

## THINKING ABOUT LACAN'S *JOUISSANCE*

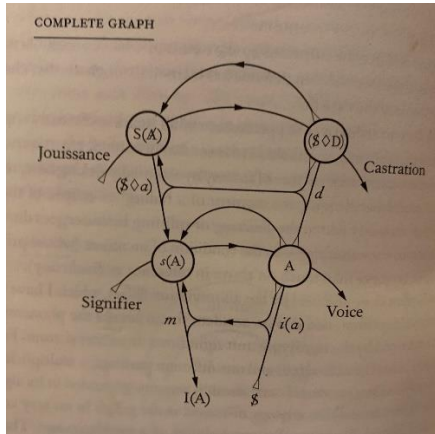
Ellie Ragland

If one starts by saying 'in the beginning there was *jouissance*', instead of 'in the beginning there was the word', one will make a small step forward in understanding Lacan. One could also combine language and *jouissance* and say that in the beginning there is *lalangue* which is made up of the earliest maternal murmurings and the sounds of phonemes. Lacan based the term *lalangue* on his earlier use of the word *lallation* to describe baby sounds that precede any formal structuring of language. *Lalangue* also responds to the impact of the partial drives on the body: oral, anal, invocatory and scopic (Lacan 1975). But *jouissance* is only known insofar as it intersects with language and the body. Although the word *jouissance* is generally taken to mean pleasure, even sexual pleasure - orgasm in French - one must grasp the extent to which Lacan modified and developed it to mean both agony and ecstasy, suffering and joy. Although Lacan recast the meaning of the word, he keeps the sense of sexuality in a broad purview: That is, sexual orgasm means both intense pleasure and the end of that pleasure in what has been termed a 'little death' so, a falling away. Even though some English writers and translators have used the word enjoyment to render *jouissance* in English, such a translation skews the concept, leaving out the necessary linking of *jouissance* as pleasure to its companion, suffering. I shall keep *jouissance* in French because I do not believe we have found an adequate English translation.

Lacan rendered Freud's idea of the libido as different kinds of *jouissance*, first Imaginary, then Symbolic, and finally Real. We shall discuss this development when we address Jacques-Alain Miller's analysis of the evolution of the meaning of *jouissance* in Lacan. Freud did at one point, however, use the word libido to refer to extreme pleasure and pain, especially when he talked about the rat torture fantasy of a patient: He did not use it, however, as a reference to the sexual non-rapport between man and woman. The Rat Man, Ernst Lanzer, came to Freud in 1907 after Freud had already published some of his thoughts on obsessional neurosis in 1896. When he published his analysis of Ernst's case in 1909, he based his interpretation on his earlier thoughts. Ernst was tortured by what Freud called obsessional fantasies. He thought the people he loved were being attacked by rats. He fantasized that rats were gnawing at his father's anus and at that of a woman to whom he was attracted. He also complained of obsessive impulses to cut his own throat. He was suffering so deeply that he had become unable to work or function effectively. In treating him, Freud concluded that his fantasies were connected to guilt over sex and repressed sexual urges. After treatment, Freud claimed that Ernst had been cured by psychoanalysis.

Lacan discussed the Rat Man case in terms of oppositions between father - rich, wife - poor. I shall not take up his development of the case in this paper, however. Rather, I shall focus on the importance of obsessional neurosis for Lacan in developing his concept of structure by which he first meant the affective relations among family members. Later, he developed the idea to mean the processes that rule our lives and desires. These structures - mirror stage, sexual differentiation (castration), and so on - operate differently for each person and determine whether that person will be structured as neurotic, perverse, psychotic, or 'normal.' By working with the

idea that the obsessional, like the Rat Man, insists absolutely that his demands be met, Lacan constructed the Graph of Desire to show the contradictory relationship between demand and desire.



He first delivered his thoughts on the graph at a conference on ‘*La Dialectique*’ held in 1960 at Royaumont. On the first vector of the graph, the subject ( $\Xi$ ) addresses his unconscious ideal ego ( $I[A]$ ) in reference to his conscious ego ideal ( $i[a]$ ). Together, these constitute a subject’s ego (*moi*). The ego ideal belongs to the Imaginary sphere of body image and identification with the *semblable* (the other). At the first level, the graph of desire takes up the Imaginary ego’s efforts to attain satisfaction by appealing to the Symbolic Other of discourse. At this moment, a subject implicitly asks the Other, ‘Who am I to you?’ This demand is a question which is shown on the second vector of the graph. The graph’s third vector shows the subject after his appeal has been made. His desires are met with the impossibilities introduced by the Real of castration which blocks his access to *jouissance* as a fulfilment. The completed graph presents the subject himself as being a signifying chain - a combination of conscious and unconscious language and ego - traversed by desire. By representing different stages undergone in a subject’s efforts to fulfil his desire on the graph, Lacan unveils the vacillations implicit in any dialectic, based as it is on want/lack. He argues that desire is not satisfied by depicting the contradictory logic encountered by anyone seeking *jouissance*. The contradictions in play typify the logic of blockage and discontinuity that his entire teaching takes up.

Even before he starts his quest, the content of the subject’s desire has been formed by the Symbolic Other’s words and by Imaginary body images and identifications. So, his own desire has already been structured as a portion of what is left over from his needs subtracted from his demands: Lacan symbolizes the left-over part in desire as the *objet a*. This object is constructed from the start of life as a cause: the desire to fill one’s lack-in-being with objects (people and things). The desired object, paradoxically, becomes the supplement, the cork, the excess that will fill the lack-in-being. The subject’s lack was created from the beginning of life by the signifier which represents both a meaning and an absence insofar as its structure is differential (referential) and fleetingly temporal. For Lacan, significations are made of signifiers referring to other signifiers - to create a subject - as fading pieces of meaning that are not absolute because they derive from the fact that the signifier cannot signify itself. Signification is created by the

outside world of words and sounds that refer one to the other. By using mathematical topology, as Lacan did in the last part of his teaching in the 1970s, we can characterize the signifier which alludes, not only to itself, but also to the object one desires as functioning paradoxically. Not only do signifiers fade, objects are primordially lost: The breast is withdrawn; the gaze goes elsewhere; the voice turns to another; toilet functions are temporal. In topology, the experience of one thing turning into another - presence/absence - can be represented as having the shape of the Möbius strip (figure 8) wherein inside and outside are contiguous, not oppositional. The infant gains access to both the signifier and the object *a* from the outside world which becomes the inside for him. For outside and inside to cohere in a compatible linkage, rather than in opposition, a twist must be made as it is in the construction of the two-part figure 8. The Real of topology for Lacan is the relation of the hole to the edge. The Möbius has only one edge and one surface around which movement is continual. In thinking of outside and inside as continuous processes, Lacan argued that external language and identifications create a seemingly internal knowledge. They emanate into consciousness from the outside sphere that structures the pseudo inside unconscious as the seat of perception and language memory.

Lacan used topology - rubber geometry - to describe the concrete structure of mind and body. As early as 1972, he called his topological thinking a science of the Real (Lacan 2016). The final message of the graph of desire is written in Lacan's pseudo-mathematical form - the graph being his earliest incursion into topology - is that the Real of the Other's desire dominates a subject's relation to his *jouissance* by means of his castration. On the second ascending vector of the graph, Lacan depicts the Symbolic retroaction of Other (A) discourse that has already created the signifying subject—s(A). At this second moment in his effort to state his desire and satisfy his demands, the subject ( $\exists$ ) asks, not 'Who am I to you?' but *Che vuoi?* / 'What do you want from me?' The change in the question asked of the Other introduces a further element of the Real into discourse: To ask the Other what he wants from you opens the door to a consideration of the object *a*, to a question about the cause of desire.

A question is often a sign of the unconscious showing up in conscious speech. Starting in Seminar V, Lacan constructed the idea that desire is a formation of the unconscious. In the completed form of his graph of desire Lacan writes the subject's quest for *jouissance* as  $\exists$  (:)  
above the formula for fantasy ( $\exists \langle a \rangle$ ). Individuals fantasize receiving pleasure and fulfilment – satisfaction - from the Other who is asked to offer positive *jouissance*. Yet, in his final construction of the graph, Lacan aims the quest for *jouissance* at castration which has already caused the subject to be less than complete: constructed around lack (the signifier) and loss (the object *a*) from the start of life, the subject only becomes able to function well enough in life by having accepted castration processes. Jacques-Alain Miller has said that the bottom part of the graph concerns making meaning in language and the top part, *jouissance*. The encounter with lack starts in the mirror stage, one of Lacan's most original contributions to the world of thought. Between sixteen and eighteen months of age, the infant recognizes her body image in the mirror and laughs with joy. She takes the image to be a totality by identifying with herself as a physical organism. This fantasy is at odds with the reality of her experiencing her body in bits and pieces, in organs and parts. The early child fantasy of being One with its own body, a unity, is repeated in her belief that she and the primordial mother are One. Lacan maintains that the first castration occurs as in the infant's recognition of differences. The second castration he theorizes is the break/cut from believing that she and the mother are One. This

happens when the child recognizes a third term - the Father's Name signifier. This signifier, which the late Lacan said the Other does not give, works, nonetheless, as a function. The child's acceptance of a third term between herself and her mother consolidates the first castration that first occurred in her assimilation of difference as sexual difference. Lacan pictures this human drama on the graph with a set of symbols that represent the subject's pursuit of *jouissance* via the drives:  $\exists(:) \dashrightarrow (\exists \langle \rangle D)$ .

