ruptures, or becomes inconsistent (which can be the case



for R, S, I or the fourth element). This is how Lacan puts it in *Les non-dupes errent*, concerning the way in which the Symbolic comes undone when the psychotic subject encounters the deficiency of the Symbolic, with the call for the foreclosed signifier;

- because some “errors,” which are effects of the paternal deficiency, of the paternal failure, were produced in the constitution of the knotting itself. This is what Lacan evokes concerning Joyce;
- finally, because there is confusion, lack of distinction between the registers R, S, and I; in other words there is a putting in continuity, an homogenization of two—or of the three—consistencies.

All this, of course, presents us with a great many questions concerning the clinic, and requires that we specify in each case how clinical phenomena account for these modes of failure.

Lastly, let us note that these modes of failure also signpost the possible modes of repair, of sticking back together, of rearranging things. Logically indeed, we must draw the consequence from this topology of knots to which Lacan leads us, and grasp that what operates has to do precisely with the tools of “practical topology.”

- scissors, which effect the cut;
- glue, which performs a sticking back together, suture, and putting in continuity;
- thread, which, as consistency, allows for supplementation by means of a fourth element, and the local repair of the “error” through the *sinthome*.

All these operations can contribute to supplementing the failed reference, namely the three-ring Borromean knot.

They are produced by the subject:

- as symptom—supplementation, fourth consistency of the knot—by the neurotic subject;

- as *sinthome*, as constructed by Joyce;
- as suture and putting in continuity: this is, for example, the paranoiac solution;
- as delusional metaphor which, broadly speaking constitutes, in psychosis, an attempt at localizing *jouissance*, at instituting a supplementation in the place of the faltering supplementation of the Name-of-the-Father; like the symptom, it is on the side of the letter, a literal metaphor which condenses *jouissance*.

It is also there that the analyst operates with his or her act:

- through interpretation, which operates a cut, and through scansion;
- through interpretation insofar as it bears on equivocation and puts the function of the hole into play through the Möbien structure;
- through the symbolic act, which can operate either as suture or as supplementation;
- through the construction, the grafting—more or less forced—that he/she can institute (that is what Melanie Klein did with Little Dick, for example).

Cut, sticking back together, supplementation, these are the topological interventions operated by the analyst—with his act—but also realized by the subject by way of his or her “know-how” (*savoir faire*) with the signifier. And we can illustrate this with what Lacan brought us, around these three terms: symptom, *sinthome*, Symbolic graft.

## THE SYMPTOM AS NOMINATION OF THE SYMBOLIC

In the topology of the Borromean knot as developed from *R.S.I.* onwards, let us only recall that Lacan evidences the symptom as fourth ring, as a supplementation to the function of the Father, as

one of the Names of the Father which are necessary to remedy the structural failing of the Other, and to effect the knotting of R, S, and I.

This four-ring knot, and Lacan emphasizes this in his Seminar on Joyce, indicates a kind of inflection, or renewal of the status of the Symbolic itself.

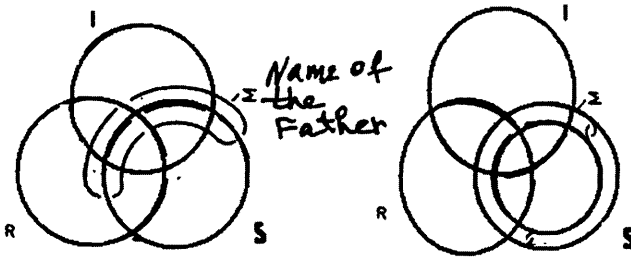


Figure 11-4.

