

THE SEMINAR OF JACQUES LACAN

BOOK XIV

The logic of phantasy

1966-1967

Translated by Cormac Gallagher from unedited French manuscripts

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Seminar 1: Wednesday 16 November 1966

Today I am going to throw out some points that are rather in the nature of a promise.

“*Logic of phantasy*”, I entitled, this year, what I count on being able to present to you about what is required at the point that we are at on a certain path. A path which implies, I will recall it forcefully today, this sort of very special return that we have already seen, last year, inscribed in the structure and which is properly speaking fundamental in everything that Freudian thinking uncovers. This return is called repetition. To repeat is not to find the same thing again, as we will articulate later, and contrary to what is believed, it is not necessarily to repeat indefinitely.

We will come back then to themes that I have in a certain fashion already situated for a long time. It is, moreover, because we are at the moment of this return and of its function, that I believed I could no longer put off presenting to you in a unified way what up to now I thought necessary as a minimal indication of this journey, namely, this volume that you already find within hand's reach. It is because this year it will no doubt be possible for us to study in depth the function of this relation to writing - which after all, in a certain way, I forced myself up to the present if not to avoid, at least to delay - that here again I believed I could take this step.

These few indicative points that I am going today to state before you, I have chosen to be five:

The first consisting in reminding you of the point that we are at about the logical articulation of phantasy, which this year will be, properly speaking, my text.

(2) The second, to the reminder of the relation of this structure of phantasy - which I will have first recalled to you - to the structure of the signifier as such.

The third, to something essential and really fundamental which has to be recalled, about what we can, what we ought, this year, call - if we put in the foreground what I called the *logic* in question - an essential remark about the *Universe of discourse*.

The fourth point, some indication relative to its relation to *writing* as such.

Finally, I will end on the reminder of what Freud indicates to us, in an articulated fashion, about what is involved in the relation of thinking to language and to the unconscious.

So, the logic of phantasy. We will begin from the writing of it that I already constructed, namely, from the formula: *S barred diamond small o* (\$ **o**). I recall what the *S barred* signifies: the *S barred* represents, takes the place in this formula of what it returns from concerning the division of the subject, which is found at the source of the whole Freudian discovery and which consists in the fact that the subject is, in part, barred from what properly constitutes it *qua* function of the unconscious. This formula establishes something which is a link, a connection between this subject as thus constituted and something else which is called **small o**. **Small o** is an object whose status what I am calling, this year, "constructing the logic of phantasy", will consist in determining - its status, precisely, in a relation which is a logical relation properly speaking.

A strange thing, no doubt, which you will allow me not to go into. I mean what this term phantasy suggests in terms of a relation to *phantasia*, to the imagination. I will not give myself the pleasure, even for an instant, of marking its contrast with the term logic with which I intend to structure it. The fact is, no doubt, that phantasy as we claim to instaure its status is not so fundamentally, so radically antinomical as one might first think to this logical characterisation which, properly speaking, disdains it. Moreover, the imaginary feature of what is called the **o**-object will appear still better to you - in the measure that we will mark what permits it to be characterised as a logical value - to be much less related, it seems to me, at first sight, to the domain of what is properly speaking the *imaginary*. The *imaginary*, rather, is attached to it, surrounds it, accumulates in it. The **o**-object has a different status. Undoubtedly, it is desirable that those who listen to me this year (3) should have had the opportunity last year to get some grasp, some idea of it. Of course, this **o**-object is not something which is yet, so easily - for all and especially for those for whom it is the centre of their experience, the psychoanalysts, even more - has yet, as I might say, sufficient familiarity for it to be, I would say, presented to them without fear or indeed even without anxiety.

"What have you done then," one of them said to me, "what need did you have to invent this little **o**-object?"

I think, in truth, that taking things from a broader horizon it was about time. Because, without this **o**-object - whose incidences, it seems to me, have made themselves widely enough felt for the people of our generation - it seems to me that much of what is done as analyses, of subjectivity as well as of history and of its interpretation, and specifically of what we have lived through as contemporary history, and very specifically of what we have, rather crudely, baptised with a most improper term, under the name of totalitarianism ... Anyone, who after having understood it, is able to occupy himself in applying to it the function of the category of the **o**-object, will perhaps see there being illuminated what it returned from, in that for which we still lack, in a surprising manner, satisfying interpretations.

The barred subject, in its relation to this **o**-object, is joined in this formula written on the board, by this something which is presented as a lozenge shape, which I earlier called the diamond (*le poinçon*), and which, in truth, is a sign that was forged expressly to join together in itself what can be isolated from it, depending on whether you separate it with a vertical stroke or with a horizontal stroke.

Separated by a vertical stroke, it represents a double relation which can be read in the first place as greater (>) or lesser (<): \$ smaller or indeed greater than big O. \$ included or in fact excluded from big O [*sic*]. What does that mean, if not that what is suggested at the first level of this conjunction, is something which, logically, is called the relation of *inclusion* or again of *implication*, on condition (4) that we make it reversible and which is articulated ... (I am going quickly, no doubt, but we will have time to expand and to take these things up again; today, I am indicating to you, it is enough for us to take some suggestive steps) ... this relation which is articulated in a logical articulation, which is called: *if and if only S barred* in this sense, namely: the *diamond shape* being divided by the vertical bar, is the subject barred from this relation of *if and if only* with the **o**-object.

This brings us to a stop. There exists, then, a *subject*. This is, logically, what we are forced to write at the origin of such a formula. Something, here, is proposed to us which is the division between *de facto existence* and *logical existence*.

De facto existence, of course, refers us to the existence of *beings* (the word *beings* between two bars) *speaking beings* - or not. These are in general living. I am saying "in general", because it is not at all necessary: we have the stone table companion who does not exist only on the stage where Mozart brings him to life, he walks around among us quite habitually!

Logical existence is something different and, as such, has its status. There is something of the subject (*du sujet*) from the moment we do logic, namely, when we have to handle signifiers.

What is involved in *de facto* existence, namely, that something results from the fact that there is something of the subject at the level of beings who speak, is something which like every *de facto* existence requires that a certain articulation should already have been established. Now, there is nothing to prove that this articulation takes place directly, that it is directly because of the fact that there are living beings or others who speak, that they are for all that and in an immediate fashion determined as subjects.

The *if and only if* is there to remind us of it. I am justifying here for you, the articulations we are going to have to go through; but they are themselves sufficiently unusual, sufficiently untraveled, for me to think I ought to indicate to you the general line of my plan in what I have to explain before you.

The small **o**, for its part, results from an operation which has a logical structure which is carried out not *in vivo*, not even on the living being, not at all properly speaking in the confused sense that the term 'body' preserves for us - it is not necessarily the 'pound of flesh', even though it could be, and that after all when it

is that, this does not arrange things too badly at all - but after all it appears that in this entity of *body* which so poorly grasped, there is something that lends itself to this operation of logical structure that remains for us to be determined. You know: *breast, scybalum, look, voice*, these detachable parts which are nevertheless entirely linked to the body - this is what is involved in the **o**-object.

(5) To make an **o** (*du o*) then, let us limit ourselves, since we are demanding some logical rigour of ourselves, to noting here, that a loan is necessary to provide it (*du pret-a-le-fournir*); for the moment this may be enough for us. But this fixes nothing! This fixes nothing for what we have to advance into: to make a phantasy, something ready-made is necessary.

You will allow me here to articulate some themes in their most provocative form, because in fact what is involved is to detach this domain from the fields of capture which make it inevitably return to the most fundamental illusions of what is called psychological experience. What I am going to advance is very specifically what shall be supported, what shall be grounded, what everything that I am going to unfold before you this year will show the consistency of.

To unfold, I already said it has been done a long time ago. When in the fourth year of my seminar I dealt with '*object relations*' already everything was said about the **o**-object as regards structure. The relation of small **o** to the Other is very specially and every sufficiently outlined in the indication that the subjective structure of the child is going to depend on the imaginary of the mother.

Undoubtedly, what it is a question here of us indicating is how this relation is articulated in properly logical terms, namely, arising radically from the function of the signifier. But it is to be noted that for the person who summarised at that time, what I was able to indicate in this sense, the slightest mistake - I mean: lack - as regards the belonging of each of the terms of these three functions which at that time were able to be designated as *subject, object* (in the sense of love-object) and the beyond of this: our present **o**-object - the slightest mistake, namely, the reference to the imagination of the subject, was able to obscure the relation which it was a matter of outlining there. Not to situate the function of the **o**-object in the field of the Other as such, leads to writing for example, that in the status of the pervert, it is at the same time the function, for him, of the phallus and the sadistic theory of coitus which are the determinants. While it is nothing of the kind, that it is at the level of the mother that these two incidents function.

I advance, therefore, into what is to be stated here: in order to make phantasy something ready-made (*pret-a-le-porter*) is necessary. What the phantasy wears has two names which concern one and the same *substance*, if you do not mind reducing this term to this function of *surface*, in the way that I articulated it last year. You already know some of the shapes of this primordial surface which we require to make our logical articulation function; they are closed surfaces; they have something of the *bubble* about them except for the fact they are not spherical. Let us call them *the bubble* and we will see what motivates, to what the existence of *bubbles* is attached in the real. This surface which I call *bubble* has properly speaking two names: *desire* and *reality*.

It is quite useless to exhaust oneself in articulating the *reality of desire* because, primordially, desire and reality are related in a seamless texture. They have no need of needlework, they have no need to be sewn together. There is no more 'reality of desire', we would say, than it would be correct to say 'the back of the front': there is one and the same fabric that has a front and a back. Again this fabric is woven in such a way that one goes without noticing it, since it has no cut or stitches, from one to the other of its faces, and that is why, before you, I made so much of a structure like that described as the *projective plane*, imaged on the board by what is called the *mitre* or the *cross-cap*. The fact that one passes from one face to the other without noticing, really means that there is only one of them, I mean one face. There nevertheless remains, as in the surfaces that I have evoked, one limited shape of which is the Moebius strip, that there is a front and a back! It is necessary to posit this in an original fashion, to recall how there is grounded this distinction between the front and the back as being *already-there* before any cut. It is clear that anyone - like the little animals that the mathematicians talk about about the function of surfaces - would here be totally implicated in this surface, would see very little in this distinction, which is nevertheless certain, between the front and the back - in other words: absolutely nothing.

Everything that refers, in the surfaces that I talked about before you in a series from the projective plan to the Klein bottle, has what one could call extrinsic properties which go very far! - I mean that most of what seems most evident to you when I image these surfaces, are not properties of the surfaces: it is in a third dimension that this takes on its function. Even the hole in the middle of torus, you must not believe that a purely toric being would even notice its function! Nevertheless, this function is not without consequences since it is in accordance with it that I - it must be now, good God, something almost like six years ago- already tried to articulate for those who were listening to me then (among whom I see some in the first row) - to articulate the relations of the subject to the Other in neurosis. It is, in effect, this third dimension in them of the Other, that is involved as such. It is with (7) respect to the Other and in so far that there is here this other term, that it may be a matter to distinguishing a front from a back, this is still not to distinguish *reality* and *desire*. What is the *front* or the *back* primarily at the locus of the Other, in the discourse of the Other, is played out there as heads or tails. This in no way concerns the subject *for the reason that as yet there is not one*.

The subject begins with the *cut*. If among these surfaces we take the most exemplary one because it is the simplest to handle, namely, the one that I called earlier the *cross-cap* or the *projective plane*, a cut and not just an indifferent one - I mean (I recall it for those for whom these images are still present in some way): if, I repeat, in a purely imaged way but one whose image is necessary, namely on this bubble whose walls (let us call them the anterior and the posterior) come
 here, in this no less imaginary stroke, to
 cross one another, this is how we
 represent the structure of what is
 involved: every cut which crosses this
 imaginary line will establish a total change in the structure of the surface, namely,
 that this entire surface becomes what, last year, we learned how to cut out in this

surface under the name of the **o**-object. Namely, that this entire surface becomes a disc that can be flattened, with a front and a back, with respect to which one has to say that one cannot pass from one to the other except by crossing an *edge*. This *edge* is precisely what makes this crossing impossible, at least this is how we can articulate its function. First of all, *in initio*, the bubble by this first cut - rich in an implication which does not leap to the eyes immediately - by this first cut, becomes an **o**-object.

This **o**-object preserves - because it has this relation from the beginning, for anything whatsoever about it to be explained - a fundamental relation with the Other. In effect, the subject has not at all appeared yet with the single cut through which this bubble, that the signifier establishes in the real, first lets fall this *foreign* object which the **o**-object is. It is necessary and sufficient, in the structure here indicated, that one should notice what is involved in this cut, in order also to notice that it has the property of joining up with itself simply by reduplicating itself - in other words that it is the same thing to make a single cut or to make two of them. I can consider the gap of what is here between my two circuits, which are only one, as the equivalent of the first cut which, in effect: if I separate it, is this gap which is (8) produced; but which - if in the fabric where it is a matter of performing this cut I make a double cut, I separate out from it, I restore what was lost in the first cut, namely, a surface whose front is continuous with the back. *I restore the primal non-separation between reality and desire.*

How, subsequently, we will define *reality*, what I called earlier the *ready-to-wear the phantasy (le pret a porter le fantasm)*, namely, what constitutes its frame and we will then see that reality, the whole of human reality, is nothing other than a *montage* of the symbolic and the imaginary - that the desire, at the centre of this apparatus, of this frame, that we call reality, is moreover properly speaking what covers - as I have always articulated - what must be distinguished from human reality, and which is properly speaking the *real*, which is never more than glimpsed. Glimpsed when the mask which is that of the phantasy vacillates, namely, the same thing as Spinoza grasped when he said: *desire is the essence of man.*

In truth, this word 'man' is a transitional term impossible to preserve in an a-theological system, which is not the case for Spinoza. For this Spinozian formula, we have simply to substitute this formula, this formula, whose miscognition leads psychoanalysts to the crudest aberrations, namely, that *desire is the essence of reality.*

But, this relation to the Other - without which nothing can be glimpsed about the real operation of this relation - is what I tried to sketch out for you as fundamental having recourse to the old support of the Euler circles.

Undoubtedly, this representation is inadequate, but if we accompany it with what it supports in logic, it may be of use. What emerges from the relation of the subject to the **o**-object is defined as a first circle, that another circle, that of the

Other cuts, the small **o** is their intersection.

It is because of this that for all time - in this relation of an originally structured *vel* which is the one in which I tried to articulate alienation for you three years ago now - that never can the subject be established except as a relation of lack to this **o** which is from the Other, except by wanting to be situated in the Other, equally not to have it except amputated from this **o**-object.

(9) The relation of the subject to the **o**-object involves what this Euler image takes as sense when it is raised to the level of the simple representation of two logical operations which are called *union* and *intersection*. Union depicts for us the liaison of the subject to the Other and intersection defines the **o**-object for us. The totality of these two logical operations are the very operations that I posited as original in saying that the **o** is the result effectuated by logical operations which must be two in number.

What does that mean? That it is essentially in the representation of a lack, in so far as it travels around, that there is instituted the fundamental structure of the *bubble* that we at first called the *stuff of desire*.

Here, on the plane of the imaginary relation there is established an exactly inverse relation to the one which links the *ego* to the image of the *other*. The ego is, as we shall see, doubly illusory. Illusory in the fact that it is subject to the avatars of the image, namely, in fact given over of the function of half or total sham (*du demi- ou du faux-semblant*). It is also illusory in the fact that it establishes a perverted logical order whose formula we will see - in psychoanalytic theory - in so far as it crosses imprudently this logical frontier, which supposes that at some given moment or other of the structure that is supposed to be primordial, what is rejected can be called 'the non-ego'. This is very precisely what we contest!

The order in question - which implies without one knowing it and in any case without it being said, the coming into play of language - in no way admits such a complementarity. And it is precisely what will make us put in the forefront of our articulation, this year, the discussion of the function of *negation*. Everyone knows and can see in this collection that is now being put at your disposal, that the first year of my seminar at Sainte Anne was dominated by a discussion on the *Verneinung* in which M. Jean Hippolyte whose intervention is reproduced in the appendix of this volume punctuated excellently what the *Verneinung* was for Freud. The secondary nature of the *Verneinung* is articulated there sufficiently powerfully for it already to be in no way admitted that it should appear right away at the level of this first division that we call *pleasure and unpleasure*.

This is why in this lack established by the structure of the *bubble*, which constitutes the stuff of the subject, there is no question of us limiting ourselves to the term, which is now out of date because of the confusions that it implies, of "negativity". The signifier can in no way - even if propaedeutically it was necessary for a time to repeat by rote its function to the ears that were listening to me - the signifier (and (10) you can note that I never properly articulated it as such) is not simply what

supports what is not there. The *fort-da*, in so far as it refers to maternal presence or absence, is not here the exhaustive articulation of the coming into play of the signifier. *The signifier does not designate what is not there, it engenders it. What is not there at the origin is the subject itself.* In other words: at the origin there is no *Dasein* except in the *o*-object. Namely, in an alienated form which remains to mark up to the end every statement about the *Dasein*. Is it necessary to recall here my formulae that there is no subject except through a signifier and for another signifier. It is the algorithm:

$$\begin{array}{c} \underline{S} \text{ ----- } S' \\ \$ \end{array}$$

S, in so far as it *takes the place* of the subject, only functions *for another signifier*.

Urverdrangung, or primal repression, is the following: what a signifier represents for another signifier. It does not bite on anything, it constitutes absolutely nothing, it accommodates itself to an absolute absence of *Dasein*.

For around sixteen centuries, at least, the Egyptians hieroglyphs remained as solitary as they were uncomprehended in the desert sands, it is clear and it has always been clear for everyone that this meant that each of the signifiers cut into the stone at least represented a subject for the other signifiers. If this was not the way things were no one would ever even have taken that to be writing! It is not at all necessary that a writing should mean something for anyone whatsoever in order for it to be a writing, and in order that, as such, it manifests that each sign represents a subject for the one which follows it.

If we call that *Urverdrangung*, it means that we are admitting that it appears to us to be in conformity with experience, to think about what happens - namely, that a subject emerges in the state of barred subject - as something which comes from a locus in which it is supposedly inscribed, into another locus in which it is going to be inscribed anew.

Namely, exactly in the same fashion in which I structured, formerly, the function of metaphor in so far as it is the model of what happens as regard the return of the repressed:

$$\begin{array}{cc} \underline{S'} & \underline{\$} \\ \$ & s \end{array}$$

In the same way, it is in the measure that with respect to this primary signifier, and we are going to see what it is, the barred subject that it abolishes comes to emerge at a place to which we are going to be able today to give a formula which has not yet been given: *the barred subject as such is what represents for a signifier - this signifier from it has arisen - a sense.*

(11) By sense I understand exactly what I made you understand at the beginning of one year in the formula: "*Colourless green ideas sleep furiously*". Which can be translated into French by the following which depicts admirably the ordinary order of your cogitations: "*Des idées vertement fuligineuses s'assoupissent avec fureur*".

This, precisely, for want of knowing that they are all addressed to this signifier of the lack of the subject that a certain first signifier becomes once the subject articulates his discourse. Namely - as all psychoanalysts glimpsed rather well, even though they were not able to say anything worthwhile about it – namely, the **o**-object which, at this level, fulfills precisely the function that Frege distinguishes from the sign under the name of *Bedeutung*. The **o**-object is the first *Bedeutung*, the first referent, the first reality, the *Bedeutung*, which remains because it is, after all, all that remains of thinking at the end of all the discourses.

Namely, what the poet can write without knowing what he is saying when he addresses himself to “his mother Intelligence from whom all sweetness flows”: “what is this neglect that allows her milk to dry up?”

Namely, a look that is grasped, the one transmitted at the birth of the clinic.