The arrows Lacan draws portray demand - the ask - as the drive ( $\exists \langle \rangle D$ ) that first brings castration to bear on the subject in terms of loss. The baby, motivated by the oral drive, aims for its mother's breast. But the mother's milk is not forthcoming. The baby howls, barely able to wait for the substitute bottle. Later, the graph locates frustration above desire (*d*) in the subject's quest. Furthermore, Lacan says that the demands made in a subject's efforts to quench her desire are demands for love. The castration ( $\exists \langle \rangle D / [-\square]$ ) encountered above desire on the graph portrays the force and intentionality of the drive which emanates from demand. In constituting her dialectic of desire seeking *jouissance*, the child's initial encounter in her quest occurs as a confrontation with her castration. The outside world poses an enigma by asking the child to recognize the difference between the sexes in reference to an Imaginary representation of organ difference: the Real penis is an Imaginary phallus ( $\square$ ). To register the fact of this difference between herself and her brother, she must accept that something lacks: when one thing is different from the other, a literal gap is created in perception. So, lack and loss intervene early in infant consciousness. At around the same time the infant is registering the reality of sexual difference, she is also encouraged to end her illusion that she and her mother are One. Two - mirror-stage mother and infant - do not make a dyadic unity of One.

Lacan says that insofar as the Symbolic concept of difference is first introduced to an infant as sexual difference, that means that the first recognition of it underlies all subsequent quests which are based on a differential dialectics; that is, a child interprets the Imaginary phallus ( $+\square$ ) in reference to his or her lack of it ( $-\square$ ). My three-year old niece observed her mother changing her baby brother's diaper. She looked at his penis and said to me: 'I had one of those too when I was a baby, but it fell off': an interpretation of difference. The image of the organ difference separates the boy from the girl:  $B \langle \rangle G$ . Miller has written about the sovereign role of the image in structuring mentality (Miller 2018). Analysts, Robert and Rosine Lefort (1994), placed the infant's recognition of the phallic difference much earlier than did Lacan or object relations theorists. One can suggest that even in the pre-mirror phase before six months, the child has started to register difference. The Leforts took infant perplexity over which spoons, tools and dolls to choose as evidence of the child's having already acknowledged the distinction of one thing from another. In their view, these early recognitions show the child questioning the Other. As the infant gradually comes to recognize a difference among persons, the father, or his substitute, is experienced, not only as separate from the child/mother relation, but also as intervening in it. Accounting for the father requires the child to make an identificatory change away from the mother, but also heralds her understanding that some figure outside the dyad is introducing Symbolic language into her world. Through realizing that she differs from her mother, the child enters the world of naming and nomination that structures the mind through various linguistic operations. It is greatly important for subject evolution that the Symbolic sphere cover over the Real of pre-mirror maternal murmurings and codlings the infant has relied

upon. The third term effect re-organizes her world by teaching her the names and words for things and people.

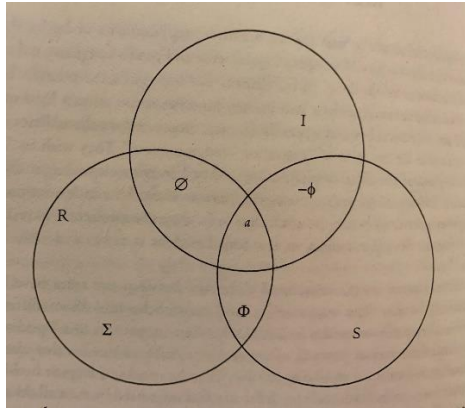
To understand Lacan's overall logic regarding the nature of a third term, one must note that the father signifier is not reducible to a person or a name but operates as a *function* wherein a certain input creates a specific output. A *function* is a logical, mathematical operation, an act of construction, not an intimate Imaginary affair. The consequence for the infant's perception is the breaking up of her illusion of living in a maternal paradise of Oneness. Given this way of looking at the third term, the Father's Name is no longer equated with the Imaginary figure of the biological father. The Symbolic order function of introducing difference can be accomplished by any person important to the mother, such as an uncle, a close family friend, a priest, a lawyer, and so on. At the level where an effect is created by a cause, the infant enters the Symbolic sphere by hearing, then using language as an agent moved by structure. The reality of learning a language does not go smoothly, however. Words bring discontinuity by creating gaps and holes in perception. They shatter Imaginary consistencies. Jacques-Alain Miller says of the holes encountered in psychoanalytic treatment that 'Structure is full of holes and in these holes, there is room for invention, for novelty, for connections that have not always been there' (Miller 1985-86). Thus, since words intrude into Imaginary consistency, the Symbolic is not a comfort zone, but an agent of disruption. It introduces the logic of space - dimensions of distance (height, width, depth related to each other in mathematical procedures) - which the field of mathematical topology, based on physics, has constructed as relations beyond geometry. It also presents the dual dimensions of time: synchronic layers of meaning hidden in the diachronic buildup of lifetime experiences one has had in the Real, Symbolic and Imaginary. Lacan writes the infant's passage into thirdness as the signified (♥) equaling  $-1/s=!$  (Lacan 2006). The young child must subtract the mother signified to add the father signifier. That does not mean that she will lose the maternal attachment, but that she has substituted something else for the primary bond. She has made metaphor - substitution - reign over the rhetorical device of metonymy - contiguity. Lacan evokes metaphor and metonymy as the operative mechanisms that structure the unconscious like a language. So, the subject's quest for *jouissance* can be represented by the logic of metaphor and metonymy - substituting the father signifier (metaphor) for the mother signified (metonymy). In primary *jouissance*, a baby aims to fulfil basic needs of being - food, sleep, safety. Miller says that in later life, we seek to repeat experiences of primary *jouissance* by trying to have the other/Other meet our needs and demands. A subject's quest centres on the first objects that cause his desire - the breast, faeces, gaze, voice, phoneme, urinary flow, Imaginary phallus, nothing. These objects, carried by the drives that energize them, are all body organs, or derive from organs, except for the nothing which can be converted to an organ in the sense that the body is an organ - a nothing/a piece of waste. The phoneme is not an organ but is produced by the vocal organs. In Lacan's meeting with Noam Chomsky, Chomsky told him that language is derived from a biological gene. Lacan replied that language is an organ and so is the body: 'We believe we think with our brain, but I think with my feet' (Lacan 1976; 2016; 2022). Secondary *jouissance* concerns the search for satisfaction via language, phallic meaning and, thereby, differs from the first efforts to attain *jouissance* via objects.

The top vector of the graph depicts the subject's desire for *jouissance* as oscillating between the fantasy that lies under it and the drive (demand) that opens onto castration/dissatisfaction. When desire has not encountered the boundary of castration, the structure of psychosis has been

created: the psychic Oneness between the infant and her primordial mother has not been cut. Let us consider the word 'cut' which Lacan reframed as a concept that, according to Miller, gave a new theory of cause and referent (Miller 1985-86). By adding Lacan's logical modalities - the necessary, the possible, the contingent and the impossible - to the concept of the cut (castration) one sees that his modalities explain how sexuation is constructed in structures that determine one's fate as a subject: 'normal' neurotic, perverse or psychotic (Lacan 1998; Ragland 2004; Miller 2018). One identifies with the masculine all, or the feminine not all: individual choice, not biology, determines these identifications. The structure of mind that ensues from these identifications is in a general sense contingent - what stops writing itself - given that psychosis is one possible outcome of the structuring of mind/body. Miller teaches that there is no necessary 'normal' (Lacan 2006: 123). At one point Lacan says there is one necessity, that of the symptom which does not stop writing itself. In his final teaching Lacan addresses the matter of how the symptom/ *sinthome* knots together - or does not in psychosis - the three registers, Real, Symbolic, Imaginary. The *sinthome* is a knot described by Jean-Paul Gilson as one way of thinking about the resolution of the Oedipal complex, the turn towards the opposite sex parent. In talking about James Joyce's psychotic structure, Lacan departs from considering the negative features of psychosis and focuses on the creative potential of the *sinthome*. All of Joyce's writing, not just *Finnegan's Wake*, uses language in a unique fashion (Lacan 2016; Ragland 1991a).