The ring of the Symbolic is replaced by a binary,  $S + \Sigma$ . “The fourth element is what the symptom realises, insofar as it makes a circle with the unconscious. [. . .] It makes a circle,  $S + \Sigma$ : this is what makes a new kind of S,” Lacan specifies in 1975 in his conferences in the United States.<sup>4</sup> This binary corresponds to the two sides of the Symbolic: the signifier insofar as it is able to couple itself with another to make a chain, and the letter. In other words, and as proposed by J.-A. Miller, it corresponds to the two functions applicable to the One of the signifier: the function of representation and the function of symptom. We can recognize here what Lacan evokes in *L’étourdit* regarding “these two *dit-mensions* [*dimensions of speech*] of the foranyman [*pourtouthomme*], that of the discourse thanks to which he foreveryones himself [*il se pourtoute*], and that of the places from which it mans itself [*ça se thomme*].”

On the one hand then, there is what pertains to the signifier insofar as it is articulated with another; in other words, what pertains to the structure of language, the unconscious and discourse, what is dialecticizable and can be elaborated in a knowledge. On the other hand, there is what pertains to the  $S_1$  all-alone, from the

letter insofar as it condenses *jouissance*, from *lalangue* as a vehicle of this *jouissance*: it is the non-dialectical, the symptom insofar as it is not analyzable; to put it another way, it is the symptom as Real.

By identifying with his symptom, the subject constitutes himself as a response of the Real. The symptom, as Real, is a supplementation.

In psychosis, unlike neurosis, in which they are opposed, the effect of sense disappears in enjoyed sense [*sens joui*], which is indexed by the Other. *Jouissance* is identified with the place of the Other, of an Other that enjoys. This is what the phenomenology of psychosis attests to.

The symptom is what co-ordinates *jouissance* and sense: this holds for both neurosis and psychosis.

In this respect, the delusional construction, taken as a psychotic symptom, is what allows one to master *jouissance*, to tame it, by separating it from the signifying chain that it invades in order to localize it, stabilize it in the delusion as symptom. It condenses it as writing, as letter which as such is non-analyzable insofar as it is a reject of the unconscious. If in neurosis the symptom as supplementation comes to complement the unconscious and constitutes the necessary supplement to the flawed Other by attesting to a fixation of *jouissance*, in psychosis, the symptom as contingent comes to separate *jouissance* from the Other, the gaping fault of which had caused *jouissance* to rush in, in a massive rejection of the unconscious.

As such, if psychosis is pure symptom, the delusional metaphor as psychotic symptom, as supplementation—albeit a contingent supplementation—comes to condense this rejection of the unconscious by localizing it.

## JOYCE AND THE *SINTHOM*E

Let us examine, apropos of Joyce, the way in which Lacan situates and constructs a clinical observation on the knot. It is one of the completely illuminating examples Lacan gives us of what the ar-

ticulation of topology with the clinic can amount to in the analytic experience.

Lacan tells us that the *sinthome* comes to repair the fault, the slip of the knot, of the knotting of R, S, and I, at the very point of its occurrence. Lacan shows it to us on the knot in relation to the episode, taken as a clinical fragment, of the thrashing received by Joyce in which he has occasion to feel a kind of detachment from his own body, which seems to him to fall from him like the peel of a ripe fruit. In this effect of the dropping of the relation to the body itself, which is set adrift in this letting-drop, Lacan invites us to recognize the slipping of the Imaginary which does not hold, owing to a fault in the knotting.<sup>5</sup>

It is from then on possible to localize, to circumscribe this fault on the knot of R, S, and I, and it is there, at the point at which it occurred, that Lacan situates—this is how he formulates things in the case of Joyce—the ego as *sinthome*, as corrective repair.

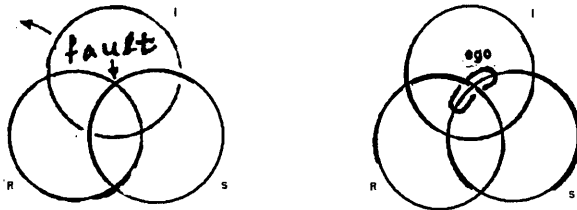


Figure 11-5.