Namely, what one of my pupils, recently, at the Congress of the University of Johns Hopkins, took as a subject calling it “the voice in literary myth”.

Namely, also, what remains of so many thoughts dispensed in the form of a pseudo-scientific hotchpotch and that one can also call by its name, as I have done for a long time, about part of analytic literature and which is called shit. On the admission, moreover, of the authors! I mean except for a tiny failure of reasoning about the function of the **o**-object, one of them can very well articulate that there is no other support for the castration complex than what is modestly called “the anal object”.

This is not then a pinpointing of pure and simple judgement, but much more the necessity of an articulation, the simple statement of which ought to give us pause, since, after all, it is not formulated by the least qualified writers, and since it will be, in fact, this year, our method, formulating the logic of the phantasy, to show where, in analytic theory, it has tripped up. I have not, after all, named this author whom many of you know. Let it be clearly understood that the flaw in reasoning is still reasoned, namely, examinable (*arraisonnable*), but not necessarily so. And the **o**-object in question can in a certain article show itself quite nakedly and not being appreciated by itself. This is what we will have occasion to show in certain texts, after all, as regards which I do not see why, as a kind of practical work, I should not soon distribute rather generally to you, if I have enough at my disposal, which is almost the case. This will happen at the moment when we shall have to attack certain register; and from now, I want, all the same to mark, what prevents there from being admitted certain interpretations which have been given to my function of metaphor, (I mean of those of which I have just given you the least ambiguous example) by confusing it with anything whatsoever that makes of it a sort of proportional relation.

When I wrote that substitution - the fact of grafting a signifier substituted for another signifier into the signifying chain - was the source and the origin of all meaning, what I articulated is correctly interpreted in the form in which, today, through the emergence of this barred subject as such, I gave you the formula. Which requires of us the task of giving it its logical status, but to demonstrate to you immediately the example of the urgency of such a task, or even of its necessity, note that the confusion was made in this four fold relation

:

$$\frac{S'}{S} \qquad \frac{S}{s}$$

(the S', the two S's and the small s of the signified) with this relation of proportion in which one of my interlocutors, M. Perelman, the author of a theory of argumentation, promoting once again an abandoned rhetoric, articulates metaphor, seeing in it the function of analogy and that is from the relation of a signifier to another in so far as a third reproduces it by giving rise to an ideal signified that he grounds the function of metaphor. To which I replied, at the appropriate time. It is only from such a metaphor that there can emerge the formula that was given, namely: S' over small s of meaning enthroned above a first register of inscription of which the *Underdrawn*, of which the *Unterdruckt*, of which the other register substantiating the unconscious, is supposed to be constituted by the strange relation of the signifier to another signifier, and we are told that it is from there that language takes its ballast:

$$\frac{S'}{s} \\ \frac{S}{S}$$

I think that you now sense that this formula, described as that of “reduced language” (*du langage réduit*), is based on an error which is to introduce into this four-fold relation the structure of proportionality. It is difficult to see, in fact, what can emerge from it, since, in fact, the relation then becomes rather difficult to interpret. But we do not see in this reference to a reduced language any other plan (13) (which is moreover admitted) than to reduce our formula that the unconscious is structured like a language – which, more than ever, is to be taken literally.

And since it is obvious that today I will not fulfill the five points that I announced to you, I have nonetheless been able to punctuate for you what is the key of the whole structure and what renders an enterprise, which thus finds itself articulated - precisely at the beginning of the little collection of which I spoke to you earlier which concerns the turning point in my relations with my audience that was constituted by the Congress of Bonneval –by its futility: it is erroneous to structure in this way on a so-called myth of reduced language any deduction of the unconscious, for the following reason: *it is of the nature of each and every signifier not to be able in any case to signify itself.*

It is too late for me to impose on you, in a hurry, the writing of this inaugural point for the whole of set theory, which implies that this theory can only function starting from an axiom described as that of *specification*. Namely, that the only interest in making a set function is when there exists another set which can be defined by the definition of certain x's in the first as freely satisfying a certain proposition. “Freely” means: independently of any quantification: small number or all. The result of this, (I will begin my next lecture with these formulae) the result of this is that by positing any set whatsoever, by defining in it the proposition that I indicated as specifying x's in it, as being simple that *x is not a member of itself*, - that which, as regards what interests us, namely, for the following, which is necessary once one wishes to introduces the myth

of a reduced language: that there is a language which is not one, namely, which constitutes, for example the totality of signifiers. What is proper to the totality of signifiers, I will show it to you in detail, involves the following as necessary - if we simply admit that the signifier is not able to signify itself - involves the following as necessary: that there is something that does not belong to this set. It is not possible to reduce language, simply because of the fact that language cannot constitute a closed set; in other words: that *there is no Universe of discourse*.

For those who may have had some difficulty in understanding what I have just formulated, I will recall simply the following which I already said at the appropriate time: that the truths that I have just stated are simply those which appeared in a confused fashion at the naive period of the establishment of set theory in the form of what is wrongly called Russell's paradox - because it is not a paradox, it is an image -: the catalogue of all the catalogues which do not contain themselves. What does that mean? Either it contains itself or it contradicts its definition, or it does not contain itself and in that case it fails in its mission. This is not at all a paradox. One has only to declare that in making such a catalogue one cannot take things all the way, and for good reasons

But, what I earlier gave you the statement of, in the formula that in the Universe of discourse there is nothing which contains everything, this is something which properly speaking encourages us to be particularly prudent as regards the handling of what is called whole and part and to require us, at the origin, to distinguish very severely - this will be the object of my next lecture - *the One from the totality* - which precisely I have just refuted, saying that at the level of discourse there is no Universe, which undoubtedly leaves still more in suspense whether we can suppose it to be anywhere else - to distinguish this One from the *countable One* in so far as, of its nature it slips away and slides, so as to be able to be the One only by repeating itself at least once and closing in on itself, to establish, at the origin the lack involved: the one involved in the establishment of the subject.

Seminar 2: Wednesday 23 November 1966

I am going to try today to trace out for your use some relations that, I would say, are essential and fundamental: to firm up at the beginning what constitutes our subject this year. I hope that no one is going to object that they are abstract, for the simple reason that this would be a quite improper term, as you are going to see! There is nothing more *concrete* than what I am going to put forward, even if this term does not correspond to the quality of density which is its connotation for many. It is a matter of making tangible for you one or other proposition like the one that up to now I have only put forward under the appearance of a sort of aphorism, which may have played at one or other turning points of our discourse the role of axiom, such as the following: *there is no metalanguage* - a formula which has the appearance of being properly speaking the contrary of everything that is given, if not in the experience, at least in the writings of those who try to ground the function of language. At the very least, in many cases, they show in language some differentiations that they find it good to begin from, starting for example from an object-language, in order to construct on this base a certain number of differentiations. The very act of such an operation seems to imply that in order to speak about language one should use something which is not part of it and which, in a way, is supposed to envelope it with a different order than the one that makes it function.

I believe that the solution of these apparent contradictions which, in short, manifest themselves in discourse, in what is said, is to be found in a function which it seems to me essential to bring out, at least from the angle that I am going to try to inaugurate it today - to bring out and especially for our purposes - for the logic of phantasy, it seems to me, can in no way be articulated without reference to what is involved - namely, to something that at least in order to announce it I pinpoint under the term of writing (*l'écriture*).

Naturally, this is not to say, for all that, that it is what you know under the ordinary (2) connotations of this word. But if I choose it, it is because it must have some relation with what I have to state.

A point, precisely, on which we are going to have to operate ceaselessly today is the following: *that it is not the same thing, after we have said it, to write it or indeed to write that one is saying it*. For the second operation, essential to the function of writing, precisely from the angle, from the point of view whose importance I am going today to show, as regards our most appropriate references in this year's subject, this, I am saying, immediately and from the beginning presents itself with paradoxical consequences. After all, why not, in order to alert you, start from what I already presented before you from a particular angle? Without you

being able to say, I believe, that I am repeating myself. It is sufficiently in the nature of the things that are discussed here, that they emerge from some angle, from some line that breaks through a surface to which by the simple fact of speaking we are forced to keep - that they should appear at some moment before they really take on their function. Here then, I remind you, is what I one day wrote on the board and which someone, after all, who is here will render me the service of writing in my place, so that I do not have to immerse myself to the level of your dear heads.

Madame! Take this little piece of chalk, make a rectangle, write no! make it very big almost as big as the board, there you are! Write: 1,2,3,4, on the first line. No! inside the frame 1,2,3,4, and then write: the smallest whole number which is not written on the board, beneath 1,2,3,4 (*laughter*). No, write the sentence: "the smallest whole number which is not written on this board".

1 2 3 4
the smallest whole number which is not written on this board

(3) This could have been presented in a different form, namely - instead of doing me the service which has been done, and I thank the person who was good enough to write this sentence that you see written out - that I could have, without writing it, ask you or even, if you wish, make a little person from those mouth there would emerge what they call in comic strips a bubble: "the smallest whole number which is not written on this board", in which case you would all have been in agreement and I would not have contradicted that it is the number 5. It is clear that from the moment that this sentence is written: "the smallest whole number which is not written on this board", the number 5 - being written, there by this very fact - is excluded. You have only to search then whether the smallest whole number which is not written on the board might not, by chance, be the number 6 and you find yourself with the same difficulty, namely, that from the moment that you pose the question, the number 6 as the smallest whole number which is not written on the board, is written on it and so on.

This, like many paradoxes is only of interest of course for what we want to make of it. What follows is going to show you that it was perhaps not useless to introduce the function of writing from this angle from which it may present some enigma to you. It is, let us say, properly speaking, a logical enigma and it is no worse a way than any other to show you that there is, in any case, some close relation between the apparatus of writing and what one can call logic.

This also deserves to be recalled, at the start, at the moment at which - the majority of those who are here, I think, having a adequate notion of it, even for those who have none this can serve as a point to hang onto - at which to recall that undoubtedly, if there is something which characterises the new state, undoubtedly,

undoubtedly new... - in this sense that they are far from and in no way able to be contained, to be reabsorbed within the framework of what was called classical or again traditional logic - the new developments, I am saying, of logic are entirely linked to these operations of writing.

So let us pose a question. Ever since I have been speaking about the function of language, ever since, in order to articulate what is involved in the subject of the unconscious, I constructed - I must say that it was necessary for me to do it stage by stage, and before an audience of whom the least one can say is that they needed to be coaxed in order to listen - that I constructed the graph which is designed to order precisely that which, in the function of the word, is defined by this field, this field which the structure of language requires: it is properly what is called the *paths of discourse* or again what I called the *defiles of the signifier*. Somewhere in this graph there is inscribed the letter capital O on the right, on the lower line: if someone would rub this out I could rapidly draw the whole graph for those who do not know it. This small o that in one sense one can identify to the locus of the (4) Other, which in fact is the locus where there is produced everything that can be described as a statement in the broadest sense of the term, namely, what constitutes what I, incidentally, called the treasury of the signifier - which is not limited, in principle, to the words in the dictionary. When, precisely, correlatively to the construction of this graph I began to speak about the witticism, taking things from the angle, which perhaps appeared the most surprising and the most difficult for my listeners at that time, but which was precisely indispensable to avoid any confusion: the *non-sensical* feature- not senseless but close to this operation that English defines extremely well, makes resonate under the term of *nonsense* - that exists in the witticism; whose kinship, after all, in order to make understood the dimension that it was a matter of bringing out, I then showed - at least at the level of reception, of tympanic vibration - the kinship it has with what was, for us, at a testing time, the *personal message*. I alluded to the personal message - namely, every statement, in fact, in so far as it is cut up "non-sensically" - the last time, by recalling the celebrated: "*Colourless green ideas, etc*". The totality of statements then - I am not saying of propositions - also forms part of this Universe of discourse which is situated in capital O.

The question which is posed and which is properly a question of structure, the one which gives its sense to the fact that I say that the unconscious is structured *like a language*, which in my stating it is a pleonasm, since I identify structure to this "like a language", in the structure, precisely, that I am going to try today to make function before you.

What is involved in this Universe of discourse, in so far as it implies this operation of the signifier? In so far as it defines these two dimensions of metaphor - in as much as the chain can always graft itself (*se enter*) onto another chain along the path of the operation of substitution - in so far as on the other hand, in its essence, it signifies this sliding which comes from the fact that no signifier belongs properly speaking to any meaning. Having recalled this domain of the Universe of discourse which permits this sea (*mer*) of variations in what constitutes meanings - this essentially moving and transitory order, where nothing, as I said at one time, can be guaranteed except from the function of what I called in a metaphorical form:

buttoning points (points de capiton)- today, it is this Universe of discourse that it is a matter of questioning, starting from this single axiom regarding which it is a matter of knowing what it may specify within this Universe of discourse. An axiom which is one that I put forward the last time: that the signifier - this signifier that we have, up to now, defined by its function of representing a subject for another signifier - this signifier, what does it represent faced with itself, with its repetition as signifying unit? This is defined by the axiom that no signifier - even if it is, *and very precisely when it is*, reduced to its minimal form, the one that we call the *letter* - can signify itself.

(5) Mathematical usage depends precisely on the fact that when we have somewhere - and not only, as you know, in an exercise of algebra - when we have posited somewhere a letter capital A, we take it up, subsequently, as if it were still the same the second time that we make use of it; do not raise this objection, today is not the day I am going to give you a class in mathematics; you should know, simply, that no correct statement of any usage whatsoever of letters - even if it were, precisely, in what is closest to us today, for example, in the use of a Markov chain - would require of any teacher (and this is what Markov himself did) a stage, which is in a way propaedeutic, to make clearly sensed the impasse, the arbitrariness, what is absolutely unjustifiable in this employing, the second time, of the A (quite apparent moreover) to represent the first A as if it were still the same. It is a difficulty which is at the source of the mathematical use of this so-called identity. We do not have to deal with it explicitly here today, because we are not dealing with mathematics. I want simply to recall to you that the foundation that the signifier is not grounded by signifying itself is admitted by those very people who on occasion may make a use that is contradictory to this principle - at least in appearance. It would be easy to see through what intermediary this is possible, but I do not have the time to go astray in this. I want simply to pursue - and without tiring you any more - my proposition which is then the following: **what is the consequence in this Universe of discourse of this principle: that the signifier cannot signify itself?**

What does this axiom specify in this Universe of discourse in so far as it is constituted, in short, by everything that can be said? What sort of specification is it and does the specification that this axiom determines, form part of the Universe of discourse? If it does not form part of it, this is undoubtedly a problem for us. What specifies, I repeat, the axiomatic statement that the signifier cannot signify itself, will have the consequence of specifying something which, as such, would not be in the Universe of discourse. Even though, precisely, we have admitted into its ambit to say that it encompasses everything that can be said. Are we going to find ourselves in some diversion which would signify the following: that what, thus, cannot form part of the Universe of discourse, cannot be said in some way or other? And, of course, it is clear that since we are speaking about it, about what I am bringing to you, it is obviously not to tell you that it is the ineffable thematic regarding which you know that from pure consistency and without for all that belonging to the school of Mr. Wittgenstein, I consider as: that it is useless to speak.

(6) Before coming to such a formula, and you can see after all that I am not sparing you either its relief or the impasse that it constitutes, since moreover we are going to have to come back to it - I really do everything to open up the paths to what I am trying to get you to follow me in - let us take care to put to the test the following: that what specifies the axiom that the signifier cannot signify itself, remains part of the Universe of discourse.

What do we then have to posit? What is at stake in, what specifies the relation that I stated in the form that the signifier cannot signify itself - let us take arbitrarily the usage of a little sign which serves in this logic which is founded on writing, this *W* in which you will recognise the shape (these games are not perhaps purely accidental) of my diamond, in a way with its hat knocked off, that has been opened up like a little box, and which serves, this *W*, to designate, in the logic of sets, *exclusion*. In other words, what is designated by the Latin *or*, which is expressed by an *aut*: one or the other. The signifier in its repeated presentation only functions *qua* functioning the first time or functioning the second, between one and the other there is a radical gap, this is what is meant by the signifier cannot signify itself.

S W S

We suppose, as we have said, that what determines this axiom as a specification in the Universe of discourse, and that we are going to designate by a signifier: B - an essential signifier which you will notice can be appropriated to something the axiom specifies: that it cannot, in a certain relation and from a certain relation, generate any meaning - B is very specifically the signifier to which there is no objection to it being specified by the fact that it marks, as I might say, this sterility. The signifier in itself being precisely characterised by the following: that there is nothing obligatory about it, that it is far from being in the first outline that it generates a meaning. It is this that gives me the right to symbolise by the signifier B this feature: that the relation of the signifier to itself does not generate any meaning.

But let us start, to begin with, from the following which after all seems to be required: the fact is that something that I am in the process of stating to you forms part of the Universe of discourse - let us see what results from that. That is why I make use for the moment - because after all it does not seem to me to be inappropriate - of my little diamond in order to say that B forms part of A, that it has relations with it whose richness I will certainly have to bring into play for you throughout this year and whose complexity I indicated to you the last time, by decomposing this little sign in all the binary fashions in which it can be done.

B A

(7) It is a matter of knowing, then, whether there is not some contradiction resulting from it, namely, whether from the very fact that we have written that the signifier cannot signify itself, we can write that this B, not signifies itself, but,

forming part of the Universe of discourse, can be considered as something which, in the style which characterises what we have called a specification, can be written: *B forms part of itself.*

It is clear that the question arises: does B form part of itself? In other words what the notion of specification grounds, namely, what we have learned to distinguish in several logical varieties, I mean that I hope that there are enough people here who know that the functioning of a set is not strictly speaking super-imposable on that of a class, but that in fact all of this at the origin, must be rooted in this principle of a specification. Here, we find ourselves before something whose kinship in fact should sufficiently resonate in your ears with what I called the last time Russell's paradox, in so far as to what I am stating, that here, in the terms which interest us, the function of sets - in so far as it does something that I, for my part, have not yet done, for I am not here to introduce it but to maintain you in a field which logically is on this hither side, but to introduce something which it is the opportunity in this connection to try to grasp: namely, what is grounded by the bringing into play of the apparatus described as set theory, which today is presented as something quite original, undoubtedly, for any mathematical statement and for which logic is nothing but what mathematical symbolism can grasp - this function of sets will also be the principle, and this is what I put in question, of the whole foundation of logic.

If there is a logic of the phantasy it is indeed because it is more fundamental (*principielle*) with respect to any logic which flows into the formalising defiles where it has revealed itself, as I have said, to be so fruitful in the modern epoch.

Let us try then to see what Russell's paradox means, when it covers something which is not far from what is there on the board. Simply, it promotes as altogether enveloping this fact of a type of signifier, that it takes moreover for a class. A strange error! ... To say for example that the word "obsolete" represents a class in which it would itself be included under the pretext that the word "obsolete" is obsolete, is undoubtedly a little conjuring trick, which has strictly no interest except to found as a class the signifiers which do not signify themselves. While precisely we posit as an axiom, here, that in no case can the signifier signify itself and that it is from there that one must start to sort oneself out, even if it were only to see that it is necessary to explain differently that the word "obsolete" can be qualified as obsolete. It is absolutely indispensable to bring into it what the division of the subject introduces.

(8) But let us leave "obsolete" and let us start from the opposition that Russell sets up to mark something which is supposed to be a contradiction in the formula which might be stated as follows:

$$(B \quad A \quad / \quad S \quad W \quad S)$$

from a sub-set B whose status it would be impossible to guarantee, starting from the fact that it would be specified in a different set A, by a characteristic such that an element of A would not contain itself.

Is there some sub-set defined by this proposition of the existence of elements which do not contain themselves?

