

Knot and Name-of-the-Father

Pierre Skriabine

21 CONSIDERATIONS ON THE STRUCTURE

1. Human experience is structured according to three categories – that of the analytic experience, extracted by Jacques Lacan under the names of the Real, the Symbolic and the Imaginary.

2. These three registers are fundamentally heterogeneous.

3. In order to hold himself in “human reality” – that of discourses, to make this reality consist in its three dimensions, to create and maintain a social bond with his congeners, the subject needs to hold these three registers together; he must find some common denominator between them.

4. In order to make consist a “reality” which has no intrinsic existence – because it is only a veil woven with the imaginary and the symbolic used to cover the real, is nevertheless necessary for the speaking being, the subject, to protect himself from this real that escapes the signifier and the image and that is unbearable as such.

5. This protection that allows the possibility for a discourse to develop and make a bond, implies a counterpart: the limitation of enjoyment (limitless otherwise) of the primordial Thing i.e. the mother. This limitation comes from the father function becoming operative: interposition, interdiction of incest, symbolic law being put in place are due to this function.

6. The role of the paternal metaphor – substitution of the Name-of-the-Father for the Desire of the Mother, is thus to allow an access to the discourses in exchange of a loss of enjoyment. This, in Lacanian terms, is nothing else than the operation of castration, in Freudian terms.

7. In this way the Name-of-the-Father – as *Bejahung* (saying/telling yes) of the reality of castration, realises the access of the speaking being to the universe of discourses and to the protection against the real, which allows the installation of the social bond.

8. In other terms, the function of the Name-of-the-Father is to hold together Real, Symbolic and Imaginary – for every subject, one by one; to make a reality without existence consist where the social bond can nevertheless develop itself in the field of discourses.

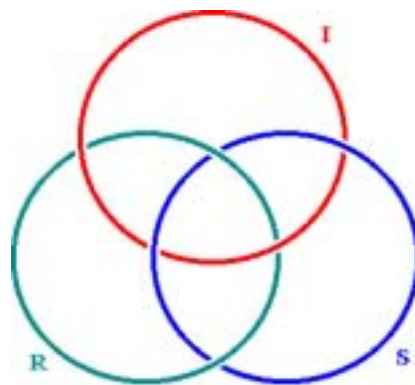
9. The Other is failing as the subject is. There is no Other that is both complete and consistent. This is because of the very structure of the signifier which is differential and thereby excludes any absolute reference.

10. As the Other does not exist there is no ultimate guarantee: the signifier that would guarantee the Other lacks. God could not guarantee the Father. There is no Name-of-the-Father unless every subject invents and puts in place something that will take that place for him. In other words, there is no other choice than to do without (the Name-of-the-Father as guarantee that does not exist) on condition of using it (i.e. to put its function in place).

11. First conclusion: structurally, there is foreclosure of the Name-of-the-Father considered as “innate” common denominator, mythical “normality” which would hold together Real, Symbolic and Imaginary thanks to a successful Borromean knotting with three. Nothing links them a priori. Generalised foreclosure: “all debilitated ones”, Lacan said – going thereby beyond the reassuring reference to the Freudian myth of the father that was invented to palliate the fundamental dissociation of the three registers R, S and I for every subject.