Here, the ego designates what is constituted through the artifice, the art of Joyce, which produces an enigmatic writing, which undoes language, and which, as Lacan tells us, constitutes a pure symptom “which Joyce succeeds in raising to the power of language without for all that any of it being analysable.”<sup>6</sup>

This ego as *sinthome*, as supplementation, restores a second link between the Symbolic and the Real, and makes the Imaginary hold. But this minimal fashion of repairing the fault, of making R, S, and I hold together, retains the memory, the trace, of the initial

fault: R and S remain entwined, and the epiphanies are the mark of this in Joyce's work.

### THE NOMINATION OF THE REAL AS SYMBOLIC GRAFT: MELANIE KLEIN'S CASE OF LITTLE DICK

How could we grasp something of what this other form of the Name-of-the-Father would be as nomination of the Real—namely as anxiety—coming to supplement the ring R and realize the Borromean knotting with I and S?

Let us try to approach this question by relying on Melanie Klein's case of Little Dick. She published this famous case in 1930, in an article entitled "The Importance of Symbol-Formation in the Development of the Ego,"<sup>7</sup> and Lacan referred to this case, extensively re-articulating it in his *Seminar I: Freud's Papers on Technique*, in 1953, at the beginning of his teaching.

When Dick, who is four, comes to see Klein, he lives wholly in an undifferentiated world and, unlike neurotic children, he manifests no anxiety: everything is equally real to him, equally indifferent: he lives in the Real, and in a non-anxiogenic manner. He is a child who does not respond, and who addresses no call. He does not have access to the Other, he does not have access to human reality.

However for Dick, the Real, Symbolic, and Imaginary are there, perceptible, just beneath the surface, notes Lacan. Dick is in the Real, but Klein's speech, in the Symbolic, will be able to operate and the objects, in the Imaginary, are already constituted; there is the beginning of an imaginification of the exterior world.

But Real, Symbolic, and Imaginary cannot interact with one another. They are lacking a common measure. "The whole problem is that of the conjunction of the symbolic and the imaginary in the constitution of the real," says Lacan—the Real is here to be understood as reality. That this conjunction should fail to occur is to be attributed to a fault in the situation of the subject insofar as

it “is essentially characterised by its place in the symbolic world, in other words in the world of speech” (*Seminar I*, p. 80).

Lacan illustrates the mechanism of this conjunction in *Seminar I* with Bouasse’s experiment, known as the experiment of the inverted bouquet. This optical experiment shows how Real and Imaginary objects can be conjoined, be included in one other, and that this works both ways. Lacan indicates that this experiment is a new presentification of the mirror stage: the image of the body, if we locate it in our schema, is like the Imaginary vase which contains the bouquet of Real flowers. That’s how we can portray for ourselves the subject of the time before the birth of the ego, and the appearance of the latter (*Seminar I*, p. 79).

For Dick, this free play, the conjunction between the different forms of objects, Imaginary and Real, is what does not occur: the bouquet and the vase cannot be there at the same time. For Dick, the Real and the Imaginary are equivalent (p. 84). And that, Lacan tells us, is because the subject is not in the right place in the Symbolic. The coupling of language and the Imaginary has not taken place, namely, that which would allow Dick to enter into a system of equivalence where objects would be substituted for one another, in other words, in the process of symbolization, in the signifying chain. This is what will allow for Klein’s intervention.

But let us return to the point of departure for Dick.

He lacks the signifying chain,  $S_2$ . Alienation—the choice of the Other, of speech—has not taken place. Dick only has at his disposal “an anticipated, fixed symbolisation,” says Lacan, “with a single and unique primary identification with the following names, the void, the dark”—the body of his mother as container. “This gap is precisely what is human in the structure peculiar to the subject” (p. 69).