It is undoubtedly easy, in this condition, to show the contradiction that exists in this because we have only to take an element y as forming part of B , as an element of B :

$$(y \in B)$$

for us to see the consequences that there then are in making it at the same time, as such, form part, as an element, of A :

$$(y \in B) \quad (y \in A \quad / \quad y \in y)$$

and not being an element of itself. The contradiction is revealed by putting B in the place of y :

$$(B \in B) \quad (B \in A \quad / \quad B \in B)$$

and seeing that the formula operates from the fact that every time we make B an element of B , there results, because of the solidarity of the formula that since B forms part of A , it ought not to form part of itself, if on the other hand - B having been put, substituted for the place of this y - if on the other hand it does not form part of itself, satisfying the parenthesis on the right of the formula, it then forms part of itself being one of these y 's which are elements of B .

This is the contradiction before which Russell's paradox put us.

It is a matter knowing whether, in our register, we can stop at it, provided we notice in passing what is meant by the contradiction highlighted in set theory, which would allow us perhaps to say the way in which set theory is specified in logic, namely, what step forward it constitutes as compared to the more radical one that we are trying to establish here.

The contradiction involved at this level where Russell's paradox is articulated, depends precisely - as the simple usage of words shows us - on the fact that I *say* it. For if I do not *say* it, nothing prevents this formula, the second one, very precisely, from holding up as such, written out and there is nothing to say that its usage will stop there. What I *say* here is no word play, for set theory as such has absolutely no other support except the fact that I *write* as such, that everything that can be *said* (9) about a difference between the elements is excluded from the operation.

To write, to manipulate the literal operation which constitutes set theory consists in writing, as such, what I am saying there: namely, that the first set can be formed at once from the charming person who is in the process today, for the first time, of typing my discourse, from the mist on this window and from an idea which just now is going through my head, that this constitutes a set, from this fact, that I *say* expressly that no other difference exists than the one which is constituted by

the fact that I can apply to these three objects, that I have just named and which you see are rather heteroclitite, a unary stroke upon each one and nothing else.

Here then is what ensures that since we are not at the level of such a specification, since what I bring into play is the Universe of discourse, my question does not encounter Russell's paradox, namely, that there is deduced no impasse, no impossibility to the following, that B about which I do not know, but which I have begun to suppose forms part of the Universe of discourse, undoubtedly for its part, although constituted from the specification that *the signifier cannot signify itself* - may perhaps have this sort of relation to itself which escape Russell's paradox, namely, to demonstrate to us something which might be perhaps its own dimension and in connection with which we are going to see in which status it forms part or not of the Universe of discourse.

In effect, if I was careful to remind you of the existence of Russell's paradox, it is probably because I am going to be able to make use of it to make you sense something. I am going to make you sense it first of all in the simplest fashion and, after that, in a fashion that is a little bit richer. I am going to make you sense it in the simplest fashion because I am prepared, for some time now, for any concession (*laughter*). People want me to say simple things, well then, I will say simple things! You are already all the same, sufficiently formed to following, thanks to my care, to know that there is not such a direct path towards understanding. Perhaps, even if what I tell you appears simple, there will remain with you, all the same, a little suspicion...

A catalogue of catalogues: here indeed, in a first approach, is what is involved as a signifier. Why should we be surprised that it does not contain itself? Naturally, since this seems, to us, to be required from the beginning. Nevertheless, there is nothing to prevent the catalogue of all the catalogues which do not contain themselves from printing itself inside! In truth, nothing would prevent it, even the contradiction that Lord Russell would deduce from it!

But let us consider precisely this possibility that exists, that in order not to contradict itself, it does not inscribe itself in itself.

Let us take the first catalogue; there are only four catalogues, up to then, which do not contain themselves:

A B C D.

(10) Let us suppose that there appears another catalogue which does not contain itself, we add it on: E.

Why is it inconceivable to think that there is a first catalogue which contains A B C D, a second catalogue which contains B C D E, and not to be surprised that each of them lacks this letter which is properly the one which would designate itself?

But from the moment that you generate this sequence, you have only to arrange it around the circumference of a disc and see that it is not because in each

catalogue one of them will be missing, indeed even a greater number, that the circle of these catalogues will not add up to something which is precisely what corresponds to the catalogue of all the catalogues which do not contain themselves. Simply what will constitute this chain will have this property of being an additional signifier (*un signifiant en plus*) which is constituted from the closure of the chain. An uncountable signifier and which, precisely because of this fact, is able to be designated by a signifier. Because, being nowhere, there is no difficulty in a signifier arising which designates it as *an additional signifier*: the one that is not grasped in the chain.

I take another example: catalogues are not made, in the first place, to catalogue catalogues, they catalogue objects which have some right (*titre*) to be there (the word "*titre*" having here all its importance). It would be easy to become engaged on this path in order to open up the dialectic of the catalogue of all the catalogues, but I am going to go to a more lively path, since it is necessary that I should leave you some exercises for your own imagination.

The book: with the book we enter, apparently, into the Universe of discourse. Nevertheless, in the measure that the book has some referent and that it also may be a book that has to cover a certain surface, in the register of some title (*titre*), the book will include a bibliography. Which means something which is presented properly for us to image the following, what results in so far as the catalogues live or do not live in the Universe of discourse: if I make the catalogue of all the books that a bibliography contains, naturally I am not making a catalogue of bibliographies! Nevertheless, in cataloguing these books, in so far as in the bibliographies they refer on to one another, I am very well cover the totality of all the bibliographies.

Here indeed is where there may be situated the phantasy which is properly the poetic phantasy *par excellence*, the one which obsessed Mallarme: of the *absolute Book*. It is at this level where things are tied together at the level of the usage not of pure signifier, but of the purified signifier, in so far as I *say* - and that I *write* that I *say* - that the signifier is here articulated as distinct from any signified and I then see there being outlined the possibility of this *absolute Book*, whose property would be that it would encompass the whole signifying chain, properly in the following: that it may no longer signify anything. In this, then, there is something that proves to be founded in existence at the level of the Universe of discourse, but (11) we have to suspend this existence on the proper logic which that of the phantasy may constitute, because moreover, it is the only one that can tell us the way in which this region is attached to the Universe of discourse. Undoubtedly, it is not excluded that it should enter it, but on the other hand, it is quite certain that it specifies itself in it, not at all by this purification of which I spoke earlier, for purification is not at all possible of what is essential to the Universe of discourse, namely, meaning. And were I to speak to you for another four hours about this *absolute Book* it would nevertheless remain that everything that I tell you has a sense.

What characterises the structure of this B - in so far as we know where to situate it in the Universe of discourse, inside or outside - is very precisely this feature that I announced earlier, in making for you the circle, simply of this A B C D E, in so far as by simply closing the chain, there results that each group of four can easily leave outside itself the extraneous signifier, which can serve to designate the group, for the simple reason that it is not represented in it, and that nevertheless the whole chain will be found to constitute the totality of all these signifiers, giving rise to this additional unit, uncountable as such, which is essential for a whole series of structures, which are precisely the ones on which I founded, since the year 1960, my whole operation (*opératoire*) of identification. Namely, what you find of it, for example, in the structure of the torus, being quite obvious that by buckling on the torus a certain number of circuits, by making operate a series of complete circuits at a cut and by making of them the number that you like (naturally the more of them there are, the more satisfying it is, but the more obscure it is). It is enough to make two of them to see there appearing at the same time this third required for these two to buckle together and, as I might say, for the line to bite its own tail: it will be this third circuit, which is secured by the buckling around the central hole, through which it is impossible not to pass in order for the first two loops to cut one another.

If I am not making any drawing on the board today, it is because in truth - in saying it - I am saying enough about it for you to understand me and also a good deal too little for me to show you that they are at least two paths, at the origin, along which this can be put into effect and that the result is not at all the same as regards the emergence of this additional One (*Un en plus*) that I am in the process of speaking to you about.

This simply suggestive indication contains nothing to exhaust the richness of what the least topological study provides us with.

What it is a matter today simply of indicating, is that the specificity of this world of writing is precisely to distinguish itself from discourse by the fact that it can close. And, closing on itself, it is precisely from there that there arises this possibility of a "one" which has a completely different status to that of the one which unifies and which encompasses. But from this "one" which already, from the simple closing - without there being any need to go into the status of repetition, which nevertheless (12) is closely linked to it - just from its closing, it gives rise to what has the status of the *additional one*, in so far as it is only sustained by writing and that it is nevertheless open, in its possibility, to the Universe of discourse; since it is sufficient, as I pointed out to you, for me to *write* - but it is necessary that this writing should take place - what I *say* about the exclusion of this *one* is enough to generate this other plane where there unfolds properly speaking the whole function of logic; the thing being sufficiently indicated to us by the stimulus that logic received, by submitting itself to the simple operation of writing, except for the fact that it still fails to remember that this only reposes on the function of a *lack*, in the very thing that is written and which constitutes the status, as such, of the function of writing.

I am saying simple things to you today, and perhaps this in itself risks making this discourse appear disappointing to you. Nevertheless, you would be wrong not to see that this is inserted into a register of questions which henceforth give to the function of writing something which cannot but have repercussions down to the deepest level of any possible conception of structure. For if the writing of which I speak is only supported from the return buckled onto itself, from a cut (as I illustrated it from the function of the torus), we find ourselves lead to the following: that precisely the most fundamental studies, linked to the progress of mathematical analysis, have put us in a position to isolate in it the function of the *edge*.

Now, once we speak about edge, there is nothing which can make us substantify this function, in so far as here you might improperly deduce that this function of writing is to limit this changableness (*mouvant*) of which I spoke to you earlier as being that of our thoughts or of the Universe of discourse. Far from it! If there is something which is structured as edge, what it itself limits is in a position to enter in its turn into the edging function. And here indeed is what we are going to have to deal with.

Or indeed - and this is the other face on which I intend to end - it is the reminder of what has always been known about this function of the *unary stroke* (*trait unaire*).

I will end by evoking the 26th verse of a book which I have already made use of, at one time, to begin to make understood what is involved in the function of the signifier: the book of Daniel and in connection with the story about zouave's trousers which is designated in it by a word which remains in the state of what is called an hapax and which is impossible to translate unless it was the socks that the characters in question wore.

In the book of Daniel, you already have the theory of the subject that I am presenting to you and precisely arising at the limit of this Universe of discourse. It is the famous story of the dramatic festival of which we no longer find, moreover, the slightest trace in the annals, but no matter!

Mene, Mene, for this is how verse 26 is expressed, *Mene, Mene, Tekel, Parsin*, which is usually transcribed in the famous *Mene, Tekel, Parsin*. It does not seem useless to me for us to notice that *Mene, Mene* which means "counted" - as Daniel pointed out in interpreting it to the worried prince - is expressed twice in order to show the most simple repetition of what constitutes counting; it is enough to count up to two for everything that is involved in this *additional one*, which is the true root of the function of repetition in Freud, to take place and to be marked in the following: except for the fact that contrary to what occurs in set theory, one does not *say* it.

One does not say the following: that what repetition seeks to repeat is precisely what escapes, because of the very function of the mark, in so far as the mark is original in the function of repetition. That is why repetition takes place, because the mark is repeated, but that for the mark to provoke the sought-for repetition, it is necessary that on what is sought because the mark marks the first time, this very

mark is effaced at the level of what it has marked and that is why what is sought for in repetition, of its nature slips away, allows there to be lost the fact that the mark cannot not be reduplicated, that by effacing, on what is to be repeated, the first mark, namely, to let it slip out of reach.

Mene, Mene ... something in what is rediscovered lacks weight: *Tekel*. The prophet Daniel interprets it, and interprets it by saying to the prince that he was in effect weighed, but that something is missing there, which is expressed as "*Parsin*". This radical lack, this first lack which flows from the very function of the *counted* as such, this *additional One* that one cannot count, it is this which constitutes properly this lack to which it is a matter for us of giving its logical function, in order that it should secure what is involved in the final "*Parsin*", the one which precisely explodes what is involved in the Universe of discourse, of the bubble, of the empire in question, of the sufficiency of what is closed in on the image of the imaginary whole.

Here is exactly the path along which there is brought to bear the effect of the entry of what structures discourse at the most radical point, which is undoubtedly - as I always said and accentuated, to the extent of employing the most popular images for it - the *letter* that is involved, but the *letter* in so far as it is excluded, as it is lacking.

This is indeed about what - that moreover, since today I am making a new irruption into this Jewish tradition - to tell the truth, I had so many things prepared even to the extent of having come to grips with a little exercise of learning to read Massoretic, a whole work which was in a way put in cold storage because of the fact that I was not able to construct the thematic that I had the intention of developing around the Name of the Father - and that moreover, there remains something of all of this and specifically that at the level of history of Creation: "*Berechit, Bara, Elohim*" the Book begins, namely by a beth. And it is said that this very letter that we have used today, the capital A, otherwise called Aleph, was not, at the beginning, among those from which there emerged the whole of creation.

(14) This indeed is here to indicate to us, but in a fashion that is in a way turned in on itself, that it is in so far as one of these letters is absent that the others function, but that no doubt it is in its very lack that there resides the whole fruitfulness of the operation.

I am going to try today to trace out for your use some relations that, I would say, are essential and fundamental to secure at the beginning what constitutes our subject this year. I hope that no one is going to object that they are abstract, for the simple reason that this would be a quite improper term, as you are going to see! There is nothing more *concrete* than what I am going to put forward, even if this term does not correspond to the quality of density which is its connotation for many. It is a matter of making tangible for you one or other proposition like the one that up to now I have only put forward under the appearance of a sort of aphorism, which may have played at one or other turning point of our discourse the role of axiom, such as the following: *there is no metalanguage* - a formula which has the appearance of being, properly speaking, contrary to everything that is given, if not in the experience, at least in the writings of those who try to ground the function of language. At the very least, in many cases, they show in language some differentiations that they find it good to begin from, starting, for example, from an object-language, in order to construct on this base a certain number of differentiations. The very act of such an operation seems to imply that in order to speak about language one should use something which is not part of it or which, in a way, is supposed to envelope it in an order different to the one that makes it function.

I believe that the solution of these apparent contradictions which, in short, manifest themselves in discourse, in what is said, is to be found in a function which it seems to me essential to bring out, at least from the angle that I am going to try to inaugurate it today - to bring out and especially for our purposes - because the logic of phantasy, it seems to me, can in no way be articulated without reference to what is involved, namely, to something that at least in order to announce it I pinpoint under the term of writing (*l'écriture*).

Naturally, this is not to say, for all that, that it is what you know under the ordinary (2) connotations of this word. But if I choose it, it is because it must have some relation with what I have to state.

A point, precisely, on which we are going to have to operate ceaselessly today is the following: *that it is not the same thing, after we have said it, to write it or indeed to write that one is saying it*. Because the second operation, essential to the function of writing, precisely from the angle, from the point of view whose importance I am going to show today, as regards our most appropriate references in this year's subject, this, I am saying, immediately and from the beginning presents itself with paradoxical consequences. After all, why not, in order to alert you, start from what I already presented before you from a particular angle? Without you being able to say, I believe, that I am repeating myself. It is sufficiently in the nature of the things that are discussed here, that they emerge from some angle, from some line that breaks through a surface to which we are forced to keep by the simple fact of speaking - that they should appear at some moment before they really take on their function. Here, then, I remind you, is what I one day wrote on the board and which someone, after all, who is here will render me the service of writing in my place, so that I do not have to immerse myself to the level of your dear heads.

Madame! Take this little piece of chalk, make a rectangle, write... no! make it very big almost as big as the board, there you are! Write: 1,2,3,4, on the first line. No! inside the frame... 1,2,3,4, and then write: the smallest whole number which is not written on the board, beneath 1,2,3,4 (*laughter*). No, write the sentence: "the smallest whole number which is not written on this board".

1 2 3 4
the smallest whole number which is not written on this board

(3) This could have been presented in a different form, namely - instead of doing me the service which has been done, and I thank the person who was good enough to write this sentence that you see written out - that I could, without writing it, have asked you or even, if you wish, made a little person from those mouth there would emerge what they call in comic strips a bubble: "the smallest whole number which is not written on this board". In which case you would all have been in agreement, and I would not have contradicted you, that it is the number 5. It is clear that from the

moment that this sentence is written: “the smallest whole number which is not written on this board”, the number 5 - being written, there by this very fact - is excluded. You have only to search, then, whether the smallest whole number which is not written on the board might not, perchance, be the number 6, and you find yourself with the same difficulty, namely, that from the moment that you pose the question, the number 6 as the smallest whole number which is not written on the board, is written on it and so on.

This, like many paradoxes, is only of interest, of course, for what we want to make of it. What follows is going to show you that it was, perhaps, not useless to introduce the function of writing from this angle from which it may present some enigma to you. It is, let us say, properly speaking, a logical enigma and it is no worse a way than any other to show you that there is, in any case, some close relation between the apparatus of writing and what one can call logic. This also deserves to be recalled, at the start, at the moment at which - the majority of those who are here, I think, having a adequate notion of it, even for those who have none this can serve as a point to hang onto - at which to recall that undoubtedly, if there is something which characterises the new state, undoubtedly, undoubtedly new... - in this sense that they are far from and in no way able to be contained, to be reabsorbed within the framework of what was called classical or again traditional logic - the new developments, I am saying, of logic are entirely linked to these operations of writing.

So let us pose a question. Ever since I have been speaking about the function of language, ever since, in order to articulate what is involved in the subject of the unconscious, I constructed - I must say that it was necessary for me to do it stage by stage, and before an audience of whom the least one can say is that they needed to be coaxed in order to listen - that I constructed the graph which is designed to order, precisely what, in the function of the word, is defined by this field, this field which the structure of language requires: it is properly what is called the *paths of discourse* or again what I called the *defiles of the signifier*. Somewhere in this graph there is inscribed the letter capital O on the right, on the lower line: if someone would rub this out I could rapidly draw the whole graph for those who do not know it. This **small o** [*sic*] that in a sense one can identify to the locus of the (4) Other, which in fact is the locus where there is produced everything that can be described as a statement in the broadest sense of the term, namely, what constitutes what I, incidentally, called the treasury of the signifier - which is not limited, in principle, to the words in the dictionary. When, precisely, correlatively to the construction of this graph, I began to speak about the witticism, taking things from the angle, which perhaps appeared the most surprising and the most difficult for my listeners at that time, but which was precisely indispensable to avoid any confusion. The *non-sensical* feature - not senseless but close to this operation that English defines extremely well, makes resonate under the term of *nonsense* - that exists in the witticism; whose kinship, after all, in order to make understood the dimension that it was a matter of bringing out, I then showed - at least at the level of reception, of tympanic vibration - the kinship it has with what was, for us, at a testing time, the *personal message*. I alluded to the personal message - namely, every statement, in fact, in so far as it is cut up “*non-sensically*” - the last time, by recalling the celebrated: “*Colourless green ideas, etc*”. The totality of statements then - I am not saying of propositions - also forms part of this Universe of discourse which is situated in capital O.

The question which is posed and which is properly a question of structure, the one which gives its sense to the fact that I say that the unconscious is structured *like a language*, which in my stating it is a pleonasm, since I identify structure to this “like a language”, in the structure, precisely, that I am going to try today to make function before you.

