



'Knots': Drawing out Threads of the Literary Laing

November 11, 2014 · Volume 18 (2014)

Adrian Chapman

Chapman A. 'Knots': Drawing out Threads of the Literary Laing. PsyArt Journal. 2014 Nov 11 [last modified: 2016 Apr 2]. Edition 1.

Abstract

R. D. Laing's critically neglected verse volume *Knots* (1970) is treated as a literary text and related to games, game theory and Cold War politics. The main focus is Laing's use and view of language. He attempts, Zen-like, to reveal its conventionality and point towards another order of being. *Knots* participates in several genres and Laing – someone who sought to dissolve the doctor-patient distinction – transgresses what, he implies, are merely categories existing in language's zone of illusion. His view of language relates, I argue, to his movement away from the speaking cure and towards greater interest in the body and pre-linguistic experience. While the countercultural Laing looks forward to the complete untangling of psychic, somatic and social knots, his presentation of such knots also suggests their unavoidability. If unavoidable, this text could help readers relate differently to their own knots and perhaps tie some more interesting ones.

PDF

[Download pdf here](#)

PsyArt-2014-Article-21-A-Chapman