To say it otherwise, Dick remains fixated, petrified, under this primary  $S_1$ .<sup>8</sup> In this position indeed, he can spare himself the cost of anguish, of the anxiety which arises with “every new re-identification of the subject” (*Seminar I*, p. 69), an anxiety which, Lacan specifies, as loss of the subject in the signifying interval,

as a signal of this loss, can be found at some extremely primitive levels. But Dick does not lose anything in the signifying chain; he fixes his being as subject in this  $S_1$  of the primordial identification. What has not taken place for him is precisely the fall of this  $S_1$ , that is to say, primal repression. Freud indicates this in *Inhibition, Symptom, Anxiety*: it is anxiety which produces repression. Anxiety is the cause of repression. Dick's lack of such anxiety is precisely what Klein notes from the outset. This is her starting point, and she articulates for us, in three points, what guides her action as therapist in this treatment. Firstly, what is at stake for her is to access the unconscious of the subject—we would rather say that there is no trace of the unconscious in him, and that she intervenes on his structure; then, to arouse the child's anxiety by attenuating its latent form, by unknitting it through interpretation; finally, to elaborate this anxiety so as to allow for the development of symbolization.

In other words, the anxiety thereby produced is necessary for repression, for the fall of the  $S_1$  under which the subject was petrified, and correlatively alienation, namely the choice of the Other, can take place. Anxiety is strictly correlative with this advent of the subject in the Other, an operation which stages the Other as barred and produces a remainder, the object  $a$ .

Thus, faced with this child who manifests no interest for the toys she shows him, as early as the first session, Klein immediately intervenes, on the basis of ideas she already has: "I took a big train that I placed beside a smaller train and I called them 'Daddy-train' and 'Dick train.'" On the spot, he took the train I had called 'Dick,' made it roll over to the window and said 'Station.' I explained to him that 'the station is Mummy; Dick is going into Mummy.'"

From then on, everything unfolds for Dick, and as early as the end of the first session, he formulates a call. Through her speech, Klein forces the Symbolic onto him, and precisely in the form of the oedipal myth. She appends the bare core of a myth to him, that is to say, a symbolization of the Real. Through this graft of oedipal symbolization, "she literally gives names to what doubtless does



indeed partake in the symbol, since it can be named immediately, but which was, up to that moment, for this subject, just reality pure and simple," says Lacan (*Seminar I*, p. 69).

Could we not see here, under this form of the Oedipus, of the oedipal myth, this nomination of the Real that Lacan designates for us as one of the Names of the Father: anxiety as supplementation, as nomination of a Real, makes a hole in the undifferentiated Real in which Dick lives, through the appending of oedipal symbolization, as primary nomination, to the ring of the Real.

Ultimately, this is the form of the four-ring knot as introduced by Lacan in *R.S.I.* on the 14th of January 1975 in order to show the function of the Oedipus complex for Freud as the necessary fourth for the knotting of R, S, and I.

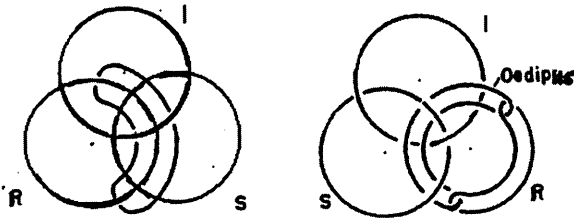


Figure 11-6.

We have seen that the symptom as supplementation can, as letter, come to complement the Symbolic on the Real side of the signifier.

Here, oedipal symbolization as fourth, as Symbolic hold on the Real, is "the one which gives us anxiety, which is the sole, definitive apprehension, and as such very real."<sup>9</sup> It complements the Real and introduces a degree of equivalence between R, S, and I, namely it is constituted as a mode of defense against what is unbearable of the Real. The advent of the subject in the Other is henceforth possible, and Dick can formulate a call, produce an  $S_2$ .

Klein's speech is operative; it touches the very structure of the subject, at the precise point where this subject was accessible

to this intervention. The Symbolic graft amounts to a supplementation; Dick accedes to the signifying chain.

However, does this particular mode of birth of the subject to the signifier, a birth forcibly induced by Klein, carry the same consequences as the mythical time in which the subject, in the Other where “it” (*ça*) speaks of him, recognizes himself under an  $S_1$ , an insignia, a letter, and as such the repository of the function of the symptom which is then, as nomination of the Symbolic, a Name-of-the-Father in its place as fourth?