What is involved in this Universe of discourse, in so far as it implies this operation of the signifier? In so far as it defines these two dimensions of metaphor - in as much as the chain can always graft itself (*se enter*) with another chain along the path of the operation of substitution - in so far as on the other hand, in its essence, it signifies this sliding which comes from the fact that no signifier belongs properly to any meaning. Having recalled this domain of the Universe of discourse which permits this sea (*mer*) of variations in what constitutes meanings - this essentially moving and transitory order, where nothing, as I said at one time, can be guaranteed except from the function of what I called in a metaphorical form: *buttoning points* (*points de capiton*)- today, it is this Universe of discourse that it is a matter of questioning, starting from this single axiom regarding which it is a matter of knowing what it may specify within this Universe of discourse. An axiom which is one that I put forward the last time: that the signifier - this signifier that we have, up to now, defined by

its function of representing a subject for another signifier - this signifier, what does it represent faced with itself, with its repetition as signifying unit? This is defined by the axiom that no signifier - even if it is, *and very precisely when it is*, reduced to its minimal form, the one that we call the *letter* - can signify itself.

(5) Mathematical usage which depends precisely on the fact that when we have somewhere - and not only, as you know, in an exercise of algebra - when we have posited somewhere a letter, capital A, we take it up, subsequently, as if it were still the same the second time that we make use of it. Do not raise this objection; today is not the day I am going to give you a class in mathematics. You should know, simply, that no correct statement about any use whatsoever of letters - even if it were, precisely, in what is closest to us today, for example, in the use of a Markov chain - would require of any teacher (and this is what Markov himself did) a stage, which is in a way propaedeutic, to make clear the impasse, the arbitrariness, what is absolutely unjustifiable (quite apparent moreover) in employing A the second time to represent the first A, as if it were still the same. It is a difficulty which is at the source of the mathematical use of so-called identity. We do not have to deal with it explicitly here today, because we are not dealing with mathematics. I want simply to recall to you that the foundation, that the signifier is not grounded by signifying itself, is admitted by those very people who, on occasion, may make a use that is contradictory to this principle - at least in appearance. It would be easy to see the intermediary by which this is possible, but I do not have the time to go astray in this. I want simply to pursue - and without tiring you any more - my proposition which is then the following: **what is the consequence in this Universe of discourse of this principle: that the signifier cannot signify itself?**

What does this axiom specify in this Universe of discourse in so far as it is constituted, in short, by everything that can be said? What sort of specification is it and does the specification that this axiom determines, form part of the Universe of discourse? If it does not form part of it, this is undoubtedly a problem for us. What specifies, I repeat, the axiomatic statement that the signifier cannot signify itself, will have the consequence of specifying something which, as such, would not be in the Universe of discourse. Even though, precisely, we have admitted saying that it encompasses everything that can be said, into its ambit. Are we going to find ourselves in some diversion which would signify that what, thus, cannot form part of the Universe of discourse, cannot be said in some way or other? And, of course, it is clear that since we are speaking about it, about what I am bringing to you, it is obviously not to tell you that it is the ineffable thematic regarding which you know that from pure consistency and without for all that belonging to the school of Mr. Wittgenstein, I consider as: that it is vain to speak.

(6) Before coming to such a formula, and you can see after all that I am not sparing you either its relief or the impasse that it constitutes, since moreover we are going to have to come back to it - I really do everything to open up the paths to what I am trying to get you to follow me in - let us take care to put to the test the following: that what specifies the axiom that the signifier cannot signify itself, remains part of the Universe of discourse.

What do we then have to posit? What is at stake in, what specifies the relation that I stated in the form that the signifier cannot signify itself - let us take arbitrarily the usage of a little sign which serves in this logic which is founded on writing, this *W* in which you will recognise the shape (these games are not perhaps purely accidental) of my diamond, in a way with its hat knocked off, that has been opened up like a little box, and which serves, this *W*, to designate, in the logic of sets, *exclusion*. In other words, what is designated by the Latin *or*, which is expressed by an *aut*: one or the other. The signifier, in its repeated presentation, only functions *qua* functioning the first time or functioning the second. Between one and the other there is a radical gap, this is what is meant by: the signifier cannot signify itself.

We suppose, as we have said, that what determines this axiom as a specification in the Universe of discourse is what we are going to designate by a signifier, B - an essential signifier which you will notice can be appropriated to something the axiom specifies: that it cannot, in a certain relation and from a certain relation, generate any meaning. B is very specifically the signifier which can be specified, without objection, by the fact that it marks, as I might say, this sterility. The signifier in itself being characterised precisely by the fact that there is nothing obligatory, that it is far from being in the first spurt that it generates a meaning. It is this that gives me the right to symbolise by the signifier B this feature: that the relation of the signifier to itself does not generate any meaning.

But let us start, to begin with, from the following which after all seems to be required: the fact is that something that I am in the process of stating to you forms part of the Universe of discourse. Let us see what results from that. That is why I make use for the moment - because after all it does not seem to me to be inappropriate - of my little diamond in order to say that B forms part of A, that it has relations with it whose richness I will certainly have to bring into play, for you, throughout this year, and whose complexity I indicated to you the last time, by decomposing this little sign in all the binary fashions in which it can be done.

B \diamond A

(7) It is a matter of knowing, then, whether there is not some contradiction resulting from it. Namely, whether from the very fact that we have written that the signifier cannot signify itself, we can write that this B, not signifies itself, but, forming part of the Universe of discourse, can be considered as something which, in the style which characterises what we have called a specification, can be written: *B forms part of itself*.

It is clear that the question arises: does B form part of itself? In other words what the notion of specification grounds, namely, what we have learned to distinguish in several logical varieties, I mean that I hope that there are enough people here who know that the functioning of a set is not strictly speaking super-imposable on that of a class, but that in fact all of this at the origin, must be rooted in this principle of a specification. Here, we find ourselves before something whose kinship in fact should sufficiently resonate in your ears with what I called the last time Russell's paradox, in so far as to what I am stating, that here, in the terms which interest us, the function of sets - in so far as it does something that I, for my part, have not yet done, for I am not here to introduce it but to maintain you in a field which logically is on this hither side, but to introduce something that there is an opportunity to grasp in this connection: namely, what is grounded by the bringing into play of the apparatus described as set theory, which today is presented as something quite original, undoubtedly, for any mathematical statement, and for which logic is nothing but what mathematical symbolism can grasp - this function of sets will also be the principle, and this is what I put in question, of the whole foundation of logic.

If there is a logic of the phantasy, it is because it is more fundamental (*princielle*) than any logic which flows into the formalising defiles where it has revealed itself, as I have said, to be so fruitful in the modern epoch.

Let us try then to see what Russell's paradox means, when it covers something which is not far from what is there on the board. Simply, it promotes as altogether enveloping this fact of a type of signifier, that it takes moreover to be a class. A strange error! ... To say, for example, that the word "obsolete" represents a class in which it would itself be included, under the pretext that the word "obsolete" is obsolete, is undoubtedly a little conjuring trick, which has strictly no interest except to found, as a class, the signifiers which do not signify themselves. While precisely we posit as an axiom, here, that in no case can the signifier signify itself and that it is from there that one must start to sort oneself out, even if it were only to see that it is necessary to explain differently that the word "obsolete" can be qualified as obsolete. It is absolutely indispensable to bring into it what the division of the subject introduces.

(8) But let us leave “obsolete” and let us start from the opposition that Russell sets up to mark something which is supposed to be a contradiction in the formula which might be stated as follows:

$$(B \diamond A / S W S)$$

of a sub-set B whose status it would be impossible to guarantee, starting from the fact that it would be specified in a different set A, by a characteristic such that an element of A would not contain itself.

Is there some sub-set, defined by this proposition of the existence of elements which do not contain themselves?

It is undoubtedly easy, in this condition, to show the contradiction that exists in this because we have only to take an element y as forming part of B, as an element of B:

$$(y \in B)$$

for us to see the consequences that there then are in making it at the same time, as such, form part, as an element, of A:

$$(y \in B) \quad (y \in A / y \in y) /$$

and not being an element of itself. The contradiction is revealed by putting B in the place of y :

$$(B \in B) \quad (B \in A / B \in B) /$$

and seeing that the formula operates from the fact that every time we make B an element of B, there results, because of the solidarity of the formula, that since B forms part of A, it ought not to form part of itself. If on the other hand - B having been put, substituted for the place of this y - if on the other hand it does not form part of itself, satisfying the parenthesis on the right of the formula, it then forms part of itself being one of these y 's which are elements of B.

This is the contradiction before which Russell's paradox put us.

It is a matter of knowing whether, in our register, we can stop at it, provided we notice in passing what is meant by the contradiction highlighted in set theory, which would allow us perhaps to say the way in which set theory is specified in logic, namely, what step forward it constitutes as compared to the more radical one that we are trying to establish here.

The contradiction involved at this level where Russell's paradox is articulated, depends precisely - as the simple usage of words shows us - on the fact that I *say* it.

For if I do not *say* it, nothing prevents this formula, the second one, very precisely, from holding up as such, written out and there is nothing to say that its use will stop there. What I *say* here is no word play, for set theory as such has absolutely no other support except the fact that I *write* as such, that everything that can be (9) *said* about a difference between the elements is excluded from the operation.

To write, to manipulate the literal operation which constitutes set theory consists in writing, as such, what I am saying there: namely, that the first set can be formed at once from the charming person who is in the process today, for the first time, of typing my discourse, from the mist on this window and from an idea which just now is going through my head, that this constitutes a set, from this fact, that I *say* expressly that no other difference exists than the one which is constituted by the fact that I can apply to these three objects, that I have just named and which you see are rather heteroclitic, a unary stroke upon each one and nothing else.

Here then is what ensures that since we are not at the level of such a specification, since what I bring into play is the Universe of discourse, my question does not encounter Russell's paradox, namely,

that there is deduced no impasse, no impossibility to the following, that B which I do not know, but which I have begun to suppose forms part of the Universe of discourse, undoubtedly for its part, although constituted from the specification that *the signifier cannot signify itself*, may perhaps have this sort of relation to itself which escape Russell's paradox, namely, demonstrate to us something which might be perhaps its own dimension and in connection with which we are going to see in which status it forms part or not of the Universe of discourse.

In effect, if I was careful to remind you of the existence of Russell's paradox, it is probably because I am going to be able to make use of it to make you sense something. I am going to make you sense it first of all in the simplest fashion and, after that, in a fashion that is a little bit richer. I am going to make you sense it in the simplest fashion because I am prepared, for some time now, for any concession (*laughter*). People want me to say simple things, well then, I will say simple things! You are already, all the same, sufficiently formed to the following, thanks to my care, to know that there is not such a direct path towards understanding. Perhaps, even if what I tell you appears simple, there will remain with you, all the same, a little mistrust...

A catalogue of catalogues: here indeed, in a first approach, is what is involved as a signifier. Why should we be surprised that it does not contain itself? Naturally, since this seems, to us, to be required from the beginning. Nevertheless, there is nothing to prevent the catalogue of all the catalogues which do not contain themselves, from printing itself, inside it! In truth, nothing would prevent it, even the contradiction that Lord Russell would deduce from it!

But let us consider precisely this possibility that exists, that in order not to contradict itself, it does not inscribe itself in itself.

Let us take the first catalogue; there are only four catalogues, up to then, which do not contain themselves:

A B C D.

(10) Let us suppose that there appears another catalogue which does not contain itself, we add it on: E.

Why is it inconceivable to think that there is a first catalogue which contains A B C D, a second catalogue which contains B C D E, and not be surprised that each of them lacks this letter which is properly the one which would designate itself?

But from the moment that you generate this sequence, you have only to arrange it around the circumference of a disc and see that it is not because in each catalogue one of them will be missing, indeed even a greater number, that the circle of these catalogues will not add up to something which is precisely what corresponds to the catalogue of all the catalogues which do not contain themselves. Simply what will constitute this chain will have this property of being an additional signifier (*un signifiant en plus*) which is constituted from the closure of the chain. An uncountable signifier and which, precisely because of this fact, is able to be designated by a signifier. Because, being nowhere, there is no difficulty in a signifier arising which designates it as *the additional signifier*: the one that is not grasped in the chain.

I take another example: catalogues are not made, in the first place, to catalogue catalogues, they catalogue objects which have some right (*titre*) to be there (the word "*titre*" having here all its importance). It would be easy to become engaged on this path in order to open up the dialectic of the catalogue of all the catalogues, but I am going to go to a more lively path, since it is necessary that I should leave you some exercises for your own imagination.

The book: with the book we enter, apparently, into the Universe of discourse. Nevertheless, in the measure that the book has some referent and that it also may be a book that has to cover a certain surface, in the register of some title (*titre*), the book will include a bibliography. Which means something which is presented properly for us to image the following, what results in so far as the catalogues live or do not live in the Universe of discourse. If I make the catalogue of all the books that a bibliography contains, naturally I am not making a catalogue of bibliographies! Nevertheless,

in cataloguing these books, in so far as in the bibliographies they refer on to one another, I may very well cover the totality of all the bibliographies.

Here indeed is where there may be situated the phantasy which is properly the poetic phantasy *par excellence*, the one which obsessed Mallarmé: of the *absolute Book*. It is at this level where things are tied together at the level of the use not of pure signifier, but of the purified signifier, in so far as I *say* - and that I *write* that I *say* - that the signifier is here articulated as distinct from any signified and I then see there being outlined the possibility of this *absolute Book*, whose property would be that it would encompass the whole signifying chain, properly in the following: that it may no longer signify anything. In this, then, there is something that proves to be founded in existence at the level of the Universe of discourse, but (11) we have to suspend this existence on the proper logic which that of the phantasy may constitute, because moreover, it is the only one that can tell us the way in which this region is attached to the Universe of discourse. Undoubtedly, it is not excluded that it should enter it, but on the other hand, it is quite certain that it specifies itself in it, not at all by this purification of which I spoke earlier, for purification is not at all possible of what is essential to the Universe of discourse, namely, meaning. And were I to speak to you for another four hours about this *absolute Book* it would nevertheless remain that everything that I tell you has a sense.

What characterises the structure of this B - in so far as we know where to situate it in the Universe of discourse, inside or outside - is very precisely this feature that I announced earlier, in making for you the circle, simply of this A B C D E, in so far as, by simply closing the chain, there results that each group of four can easily leave outside itself the extraneous signifier, which can serve to designate the group, for the simple reason that it is not represented in it, and that nevertheless the whole chain will be found to constitute the totality of all these signifiers, giving rise to this additional unit, uncountable as such, which is essential for a whole series of structures, which are precisely the ones on which I founded, since the year 1960, my whole operation (*opératoire*) of identification. Namely, what you find of it, for example, in the structure of the torus, being quite obvious that by buckling on the torus a certain number of circuits, by making operate a series of complete circuits at a cut and by making of them the number that you like (naturally the more of them there are, the more satisfying it is, but the more obscure it is). It is enough to make two of them to see there appearing at the same time this third required for these two to buckle together and, as I might say, for the line to bite its own tail: it will be this third circuit, which is assured by the buckling around the central hole, through which it is impossible not to pass in order for the first two loops to cut one another.

If I am not making any drawing on the board today, it is because in truth - in saying it - I am saying enough about it for you to understand me and also a good deal too little for me to show you that they are at least two paths, at the origin, along which this can be effected and that the result is not at all the same as regards the emergence of this additional One (*Un en plus*) that I am in the process of speaking to you about.

This simply suggestive indication contains nothing to exhaust the richness of what the least topological study provides us with.

What it is a matter simply of indicating today, is that the specificity of this world of writing is precisely to distinguish itself from discourse by the fact that it can close. And, closing on itself, it is precisely from there that there arises this possibility of a "one" which has a completely different status to that of the one which unifies and encompasses. But from this "one" which already, from the simple closing - without there being any need to go into the status of repetition, which nevertheless (12) is closely linked to it - just from its closing, it gives rise to what has the status of the *additional One*, in so far as it is only sustained by writing and that it is nevertheless open, in its possibility, to the Universe of discourse; since it is sufficient, as I pointed out to you, for me to **write** - but it is necessary that this writing should take place - what I **say** about the exclusion of this *one*, this is enough to generate this other plane where there unfolds properly speaking the whole function of logic; the thing being sufficiently indicated to us by the stimulus that logic received, by submitting itself to the simple operation of writing, except for the fact that it still fails to remember that this only reposes on the function of a *lack*, in the very thing that is written and which constitutes the status, as such, of the function of writing.

I am saying simple things to you today, and perhaps this in itself risks making this discourse appear disappointing to you. Nevertheless, you would be wrong not to see that this is inserted into a register of questions which henceforth give to the function of writing something which cannot but have repercussions down to the deepest level of any possible conception of structure. For if the writing of which I speak is only supported from the return buckled onto itself, from a cut (as I illustrated it from the function of the torus), we find ourselves lead to the following: that precisely the most fundamental studies, linked to the progress of mathematical analysis, have put us in a position to isolate in it the function of the *edge*.

Now, once we speak about edge, there is nothing which can make us substantify this function, in so far as here you might improperly deduce that this function of writing is to limit this changeability (*mouvant*) of which I spoke to you earlier as being that of our thoughts or of the Universe of discourse. Far from it! If there is something which is structured as edge, what it itself limits is in a position to enter in its turn into the edging function. And here indeed is what we are going to have to deal with.

Or indeed - and this is the other face on which I intend to end - it is the reminder of what has always been known about this function of the *unary stroke* (*trait unaire*).

I will end by evoking the 26th verse of a book which I have already made use of, at one time, to begin to make understood what is involved in the function of the signifier: the book of Daniel and in connection with the story about the zouave's trousers which is designated in it by a word which remains in the state of what is called an hapax and which is impossible to translate unless it was the socks that the characters in question wore.

In the book of Daniel, you already have the theory of the subject that I am presenting to you, and precisely arising at the limit of this Universe of discourse. It is the famous story of the dramatic festival of which we no longer find, moreover, the slightest trace in the annals, but no matter!

(13) *Mene, Mene*, for this is how verse 26 is expressed, *Mene, Mene, Tekel, Parsin*, which is usually transcribed in the famous *Mene, Tekel, Parsin*. It does not seem useless to me for us to notice that *Mene, Mene* which means "counted" - as Daniel pointed out in interpreting it to the worried prince - is expressed twice in order to show the most simple repetition of what constitutes counting; it is enough to count up to two for everything that is involved in this *additional One*, which is the true root of the function of repetition in Freud, to take place and to be marked in the following: except for the fact that contrary to what occurs in set theory, one does not *say* it.

One does not say the following: that what repetition seeks to repeat is precisely what escapes, because of the very function of the mark, in so far as the mark is original in the function of repetition. That is why repetition takes place, because the mark is repeated, but that for the mark to provoke the sought-for repetition, it is necessary that on what is sought because the mark marks the first time, this very mark is effaced at the level of what it has marked and that is why what is sought for in repetition, of its nature slips away, allows there to be lost the fact that the mark cannot not be reduplicated, except by effacing, on what is to be repeated, the first mark, namely, to let it slip out of reach.

Mene, Mene ... something in what is rediscovered lacks weight: *Tekel*. The prophet Daniel interprets it, and interprets it by saying to the prince that he was in effect weighed, but that something is missing there, which is expressed as "*Parsin*". This radical lack, this first lack which flows from the very function of the *counted* as such, this *additional One* that one cannot count, it is this which constitutes properly this lack to which it is a matter for us of giving its logical function, in order that it should secure what is involved in the final "*Parsin*", the one which precisely explodes what is involved in the Universe of discourse, of the bubble, of the empire in question, of the sufficiency of what is closed in on the image of the imaginary whole.

Here is exactly the path along which there is brought to bear the effect of the entry of what structures discourse at the most radical point, which is undoubtedly - as I always said and accentuated, to the extent of employing the most popular images for it - the *letter* that is involved, but the *letter* in so far as it is excluded, as it is lacking.