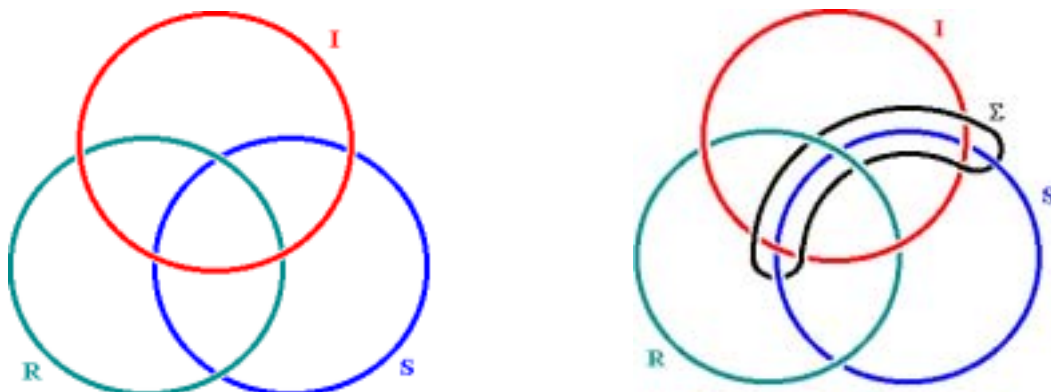
12. Second conclusion: the structure of human experience – not only the analytic one, is to be thought outside of a reference to the Other. It has to be thought in reference to the three categories of experience only: Real, Symbolic and Imaginary. Pressing on, Lacan showed that this structure founded on a lack, on an original defect, is topological: it is the very structure of knots. Beyond metaphor, the real of this structure is the topological real of the knots.

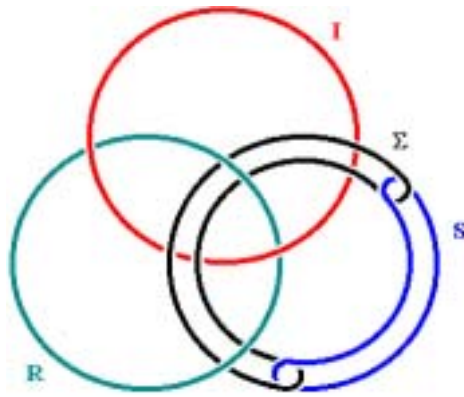
13. The Borromean knot with three is the figure of the lack, of what there is not: it would be the Name-of-the-Father if it existed. The Borromean knot with three – perfect solution, is always a failure. There is foreclosure of the Borromean knot as Name-of-the-Father. This is why we are interested in it. In order to make the Bo knot three elements are needed: R, S and I, disjoint two by two and topologically equivalent. Yet there are four; there is the Bo knot itself. Each of the three- R, S and I, knots the other two and makes the knot consist: each as implicit fourth bears the efficiency of the Borromean knotting. The breaking of any one of them unknots the whole.



14. There are many ways to fail the knotting and many ways to supplement this failure to make R, S and I holding together nevertheless. There are therefore many names-of-the-Father. With topology Lacan demonstrates the necessary pluralisation of the name-of-the-Father: if the Name-of-the-Father always fails, many are the names-of-the-Father to supplement it.

15. A fourth element is therefore needed to supplement the original foreclosure. In his *RSI* Seminar Lacan deploys the supplementations, the names-of-the-Father which reconstitute a Borromean knotting with four: three different types of supplementation. The symptom (S) to start with.





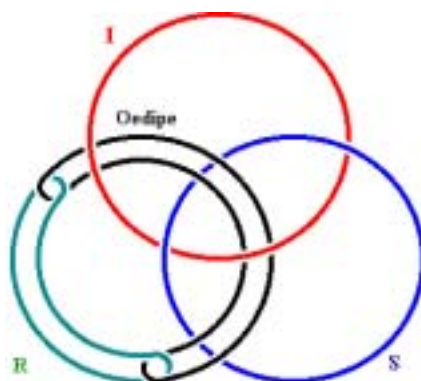
The last one above is a new figuration which shows in which way the fourth element – here associated with the symbolic, translates a renewal of the symbolic itself: compared to the Bo-knot with three the symbolic is here replaced by a binary, divided into (symbolic + symptom). Lacan will designate this binary as (unconscious + sinthom). This binary is Borromeanly knotted to R and to I.