In the register of oedipal symbolization as supplementation, let us note here that, in the case of Dick, this supplementation pertains to the contingent—for him, it ceases not writing itself—and, by enabling access to the Other, it includes an effect of emptying-out, of separation from *jouissance*. In this respect, the paternal metaphor singularly resembles the delusional metaphor. This is what J.-A. Miller reminded us in 1979 at the *Journées on psychoses*.<sup>10</sup>

To conclude this attempt at presenting some clinical articulations on the basis of topology, and especially on the basis of the Borromean knot, I will make three remarks.

- Borromean topology—in which one can situate around the object *a* the places of mythical sexual *jouissance*, which is forbidden as such to the speaking being, of phallic *jouissance*, and of “enjoyed-sense” (*sens-joui*)—accounts for the very structure of the analytic experience as a process of emptying-out of *jouissance* and of localization of its remainder insofar as what takes place there is the condensation, the close circumscription of the object *a* as non-analyzable remainder, as left-over of *jouissance*, as letter, its isolation as the very cause of the subject.
- These examples have allowed us to perceive the extent to which Lacan’s advance, which takes its bearings on  $\emptyset$  and relies on the topology of the knots, brings neurosis and psychosis closer to each other—at least with respect to the function of supplementation as correlative to the generalization of foreclosure as structural—while maintaining the radicality

of what separates them. It thus announces an entirely new differential clinic, and one which remains to be constructed: a clinic of supplementation indexed on the Borromean knot.

- Finally, and to finish, let us recall the terms in which Lacan formulates the fundamentally topological character of the analytic experience in *L'étourdit*: “A topology is necessitated because the real only returns to it from the discourse of analysis, which confirms this discourse, and because it is from the gap that this discourse opens by virtue of its closing upon itself beyond other discourses, that the real derives its ex-sistence.”

## ENDNOTES

1. Jacques Lacan, “*La question préliminaire à tout traitement possible de la psychose*,” *Ecrits*, Paris: Seuil, 1966, p. 582; “On a Question Preliminary to Any Possible Treatment of Psychosis” (1957–1958), *Ecrits: A Selection*, trans. by Alan Sheridan, New York: W. W. Norton, 1977.

2. Jacques-Alain Miller, *Cours 1985–1986, Extimité*, unpublished.

3. Jacques Lacan, *Séminaire XXII, 1974–1975, R. S. I.*, unpublished.

4. Jacques Lacan, “*Conférences et entretiens dans des universités Nord-Américaines*,” *Scilicet*, no. 6/7, Paris: Seuil, 1976, pp. 40–58.

5. Jacques Lacan, *Séminaire XXIII, 1975–1976, Le Sinthome* (May 11, 1986), unpublished.

6. Jacques Lacan, “*Joyce le symptôme I*” (June 16, 1975), *Joyce avec Lacan*, ed. by Jacques Aubert, Paris: Navarin, 1987.

7. Melanie Klein, “*L’importance de la formation du symbolique dans le développement du moi*” (1930), *Essais de Psychanalyse*, Paris: Payot, 1968; *Love, Guilt and Reparation 1921–45*, vol. I, intro. by R. E. Money-Kyrle, London: The Hogarth Press and The Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1975.

8. Jacques Lacan, “*Position de l’inconscient*,” *Ecrits*, Paris: Seuil, 1966, p. 841; “Position of the Unconscious” (1964), trans by Bruce Fink, *Reading Seminar XI: Lacan’s Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, ed. by R. Feldstein, B. Fink, and M. Jaanus, Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1995, pp. 259–282.

9. Jacques Lacan, *Séminaire X, 1962–1963, L’Angoisse* (July 3, 1963), unpublished.

10. Jacques-Alain Miller, “*Supplément topologique à la ‘Question préliminaire*,” *Lettres de l’Ecole*, no. 27, 1979.