In speaking of Lacan's logical modalities, Miller stresses the importance of the Real in Lacan's development of them. While Lacan sees the symptom as the fixed way one enjoys her unconscious, he says the *sinthome* is that in the symptom which is resistant to the unconscious: not only does the *sinthome* not represent the subject, but it also does not lend itself to any meaning effect that would yield a revelation. The *sinthome* comes from the Real, even from the *jouissance* surrounding the Father's Name (Lacan 2016). On the graph of desire, both *jouissance* and castration are redolent of the Real that carries the *sinthome* which manifests itself in the question, 'What do you want from me?'. The answer given to the subject who wants something from the Other is that the Other wants his obedience and sacrifice - signs of castration. The divided subject's desire for *jouissance* - unpromised, Lacan says - aims at trying to fill its lack with spurious objects of the drive.

Meanwhile, the physical drive, which was first constituted in the verbal demand for love - 'Give me food' (oral drive), 'Give me money' (anal drive), 'Did you see/hear me?' (scopic and invocatory drives) - returns the message of 'You are castrated' to the subject. The subject's drive falls short of providing satisfaction because it always encounters, not only the incompleteness of the Other i.e. its lack (: ) but also the inadequacy of the supplemental object *a* which is only a stand-in for the non-specular objects that are lost prior to alterity and, therefore, cannot offer an ongoing satisfaction. The Real carries the inexpressible remainder of reality, the object *a*, on the basis on which desire seeks the *jouissance* that Lacan places in the Real as the impossible. The impossible, he says, is that which does not stop not writing itself in the unconscious. Structurally, he adds, the Real is *lalangue* which is made up of the topological ring of the Borromean knot in which the Imaginary, Symbolic and Real circle around the object *a* at their centre. In the overlap of each two registers, he places the three *jouissances*: the phallic *jouissance* of language (□) between the Imaginary and Symbolic; the castrated *jouissance* of meaning (-□) between the Imaginary and Symbolic; the Other as lacking (: ) between the Imaginary and Real.



The matheme  $\text{--:--}$  means that there is no all-encompassing, objective Symbolic. The outside Other constructs a subject from birth on by the language that creates his *langue* as subjective and controlled by the external world. The three spheres – RSI - are held together by the fourth register - the knot - which denotes the particularity of each person's sinthome ( $\square$ ): it shows itself as the Father's Name joining the registers together. The *jouissances* between the orders -  $\square$ ,  $-\square$ ,  $:-$  - show that a subject's search for satisfaction is impeded by the intervention of some cut of the Real: language as lacking completeness ( $\square$ ); identification as based on laws of compromise ( $-\square$ ); demand/ drive as impeded by the Other's castration ( $:$ ). When the late Lacan concludes that the register of the Real in the Borromean knot is the realm of the sinthome, he repeats his earlier lessons explaining that the human quest for *jouissance* has failed because of the vacuousness of the signifier and the primal loss of the desired object. Thus, the signifying chain in his desire graph is traversed by the lack caused by the castration introduced by the signifier's double face: it, paradoxically, re-presents the subject and at the same time fades away from its task of representing him because it cannot represent itself - only something else. And objects are lost almost as soon as they are encountered. Miller has called the divided subject ( $\exists$ ) a response of the Real and has shown that structure itself was finally in the Real for Lacan; in one sense, structure gives rise to agency. Miller concludes that *jouissance* is the mark par excellence of the presence of the Real.

The joining together of pleasure and pain as the sign of the Rat Man's *jouissance* - gnawing rats torturing the anus of others - would explain why Lacan chose this case as a basis for developing his idea that structure is organized around *jouissance*. Each structure is made up of the Imaginary, Symbolic, Real and the Sinthome, registers which are put into motion by the subject's demand which drives his desire for *jouissance*. In *L'étourdit*, Lacan points out that 'language is not structure, [but] the surface from which structure clothes itself' (Lacan 2016: 484). The psychoanalytic linking of pleasure to pain could also describe Freud's eighteen-month-old nephew who cried when his mother left the room, but suddenly became happy once he started rolling a bobbin reel back and forth, saying 'Fort! Da!' (Here! There!). The incident demonstrates Freud's defence mechanism of sublimation: by substituting a game for the psychic pleasure of believing he is in a state of symbiotic Oneness with his mother, the little boy becomes socially elevated. By turning to the object of a game, he changes from a crying baby into a contented child - playing. Daniel Paul Schreber seems to have felt the same mixture of pleasure and pain in thinking that his body has been transformed into that of a woman.

Schreber's case, however, would not fit the description of a sublimation which is a positive defense mechanism, for he is socially denigrated, not raised up.

In 1949 when Lacan spoke of an infant's jubilation at the period of between six and eighteen months of age when she first recognizes her body image in the mirror as if it were whole and unified, he also develops the contention that that joy is at odds with the actual life experience of the infant's feeling its body in fragments and pieces (Miller 1983-84a). Lacan developed his teaching by continually giving examples of a paradoxical logic at the base of human actions. He started this trajectory with his account of the pre-maturation of a human at birth compared to other animals. Total helplessness ensues and, thus, commands the infant's dependence on the other/Other, making the Other all-powerful. One can only stress the originality of Lacan, following Henri Wallon who described the importance of the social in forming child psychology, who claimed that the infant's mirror-stage illusion of being a whole body is false. The *I* function is based not only on his Imaginary assumption of a totalized body image, but also on a false identification of being One with the mother. Her belief that her body is unified as is its mirror image merely confirms her sense that there is a basic wholeness to her life (Ragland-Sullivan 1986). By going on to follow Lacan's development of the graph of desire from 1960, we find that he began to speak of *jouissance* as related to unconscious desire starting in the 1957-58 Seminar (Lacan 2017). He constructed paradoxical functions on the graph such as the subject's asking the Other for something it will not grant and, finally, confronting the reality that his desire is blocked by his castration. Following Seminar V, he concludes in Seminar VI that man is not implicated in desire as a first cause, but in *jouissance*. (Lacan 2017; 2019).

At this point we might ask an obvious question: 'From what source did Lacan get the word *jouissance*?' The meanings he gives the word are clearly not taken only from the sexual connotation. Nestor Braunstein points to Hegel's use of the word *Genuss* as a possible source for Lacan's choice: the meaning of the German word is enjoyment, pleasure, and consumption, like the English word for *jouissance*. Braunstein's point, however, is that Hegel did not use *Genuss* to mean enjoyment, but to indicate something particular and subjective, impossible to share, and which is subject to legislation (Braunstein 1992: 13). His ideas point in the direction Lacan took when he defined *jouissance* in *Seminar XX* by translating it from the Latin *usufructus* which means 'the right of enjoyment and use of the property of another...*usufruct* means that you can enjoy your means but must not waste them' (Lacan 1998: 2-3). Soon after this, Lacan states that *jouissance* brings with it a superego function: *Jouis*: 'This is clearly the essence of law - to divide up, distribute, or reattribute everything that counts as *jouissance*' (Lacan 1977: 3). Moreover, 'the superego...is a correlate of castration' (Lacan 1977: 7). His point is that one can combat the effects of castration by using *jouissance* for sharing, not consumption. And, indeed, law does impose restrictions on various *jouissances* of the body - assault, rape, corporal violence, theft.

But Lacan was not traditionally Hegelian in his use of *jouissance*; his casting of it as pleasure/displeasure does not end up in a synthesis of opposites. Rather, they are necessary to each other in providing *jouissance*, demonstrating, rather, Hegel's ongoing synthesis of seeming opposites. Braunstein makes the error of not seeing that for Lacan the seeming symmetrical interchanges of transference all exemplify the antithetical meaning that defines *jouissance*: there is no you and me; no pleasure without pain; no object *a* that satisfies desire. The Rat Man's pleasure in pain



demonstrates the functional disharmony at the base of his dialectical quest. The same is true of the master/ slave interaction that Braunstein cites as an example of dialectical reciprocity. The master/slave relationship exists in a dissymmetry, an unbalance, where the master overtly rules the game, while the slave makes his power felt covertly, if at all.