16. The symptom and, more radically, the sinthom are names-of-the-Father.

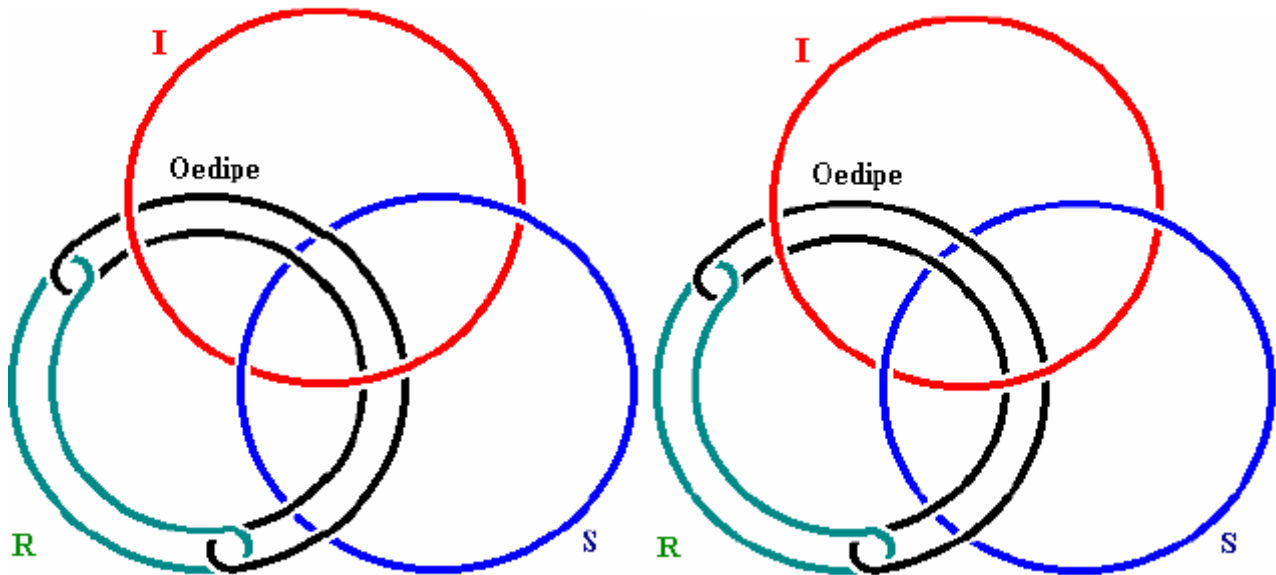
17. In this figuration we find, coupled, the signifying chain (interpretable unconscious) and the sinthom (unanalysable unconscious, opaque enjoyment).

18. The name-of-the-Father reducible to the unanalysable sinthom, pure name, is the locus where the enjoyment that escapes the defile of signifiers, takes refuge. It has exactly the same function than the delusional metaphor in psychosis - attempt at curing said Freud, because it condenses the enjoyment that the symbolic does not bar any more. Contingent indeed, the delusional metaphor is a name-of-the-Father as Jacques-Alain Miller had already underlined it in 1979. The paternal metaphor is only a delusional metaphor amongst others but it is socially shared.

19. The fourth element here is nothing else but that which supplements the symbolic in its primary function i.e. nomination (which names the unspeakable real, supplementing thereby the failure of the Other). In addition to the nomination of the symbolic as symptom are added the nomination of the imaginary as inhibition and the nomination of the real as anguish. There we have three primary names-of-the-Father that Lacan delivered at the end of *RSI*. And the first figuration of the knot with four that Lacan gave in his lesson of the 14th January 1975 in *RSI* was precisely that where the real is supplemented by its nomination: the Oedipus.



20. A mode of repair totally different is deployed by Lacan in his seminar *The sinthom* : that of Joyce.



The ego, writing, the works of Joyce, is the name-of-the-Father with which Joyce supports himself in order to exist and make a name for himself. A hand-crafted mending which leaves Real and Symbolic intertwined; the epiphanies are the trace of this remainder of the mending.

21. Ready made supplementation as the Oedipus or hand-made and made-to-measure DIY in Joyce, the name-of-the-Father reconsidered in this way by Lacan at the end of his teaching and articulated within the topology of knots, opens a reformulation of our differential clinic. A task that is now ours, work in progress...