This is indeed about what - that moreover, since today I am making a new irruption into this Jewish tradition - to tell the truth, I had so many things prepared, even to the extent of having come to grips with a little exercise of learning to read Massoretic, a whole work which was in a way put in cold storage because of the fact that I was not able to construct the thematic that I had intended to develop around the Name of the Father - and that moreover, there remains something of all of this and specifically that at the level of history of Creation: "*Berechit, Bara, Elohim*" the Book begins, namely by a Beth. And it is said that this very letter that we have used today, the capital A, otherwise called Aleph, was not, at the beginning, among those from which there emerged the whole of creation.

Hebrew Quotation

(14) This indeed is here to indicate to us, but in a fashion that is in a way turned in on itself, that it is in so far as one of these letters is absent that the others function, but that no doubt it is in its very lack that there resides the whole fruitfulness of the operation.

Seminar 3: Wednesday 30 November 1966.

Today you are going to hear a piece of work, a paper by Jacques-Alain Miller. This – about which I warned you the last time, perhaps a little late, a part of the audience having already dispersed when I announced it - marks the fact that I would like there to remain justified this curious name of *seminar*, which was attached to my teaching from the time of Sainte-Anne where, as you know, it was held for ten years.

To speak only of the two previous years here, some of you are not unaware - to your great annoyance - that I wanted this seminar to be held in an effective fashion, believing that this effectiveness could be linked to a certain reduction in this so numerous and so kindly audience that you offer me through your assiduity and attention. And, good God, so much assiduity and attention deserve a lot of respect, and they made the sorting out that was necessary for this reduction very difficult. So that, in total, your more reduced number was not such that from the point of view of quantity - which plays such an important role in communication - the scale of things changed to any great extent. So I will leave in suspense this year the solution of this difficult problem. Until further notice and without in any way committing myself to it, I am not closing any of these Wednesdays whether they are terminal, semi-terminal or other.

I would like simply that there should be at least maintained this name of seminar, in a more marked style than we experienced at Saint-Anne, where up to the very last years there were meetings in which I delegated the role of speaking to one or other of those who were following me at that time. Nevertheless, some ambiguity remains, which suspends this appellation of seminar between the proper usage of a

category: - a place where something ought to be exchanged, where the (2) transmission, the dissemination of a doctrine ought to be manifested as such, namely, in the process of being transmitted - there remained some ambiguity between this usage proper to the category and some other usage or other, not properly speaking of the proper name - because every discussion of the proper name can become engaged in this - let us say a nomination *par excellence*, the which nomination *par excellence* might become a nomination *par ironie*. Hence, in order to mark clearly that it is not the state of things in which I intend there to be stabilised the use of this appellation, you will see intervening periodically a certain number of people who show themselves disposed to it.

Undoubtedly, Jacques-Alain Miller, in inaugurating what follows, has some right, this year, since he provided you with this *index* in my book, with this *reasoned index of concepts*, which, according to what I hear is very welcome for many people, who find a great advantage in this Ariadne's thread which allows them to move through a succession of articles in which one or other notion, one or other concept (as the term is used more correctly), is found at diverse stages. A tiny detail: I note, to answer a question which has been put to me by someone, that in this index, the numbers in italics mark the essential passages, the straight or roman numbers, mark the passages where the concept is involved more in passing. It can happen that on the page that is designated for you, what is referred to in this way is simply limited to an indication in one line of the page. This will tell you the care with which this little apparatus, which is so usable, is constructed.

I am told, in this connection, that this book is, as they say in this *français* which I, for my part, do not reject, "out of print", which means *épuisé* [exhausted]. I find "out of print" nicer, with *épuisé* people ask what has happened to it (*laughter*). I hope that this "out of print" will not last too long, it is what is called a success, but a success in terms of *sales*. Let us not prejudge the *other* success. We have to wait and see and this, after all, leaves the question open. It has been remarked that I was hardly in a hurry to put this book into circulation.

If I delayed so long in doing so, one could pose this question: "Why now?" What do I expect from it?" It is clear that the reply: "*that it should be of service to you!*" was no less valid a year or two ago, or even earlier. The question is therefore not simple. It involves everything about my relations with what plays the function of a base, namely, psychoanalysis in its *incarnated* - we might say quickly - or again *subjectified* form, in other words: with psychoanalysts themselves. It is certain that there were many elements which appeared to me to justify that what I was trying to construct should remain in a reserved field, which allowed, in a way, this selection (3) which was made of those who wanted to decide to recognise what the study of Freud implied as a consequence in their practice.

Finally, things never happen in the way you plan, in these difficult matters in which resistance is not restricted to what must be designated in the narrow sense of this term in analytic praxis, but where it has another form, in which the social context is not without its impact. This indeed is what makes it very delicate for me to explain myself before such a large audience.

This indeed is why, in everything which concerns the *external relations* of my teaching – for I do not envisage in any other way the hullabaloo and the to-do around a certain number of my terms, with which I see myself associated in a way that I do not like, including that of *structuralism*, which for the moment benefiting from a certain fashion, is not the least to inspire my suspicion - nevertheless, here again, it is not the case - except in as much as I am forced to it by some incidence of what I called earlier the success of the book - this is something for which I am in no way disposed to take time here, to eat into this measured time in which you see - in which you ought to sense more or less by your experience of these last years - that I have no time to lose, if I want to state things before you at the level of the construction that you saw me inaugurating in its style by my last seminar and the points on which I wanted to establish the beginning of this logic that I have to develop before you this year.

Hence, and since all the same this book exists with the first movements that it is bringing with it - which will be followed by others - and that, in short, the two or three points that I have brought up like that, as principal - but there others - risk remaining in suspense for you, I believe that because of this, I ought to warn you that you will find, faith, the explanation - at least a sufficient explanation to permit you to respond to at least some of the questions which may remain in suspense for you – in two sorts of conversations, as they say, or again interviews, which are going to appear, I believe - if my information is correct, this week - in places, God knows, which have nothing of the fairground about them, which are called respectively the *Figaro littéraire* and *Lettres francaises*, where perhaps you will get to know a little more about these points. Besides, since I cannot help myself, every time that I have one of these kinds of *external relation*, putting into it all the same what is on-going, it is possible that you will find here and there something which refers to our discourse of this year.

It is obvious that I have some scruples - for example, as I did the last time, in speaking to you about the *repetition of the unary stroke*, as being situated, (4) established fundamentally from this repetition (of which one can say that it only happens once, which means all the same that it is double, otherwise there would be no repetition) which right away, in short, for whoever wants to delay on it a little, establishes in its most radical foundation the *division of the subject* - I cannot avoid having some scruple at having announced it before you the last time almost in passing, while at this congress which took place at Johns Hopkins (as a certain number of you know) in October, I chewed it over for about three quarters of an hour. It is perhaps because I give you greater credit than my listeners at that time; certain echoes received since having showed me that the structuralist ear - to take up again the term from earlier - well then, my God, the structuralist ear, whoever may be its bearer on a particular occasion, is capable of showing itself to be a little deaf! (*laughter*).

There are two still more unexpected places, where you will perhaps see... (in the audience: “We can’t hear!” - **Doctor Lacan**: “What? Who can’t hear? How long have you not been able to hear anything?” (*laughter*)) - Good, then, in still more unexpected places you will perhaps find on these different themes - up to and including these little initial indications, my God, which can never come too soon -

on certain themes which I will have to develop subsequently and, for example, in passing, on the function of the *preconscious* - a curious thing, that people do not seem to have occupied themselves with for a long time, namely, ever since people mixed up everything while believing they had kept it distinct, people no longer occupy themselves after all so much with the functions that Freud reserved for it - it slipped in in passing, if I remember rightly, in one of these conversations, I cannot remember which one, to which, then, it would be well to add the two other unexpected ones, I think, for you, which are conversations at the O.R.T.F. There will be one next Friday at 10.45, which is what is called, I have been assured, a "peak listening time" (*laughter*). I am thinking: not for those who are listening to me here at this hour, precisely, because I think at this peak listening time, they are at the hospital. Anyway, too bad, you can organise things as you wish and I hope after all to be able to communicate this text if the Radio is willing to give me the authorisation. There will be another one on Monday - you can see that they are in a hurry. For the first, it is Georges Charbonnier who is kind enough - I will not say to receive it - to give me a place and for the second it is M. Sipridio, thanks to whom you will perhaps have something a bit more lively than the first one, since it will be a dialogue with the person who is most qualified to sustain it, namely, Francois Wahl who is here and was kind enough to agree to carry out this exercise with me.

Now then, (in the audience: "At what time?") Well it appears that it is at ... I (5) would not swear to it, it appears that it is starting at 6.15, only they are not going to be speaking just about my book and I cannot very well tell you at what stage it will appear between 6.15 and 7 p.m., each one having his quarter of an hour... What then, is there another question? It is a peak listening time (*laughter*) which in general is accompanied by exercises in gymnastics. There you are, anyway, we will see how all of that works out.

And now I give the floor to Jacques-Alain Miller (the audience: "Oh!").

I am going all the same to communicate something very amusing to you, which was brought to me by one of my faithful followers. It is a little paper done by a sort of special journal, linked, I think, both to IBM machines and what has been done on an experimental level in the *Massachusetts Institute of Technology* (MIT, as it is usually called) and which speaks to us about the use of one of these high-level machines that are being made now, to which there was given - and certainly not for nothing - the name of Elisa; at least it is called Elisa for the use that is made of it - that I am going to tell you about... (Elisa is, as you know, the person who in a well known play - *Pygmalion* - the person who is taught to speak properly; she was a little flower seller on a busy London street and it is a matter of training her to be able to express herself in the best society, when it is noticed that she does not belong to it). It is something of this order which emerges with this little machine; in truth, what is involved is not properly speaking that a machine should be capable of giving articulated answers, simply when one speaks to it - I am not saying when one questions it - it is something which now proves to be a game and which puts in question what can happen in terms of obtaining responses from the one who is speaking to it. The thing, faith, is not absolutely articulated in a fashion which would be completely satisfying for a situation, in effect, that is so usable for us -

which gives us such an interesting reference in the discourse pursued here - it is not properly speaking stated in a fashion which would satisfy us completely - in other words which takes into account the framework into which we might insert it - nevertheless, it is very interesting because, when all is said and done, there is something suggested which may be considered as a therapeutic function of the machine and in a word, it is nothing less than the *analogue* of a sort of *transference* which can be produced in this relationship, about which the question is raised.

The thing did not dissatisfy me. I would like simply in this connection... - since moreover it is not unrelated to everything that I am leaving open concerning the fashion in which, in short, I have to manage the diffusion of what is called my teaching - I could say that what you will find in terms of the handling of a first symbolic chain (designed in its time, for me, to give me the notion that (6) psychoanalysts are required to conceive of ... the notion to which their mind should accommodate itself, to centre in a proper fashion on what Freud called memory (*ré-mémoration*), to give them a sort model that is suggestive of that), in the construction of this symbolic chain and of its own kind of memory, that is undoubtedly consistent and even insistent, which is articulated in what comes now in this book, in the second, let us say chapter or moment, namely, in the inverse position in which the *Introduction to the purloined letter* which precedes it is fixed in this book, namely, just after *The purloined letter*. I recall to those who were listening to me at that time that this construction, like all the others, was made before them and for them, step by step, and that I started very exactly: first of all, from an examination, starting from a text by Poe, about the way in which the mind works on this theme: can one win in the game of odds and evens, and that my second step was the following: to imagine a machine, precisely of this kind - and what is effectively produced today differs in nothing from what I articulated then - simply: the machine is supposed by the subject to be provided with a programme which takes into account the gains and the losses. I mean that starting from this: that the subject might question the aforesaid machine, by playing the game of odds and evens with it - starting from this single supposition, that it preserves, at least for a certain number of throws, the memory of its gains and its losses, one can construct this sequence of: +, +, -, +, -... which encompass, united in a parenthesis of a typical length and which is displaced by a notch each time, allows us to establish this trajectory that I constructed and upon which I am founding this first most elementary type of the model ... (We do not need to consider memory under the register of the physiological impression but only of the symbolic memorial)... It is starting from a hypothetical game with what was not yet perhaps in a position to function then at this level, but which all the same existed as such, as electronic machine, namely, in fact, something which can be written on paper (this is the modern definition of the machine), it is starting from there - well before, then, this got onto the agenda of the pre-occupations of engineers, who devoted themselves to these apparatuses, as you know, that are always progressing, because people expect nothing less than automatic translation - it is starting from there that 15 years ago I constructed a first model for the proper use of psychoanalysts, with the goal of producing in their *mens, mind*, this sort of necessary detachment from the idea that the functioning of the signifier is necessarily the flower of consciousness, which was at that time to introduce a step that was absolutely unprecedented.

Over to you...

(There follows the presentation of **M Jacques-Alain Miller** on Boolean logic)

Doctor Lacan: - I am not going to add any commentary. I consider that the work which has been pronounced before you as being truly able to guarantee by the perfect ease of its presentation, something which supports, grounds, corresponds to what I introduced the last time as being the absolutely necessary starting point for any logic which is properly the one the psychoanalytic terrain requires.

This commentary is not to be considered as a reduplication. It showed you something in the confrontation with the first of these sets, in the mathematical-logic sense of the term: which was given by this Boole set and the confrontation of this Boole set - in so far as it finds itself apparently much more homogeneous with classical logic - you have seen that from this set itself, we are allowed to construct this logical precedence, this necessity which radically distinguishes the status of meaning and its origin in the signifier - I find that you have had there, at once a very elegant demonstration and at the same time this constitutes a moment which was necessary for the assimilation, in a way, and the complement, the control, the configuration of what, the last time, I succeeded in bringing before you and which you will have the continuation of the next time.

Seminar 4: Wednesday 7 December 1966

You were able, the last time we met here, to hear what Jacques-Alain Miller put to you. I was not able to add many observations to it by reason of time.

I think that you were able to notice in this presentation - marked by a sure knowledge of what, properly speaking, was inaugurated, we can say, on the whole, as modern logic, by the work and the labour of Boole - (it is perhaps not a matter of indifference to let you know that Jacques-Alain Miller, who had not been present at my last lecture, let us say, who had not been able either to have it communicated to him, since I myself only got the text two days ago, found himself then, by the path and the presentation that he chose... and you were able also to sense very well, I think, that at the moment that I announced him at my last lecture, I was not too sure of the subject that he had chosen. These remarks have their interest, precisely, because of the extraordinary convergence, let us say, or again if you wish re-application of what he was able to state before you, no doubt, of course, knowing what he was about, namely, knowing what are the principles and, as I might say, the axioms around which, for the moment, my development is turning...).

It is nevertheless striking, that with the help of Boole - in whom, of course, there is absent this major articulation that **no signifier is able to signify itself** - that in starting from Boole's logic ... namely, from this turning point at which, in a way, one sees, by having wanted to formalise classical logic, that this formalisation itself allows there to be brought to it not simply major extensions, but is revealed to be the hidden essence on which this logic had been able to orient itself and to construct itself, while believing it was following something which was not really its foundation, while believing that it was following what we are going to try to (2) circumscribe today in order, in a way, to set it apart from the field in which we are going to proceed, in so far as we have announced: the logic of phantasy.

The surprising ease with which, from fields left blank in the logic of Boole, Miller rediscovered the situation, the place, where the signifier in its proper function is in a way elided, in this famous (-1), whose exclusion he admirably separated out in the logic of Boole - the fashion in which, by this very elision, he indicated the place where what I am trying to articulate here is situated, is here something which I believe, has its importance, not at all that I am complimenting him on it here, but which allows you to grasp the consistency, the straight line, in which there is inserted this logic that we are obliged to found in the name of the facts of the unconscious and which, as is to be expected, if we are what we are, namely, rationalists - what must be expected, is, of course, not at all that the previous logic should be in some way overturned, but that it should rediscover there its proper foundations.

Moreover you were able to see it being marked, in passing, that in this point which requires for us the bringing into play of a certain symbol, this something which corresponds to this (-1) which Boole does not use, or forbids himself to use, not being sure whether this (-1) is the best to use. For what is proper to a logic, to a formal logic, is that it operates, and what we have to bring out this year are new operators whose shadow, in a way, has already been profiled in the fact that, depending on the ears to which I was addressing myself, I already tried to articulate in a manageable fashion - manageable for what had to be handled, which was nothing other, on that occasion, than analytic praxis - but what, this year, we are taking to its limits, to its edges properly speaking, obliges us to give more rigorous formulations to circumscribe what we are dealing with, and which deserves in some aspects to be taken, to be undertaken, in the most general articulation which is given to us at the moment in the matter of logic, namely: what is centred on the function of sets.

I leave this subject, of what Miller brought us then the last time, less as an articulation of what I am developing before you, than as confirmation, assurance, a framework in the margin. It is not without interest to highlight for you that in designating, in Sartre, under the name of "thetic self-consciousness", the fashion in which, in a way, he occupies the place where this logical articulation resides - which is our task this year - what is involved here is indeed only what is called a substitute (*tenant-lieu*) - very properly - namely: that which, what we have to occupy ourselves with, we analysts, only in a fashion that is strictly equivalent to

the way in which we occupy ourselves with other substitutes, when we have to handle what is an effect of the unconscious.

(3) This is the reason why one can say that in no way can what I am stating about the structure be situated with respect to Sartre, since this fundamental point, around which turns the privilege that he tries to maintain of the subject, is properly this sort of *substitute* which can in no way interest me except in the register of its interpretation.

Logic, then, of the phantasy ... It is almost necessary to recall - but we can only do it very rapidly in the way that, touching a bell with the tip of the finger, one makes it vibrate for an instant - to remind you on this point of the unextinguished vacillation of what is attached to the tradition, that the term "university" will pinpoint here (if we give to this sense not at all anything whatsoever which designates or shames a geographical point, but this sense of *Universitas litterarum* or a *cursus classici*, let us say), it is not useless in passing to indicate that - whatever may be the other much more historical sense that one can give to this term of "university" - there is here some allusion to what I called the *Universe of discourse*. At least it is not vain to bring the two terms together.

Now, it is clear that in this hesitation (remember the waltz) that the professor of philosophy - in the year I think you all went through, more or less as many of you as are here - performed around logic, (namely: what is involved in it, the laws of thinking or its norms, the way it functions and that we are going to extract scientifically, will we say, or the way it ought to be conducted?) - you must admit that in so far as this debate has not yet been settled, perhaps a suspicion may arise for us that the function of the University in the sense that I articulated it earlier, is perhaps precisely to put off the decision about it.

All that I can say is that this decision, perhaps, is more involved - I am speaking about logic - in what is happening in Vietnam, for example, than what is involved in thinking, if in fact it still remains suspended in this way, in this dilemma between its *laws*... which in that case leaves us asking ourselves whether it is applied to the "world" as they say, let us say rather: to the real, in other words: whether it is not dreaming? (I am not losing my psychoanalytic bearings. I am speaking about things that interest us, us analysts, because for us analysts, to know whether the man who is thinking is dreaming is a question that has the most concrete sense. To whet your appetite, to keep you in suspense, you should know that I have indeed the intention of posing the question, this year, of what is involved in the waking state...) *Norms* of thinking, opposed to the other, here indeed is something that also interests us, and in the dimension that is not reduced by this little sand papering by which generally, the professor, when he is dealing with logic in the philosophy class, will end up by ensuring that these laws and these (4) norms end up by being presented with the same "smoothness", which allows one to pass one's finger from one to the other, in other words to handle all of that blindly.

For us, the relief has not been lost (I am saying, us analysts) of this dimension which is entitled: that of the true. In so far as, after all, it does not require, does not

imply in itself the support of thinking, and that if in questioning what it is - the true that is at stake - in connection with which there is stirred up the phantasy of a norm, undoubtedly, it clearly appears - from the origin - that this is not immanent to thinking.