To demonstrate the disharmony at play in the basic structures, Lacan underscores the paradoxical logic of alienation wherein the subject is created by some other/Other's Imaginary identifications and Symbolic signifiers. Their images and words invade the infant from birth on, creating its mind and body by and as an Other whose desire tells the infant who he is and what he wants. Although alienation is basically Symbolic and separation Real, they interact to interconnect a subject's mind and body (Lacan 1977; Ragland-Sullivan 1986). In his late teaching Lacan strove to demonstrate via topology that a procedure that is both contradictory and oppositional on the surface can at the same time be combined in a spatial, non-linear, logic of relationships of seemingly oppositional properties (Nasio 2004). In the process of separation, the Real of the drives cuts into the signifiers given by alienation, thereby creating gaps and holes in language and perception. Lacan argued that the geometric concept of the cut could be actualized to explain how the mathematical cut into an infinite straight line can reshape its points to make and remake psychic knots. At the simplest level, the words of one person cut into those of another, and vice versa. Indeed, interruption is intrinsic to speech. In reframing the concept of the cut as a *matheme*, Lacan went so far as to make it the hallmark of the psychoanalytic session. It is important to know that Lacan had invented the short analytic session as a way of allowing the analyst to use the Real to intervene into a patient's speech, either by interrupting insignificance, or by marking the patient's having made a profound statement. One must note that his short session is not a way for the analyst to dominate, or to make more money - as some have thought - but a way to underscore what he hears in the effects of the patient's speech that show the presence of an unconscious knowledge speaking, but unheard. Cutting into the patient's speech - severing - is the analyst's way of guiding her associative chain of signifiers. At the end of his teaching, Lacan says that the cut is the foundation of psychoanalytic interpretation. In Seminar X he calls it 'objectality'.

Early on Lacan called the interplay between speech and writing a play of letters (Lacan 2017). He was not only working with metaphor and metonymy here but was also playing on the link between language and the body which he symbolized by juxtaposing the words *l'être* (being) and *lettre* (letter). Letters demonstrate the effects of the Real that show up as the affects that Lacan called language itself as *a*-ffected. Miller calls the appearance of the Real in the body a Lacanian biology which is a 'recapture of the symptomatology from the body events' (Miller 2001: 6). The analytic cut sometimes makes its presence felt as a question about the meaning of a patient's language or about the *jouissance* of her body. The Lacanian Real first penetrates the infant's body through the impact of a non-specular Ur-lining whose objects are real organs and their effects that interlink Imaginary and Symbolic experiences. As listed above, these non-specular, pre-mirror stage objects are the oral, anal, scopic, invocatory, phonemic, Imaginary phallus, urinary flow, and the nothing. But the young child cannot envision these objects --:/J(a)-- in any direct way that would link their impact to their source (Ragland 2015). Lacan later reduces the objects of the Ur-lining to the four partial drives that unveil the fragmentary effects of bodily organs on the human psyche. They make their presence felt by causing a sense of an overall incompleteness in body and thought, a sense of the partial that catalyses the subject's search for

completion. Miller has developed the interconnection of language to being, the *parlêtre*, to the speaking body (Miller 2016). Based on his expansion of Lacan's ever evolving thought, Miller would say that Braunstein is wrong to anticipate any harmonious dialectic out of the interchange between desire and *jouissance*, or between the master and slave (Braunstein 1992: 7-51). The master and slave, like man and woman, desire and *jouissance*, are unequal, asymmetrical.

Further on, we shall examine Miller's 'Paradigms of *Jouissance*' in detail to show how he analyses the problematic Lacan addressed in trying to understand the dialectical interplay of desire and *jouissance*. Early on, Lacan spoke of *jouissance* as an ego phenomenon, the Imaginary equivalent of narcissistic affect (Lacan 2020). However, he gradually came to see narcissism, not as the pathology Otto Kernberg and Heinz Kohut have made of it, but as the fundamental base of human being/identity (Ragland-Sullivan 1986). Narcissism links the Imaginary ego ideal to the Real ideal ego, serving as a bridge between the conscious and unconscious parts of the divided ego. This disjunction is one more instance of Lacan's challenging theories of a unified, harmonious being. The ego is split, like the speaking 'I' divided by the signifier. By accepting the necessity of narcissism as the base of human self-regulation, Lacan described it as 'the irreducible and atemporal (spatial) feature of human identity' (Ragland-Sullivan 1986: 33). Miller conveys Lacan's move away from his early notions of a reciprocal communication between analyst and analysand to be a notion based on his early belief in a transcendence of the Symbolic signifying chain. Despite his early hopes that the purity of the signifier would offer a cure to a suffering person, much of Lacan's teaching had already resisted the idea that either the human body or language are harmoniously constructed. In 1949 he resisted the idea of a symmetry between being and body by concluding that the mirror-stage infant's idea of a bodily wholeness is incorrect. No human body is ever unified or totalized. In truth, the infant lives with the problems of learning urinary and bowel control, cutting teeth, learning to raise his head, to take steps, to curtail his hunger, and so on. The idea of bodily completeness is based on an Imaginary misperception (*méconnaissance*) that belies the truth of the Real fragmentation of the body into disunified organs and parts. Lacan's presentation of the signifier and signified was also antithetical. From his earliest teaching, he argued that the fact that the signifier creates the signified is productive of symptoms, instead of resolutions (Lacan 1991). However, once the signifier is wed to structure, they appear inseparable (Lacan 2016). In all these instances, Lacan showed discord at the root of being, language and body. Making that point, he also taught that structure is not everything because lack inhabits it. He also came to stress the conflict at play in a subject's efforts to satisfy his desire by attaining *jouissance* which is unreachable: '*Jouissance* is forbidden to he who speaks' (Lacan 2007). In his efforts to attain *jouissance*, a subject encounters the boundaries produced by the operation of castration - the learning of difference as lack. Castration, thus, causes a fundamental incompleteness in being and speech that structures unconscious knowledge as a potential counteraction against one's basic fantasies. A further disharmony is created by the reality of the drives that seem absolute, but are, in fact, partial (Lacan 1998).

In his late turn to topology, Lacan said that he sought, thereby, to clarify what he considered invalid assumptions made by world thinkers who understood human subjectivity as if it were based on an opposition between the inside and outside. For them, the inside is linked to the personal, emotional and subjective while the outside is thought to be objective and rational: feelings versus facts. For Lacan, all thought is subjective because an imperfect outside has

generated a flawed inside. By studying topology, he came to see that the properties of objects and thoughts can be radically distorted and twisted, but still retain a surface connection to each other in related sets and neighbourhoods. These attributes can demonstrate how language and body can be examined as to their qualities, not simply in terms of the metric dimensions of their quantity as geometry maintains and as empirical studies seek to show through the application of data and statistics. So, the mirror-stage infant who misperceives the connection between his being and his body has made a surface error of taking the apparent unity of a human organism for a totalized Oneness of body that does not exist in one's experience of his body. Miller speaks of the organism as giving a sense of the inner and the body as providing a sense of the outer (Miller 2015).

Miller points out in his third paradigm that in Seminar VII Lacan made a cut in his teaching about the nature of *jouissance* (Lacan 1992). Unlike in the first two paradigms where he was hopeful about the *jouissance* one could attain, Lacan argued in 1959-60 that *jouissance* is, in fact, impossible. To make this point, he addressed the Kantian philosophical and Freudian concepts of *das Ding* (the Thing). Lacan said there is not, as Freud claimed, any satisfaction to be found in the drive(s) themselves. The only fate for the drive is to end up in the Real which lies outside the Imaginary and Symbolic and is, indeed, a barrier to them. In 'Paradigms of *Jouissance*,' Miller underscores the futile aim of the drive to achieve satisfaction (*Befriedigung*) as developed in Lacan's third paradigm based on Seminar VII and Seminar XVII. In these Seminars, Lacan portrayed *jouissance* as a substance that tries to materialize itself, but in discontinuous attempts that resemble nothing more than the emptiness of Heidegger's vase (Lacan 1992; 2017; 2007). *Das Ding* is nothing more than an Other of the Other, says Miller, something that inherently lacks (Lacan 2006). In his third paradigm, Miller writes that the only hope Lacan holds out for attaining positive *jouissance* is exemplified by a horror: Antigone who tried to satisfy her desire to give her brother an honourable burial by transgressing the law of the State. In aiming at a heroic beauty achieved by rebellion, she encounters only losses and ultimately her own death (Ragland 1999).

