

# The Subject of the Screen & the Real in Democracy Today

(the 2nd in a series of 3 Open Seminars)

*"Now, what our experience, the analytic experience, brings us is centered on the phenomenon of the screen. [...] This screen is not simply what hides the real, it surely is that, but, at the same time, it indicates it." (Lacan, 1966)*

To continue this series of seminars - an exciting and novel way of putting to work the question of psychoanalysis within our technocratic 21st century - we invite you to join us for a screening of **'The Waldo Moment'** (Series 2, Episode 3).

This episode blurs the lines between satirical absurdity and the bizarre reality of contemporary democratic elections, as well as the current political fascination with social media platforms.

A cartoon bear named "Waldo" becomes a political threat to the British establishment as while seeking a representational mandate in an election campaign, his screen presence is embraced by an increasingly disillusioned public.

Writer Charlie Brooker, manages to reflect something of the relationship we can discern *via* psychoanalysis between the visual structure of the subject and the vicissitudes of the screen: as Lacan points out in '66: *"The screen, here, functions as what is interposed between the subject and the world."* In a maze of overlapping parallel planes where there appears no escape from representation *per se*.

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A failed comedian named Jamie Salter "operates" and provides the voice for a popular blue cartoon bear character (Waldo) who is the host of a late-night satire show. Waldo deftly interviews politicians

with the sole aim of humiliation. However, Waldo finds himself launched into politics when TV executives demand that he run as a local MP in the upcoming elections, in opposition to a previous guest on his show.

Waldo not only proves extremely popular on the campaign trail, but also receives the backing of shady American forces who are interested in Waldo becoming the face of global authority.

Will Waldo win the election? - and if so, what will be the effects on his "voice" subject Jamie and on civilisation as we know it?

*"The function of the screen as a support, as such, of significance is what we find immediately with the awakening of this something which, as regards man, assures us that, whatever tone of voice he emitted there, he was a speaking being." (Lacan, 1966)*

*Marlene French Mullen & Raphael Montague*