If I allowed myself, to touch the ears that it was necessary to make vibrate, to write one day, erecting a figure which it was not moreover very difficult to bring to life - that of the truth, emerging from the well, as it has always been depicted - in order to make it say: "Me, the truth, I speak", it is indeed in effect to highlight this relief in which it is a matter for us of maintaining that to which, properly speaking, our experience is attached and which is absolutely impossible to exclude from the articulation of Freud: for Freud is here put, immediately, up against it - and there is no need to intervene for that: he put himself there himself.

The question of the way in which the field of interpretation is presumed, the mode in which Freud's technique offers an opportunity for it, *free association* in other words, carries us to the heart of this formal organisation from which there are outlined the first paths of a mathematical logic, which has a name which, all the same, could not possibly have failed to tickle the ears of all of you, that is called *network (réseau)* - yes, and it is specified, but it is not my function today to specify and to remind you of what is called a trellis or lattice (an English transposition of the word *treillis*). This is what is involved in what Freud, as much in his first outlines of the new psychology, as in the fashion in which, subsequently, he organises the handling of the analytic session as such, this is what he constructs in advance (*avant la lettre*), as I might say. And when the objection is put to him, at a precise point of the *Traumdeutung* (as it happens I did not bring today the copy in which I had picked out the page for you), he has to respond to the objection: "of course, with your way of proceeding, at every cross-roads you will indeed have the opportunity of finding a signified which will provide the bridge between two meanings and with this fashion of organising the bridges, you will always go from somewhere to somewhere else". (It is not for nothing that I had put the little poster taken from Aurus Apollo, as it happens, namely, from an interpretation in the (5) XVIth century of Egyptian hieroglyphs, on a journal which has now disappeared which was called "*La Psychanalyse*": the Ear and the Bridge.) This is what is involved in Freud, and every point of convergence of this *network* or *lattice*, in which he teaches us to ground the first questioning, is in effect a little bridge. This is how it functions and the objection made to him is that in this way everything will explain everything else.

In other words, what is fundamentally opposed to psychoanalytic interpretation, is not at all any kind of "scientific critique" (in quotes) - as is imagined from what is ordinarily the only piece of baggage that minds who enter the field of medicine still have from their year of philosophy, namely, that the scientific is founded on experience! Naturally, they have not opened Claude Bernard, but they still know the title. It is not a scientific objection, it is an objection which goes back to the medieval tradition, when people knew what logic was. It was much more widespread than in our time, despite the means of diffusion that we have.

Things have, in fact, got to the point that, having let slip recently in one of the interviews that I spoke to you about, that I had got my taste for commentary from an old practice of the scholastics, I asked them to take it out. God knows what people would have deduced from it! (*laughter*).

Anyway, in short, in the Middle Ages people knew that: *Ex falso sequitur quod libet*. In other words, that it is characteristic of the false to make everything true. The characteristic of the false, is that one deduces from it in the same step, on the same footing, the false and the true. It does not exclude the true. If it excluded the true, it would be too easy to recognise it! Only in order to see that, it is necessary precisely to have carried out a certain minimal number of exercises in logic, which up to now, as far as I know, do not form part of medical studies, and it is very regrettable! And it is clear that the fashion in which Freud responds, brings us immediately onto the terrain of the structure of the *network*. He does not express it, of course, in every detail, in the modern specifications that we could give it. It would be interesting moreover to know how he was able and how he was not able to profit from Brentano's teaching, which he was certainly not unaware of - we have the proof in his university *cursus*. The function of the structure of the *network*, the way in which the lines - of association, precisely - come to overlap one another, to cross-check with one another, to converge at elective points from which they depart again electively, this is what is indicated by Freud. We know enough by all his subsequent work, the unease, we would say, the veritable concern, to be more precise, that he had about this dimension which is indeed properly speaking that of the truth. Because from the point of view of reality, one (6) is at ease! Even to know that perhaps the trauma is only a phantasy. In a certain fashion, a phantasy is even more sure, as I am in the process of showing you; it is structural. But this does not leave Freud - who was just as capable of inventing this as I am, as you can imagine - this does not leave him any more at peace. Where is here, he asks, the criterion of truth? And he would not have written the *Wolfman*, if it were not on this track, on this particular requirement: is it true or not?

"Is it true?" He supports this by what is discovered in questioning the fundamental figure manifested in the repetition dream of the *Wolfman*. And "is it true?", is not reduced to knowing whether yes or no and at what age he experienced something which had been reconstructed with the help of this figure of the dream. The essential - it is enough to read Freud in order to perceive it - is to know how the subject, the *Wolfman*, had been able to verify this scene - to verify it with his whole being. It is through his symptom. Which means - for Freud does not doubt the reality of the original scene - which means: how had he been able to articulate it properly in terms of signifier? You only have to remind yourselves of the figure of the Roman five, for example, in so far as it is involved and reappears everywhere in the outspread legs of a woman, or the beating of the wings of a butterfly, to know, to comprehend that what is involved is the handling of the signifier.

The relation of the truth to the signifier, the detour through which analytic experience rejoins the most modern process of logic, consists precisely in the fact that this relation of the signifier to the truth can short-circuit all the thinking which supports it. And just as a sort of aim is outlined at the horizon of modern logic -

one which reduces logic to a correct handling of what is simply *writing* - in the same way for us, the question of verification, concerning what we have to deal with, passes along the direct line of the operation of the signifier, in so far as on it alone the question of the truth remains suspended.

It is not easy to put forward a term like that of the *true*, without making immediately resonate all the echoes in which there come to slip in the most suspect "intuitions" (in inverted commas) and without immediately producing objections, made up from the old experiences that those who engage themselves on this terrain know only too well, so that, like scalded cats, they fear cold water. But who says that because I make you say: "Me, the truth, I speak", that through this I am allowing the re-entry of the theme of *Being*, for example? Let us look twice at it, at least in order to know. Let us be content with this very particular knot that I have just made between the truth - and by this I have not indicated any person, except the one whom I made say these words: "Me, the truth, I speak". No person, divine (7) or human is involved outside her, namely: **the point of origin of the relations between the signifier and the truth.**

What relation is there between this and the point from which I started earlier? Does it mean that by bringing you onto this field of the most formal logic, I forgot the one on which there is played out, as I said earlier, the fate of logic?

It is quite clear that Mr Bertrand-Russell is more interested than M Jacques Maritain in what is happening in Vietnam. This just by itself may be an indication for us. Besides, in invoking here *Le Paysan de la Garonne* - it is his latest outfit - I am not taking as a target ... (you did not know that *Le Paysan de la Garonne* has been published? Well then, go and get it...) (*laughter*). It is the last book of J Maritain, an author who has occupied himself a lot with the scholastic authors in so far as there is developed in them the influence of the philosophy of St Thomas who, after all, has no reason not to be evoked here, in the measure that a certain way of posing the principles of being is, all the same, not without some incidence on what one makes of logic. One cannot say that this prevents the handling of logic, but it can at certain moments be an obstacle to it. In any case I wanted to specify - I apologise for this parenthesis - that if I evoke Jacques Maritain here and if then, as a consequence, implicitly, I urge you to discover, not that the reading of it is contemptible, but that it is far from being uninteresting, I would ask you all the same to consult it in this spirit of paradox which is demonstrated in it, of the maintenance in this author, having arrived at his great age (as he underlines himself), of this sort of rigour which allows there to be seen in it, there being pushed really to a caricatural impasse, in a very exact mapping out of the whole relief of the modern development of thought, the maintenance of the most unthinkable hopes about what ought to develop either in its place, or in its margin, and in order that there should be maintained what is his central attachment, namely, what he calls: "the intuition of Being". He speaks in this connection of "philosophical Eros", and in truth I do not have to repudiate - with what I put forward before you about desire - the use of such a term. But its use on this occasion - namely, in order, in the name of the philosophy of Being, to hope for the renaissance, correlatively with the development of modern science, of a philosophy of nature - is part of an Eros it seems to me that can only be situated in

the register of Italian comedy!...(*laughter*). This in no way prevents, of course, that in passing, while taking one's distance and repudiating it, there being highlighted some remarks, more than one, and in truth throughout the book some sharp, and pertinent remarks, concerning what is involved, for example, in the structure of science. That effectively, our science has nothing in common with the (8) dimension of knowledge (*connaissance*), is something which in effect is quite correct but which does not include in itself a hope, a promise of this renaissance of knowledge, in the ancient and rejected sense that is involved in our perspective.

So then, I take up again then, after this parenthesis, what it is a matter of us questioning. There is no need for us to retreat from the use of these truth tables through which the logicians introduce, for example, a certain number of fundamental functions of propositional logic.

To write that the conjunction of two propositions implies - a table, I remind you, I am not going to make all of them for you, can be seen by anyone - implies that if we put here the values of two propositions, namely, of the proposition p, the value true and the value false (namely, that it can be either true or false), and for the proposition q, the value true and the value false and that in this case, what is called conjunction, namely, that what they are, united together, will not be true unless both are true. In all the other cases, their conjunction will give a false result. Here is the type of table that is involved:

p.q	p	q
T	T	F
F	F	F

I do not have to vary it for you, because it is enough for you to open the beginning of any volume whatsoever on modern logic, in order to find how there is defined differently, for example, disjunction, or again implication, or again equivalence.

And this can be a support for us, but it is only a support and a prop for what we have to ask ourselves, namely, is it licit - what we handle as I might say, by the word, what we say, in saying that there is truth - is it licit to write what we say, in so far as *writing* it is going to be for us the foundation of our manipulation?

In effect, logic, modern logic (I have just said it and repeated it), wants to establish itself - I did not say from a convention - but from a rule of writing; which rule of (9) writing, naturally, is grounded on what? On the fact that at the time of constituting its alphabet, we have posed a certain number of rules, called axioms, about their correct manipulation and that this is, in a way, a word that we have given ourselves.

Do we have the right to inscribe the signifiers T and F, the true and the false, as something that can be handled logically? It is sure that - whatever may be, in a

way, the introductory, preliminary (*premissiel*) character of these truth tables in the tiny logical treatises which may come into your hands - it is sure that the whole effort of the development of this logic, will be such as to construct propositional logic without starting from these tables, even if in fact, after having constructed differently their rules of deduction, one has to come back to them. But for our part, what interests us, is also to know, let us say, at least what was meant by the fact that use was made of them, I am saying here, very especially in Stoic logic. Earlier I alluded to the *Ex falso sequitur quodlibet*... It is of course something that must have appeared a long time ago, but it is clear that it was never articulated with such force, anywhere better than among the Stoics.

The Stoics questioned themselves about the true and the false along this logical path. Namely, what is necessary for the true and the false to have a relation to logic in the proper sense that we put it here, namely, where the foundation of logic is not to be found elsewhere than in the articulation of language, in the signifying chain. That is why their logic is a logic of propositions and not one of classes. For there to be a logic of propositions, for that even to be able to operate, how must the propositions be linked together with respect to the true and the false? Either this logic has nothing to do with the true and the false, or if it has anything to do, the true ought to engender the true. This is what is called the relation of implication in the sense that it makes nothing else intervene but two propositional moments: the *protasis* (I am saying "protasis" in order not to say "hypothesis" which would immediately awaken in you the idea that one believes in something, it is not a matter of belief, nor of believing that it is true, it is a matter of positing: "protasis", that is all. Namely, that what is affirmed is affirmed as true). And the second proposition: *apodosis*. We define implication as something in which there can be, nothing more, a true protasis and apodosis: this can only give something that we put in parenthesis and which constitutes a true liaison.

That does not at all mean that that is all that can happen! Let us suppose the same protasis false and the apodosis true. Well then, the Stoics will tell you that this is true, because very precisely *ex falso sequitur quodlibet*. From the false there can be implied the true just as much as the false and, consequently, if it is true, there (10) is no logical objection here. Implication does not mean the cause, implication means this liaison in which there are united, in a certain fashion, as regards the truth table, the protasis and the apodosis. The only thing that cannot happen, at least this is the doctrine of someone called Philon who played here an eminent role, is that the protasis is true and the apodosis false. The true cannot imply the false. This is the most radical foundation of any possibility of handling, in a certain relation to the truth, the signifying chain as such.

We have here then the possibility of a table which, I repeat, is constructed in this fashion:

.....	p q	p	q
	T	T	T

F F T

Namely, when the proposition p being true, the proposition q is false, then the liaison of implication is connoted as false.

What does that mean? Naturally, the most radical conditions for the existence of a logic, as I told you. The problem is quite obvious. This is what we for our part have to do, when we subsequently shall have to speak about what is written there. In other words, when the stating subject (*sujet de l'énonciation*) comes into play. In order to highlight it, we have only to observe what happens when we say: "it is true that it is false". It does not budge, namely, quite simply the *false* regains some lustre, framework, which makes it become a radiating *false*. All the same, this is not nothing. To say: "it is false that it is true", has the same result, I mean that we ground the false, but, is it quite the same thing? Were it only to indicate the following that we have to note, that we will say rather: "it is false that it might be true". The use of the subjunctive indicates to us here that something is happening.

To say: "it is true that it is true", can also be said and leaves us an assured truth, even though it is tautological, but to say: "it is false that it is false", no doubt does not assure the same order of truth.

To say, "it is not false", does not mean to say for all that: "it is true".

We see again then, with the dimension of stating, there being put in suspense something that was only asking to function, in a quite automatic fashion at the level of writing.

(11) This is why it is altogether striking to note what is the slippery aspect of this point where the drama, as I might say, arises very exactly from this duplicity of the subject, and it is the one that, I must say, I will not hesitate to illustrate with a little story, to which I already alluded on many occasions because it did not fail to have an impact (let us say: the career of my little story). This kind of complaint, indeed exigency, which one day emerged precisely from the throat of someone who was very seduced by what I was contributing in terms of the first articulations of my teaching, a touching ejaculation launched towards the heavens: "Why" said this personage, "why does he not say the true about the true?" This sort of urgency, indeed unease, would already find its answer sufficiently, I think, on this single condition of going again to the written signifier.

The true about the true! The T about the T. The signifier cannot signify itself, except precisely when it is not itself that it signifies, namely, when it uses metaphor. And there is nothing to prevent the metaphor which substitutes a different signifier for this T of the truth, from making the truth re-emerge at this moment, with the ordinary effect of metaphor, namely: the creation of a false signified.

This even happens all the time. And in connection with discourse, however rigorous I am attempting to make it today, this may still, in many corners of what

one calls more or less appropriately your brain, generate these sorts of confusions, linked precisely to the production of the signified in metaphor. Certainly, it is not astonishing that it comes to my ears that from the same source, then, from which there was produced this nostalgic invocation, a recent statement should have taken as aim, concerning what Freud taught, what this mouth articulated so elegantly as a “conceptual watering down”. There is here, in effect, a certain sort of admission in which precisely there is designated the following: the close relation that the partial object has with the structure of the subject. The ideal or even, simply, the fact of admitting that it is possible in any way to comment on a text of Freud by watering down his concepts invincibly evokes what can in no way satisfy the function of the partial object: the partial object ought to be able to be settled. In no way can the mustard pot, the mustard pot that I defined at one time as being necessarily empty (empty of mustard naturally) be filled in a satisfying fashion with what this watering down sufficiently evokes, namely, soft shit.

It is extremely essential to see the consistency, precisely, between these primordial objects and any correct handling of a dialectic that is described as subjective.

To take up again, then, the first steps that we have taken as regards implication, it is necessary to see there arising here - in this joint between the truth and this (12) handling of writing - to see what is involved, namely: **what can be written and what cannot be.**

What is meant by this “cannot be” whose definition, at the limit, remains entirely arbitrary? The only limit posed, in modern logic to the functioning of an alphabet, in a certain system, the only limit being that of the initial, axiomatic, given word. What is meant by this “cannot be?” It has its sense in the initial interdictory word that is given, but what can be written about it? The problem of negation is to be posed at the level of writing, in so far as it regulates it as logical functioning.

Here, immediately, of course, there appears to us the necessity which gave rise at first to this use of negation in these intuitive images marked by the first outline of what people did not even know then was an edge: the images in a way of a limit, the one in which the first logic, the one introduced by Aristotle, predicative logic, marks the field in which a class is characterised by a given predicate and the *outside this field* as designated by *not joined to the predicate*.

Naturally, it is not perceived, it is not articulated in Aristotle, that this involved the unity of the Universe of discourse. To say, as I wrote somewhere in connection with the unconscious, to show its absurdity: “there is black, and then ... everything that is not so”; that this has a sense, is the foundation of the logic of classes or of the predicate. It is very precisely because of what this already involves as suspect, if not of blind alley, that people tried to establish something else.

It is not today, but certainly in the sessions that are going to follow, that I am going to try to distinguish for you, in a complete fashion, what are the logical levels, properly speaking: what it is necessary - what it is necessary from writing itself - to distinguish, concerning negation. It is by means of little letters as clear and also once fixed on this blackboard, that I will show you that there are four different

levels of negation, and that classical negation - the one that invoked and appears to be founded uniquely on the principal of non-contradiction - and that classical negation is only one of them.

This technical distinction, I mean of what can be strictly formulated in formal logic, will undoubtedly be altogether essential to allow us to put in question what Freud says, (and what of course since he said it has been repeated without there ever being the smallest beginning of an examination!): that the unconscious does not know contradiction.

It is really sad that certain remarks should be launched in this form of illuminating arrow - for it really puts us on the track of the most radical developments - should (13) have remained in this suspended state, to the point that even a lady, qualified by this title that she had in effect, officially, of princess, was able to repeat it believing that she was saying something! That is precisely the danger of logic. That logic is only supported where one can handle it in the use of writing, but that properly speaking, no one can be assured that someone who speaks of it is even saying something. This indeed is what makes people suspicious of it! It is also the reason why it is so necessary for us to have recourse to the apparatus of writing. Nevertheless, our danger, our risk, is that we ought to take notice of the mode in which there arises, elsewhere than in the written articulation, this negation. Where does it come, for example? Where are we going to be able to grasp it, where are we going to be forced to write it, simply with the systems that I already produced here before you.

Let us take this implication: the proposition p implies the proposition q . Let us try to see what is involved in this starting from q , namely, what we are able to articulate about the proposition p if we put it after the proposition q . Well then, we ought to write negation before, or to one side, or above, somewhere linked to q .

p implies q indicates that *if not q not p* . I repeat: it is an example, and one of the most tangible ones, of the necessity of the emergence in writing of something that one would be quite wrong to believe is the same as the one that was functioning earlier, as a complementary, for example, namely, which of itself posited the Universe of discourse as One. The two things are so dissimilar that it is enough to decree it to disarticulate one from the other, to make one and the other function distinctly.

Among the varieties of this negation, which is proposed for us as having to be questioned before what can be written, namely: from the point where there is eliminated the duplicity between the stating subject and the subject of the statement - if you wish from the point at which this duplicity is maintained. We will first have the function of negation in so far as it rejects from any order of discourse, in so far as the discourse articulates it, what it is speaking about. Or, I will point it out to you very specifically, what Freud advances and what is misunderstood, when he articulates the first step of experience, in so far as it is structured by the pleasure principle: as being ordered, he says, by an *ego* and an *non-ego*. People are so little logicians that they do not see that at this moment it can only be question - this in a way that is all the more culpable because in the text of Freud the two stages are

distinguished: the *ego* and the *non-ego* in so far as they are defined in the *Lust-Unlust* opposition - and so little to be considered as being of the order of this complementarity imposed by the universe of discourse, that Freud distinguished it by putting in the first line: *Ichsaussenwelt*, which is not at all of the same register.