The fourth paradigm describes normal *jouissance*. Miller says Lacan developed this idea in Seminar XI where he resisted the idea of a cleavage between the signifier and *jouissance*: rather, they are bound together to seek meaning in a new and singular way. The phallic signifier, often taken as the word (□), does not exist. Rather, the signifier is wed to *jouissance* by the substance of the object *a*. *Das Ding* is replaced by the *a*. In his fifth paradigm Miller refers to Lacan's claim that at the most basic level where one encounters *das Ding*, as in paradigm three, one finds the taboo against incest with the mother. At a more general level, Miller portrays *das Ding* as an amassed *jouissance* which aims at an object that, sadly, corresponds to its own absence. In his Seminar of May 2, 1984, Miller says 'The concept of *jouissance* itself is a concept that is fundamentally non-dialectical in its relation to desire' (Miller 1983-84b). He bases this statement on something Lacan said in 'The Subversion of the Subject and Dialectic of Desire in the Freudian Unconscious' about the non-dialectical nature of desire (Lacan 2006). Lacan did say, however, in Seminar X (1962-63) that only love can cause *jouissance* to descend to desire (Lacan 2014). And Miller said that analysis is an 'experience whose mainspring is love' (Dunlap 2014: 103). In continuing to work with Miller's 'Paradigms of *Jouissance*,' we shall see that he never strays far from the problematic Lacan faced in trying to construct a correct relationship between desire and *jouissance* and between *jouissance* and castration. Lacan finally solved this

problem in his last teaching. He based his final idea that one cannot attain *jouissance* as pleasure or satisfaction, either through a reciprocal communication, or otherwise, on what he had enunciated clearly in *L'Étourdit* and Seminar XX where he spoke of the dead end to the pursuit of *jouissance*: 'There is no sexual relation' (Lacan 2001: 464 & 1998: 34). There is only a fantasy or dream of it. In one of his articles on *jouissance*, Miller points out that one can speak of desire as a dialectic with the Other, but *jouissance* does not work that way. In 'The Subversion...' Lacan says that 'castration means that *jouissance* must be refused [in order] to be attained on the inverse scale of the Law of desire' (Lacan 2006: 700). In his 2011 Seminar *L'Être et l'Un* (Being and the One) Miller explains that *jouissance* for Lacan is finally a thing of the One. In his Seminar he takes up Lacan's sixth and last paradigm which maintains that *jouissance* serves the function of satisfying the individual subject in his aloneness. In this final paradigm, *jouissance* rules the game ( $a \leftrightarrow \exists$ ), not fantasy ( $\exists \leftrightarrow a$ ). In fantasy the lack of the divided subject is in command. It is interesting to note that the matheme  $a \leftrightarrow \exists$  represents the relation of the speaking subject to the other in the analyst's discourse:  $a \rightarrow \exists$  (Lacan 1998: 16). At this concluding moment in his thinking, Lacan named *jouissance* the *jouissance* One. Braunstein argues that Lacan made the move to question the dialectic between desire and *jouissance* based on his reading of Freud's early teachings where Freud thought the pleasure principle could cure repressed suffering. He only discovered later that trauma is the cause of repression. Braunstein concludes that once Freud saw that the pleasure principle and the law were mutually exclusive, he worked less and less with the idea of a pleasure principle as the source of human satisfaction (Freud [1900a]). In developing the concept of *jouissance*, Lacan called it a substance 'beyond the pleasure principle,' a concept he elaborated in Seminar VII (Lacan 1992).

Miller says that with the beginning of neurosis the body speaks, communicating that its symptoms have gone unaddressed. In Seminar XX Lacan says 'the real, I will say, is the mystery of the speaking body' (Lacan 1998: 131). Miller develops this concept to show how Real events correspond to the body's speech. In *L'Étourdit* Lacan says the flesh speaks a language of *jouissance*, but that it would not speak unless it took voice from the unconscious (Lacan 2001). In other words, the *sinthome*, the singular fate of an individual, can be linked to her *lalangue* which embodies the Real of *jouissance* (Lacan 2016). In constructing an ever more complex picture of *jouissance*, Lacan speaks of its presence in the dream and says it is rendered as metaphor there. We remember that Lacan tells us in 'The Instance of the Letter...' that metaphor functions by substituting one thing for another (Lacan 2006). For humans, dream language and images make an articulation between the body and *jouissance*, between conscious and unconscious minds. Via its enigmatic statement, the dream tells us that *jouissance* works against the hypocrisy of the ego. Miller says the dream replaces the ego's sense of self-mastery and control with the knowledge possessed by the unconscious (Miller 2018). One reason people say that their dreams mean nothing, or that they come from their having eaten green cheese, is that they do not understand the language of their unconscious. Not only can they not decipher their unconscious messages, but they are also not able to tolerate the Real part of their *jouissance* that speaks to them in an enigmatic language.

Lacan ends up claiming that the presence of *jouissance* shows itself in language and the body as an essential life substance. Topologically speaking, he means that the body's surface is quite literally in continuous contact with its language (voice, phoneme) and images (gaze/ eye). This connection between the physical organism and its agents looks like a Möbius strip figure where

the two parts of the 8 are joined/cut by a twist that links them, rather than divides them. The Möbius figure 8 is a surface topological figure unless it is cut in half and its edges joined to make a circle. Then, and only then, does it belong to knot topology by making a Trefoil knot, a nontrivial knot also called a loop. In 'Clinic and Topology: The Flaw in the Universe,' analyst Pierre Skriabine quotes Lacan as saying in Seminar XI that 'the transference operates in the direction of bringing the demand back to identification. It is in as much as the analyst's desire, which remains an  $x$ , tends in a direction which is the exact opposite of identification, namely, it maintains the distance between the I of the fundamental identification and the object of the drive, the  $a'$ '. (Skriabine 2004: 96; Lacan 1977: 274). In this way, the analyst's desire connects the patient's unconscious thought to the Real of his drives (Skriabine 2004). Lacanian analyst Gilson says that surface topology - not knot topology - is the confrontation of the subject with his or her *jouissance* (Gilson 1994). This would mean that the surface of the body is itself a body of *jouissance*. The structure of the speaking subject is Möbian Lacan said in *Le séminaire IX*. The two parts of the subject made up of inside and outside co-exist in a seemingly contradictory coherence – negative unconscious informing positive consciousness which is unaware. The speaker frees herself from the object ( $\exists/a$ ) in the hole of the torus -- -- insofar as she, as subject, is internally excluded from it because it is lost (Lacan 2006; Ragland 2004).

Miller says that the ego is made up of narcissism plus *jouissance*. This is a very different ego from Freud's picture of it as a whole agency whose principal role is that of mediating between the conflicting parts of the id and superego (Freud [1923b]). It is no wonder that Lacan portrays the psychotic subject as clinging to his rigid ego structure at all costs because he is not able to repress or suppress the *jouissance* of the Real that invades his language and body. Beyond speech and the ego, *jouissance* can also be deciphered in laughter, a 'language' distant from its apparent meaning (Ragland 1976: 91). Miller calls the *jouissance* experienced in laughter, a *sens* that is created by castration. The *Witz*, the joke, always depends on there being a fall guy, a loser. *Sens*, for Miller, embraces the dual connotation of bodily sense and meaning as 'sense' ( $-\square$ ) (Ragland 2004: 9). Lacan called the meaning created by castration ( $-\square$ ) 'signification'. But he did use the word '*jouis-sens*' in *Television* (Lacan 1990: 22). The *jouissance* language retained in the ego is repressed, as it is in laughter where a hidden meaning elicits the response. This is not surprising given that alienation into language occurs by the means of identification which leads to the repression of painful or distressing thoughts (Miller 2000). Therefore, the source of the *jouissance* is not available to the speaking subject, except in the case of psychosis. But, as Miller clarifies, whether *jouissance* is repressed or not, we are spoken by it, not the reverse. As we saw on the graph of desire, Lacan concluded that there is a fundamental antinomy between the hope for positive *jouissance* and the castration that blocks it by ushering lack and loss into the speech that seeks pleasure. Desire tries to oppose the castration which first arose from the child's learning the fundamental reality of difference as a sexual difference which heralds a non-rapport. So wide is the ever-growing gap between man and woman that Miller has described them as two different races (personal conversation).

There is a non-rapport in Freud's early theory of the Oedipus complex, although it is not a lacking rapport between the sexes. He said that sexual pleasure must be renounced in the name of finding another pleasure that is not the primary one, one in which the mother is not the object, not *das Ding* of desire (Freud [1900a]). For, as we have said, the individual who cannot renounce the Oedipal complex is the psychotic who has failed to relinquish the primordial *jouissance* of

his symbiotic identificatory link with the primordial mother - both in thought and body. For other subjects the secondary *jouissance* is phallic in its sense of bringing a *jouissance* of the word: this results from their having accepted the law of castration by which means they become subjects of law and Symbolic order language (+□/-□). Castration enables most subjects to live comfortably enough in the Symbolic sphere. Nonetheless, one should not be surprised when Lacan says that the powerful effects of castration entail a certain sacrifice of a subject's narcissism. Such sacrifices open onto what Lacan ultimately said about the function of *jouissance* in humans: it does not serve any purpose.

Yet Miller shows us via Lacan, particularly in reference to Seminar XVII and Seminar XX, that *jouissance* leads the game of life for each subject. And he accepts Lacan's conclusion that the *jouissance* which finally commands our lives is a *jouissance* One. Yet, despite our having accepted castration, we do not stop dreaming of a primary *jouissance* - a paradise - of the past which we seek to repeat in love relations and with the objects we suppose will give us satisfaction (Lacan 1977). Since we all start out as infants, Lacan emphasized that we are first subject to need - hunger, sleep, freedom from pain. But because our needs are curtailed by the necessity of demand which opens onto lack and ushers in desire, we are alienated into the Other's desire. Paradoxically, the only salvation - the only rescue from alienation - a child can hope for is from the Other who might bless him by satisfying his desire. He hopes for the possibility of consolation from the outside world, not from inside his body (Ragland-Sullivan 1986). Lacan says, however, that the Other offers no final salvation because it first introduced a helpless infant to the only means he has to access the outside world - through an-Other's desires and demands. The Other constitutes another Lacanian paradox: it is both outside and inside a subject. Fundamentally the Other has no a priori existence, except in the fact that we are born into it. To make his point, Lacan says that the Other, like God, never existed as a universal principle: it is a creation of Symbolic order. There is both a Symbolic lack ( $\exists$ ) and a rudimentary hole of the Real in the Other (: ) - Skriabine's flaw in the universe - which renders its operations ineffective regarding many of the subject's demands (Lacan 2007).

Paradoxically, not only is the other/ Other (the *Nebenmensch*) not the saviour of the infant, but he is also the one who has introduced a hostile, judgmental world to the infant. When Lacan says that the Other does not exist in an a priori form, we can support that contention by considering autism which often results in total mutism in a child who has not been given a tolerable Other (Laurent 2012). But most people are not autistic. For them, the necessity of the Other's giving them language results from the repressed prototypes that Freud discovered as the *Urverdrängungen* that create an originary repression that founds the unconscious. Lacan makes language marks or traces of such representations - *lalangue* - that underlies the differential structure of the signifier (♦) which creates its own signified (♥). The signifier creates its gift of language by structuring the unconscious. However, Lacan's understanding of the structure of the linguistic sign refutes Saussure's concept of it. Saussure stressed that the sign represents something for someone, and that the signifier is only a phonic image which works simultaneously with its signified to give it primacy. He gave the superior position to the signified without understanding its actual relationship to the signifier which, for Lacan, creates mental thought (Saussure 2011; Ragland-Sullivan 1986). When Lacan says, 'the unconscious is structured, not just by language, but *like* a language,' he inverts Saussure's sign by showing that signifiers create meaning in reference to one another and thereby create the signified. Later, he

shows how metaphor and metonymy work like Freud's condensation (substitution) and displacement (contiguity) did in dreams and jokes (Freud [1905]). Skriabine refers to Lacan's topological demonstration that psychoanalysis is founded on a lack created by the signifier, and a hole created by the object *a*, to claim that the result of this teaching makes psychoanalysis an a-spherical topology - a spatial one (Skriabine 2004: 96). Let us remember that a sphere is mostly round and exists in three dimensions, like a Borromean knot.

In passing from the pre-mirror and pre-Oedipal stages which register as a lived experience of the body, the infant becomes able to use words (*paroles*) to tame her previously unnamable incoherence. Still, taming the varying effects that arise from the three registers does nothing to save humans from having been created by an Other - 'spoken by the family,' Miller says. In other words, we do not start out as 'ourselves,' but as a creation of an-Other's occupying us and, thus, launching our thoughts as alienated and our *jouissance* as lost in the separation caused by the drives. Lacan says that we do not even know what *jouissance* is for sure, only that we seek it. For the topological Lacan, *jouissance* appears in the distorted forms that materialize as chaotic representations, mysterious unary traces, fragmentary *sinthomatic* marks of the traumatic Real. These effects enter language as the impact of word upon word, dreams, delusions, and so on. Lacan eventually named *jouissance* a writing of the Real. Letters of being - grammar, *écrits* - connect words to the Real body and start the life of the infant by inscribing his flesh with mysterious meanings (Lacan 2016: 44). And these marks remain in a person's flesh throughout life unless some outside intervention, such as love or psychoanalysis, intercedes to attenuate the suffering they cause. It follows logically that insofar as humans are alienated by and within language, they will be nostalgic for a way out of what Frederic Jameson has named 'the prison-house of language'. Not only do individuals often feel lost and uncertain about their orientation in life, but they are also affectively thrown off guard by the operations of the dual mechanisms of separation and alienation. As the return of the Real of the drives pierces language, separation marks their cut into thought by creating the holes in the signifiers that constitute thought around the gap caused by a lack intrinsic to language. Lacan says that the unconscious is a working process, an activity, whose first material substance is *jouissance* and the discourse produced by the primacy of the signifier. We remember that the first signifier to make an impact on infant perception is the interpretation he makes of the Imaginary phallus that determines how he will introject (*Bejahung*) difference as a sexual difference.

The Lacanian subject is born into paradox. He is alienated from the primordial Thing (*Ding*) which is forever lost, but his yearning for completion and satisfaction does not stop. Moreover, the negative aspects of *jouissance* are ever present. They show their face in regressions, ego fixations, symptoms, love, fantasies, and so on. The presence of ever moving contradictions in our lives is one reason Lacan stressed the importance of confronting one's fundamental fantasy, the fantasy which controls our subjective being. So important is it to resist this fantasy that an analysand who seeks the 'Pass' in psychoanalysis can only earn it by challenging the power of this primary fantasy (Miller 2010). Only by dropping certain symptoms and the objects that weigh him down can one look squarely at his fundamental fantasy. By making a radical series of changes, a person may gain a certain affective freedom. But in the Lacanian world, the subject will still have to accept that there is no universal panacea for the human condition: lack and loss remain intact for most people. The more specific point to keep in mind about the fundamental fantasy is that it lies beyond the representations that induce the *sinthome* yet is at the heart of

one's subjectivity. The fundamental fantasy concerns the narrative one has given oneself about castration and loss. So far reaching is this concept for Lacan that Freud's view of fantasy would no longer be tenable, as Laurent says. By viewing fantasy as imaginative material constructed around wish fulfilment, Freud conceived of wishes as repressed, and thereby latent in thought. But he believed these wishes could be undone by the patient's talking about unconscious material such as dreams and fantasies: cathexis. Repressed wishes, he argued, mask themselves by the defensive processes that enables a person to be misled by his desire. Yet, he was ever positive about the possibility of patients' unravelling defence mechanisms through catharsis. Unveiling fantasies was important to him: let us remember that in 1897 he had abandoned his theory that actual seductions caused neurosis by turning to the idea that his patients had fantasized those seductions (Freud [1900a]). Both dreams and fantasies arise from the repressed unconscious which, for Lacan, means that the fundamental fantasy traverses the primary thought of any being, except the psychotic. For most people the veiled fantasy speaks the primordial language of *jouissance*, often with the notion of protection woven into it (Lacan 1977; 2015; 2020).

The first primary caretakers of the infant frequently teach him or her to '*jouir*' sexually on the side of the superego by threatening castration of the penis to the male, and an abandonment of love to the female. Perhaps such disapproval of sexuality has abated in modern society with contemporary understandings of childhood sexuality. But the objection to childhood sexuality will probably not disappear given the weightiness and complexity of human sexuality. Within the reality of the family romance, Eros is often tainted by guilt, thereby linking sexuality to transgression. Lacan and Miller have never stopped teaching that to be able to endure one's *jouissance* - sexual or otherwise - sacrifice is required. Yet, the search for *jouissance* in all its guises is crucial to each person because both its positive and negative parts have already dictated the basic reality of who he or she is as a libidinal/ verbal being. Miller says that individuals are horrified at the idea of making the sacrifices required to minimize a *jouissance* that does not wish their good. So powerful is the resistance to challenging one's *jouissance*, he argues, that all of language is a defence mechanism used to cover over the vacillations of *jouissance* and the traumata of the Real. With the Lacanian picture of *jouissance* and his psychoanalytic hope of teaching people how to resist the lethal parts of it, one comes to see that there is a basic incompatibility between *jouissance* and law. Individuals act and feel as they have been taught to by the other/Other: The law takes twists and turns.