(14) If *ego* and *non-ego* meant at that moment: grasp of the world in a Universe of discourse - which is properly speaking what is evoked by considering that primary narcissism can intervene in the analytic session - this would mean that the infantile subject, at the point at which Freud already designates it in the first functioning of the pleasure principle, is capable to doing logic. While what is at stake is properly the identification of the ego in what pleases it, in the *Lust*. Which means that the ego of the subject is alienated here in an imaginary fashion. Which means that it is precisely *outside* that what pleases is isolated as *ego*. This first *no* which is foundational as regards the narcissistic structure, in so far as in the rest of Freud it will develop into nothing less than this sort of negation of love, in connection with which - when one finds it as has happened in my discourse - it will not be said that I say the truth about the true, but that I say the truth about what Freud said.

That all love is founded on this primary narcissism is one of the terms from which Freud starts, soliciting us to know what is involved in this supposedly universal function in so far as it has reached out to this famous "intuition" - denounced earlier - of Being.

Here is this negation that we will call the mis- (*me-*) of miscognition (*meconnaissance*) which already poses us its question and which is distinguished from the complement, in so far as in the Universe of discourse it designates - and can it designate? - the counterpart, what we will call if you wish, here the *counter*, in order to say no more and to call it the *contrary*, which is perfectly distinct from it, and is in Freud himself.

Subsequently, it is this which will enter further and in a more manageable way than it is in logical writing - what I made an allusion to earlier in implication - in so far as to regulate it in the appearance of these negations that are completely opaque in their reversal (*retournement*), one can call it in implication itself: the *not without* (*pas sans*) in implication as it is defined by the Stoic tradition, as it cannot be avoided whatever may be its paradoxes. For undoubtedly if there is some paradox in the fact that it is constituted in such a way that any propositions whatsoever, "p" and "q" constitute an implication if you join them together and that it is clear that to say: "If Madame such-and-such has straw-coloured hair, then quadrilateral triangles (*laughter*), equilateral triangles have such and such a proportion to their height". No doubt there is some paradox in this use, but what the position of reversal implies, namely, that the condition becomes necessary to go back from the second proposition to the first, it is from the aspect of the *not without* (this does not happen without). Madame such-and-such may have straw coloured hair, that does not have a necessary liaison for us with the following: that the equilateral triangle should have a particular property. Nevertheless, it remains true that the fact that (15) she has or that she does not have straw coloured hair does *not happen without* the thing which, in any case, is true.

Around the suspension of this *not without* there is profiled at once the place and the mode of emergence of what is called the *cause*. If we can give a sense, a substance to this phantastical being which people have never succeeded in exorcising from this joint, despite the fact that obviously everything that science develops always tends to eliminate it and does not reach its perfection except where there is no longer any need to speak about it, it is the function of this *not without* and the place that it occupies that will allow us to flush it out.

And to end on what will constitute, in short, the whole object and the question of our next meeting, what is meant by the term *no (non)*? Can we even make it emerge as a form of complementary, neither as a form of the *me-* of *meconnaissance*, nor in terms of this *pas sans*, when it comes to be applied to the most radical terms around which I always made turn for you the question of the fact of the unconscious. Namely, might the idea even come to us that when we speak about “*non-being*”, it is a matter of this something which is supposed to be in a way on the periphery of the bubble of being? Is *non-being* then all the space outside? Is it even possible to suggest that this is what we mean when we speak, very confusedly in truth, about this *non-being* that I would prefer, on this occasion, to entitle by what is at stake and that the unconscious puts in question, namely: *the place where I am not*.

As regards *not thinking*, which will lead it to be said that here is something that cannot in any way be grasped, in that around which all the logic of the predicates turns, namely: this famous distinction - which is not one - between *extension* and *comprehension*! As if *comprehension* constituted the slightest antinomy to the register of *extension*, when it is clear that everything that has been taken as a step in logic in the sense of *comprehension*, was always and uniquely when one took things uniquely from the angle of *extension*.

Is this a reason for negation, here, to be able even to continue to be put to use without a primordial questioning about what is involved, if it ought to remain linked to extension? Because there is not only for us this *not to be*, since moreover the fate of *being* which is important for us as regards the subject, is linked to thinking. So then what is meant by *not thinking*? I mean: what does it mean at the point that we can write it in our logic?

This is the question - that of “I am not” (*je ne suis pas*) and of the “I do not think” (*je me pense pas*) – on which I will bring our next conversation to bear.

I think I proved to you the last time that I can tolerate a lot of little trials: the bulb, like that, going on and off... (*laughter*). In previous times, in these bogey-man stories, the explanation was given how people were lead, in certain places, to their auto-critique. It was used for that. In any case, it was less disagreeable for me than for you, I must say - because I had it over me and you had it in your eyes.

You were able to see that these little discomforts are not capable of deviating me from what I have to say. That is why I hope you will not try to refer to any personal sensitivity the fact that today we will not be celebrating, despite the fact that it is the season for it. I am warning you right away; I will not give today the seminar that I had prepared for you. I apologise to those who perhaps might have delayed their holiday plans in some way to benefit from it. At the very least no one will have gone out of his way for absolutely nothing, since I hope you all have the little copy with which I pay homage to you as an end of year gift. I have not gone so far as to put in a dedication for each of you, since there are too many names that I do not know, but of course it can always be done!

We have arrived at the moment at which I am going to formulate formulae about the unconscious that I consider as decisive, logical formulae that you saw appearing written on the blackboard the last time, in the form of this "either I do not think or I am not" (*ou je ne pense pas ou ne suis pas*), with this reservation: that this *or* is neither a *vel* (the *or* of union: the one, the other, or both), nor an *aut* (at least one, but no more: you have to choose). It is neither one nor the other.

And this will be the occasion for me to introduce, I hope, in a fashion which will be acceptable in logical calculation, a different function: the one which, in these truth tables, would be characterised by this operation which should be called by a different (2) name, even though there is one which I have already used, but since it has other applications, may be ambiguous. It doesn't matter! I will make the link with it: it is a matter of nothing other, I point out to you - I am not here to play at mysteries - than what I at one time indicated here under the term of *alienation*, but what matter! It is up to you to make the choice. Meanwhile, let us call this operation *omega* and, in the truth table, let us characterise it by the following: if the two propositions on which it operates are true, the result of the operation is false.

You can consult the truth tables that you have within hand's reach, and you will see that none of those in use up to now from conjunction, to disjunction, to implication, fulfil this condition.

When I say that the conjunction of the true and the true gives, by this operation, the false, I mean that every other conjunction here is true: that of the false and the false, of the false and the true, of the true and the false.

The relation between this with what is involved in the nature of the unconscious, is what I hope to articulate before you on the 11th January, for which in any case I give you a *rendezvous*. You can well imagine that if I am not doing it today - on this point, I think, you can trust me - it is because my formulation is not ready, nor what I could limit it to today. Nevertheless, if, effectively, it is from a certain fear of putting it before you in all its rigour, on a day where I find myself embarrassed, because of the

fact that I spent these last hours questioning myself about something which is nothing less than the appropriateness or not of continuing this: the fact that we are all together for the moment and what is called my seminar.

If I ask myself this question, it is because it is worth posing it: this little volume [*Language and the unconscious*] that I have given you and which it seemed to me ought to be brought to your attention just before I bring forward a logical formula which allows in a way there to be secured in a firm and certain way what is involved in the reaction of the subject caught up in this reality of the unconscious, it is not useless for this volume to bear witness to you of what is involved in the difficulties of this abode, for those whose praxis and function it is to be there. Perhaps it is for want of measuring the relation between this “*being there*” to a certain necessary “*not being there*”. This volume will bear witness to you of a meeting that took place around this theme of the unconscious. There participated in it in an outstanding role two of my pupils, amongst those who were most precious to me, and still others ... everything is in it, even the Marxists of the CNRS.

You will see on the first page in very small characters, a very singular manifestation. (3) Any analyst here will recognise what is called technically, what Freud alluded to at one point of the five great case histories (I will leave it up to you - this will allow you to go through them a little - to find this point) what Freud and the police, with one voice call “the gift” or “the visiting card”. If one day it happens that your apartment is visited in your absence you will be able to note perhaps that the trace that the visitor may have left there is a little shit. We are here on the plane of the little *o*-object. It is not surprising that such things happen in the relations with subjects that you are tracking by your discourse on the paths of the unconscious.

In truth, there are strong and major excuses for the lack that psychoanalysts of today demonstrate in keeping themselves to the theoretical heights required by their praxis. For them, the function of resistances is something regarding which you will be able to see that the formulae that I wish to be as sure of myself as possible, the day when I try to give them to you in their essential and in their true agency...you will see the necessity which is attached to resistance and that it cannot in any way be limited to the non-psychoanalysed. Moreover, from the schema that I will try to give you of the relation, not between the *un-thought* and *non-being* (do not believe that I am on the slopes of mysticism!) but between the *I am not* and the *I do not think* which will allow there to be marked for the first time, I believe, and in a tangible fashion not simply the difference, the non-overlapping of what is called resistance and of what is called defence, but, even, to mark in an absolutely essential fashion, even though it has not been published up to now, what is involved in defence, which is properly what circumscribes and what preserves exactly the *I am not*. It is for want of knowing it that everything is displaced, maladjusted in the perspective in which everyone phantasises what is involved in the reality of the unconscious. This something which we lack and which constitutes the risky part of what we are confronted with not by some contingency, namely: this new conjunction between *being* and *knowledge*.

This distinct approach of the term truth, makes of Freud’s discovery something which can in no way be reduced and criticised by means of a reduction to any ideology whatsoever.

If I am given the time, I will take here ... and if I am announcing it to you it is not for the vanity of waving before you something tawdry designed to allure you in the circumstances, but rather to indicate why you will lose nothing in first re-opening Descartes, since moreover, this is the pivot around which I make revolve this necessary return to the origins of the subject, thanks to which we can take it up, take it up again in terms of subject. Why? Because precisely, it is in terms of subject that Freud articulates his aphorism, his essential aphorism around which I taught to turn not simply myself, but those who listen to me, the *Wo Es war, soll Ich werden*. The "Ich" in this formula, and the date when it was articulated - in the *New introductory lectures*, as you know - can in no way be taken for the function "das Ich" as it is articulated in the second topography, as I translated it: "Where it was, there must I" - I added *as subject* but it is a pleonasm: the German "Ich" here is the subject - "become".

Just as I revived before you the sense of the *cogito* by putting around the "I am" the quotation marks which illuminate it, I would go into Freud's aphorism, where we can - a formula more worthy of the tablet than the one he dreamt of: here was discovered the secret of dreams - the "Wo Es war, soll Ich werden", if you are carving it, do not forget to drop the comma: it is "there where it was" that the "Ich" must come. Which means - at the place where Freud places this formula, the final one in one of his articles - which means that what is at stake in this indication, is not the hope that all of a sudden, in all human beings, as it is expressed in a verminous language: "the ego must dislodge the id"; but this means that Freud indicates here nothing less than this revolution of thought that his work requires.

Now, it is clear that this is a challenge, and is a dangerous one for whoever advances, as is the case for me, in order to sustain it in his place. "*Odiosum mundo me fecit logica*" - a certain Abelard, as perhaps some of you still remember, wrote one day these words - "logic made me hateful to the world" ... and it is onto this terrain that I intend to carry some decisive terms, which no longer allow there to be confused what is at stake when what is at stake is the unconscious. We shall see whether or not someone may say that, here, I am slipping outside, or am trying to turn away from it.

To grasp what is involved in the unconscious, I want to mark, so that you can in a way prepare your minds for it by some exercises, that what is prohibited for us in it, is exactly this sort of movement of thought which is properly that of the *cogito*, which just as much as analysis requires the Other (with a capital O). Which in no way requires the presence of some imbecile or other.

When Descartes publishes his *cogito*, which he articulates in this movement of the *Discourse on method*, that he develops in writing, he is addressing himself to someone. He leads him along paths of an always more urgent articulation. And then, suddenly, something happens, which consists in taking off from this path that has been traced out, in order to make emerge from it this other thing which is the "I am".

There is here this sort of movement that I will try to qualify for you in a more precise way, which is one that you find only sometimes in the course of history, and I could (5) designate the same one for you in this VIIIth book of Euclid, in the proof that we

are still enslaved to, for we have not found any others and it is of the same order, very exactly to prove (whatever may be the formula that you might give, if it were found, give to the genesis of prime numbers) that it would be necessary - no one has yet found this formula, but if it were to be found! - that it is necessarily deduced that there are others that this formula cannot name. It is this sort of knot in which there is marked the essential point of what is involved in terms of a certain relation which is that of the subject to thought.

If I touched last year on Pascal's wager, it was with the same intention. If you refer to what appears in modern mathematics, as what is called "diagonal process" (*l'apprehension diagonale*), in other words what allows Cantor to establish a difference between infinities, you have still the same movement, and more simply, if you do not mind, between now and the next time, procuring in this form or in another: *Fides quaerens intellectum* of St. Anselm, in chapter II (so that I will not be obliged, for my part, to read it to you), you will read, even if you have to go to some trouble to procure this little book (this is the translation by Koyre, published by Vrin; I do not know if any of them are left, but undoubtedly they will not be left!) - you will read in chapter II, in order to go over again as an exercise, what is involved in what university imbecility has discredited under the name of the ontological argument. They thought that St. Anselm did not know that it is not because one can think the most perfect that it exists. You will see, in this chapter that he knew it very well, but that the argument has a completely different import, the import of this progress that I am trying to designate for you, which consists in leading the adversary along a path such that it is from its sudden detachment that there arises a dimension unnoticed up to then.

Such is the impossible movement that constitutes the horror of the relation to the dimension of the unconscious; everything is allowed to the unconscious except to articulate: ... "therefore I am". This is what requires different approaches, and properly the logical approaches that I am trying to trace out before you, of what rejects to its nothingness and its futility everything that has been articulated in the woolly ideas of a psychologist about self-analysis.

But if undoubtedly the whole difficulty that I may have in re-animating, in a field whose function is affirmed and is crystallised, precisely the difficulties - let us call them noetics if that suits you - of the theoretical approach to the unconscious, a too comprehensible point, which does not exclude my joining up with this *milieu* on the plane of technique and of precise questionings, precisely, for example, to be able to require that there should be opened up there the terms in which the training analysis is justified.

(6) For me, the question, can be posed about what are the consequences of a discourse, that the circumstances - and also my plan to use the detours imposed on me by these circumstances - to open this discourse on Freud to a larger public.

The honourable man whose signature is at the bottom of what I called "the gift", writes: "Is it becoming, under the pretext of liberty, to tolerate that the forum should be transformed into a circus?" Here, the gift is precious to me: the truth emerges, even from incontinence.

I am the one who is supposed precisely, in this volume, to be substituting the circus for the forum, may God bless me if I really succeeded! Sure! In this little article on the unconscious, I really had, in effect, in composing it, the feeling that I was exercising myself at something which was at once rigorous and breaking through the limits, if not those of the roof of the circus tent at least those of acrobatics, and why not clown if you wish, in order to substitute something which has not, in effect, any relation to what I was able to say in this forum of Bonneval, which was like all forums, a noisy fair! (*Dr Lacan throws the pamphlet on the table!*)

The precision of a circus exercise is all the less within the capacity of everyone that what I am in the process of demonstrating to you, when I speak to you about the *cogito*, is something which, in effect, is in the style of a circus, except that the circuit does not close, that there is somewhere this little projection (*ressaut*) which takes one from this "*I think*" to this "*I am*", which also allowed there to be taken, at such and such a date, something so rare, an essential step in the revolutions of the subject.

The one that I took the last time is that of Cantor. You should know that he, for his part, was spat on to such an extent (*Dr Lacan again throws the pamphlet on the table*) that he finished his life in an asylum. Don't worry, it won't happen to me! (*laughter*) I am a little bit less sensitive than he was to expressions by colleagues and others. But the question that I am asking myself is whether now that I am articulating - in a dimension which is conveyed by the rather stupefying sale of these *Ecrits* - that I am articulating, then, this discourse, whether or not I am going to have to occupy myself this the noisy fair. Because, of course, one cannot count on those whose trade it is to promote themselves, by grabbing in passing any little thing whatsoever that they find in Lacan's discourse, or in the discourse of someone else, to produce a paper in which "he" shows his originality.

Between the Bonneval congress and the time I came here, I lived in the middle of a fair. A fair in which I was the beast: I was the one who was on sale in the market-place. This does not upset me. First of all, because these operations did not concern me - I mean in my discourse - and also because this did not prevent the same people who were carrying out this service coming to my seminar and writing down everything that I was saying - I mean to write it carefully, and all the more carefully (7) because they knew very well that, given their own plans, they did not have much time. So then, it is not just any fair that is in question.

What is now going to come into the fair, is all sorts of other things, which are going to consist - as has already happened and already before the appearance of my *Ecrits* - which are going to consist in making off with any one of my formulae in order to make it serve God knows what! Like trying to demonstrate to me that I do not know how to read Freud, after the thirty years that I have spent doing nothing but that!

So then, what response should I give? Or should I have given? What a mess! Perhaps I have more useful things to do. Specifically, to occupy myself with the point at which things may bear fruit, namely, among those who follow me in the praxis.

In any case, as you see, this question does not leave me indifferent. It is indeed because it does not leave me indifferent that I found myself posing it with the greatest

acuity. I must say that there is only one thing which prevents me from settling it in the way that you see being outlined here: it is not your quality, ladies and gentlemen, even though I am far from not feeling honoured, to have among my listeners, today or other days, some of the people with the best formation, and those for whom it is not vain for me to offer myself to their judgement. Nevertheless, would this by itself be enough to justify what, moreover, can be transmitted by way of writing? Despite everything, at the level of writing, it happens that what is worth something remains afloat, even though, of course, in a university like the French university where for a hundred years people are Kantian, those responsible - as I already pointed out to you in one of my notes - have not, in the course of the hundred years in which they have herded and pushed before them crowds of students, found a way to produce a complete edition of Kant. What makes me hesitate, what ensures that perhaps (perhaps: if I like the idea) I will continue this discourse, is not therefore your quality but your number. For after all, that is what strikes me. That is why, this year, I abandoned this closing of the seminar which had, in previous years, its little experimental period and the opportunity to show its inefficacy. It is because of this number, of this something unbelievable which makes people, a good share of those who are here, people - whom I salute because, moreover, they are there to prove to me that there is something in what I am saying, something which resonates, which resonates sufficiently for them to come to listen to me, rather than the discourse of one or other of their professors about things that interest them, because that forms part of their programme - should come to listen to me, who does not form part of it; this gives me all the same the sign that through what I am saying, which can certainly not pass as demagogy, there must be something in which they found themselves interested.

(8) It is through this that undoubtedly I can justify myself, if this happens, in pursuing this public discourse. This discourse, undoubtedly, which just as throughout the fifteen years that it had already lasted, is a discourse in which undoubtedly everything is not decided in advance, but which I constructed and of which entire parts still remain scattered in memories, which, faith, will do what they want with it; there are nevertheless parts which deserve more and better.

I will make reference to the witticism in what I will tell you about the formula of what I called earlier "the omega operation". For three months, in front of people who could not believe their ears, who asked themselves whether I was joking, I spoke about the witticism. I would ask you, since you are going to be on holidays to procure, if by chance it is possible (because you never know, the works of Freud are also unfindable), to procure for yourself the *Jokes* book, and to soak yourself in it. If I also have to take holidays, for my part, it is the first thing - from my past seminars - that I would try to give an equivalent of in writing.

On this, there you are now provided for this intermediary time, with what I wanted to say: it is not always a festival. In any case not for me.