The behaviour that results from alienation into and by the Other means that however it has been inscribed, *jouissance* will be repeated. We remember from the graph of desire that what Lacan calls 'demand' is written as  $--\exists \langle \rangle D---$ , his formula for the drive. It is in 'The Signification of the Phallus' in 1958 that he says each demand is a demand for love. In other words, our drives are joined to our words as requests for the gift of love from the other/ Other, poison or not. We are pushed by the Real of our needs to ascribe to any Symbolic game that we think will attenuate the lack in the desire that fails to satisfy them. The demand for love, then, rests on the Imaginary politics of identity (Lacan 2006: 575). One asks for something - an acceptable relation to the *jouissance* that commands him - but to receive it he must pass through the Imaginary/ Symbolic laws of castration and the Real of the primary drives. To appease his *jouissance* demands can be a Herculean task. The person who seeks help for his difficulties in life can only hope to learn to decipher his *jouissance* wants through psychoanalysis. Freud, Lacan and Miller, among countless



others, have, throughout their lives, pushed the wager to find an ever more truthful answer to who we are as individuals/ *sinthomes*, and to ascertain, how we can, then, best address the tasks required for acquiring better, freer, and more humane lives. The task is large given that the *sinthome* which regulates our being has an unconscious meaning that is not delivered. Such statements make us aware of the importance Lacan attached to discovering one's fundamental fantasy as an entry point into the *jouissance* language of the *sinthome*.

We will now follow Miller's development of Lacan's thinking about *jouissance* in 'Paradigms of *Jouissance*.' He outlines six. Interestingly, although there is a sequential development in Lacan's thought about *jouissance* from the beginning to the end of his teaching, his different concepts of it do not follow a chronological logic. Miller's reading of Lacan is taken from his own Seminar *L'Expérience du réel dans la cure analytique* (Miller 1998-99). There he lists the first paradigm as the Imaginarisation of *jouissance* that intersects with the introduction of Symbolic language. At this first period, Lacan thought inter-subjective exchange could create a dialectic wherein the signifier, existing in a chain of mutual representations, one dependent upon the other, could be deciphered (Lacan 2006). Here Lacan says that the Symbolic leaves out the Imaginary ideal ego (I[A]). In 'The Freudian Thing...' he had said that narcissism, which is fundamentally Imaginary, envelopes desire which is basically Symbolic (Lacan 2006). The last reference is to early Lacan, around the time of his 'Rome Discourse' (Lacan 2006). In this first concept of *jouissance*, the Imaginary introduces a fracture into the signifying chain via the subject's 'acting out.' Miller shows Lacan as pointing out that for the beginning analysand, transference is basically an alien phenomenon, and, therefore the Freudian Imaginary libido serves as an entity that acts erroneously on the purity of the Symbolic signifying chain.

In the second paradigm, the Imaginary becomes only a reserve of narcissistic illusions of ego unity and consistency. *Jouissance* is significantized here. The Imaginary demand (which is energized as drive by the object *a*) is addressed to the Symbolic subject ( $\exists$ ) via his fantasy which articulates the object *a* he aims at for satisfaction. For a person to surmount the Imaginary fantasy, Lacan says the Symbolic Father's Name is needed. The libido is said to be Symbolic in this second paradigm where regression from the Imaginary to the Symbolic is said to deconstruct the ego. One text which supports Lacan's theoretical change is 'On a Question Prior to any Possible Treatment of Psychosis' (Lacan 2006). In paradigm three, which I mentioned in some detail in this article, Lacan's reference text is Seminar VII (Lacan 1992). Miller writes that *jouissance* as one that is rendered impossible: Lacan's idea that *jouissance* is Symbolic is replaced with the idea that it is Real. *Das Ding* replaces both the Symbolic signifier and Imaginary identification to show itself as primordially blocking the satisfaction of the drive. Freud said that since *das Ding* was an ego defence that was undoable in the talking which reveals the unconscious. Lacan said there is no defence in play with *das Ding*, only the revelation that the foundational Other is basically a pretence, a masquerade of knowledge and semblance that tries to cover over its own alienating power.

In his fourth paradigm, Miller quotes Lacan as referring to Seminar XI (Lacan 1977). Normal *jouissance* is said to be fragmented by the return of the drive that creates a hollow, a void, in language and identity. Alluding to Seminar VII, Lacan portrays the fragmented body as experiencing a kind of second death. In portraying the signifier as articulated to *jouissance*, he suggests a revision of his 1953 'Rome Discourse' by a reconstruction that is based on a set

theory concept of alienation and separation (Miller 1977). They are combined in connected sets: mathematically speaking a set is a well-determined collection that is completely characterized only by its elements. Much of Lacan's teaching is based on the idea that psychic processes function as sets that he ultimately links these to the kind of spatial organization proposed by topology: neighbourhoods where similar properties function become all important, despite the seeming distortions of elements involved. A subject, for example, is created in a Symbolic alienation by the signifier that both gives him the meanings that typify him while he is, at the same time, an empty set. The lacking subject experiences the Real of separation in waiting to be filled by drive objects that he hopes will attenuate the fundamental sense of loss that plagues him. Lacan cites Seminar VIII to speak of the human search for the precious agalma of identification. Referring to Seminar IX, he says that we seek *jouissance* as an Imaginary component in the signifier. Referring to Seminar X, he says that we take the object *a* as an element of the Other that we believe will, in and of itself, bring *jouissance*: we take it to be substantial and remain unaware of its alienating and separating properties (Lacan 2015; 2014).

Miller's paradigm five creates a picture of *jouissance* as discursive. Paradigms five and six represent Lacan's final thinking regarding the concept that he began developing as such in Seminar VII. Before that he was working with the theory that desire tries to satisfy itself in terms of Imaginary narcissism or Symbolic signifying. In turning to Seminar VII, he proposed that beyond Freud's pleasure principle there is a *jouissance* linked to the partial drive. He continues constructing the concept as discursive Seminar XVII (Lacan 2007). In Seminar XVII he talks about the unification of alienation and separation as primal relations that connect knowledge to *jouissance* and words to identifications by repetition. Yet, repetition creates the paradox of showing the failure of representation. Even though the  $\exists$  is fundamentally empty and, thus, impossible to fully re-present itself, it emerges anyway because all subjects, except some autistics, talk--, even if their speech is signing language. In a second paradox caused by repetition, the signifier uses language to petrify itself.  $\diamond$ , for example, belongs to the set that both includes it and tries to hide the empty set present in it. One confronts the paradox that only the signifier can make a set that will produce a speaking subject whom it, then, divides into a knowing part and an empty part. *Jouissance* is produced as a substance that shows a drive-oriented person searching for words and objects: alienation commands the agency of the subject's speech and separation reigns over its sense of a loss of life experienced in the drives.

Paradigm five shows the signifier as Real in that it is a cause, even though its logic is that of discontinuity and emptiness. Because of this Lacan said desire is dead desire, a retroactive function of wanting that both acts on and exterminates itself. Miller reads this Lacan's depiction of *jouissance* here as a proposal that it cannot be inscribed in desire as he had maintained in 'The Subversion...'. Even though subjects try to join desire to *jouissance*, they are stymied by the meanings that emanate from phallic castration: you cannot be it (the desired object/ $\square$ ) because the possibility of the signification of the object depends upon its castration ( $-\square$ ). Again, we encounter a paradox: even though we cannot annul the presence of *jouissance* in our words and bodies, it remains just out of reach--impossible, lost. As beings, we are speaking bodies affected by emptiness, division and fragmentation. Thus, in his final development of *jouissance*, Lacan proposes that the body (*a*) replaces the subject ( $\exists$ ). Beyond its seeming Symbolic autonomy, the signifier is an apparatus of *jouissance*. The truth the signifying chain enunciates is that of death as loss and desire as lack. A double *jouissance* is conveyed: that of its mortification and that of it

as a gap that tries futilely to fill itself by the supplemental object *a*. In this fifth paradigm, the fourth one is gone: subjects no longer look for the agalma of identification. Nor does the idea of transgression bring *jouissance*. The fifth paradigm continues to be necessary, however, as a returning reminder that the signifier is our lifejacket, and that *jouissance* exists even though it fails to produce its sought-after goals. By unveiling itself in language, both as a master signifier (♦) and as the excess or supplemental *a* that falls prey to entropy, *jouissance* joins hands with ‘truth’ which Lacan describes as ‘the sister of *jouissance*’: truth is both forbidden (incest) and castrated. Even though no truth exists without *jouissance*, there is no last word, no full or absolute truth of *jouissance* (Lacan 2007). There is *encore*, *en-corps* (in the body).

Miller characterizes the early Lacan who talked about attaining a positive *jouissance* as a formalist, a proponent of an autonomous signifier that existed without the body and even transcended it. Lacan’s thinking about *jouissance* culminates, however, in the idea that the end of an analysis does not give an epiphany of *jouissance*; it offers, rather, the traversal of the fundamental fantasy, the acceptance of castration, and a dawning realization of how one can work with one’s sinthome in less destructive ways. Subjective destitution comes with the end of analysis when the patient has dropped many of the objects he thought essential to life. He has become able to admit that he is a sinthomatic creature who repeats *jouissance* practices. He can accept that his object *a* is a signifier that joins alienation to separation in a cut between libido and nature. That is, the signifier places itself over the *jouissance* which supports it:  $s/J(a)$ . In paradigm six, Miller shows Lacan turning to Seminar XX in which he mocks many of his earlier ideas. He says that his theory of the signifier as the sign of a divided subject was unoriginal, derivative. *Parole* is not communication he says, but, rather, the *lalangue* of *jouissance* is. The word belongs to the Other, while *jouissance* is a language of blablabla. What the Other reveals is a disjunction between the subject’s signifier and the treasury from which he got it. Having chosen the Father’s Name over the mother’s body, castrated subjects have embraced a disjointed concept of being from the beginning of life - mother versus father. What Lacan found in his third paradigm is that there are topological joining structures - narcissism in the ego, the Father’s Name in signifying speech - but that they are not in any way transcendental. There is no metalanguage, Lacan said. In Miller’s view, paradigm five shows Lacan realizing that praxis yields pragmatics. The articulation of ♦ and ♥ happens in a necessary way because of the Real of relationships (rappports). In 1952, Lacan stated that there is an inter-subjective exchange which allows psychoanalysis to work. In 1972-73, he said that psychoanalysis does not work: what works is the living body which speaks a language of *jouissance* that is based on a non-rapport between itself and the Other (A). The Other of the Other tries to speak but ends up being the One all alone: ∴.

In his sixth paradigm, Miller says that the starting point of everything for Lacan is that *jouissance* is wed to knowledge: yet its knowledge concerns the One of the body which ‘*jouit*’ without the Other. In addition to this first *jouissance* of the body, primary *jouissance*, Lacan has added a second one, the phallic *jouissance* (□) which he calls that of the idiot. In addition to the *jouissance* of the body, and the phallic one, he adds the *jouissance* of the word. Miller says Lacan remains somewhat Freudian here by evoking the *jouissance* of sublimation which is a defense mechanism that precludes the Other by channelling unacceptable thoughts or urges into admissible outlets (Freud [1900a]): sublimation does not exist in a rapport with the Other. *Jouissance* Other is sexual, that of enjoying the Other’s body i.e. that of a different sex. But even

though the Other is structurally originary, it becomes a problematic reality because of that: it exists as an impasse created by a foundational non-rapport. Structure - the Lacanian processes that give a certain order, even of disorder - is necessary in that it does not stop writing itself. Lacan uses the verb 'write' in his modal logic to mean that which signifies *jouissance*. In Seminars XI, XIX and XX, and in 'On a Question Prior to Any Possible Treatment of Psychosis' he develops the modal categories - the necessary, the possible, the impossible, and the contingent - that show different ways in which knowledge is wed to *jouissance* (Lacan 1977; 2017; 1998; 2006). His categories are both a response to and a contradiction of Aristotle's modal logic. Structure writes the necessary role of the phallic injunction if one is not to be psychotic. This injunction is based on the law that the identity of same to same is false. The same cannot equal itself (A cannot equal A): all mathematics is based on this principle. From it, Lacan deduces that a signifier cannot signify itself. One must approach the Other for *jouissance*, but, Miller says, we run into contingency (what stops not writing itself) wherein the structure that pushes us to seek prevails over the fixity of semblance. The Symbolic and Real triumph over the Imaginary. Miller ends 'Paradigms...' with this statement: 'Today it's harder to isolate and circumscribe what is structure and what is real' (Miller 2000: 46).

The most recent work being produced on *jouissance* in the Freudian/ Lacanian Field, opens onto an ongoing discussion about feminine *jouissance* linked to Lacan's idea that } Woman does not exist. Lacan developed his logic of the feminine not all in Seminar XX in his sexuation graph (Ragland 2004: 1; Lacan 1998: 78). Feminine sexuation is represented here as residing on the side of a *jouissance* that is not all phallic, not all Symbolic. It belongs to the Real, he says. This evolution in Lacan's thought poses a question to his early idea of feminine *jouissance* as a masquerade (Ragland-Sullivan 1991b). In an article, Miller asks the question 'Is Feminine *Jouissance* not *Jouissance* as Such?' (Miller 2021). Éric Laurent has written about the same question in 'Feminine *Jouissance*' (Laurent 2012). Gil Caroz has written 'The Rudder and the Feminine' (Caroz 2011). In *(Re)-Turn* Liora Goder asks 'What is a Woman and What is Feminine *Jouissance* in Lacan?' (Goder 2010). Aron Dunlap dedicates a chapter to '*Jouissance* and Feminine Sexuality' in which he quotes the Bible as claiming that woman is superior to man: 'The Lord has created a new thing on the earth; a woman encompasses a man' (Dunlap 2014: 80/ *Jer.* xxxi, 22). The last issue of *The Lacanian Review: Journal of the New Lacanian School* *Woman and the World Association of Psychoanalysis* dedicates the whole volume to the question of } Woman (2022: 11-170). Marie-Hélène Brousse has published a book entitled *The Feminine: A Mode of Jouissance* (Brousse 2022). The Lacanian field is now wide open for advancing its understanding of *jouissance* via the categories of the feminine 'not all' and } Woman, theories which end up as the basis for a new concept of the difference between the sexes. These questions make up the ongoing psychoanalytic debate regarding what Lacanian *jouissance* is and what avenues of thought are opened by this new work<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Dimitriadis, Y. (2017). The Psychoanalytic Concept of *Jouissance* and the Kindling Hypothesis *Frontiers Psychoanalysis*, Research Center for Psychoanalysis and Society 8: 1593 (in the section of psychoanalysis and neuroscience, Research Centre for Psychoanalysis and Society, Paris, Diderot Sorbonne-Cité). The article bears mention because it is part of a medical, neurological effort at a takeover of Lacanian psychoanalysis. Dimitriadis' article starts off as being of interest because he summarizes seven kinds of *jouissance*. But upon a close reading, he is simply repeating Jacques-Alain Miller's article on the six paradigms. He divides the Other *jouissance* which Miller discusses at the end of his piece into the *jouissance* of the Other, that of the word, and that of a *jouissance* of sex. He then adds a *jouissance* of life itself. Miller states clearly in his article that a *jouissance* of the word is excluded by the sixth paradigm, by the sexual non-rapport which ends up in paradigm six as *jouissance* One.

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Dimitriadis seems not to understand that each of Miller's paradigms relates intrinsically to the inseparability of life from the death drive; there is no pure *jouissance* of life. Moreover, Miller states plainly that the Real presents itself as body symptoms and body events that are readable in the *jouissance* at the surface of discourse. Thus, *jouissance* is treatable in the clinic through work with the *sinthome* and the fundamental fantasy. At no point does Miller claim, as does Dimitriadis, that medical disease can be deciphered as direct traces of *jouissance* on the body. The disturbing thing about Dimitriadis' article is his claim that if there is a 'speaking body', which he does not name as such, there is clearly a mark made upon the flesh that translates immediately into psychosomatic illness. For him, the cause of all medical illness, shown in body symptoms, is directly traceable to neurons of the brain that are the underlying cause. He takes the discovery of the brain's neuroplasticity to mean that *jouissance* writes on it directly: in Dimitriadis's article, Lacan's and Miller's description of the word and drive as structuring the *sinthome* are gone. Miller shows language and drives to be the cause of symptoms, not the neurons of the brain. Lacan's and Miller's understanding of psychosomatic phenomena always focuses on treating the word and the drive which caused the symptom, not some part of the organism which supposedly acts on its own. To bolster his argument, Dimitriadis turns to the kindling concept of implanting electrodes in the brain to argue for testing the link between disease and *jouissance* by implanting electrodes; this proves to him that there is a psychoanalytic link of body symptoms to the neurological cause of disease. He concentrates, as do all the psychosomatic oriented psychoanalytic commentators, on epilepsy and mystical trances as further proof of his theory. The signifiers, or letters of the Real, that mark the body for meaning in the Symbolic (language), Imaginary (identification) and Real (trauma) become for him examples of psychosomatic brain disease that he says causes epilepsy. He gives no data to support his claims other than the Pavlovian discovery that animals can learn to change their behaviour if given the correct stimuli - for him, electrodes planted in the brain. Dimitriadis speaks of *materialist* traces of illness that can be immediately translated as physical symptoms. There is no subject, no signifier, no desire, no love, no fantasy, no transference in his work. The most recent book to address such contemporary abuses of psychoanalysis is by Hervé Castanet, *Neurologie Versus Psychanalyse*, Paris: Navarin, 2022. It is being translated into English by Julia Richards.

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