The last time that I alluded to festivals, it was in a little writing, which was really not a writing at all, because I wanted it remain in the state of a discourse that I gave before a rather large medical audience. The reception of this discourse was one of the experiences of my life. It was not moreover an experience that surprised me. If I no longer do it, it is because I know its results in advance. I must say that I was not able

to resist adding to it a modification which really has nothing to do with the discourse; this allusion to the festival, to the festival of the Symposium ... if it was in allusion. The public will recognise better in the bulletin of my little Ecole no doubt than in that of the College de Medecine where moreover it will be published, the allusion to the festival of the Symposium. What is at stake is the one where there come, one begging, one astray, two characters, two allegorical characters whom you know and who are called Poros and Penia: the Poros of psychoanalysis and the university Penia. I am in the process of questioning myself about how far I can let the obscenity go. Whatever may be at stake, it is worth looking twice at the matter, I mean: even if what is at stake is what someone called, rather comically, philosophical Eros.

Happy Christmas!

Seminar 8: Wednesday 18 January 1967

I will come back today, to articulate it once again and with more insistence, to the operation that I introduced the last time under the term of alienation.

Alienation is the pivotal point in what I am presenting to you and, first of all, this term transforms the use that has been made of it up to now. It is the pivotal point thanks to which there can and ought be maintained for us the value of what one can call from the angle of the subject; the **Freudian foundation**, the decisive step that the thinking of Freud and, still more, the praxis which is maintained through his patronage under the name of psychoanalysis, have, once and for all, brought to our attention as decisive.

We shall speak about a thinking that is not *I*: such is, from a first vague approach, the way in which the unconscious is presented. The formula is certainly insufficient, the value it has is that it puts at the pivot of what Freud produces for us as decisive, this term of *I*. Naturally, this does not allow us for all that to content ourselves with a formula that is so vague, even though poetic (which, moreover, is never extracted from its poetic context except always with a little misuse) - everything has not been said in putting forward that *I am another*. This is why it is necessary to give a more precise logical articulation to it.

As you know, the function of the Other (as I write it with this big O placed in the top left corner of our board today) is its the determining function.

It is not simply impossible correctly to articulate the logic of thinking as the Freudian experience has established it, it is also impossible to comprehend anything whatsoever in what was represented in philosophical tradition - as it came to us, up to Freud - it is impossible to situate correctly what was represented by this step of putting at the centre of reflection, the function of the subject as such - if we do not bring into play

this function of the Other, as I define it when I mark it with this capital O - if we do not remember that I called the Other, marked in this way, what takes on the function of being the *locus of the word*.

(2) What does that mean? We can never come back to it often enough, even though I think I have hammered it out a little.

Freud - when he speaks to us about this thinking which is not *I*, at the level for example what he calls "*dream thoughts*", the *Traumgedanken* - seems to tell us that this thinking remains singularly independent of any logic. He underlines at first: in fact their system is not embarrassed by contradiction. More than one feature again is articulated: those who say, at a first approach, that negation as such cannot be represented there and that, moreover, causal articulation, subordination, conditioning, seem to flee what, in these thoughts, is apparently linked together and cannot be rediscovered in its thread except by the ways of the most free association. There is something that I am only recalling because, for many people, this is still the received idea about what is at stake in the order of the unconscious. But in fact, to speak about the disconnected linking that is supposed to be presented by thoughts that we locate at the level of the unconscious, which are indeed those of a subject or ought to be such, to say that these thoughts do not follow the laws of logic is only a first approach, which supposes something which is rather an antinomy with a preconceived real or rather a preconception of what ought to be the relations of all thinking with the real.

The real, we think - this is the correct and the proper order of any efficacy of thinking - ought to be imposed on it. In truth, this is too much under the sway of the presupposition of a pedagogical logic which is based on a schema of adaptation, not to justify at once Freud - speaking to people not otherwise formed who may be the people of his ordinary audience - making a reference to it, but that also, for any reflection which takes into account what is different in what is involved in the relation of any subject whatsoever to the real - because of the fact that it, as subject, is only grounded, is only established in so far as, in the real, there already are, and being exercised as such, the powers of language - obliges us to take our questioning further.

The path that Freud makes us take certainly remains no less astonishing - in truth only takes on the value which grounds the appropriate astonishment we experience on hearing it - from the fact that we articulate more precisely what he renews about the relations between *thinking and being*. Undoubtedly a theme that has been brought onto the agenda by the discourse of one or other contemporary philosophers, Heidegger in the first place, but undoubtedly in the noise created around what he articulates, it would be indeed be the most naïve form to translate what he calls - as from some reminder or other which ought, at the turning point at which we are at, come from Being itself to thinking for it to be renewed by it, for it to break with what, because of the thread that it has followed for three thousand years, has lead it to some *impasse* or other where it can no longer grasp itself in its essence, and at which one (3) could ask oneself as Heidegger does: "*Was heisst Denken*"? "*What does thinking mean*"? - to expect the renewal of the sense of this word *think* only from some trans-metaphysical accident or other, which would amount to a complete overturning of everything that thinking has traced out. Undoubtedly this is not the sense of Heidegger's text and, for those who dwell on it, one could evoke the humouristic and

derisory metaphor which is that of the girl who does not know how to give herself other than by spread-eagling herself on the bed, limbs all over the place, waiting for the initiative to come from the person she thinks she is offering herself to - it is not so rare an adventure in a time of mediocre civilisation and everyone knows that the person who finds himself thus confronted is not for all that especially stimulated to take action! It would be well for thinking not to have an image of the same order, but to be willing to recall that it is not always without a little bit of trouble that true unions come about.

It is indeed something that has a contribution to make to this problem of *being*, that the path traced out by Freud brings us. But not otherwise - I am coming back to it - than by gauging the connection, the consequences of what results for thinking from the decisive step, from this step which has been taken, which is the one that we have called, by a sort of convention which is historically founded, the *Cartesian step*; namely, the one which limits the establishment of being as such to that of the *I am* implied by the pure functioning of the subject of the *I think* as such, in so far as it gives the appearance - for it is only an appearance - of being transparent to itself, of being what we could call a *suis-pensee* (*an am-thinking*). Allow me, with the neologism, to translate or to support in a caricatural way what is usually called "self consciousness", a term which resonates badly and insufficiently as compared to the use that the German composition allows of: *Selbstbewusstsein*. But in fact, at the level of Descartes and of the *cogito*, what is at stake is properly a *suis-pensee*, this *I think*, which is only situated at the moment at which it is no longer supported except by articulating: "I think".

It is from what follows as a consequence of this, in so far as it is a decisive step forward, that it is a matter - I mean that it is in a thinking determined by this first step that Freud's discovery is inscribed.

I spoke about the Other ... it is clear that at the level of the Cartesian *cogito*, there is a remitting to the charge of the Other of the consequences of this step. If the *cogito ergo sum* does not imply what Descartes wrote quite literally in his *Regulae* - where there can be so clearly read the conditions which determined it as thinking - if the *cogito* is not completed by a: *sum, ergo Deus est* (which undoubtedly makes things much easier), it is not tenable. And nevertheless, if it is not tenable as an articulation - I mean a philosophical one - it nevertheless remains that the benefit has been won; that the procedure which reduces to this narrow margin of the thinking being, in so far as he thinks he is able to ground himself as *I am*, simply on this thinking, it remains (4) that something has been won whose consequences can be read very quickly moreover, in a series of contradictions. For this is indeed the place to mark, for example, that the supposed foundation of simple intuition, which would see there being radically distinguished the *extended thing* from the *thinking thing*, (the first being founded on the exteriority one from another of its parts, from the foundation of *partes extra partes*, as characteristic of extension) is, in a very short space of time, annihilated by the Newtonian discovery, in which I do not think there is sufficiently underlined that the characteristic that it gives to extension, is precisely that in each one of its points, as I might say, no mass is unaware of what is happening at that very instant in all the other points. An obvious paradox certainly and one which gave to contemporaries, and very specially to Cartesians, a lot of difficulty in admitting - a

reticence which has not dried up and in which there is demonstrated something which, for us is certainly completed by the fact that the *thinking thing* imposes itself on us, precisely, from Freudian experience, as being - for its part - no longer this thing which is always marked with an indefectible unification, but, quite the contrary, as marked, by being characterised by being fragmented, indeed fragmenting - carrying in itself the same mark which is developed and in a way is demonstrated in the whole development of modern logic; namely, that what we call the machine, in its essential functioning, is what is closest to a combinatorial of notations and that this combinatorial of notations is for us the most precious, the most indicative fruit of the development of thinking.

Freud, here, makes his contribution by demonstrating what results from the **effective** functioning of this aspect of thinking. I mean: from its relation not at all to the subject of mathematical proof, whose essence we are going to recall right away, but to the subject that Kant would call the *pathological subject*, namely, to the subject in so far as it may suffer from this sort of thinking. The subject suffers from thinking, in so far, says Freud, as he *represses* it. The fragmented and fragmenting character of this repressed thinking is what our experience teaches us every day, in psychoanalysis.

This is why it is a crude and dishonest mythology to present, as the foundation of our experience, some nostalgia or other for a primitive unity, for a pure and simple pulsation of satisfaction, in a relationship to the Other, which is here the only one who counts, and who is imaged, who is represented as the Other of a feeding relationship. The following step, still more scandalous - as I might say - than the first, becoming necessarily what happens, what is articulated in modern psychoanalytic theory throughout its length and breath: the confusion between this feeding Other and the sexual Other.

There is really no salvation - as I might say - for the thinking, any possible preservation of the truth introduced by Freud (but also indeed technical honesty), that cannot, that ought not to be grounded on the setting aside of this crude lure, of this scandalous abuse that it represents: by a sort of contrary pedagogy; a deliberate use of a capture, by a sort of illusion especially untenable for anyone who throws an honest (5) look at what psychoanalytic experience is.

To re-establish to Other in the only status which is valid, which for it is that of the locus of the word, is the necessary starting point from which everything in our analytic experience can take again its correct place.

To define the Other as the locus of the word, is to say that it is nothing other than the locus where an assertion is posited as veracious. It means, at the same time, that it has **no other kind of existence**. But, since to say it, is still to appeal to it in order to situate this truth, it is to make it re-emerge every time that I speak. And that is why I cannot *say* this expression: "*that it has no kind of existence*", but I can *write* it. And that is why I write S signifier of capital O barred as constituting one of the nodal points of this network around which there is articulated the whole dialectic of desire, in so far as it is hollowed out from the interval between statement and stating.

There is no insufficiency, no reduction to some careless gesture or other, in the fact of affirming that the writing: S (O) plays here, for our thinking, an essential pivotal role. For there is no other foundation to what is called mathematical truth, if not that the recourse to the Other, in so far as those to whom I am speaking are asked to refer to it (I mean: *qua* big Other) in order to see inscribed there the signs of our initial conventions as regards what is involved in what I manipulate in mathematics, which is very exactly what Mr Bertrand Russell, an expert in the matter, would go so far as to dare to designate in these terms: that we do not know what we are talking about, nor whether what we are saying has the slightest truth. And in effect, why not? Simply the recourse to the Other - in so far as corresponding in a certain field to a limited use of certain signs, it is incontestable that, having spoken, I can write and maintain what I have written. (If I cannot, at every moment of mathematical reasoning, make this to and fro movement between what I articulate through my discourse and what I inscribe as being established, there is no progression possible of what is called mathematical truth and this is the whole essence of what is called, in mathematics: proof). It is precisely of the same order as what we are dealing with here - the recourse to the Other, is, in every effect of thinking, absolutely determining.

The *I am* of the Cartesian *I think* not only does not avoid it, but is grounded on it, it is grounded in it, even before it is forced, to place this Other at a level of divine essence in order simply to obtain from the interlocutor what follows: the *therefore* of the *I am* - this Other is very directly summoned, it is to it, it is to the reference to this locus, as locus of the word, that Descartes remits himself, for a discourse which calls for consent to do what I am in the process of doing before you: in exhorting me to doubt, you will not deny that I am; the argument is ontological from this stage and undoubtedly if it does not have the cutting edge of St. Anselm's argument, if it is more (6) sober, it does not fail for all that to involve consequences which are the ones that we are going to come to now and which are precisely those which result from having to write by a signifier, that this Other is not something else.

St. Anselm ... (I had asked you during this vacation to refer to a certain chapter and in order that the matter does not remain in the air, I will recall here the order of this famous argument, which is unfairly disparaged and which is well designed to give all its relief to the function of this Other. The argument concern in any way - as is said in the manuals - the following: that the most perfect essence would imply existence.)

Chapter II of the *Fides quarens intellectum*, articulates the argument by being addressed to what is called "the fool"; the fool who, says scripture, has said in his heart: "there is no God".

The argument consists in saying: "Fool! Everything depends on what you call God, and since it is clear that you have called God the Being who is most perfect, you do not know what you are saying". For, says St Anselm, I St Anselm know well that it is not sufficient that the idea of the most perfect Being exists as an idea, in order for this Being to exist. But if you consider that you have the right to have this idea, that you say, that this Being does not exist, what will you look like, if perchance it exists? For you are proving then, that in forming the idea of the most perfect Being, you form an inadequate idea, since it is separated from the following: that this Being can exist and that as existent it is more perfect than an idea that does not imply existence.

It is a proof of the impotence of the thinking of the one articulating it, through a certain critical bias concerning the inoperancy of thinking itself. It is to prove to him that in articulating something about thinking, he himself does not know what he is saying. That is why what is to be re-examined is elsewhere and very precisely at the level of the status of this Other in which I not simply can but in which I cannot do otherwise than establish myself, every time something is articulated which belongs to the field of the word.

No one, as one of my friends has written recently, believes in this Other. In our time, from the most devout people to the most libertine - if this term still has a sense - everyone is an atheist. Philosophically, anything that is based on any form of existence of this Other is untenable.

That is why everything is reduced in the import of the *I am* which follows the *I think*, to the fact that this *I think* makes sense, but exactly in the same way as any nonsense makes sense. Everything that you articulate, on this single condition, as I already taught you - that there must be maintained a certain grammatical form (do I need to go back on the "green colourless ideas, etc"?), anything which has simply a grammatical form makes sense. And this means nothing else than that starting from there I cannot (7) go any further. In other words, that the strict consideration of the logical import that any operation of language involves, is affirmed in what is the fundamental and sure effect, of what is called *alienation* and which does not at all mean that we remit ourselves to the Other, but on the contrary, that we see the caducity of anything that is founded simply on this recourse to the Other, of which nothing can subsist except what grounds the course of mathematical proof from a reasoning by recurrence; the typical form of which is that if we can prove that something that is true for n is also true for $n - 1$, it is enough for us to know what is involved when $n = 1$ in order to affirm that the same thing is true for the whole series of whole numbers. So what? ...

This in itself does not involve any other consequence than the nature of a truth which is the one that I earlier sufficiently pinpointed in the judgement of Bertrand Russell: for our part, we must posit - since something comes to reveal to us the truth hidden behind this consequence - since it is not our place to retreat before what is essential; that the status of thinking, in so far as alienation is realised in it as the fall of the Other, is composed of this; namely, of this white field which is on the left of S [*pointing to the board*] and which corresponds to this status of the I, which is that of the I in so far as it reigns, and this incontestably, over the majority of our contemporaries and which is articulated by an *I do not think*, which is not only proud but even glories in this affirmation! As a result of which, what completes it is what here, I designated as *Es* and which I articulated the last time as being certainly a complement, but a complement which comes to it from this fallen part of this alienation, namely: from what comes to it from this locus of this vanished (*disparu*) Other, in what remains of it as being the *not-I* and that I called - because it is in this way that it must be designated - nothing but this: **the grammatical structure.**

It is certainly not the privilege of a Freudian to conceive of himself in this way, read Mr Wittgenstein: *Tractatus logico philosophicus* ... You must not believe that because a whole school, which is called logical-positivist, dins into our ears a whole

series of the most insipid and mediocre considerations, that the step taken by Wittgenstein amounts to nothing. This attempt to articulate what results from a consideration of logic in so far as it can do without any existence of the subject, is well worth following in all its details and I recommend you to read it.

For us Freudians, on the contrary, what this grammatical structure of language represents is exactly the same thing as what ensures that when Freud wants to articulate the drive, he cannot do other than pass by way of grammatical structure, which alone gives its complete and ordered field to what, in fact, comes to dominate when Freud speaks about the drive; I mean to constitute the only two *functioning* (8) examples of drives as such, namely the scopophilic drive and the sado-masochistic drive.

It is only in the world of language that the *I want to see* can take on its dominant function leaving it open to know from where and why I am looked at.

It is only in a world of language, as I said the last time in order to highlight it simply in passing, that "a child is being beaten" has its pivotal value.

It is only in a world of language that the subject of the action gives rise to the question of *who* supports it, namely, for whom it acts?

No doubt, nothing can be *said* about what is involved in these structures. Our experience, nevertheless, affirms to us that it is they that dominate and not what prowls along some corridor or other of the analytic assembly, namely, a "genital" drive which anyone would be quite incapable of defining as such - that it is they that give their law to the function of desire. But this cannot be *said*, except by *repeating* the grammatical articulations in which they are constituted; namely, exhibiting in the sentences which ground them what can be deduced from different fashions that the subject may have of dwelling there. Nothing, I am saying, can be *said* about them, except what we in fact hear, namely, the subject in his *complaint*.

To know that for all that he is not found in them, that the desire that he grounds in them has for him this ambiguous value of being a desire that he does not assume, that he is only able *despite himself*. It is indeed to return to this point that we are articulating everything that we have to unfold here before you. It is indeed because this is the way things are and because people *dared to say it*, that we must examine **where** this discourse could have started from.

It could have started from this: that there is a point of experience from which we can see what is involved in the truth, because of what I will call as you wish: the obscuring, the strangling, the impasse of the subjective situation, under this strange incidence whose final source is to be grounded in the status of language.

It is at the level where thinking exists as: *it is not I who think*.

This thinking - as it is here, supported by this little shuttle (*on the bottom right of the schema*) which carries the capital I [*in French*] - this thinking, which has the status of unconscious thoughts, implies the following: that it *cannot say* - and this is the status

that is proper to it - either: *therefore I am*, nor even the *therefore I am not*, which nevertheless completes it and which is its virtual status at the level of the Other.

For it is there and only there that this Other maintains its agency. It is there where the *I*, as such, is only effectively inscribed by an *I am not* - by an *I am not* which is supported by this fact that it is supported by as many others as there are to constitute a dream - that the dream, Freud tells us, is essentially egoistic - that in everything that (9) the dream presents us with we have to recognise the agency of the *Ich*, under a mask; but, moreover, it is in so far as it is not articulated as *Ich*, that it masks itself there - that it is present.

This is why the place of all the dream-thoughts is marked here, on the right-hand side by this blank area where it is designated that the *Ich*, as such, is certainly indicated in each one of these dream-thoughts by finding it, by what is going to constitute what Freud calls *Trauminhalt*, namely, very precisely, this set of signifiers of which a dream is constituted by the different mechanisms of the unconscious: condensation, displacement, *Verdichtung*, *Verschiebung*; if the *I*, the *Ich*, the *ego*, is present in all of them, namely, very precisely in the fact that it is **in all**, namely, that *it is absolutely dispersed in them*.

What does that mean, and what is the status that remains to the thoughts that constitute this unconscious, if not to be what Freud told us, namely, these signs through which each thing - in the sense that I said the last time: *Sache*, affairs, things encountered - play with respect to one another this function of referring on which makes us, in the analytic operation, lose time in harvesting them, as in an unordered world?

But what is the operation realised by Freud going to - be and especially in this part of the *Traumdeutung* which is called the dream-work *die Traumarbeit* - if not to show us what it articulates - what it articulates at the beginning of this chapter in the clearest fashion and *quite literally* (whatever maybe said by people who are reading me nowadays for the first time and who are astonished), - that for so many years I have been articulating - that the unconscious is structured like a language! *Der Trauminhalt* - the dream content - is given to us: *gleichsam* - just like - in a writing made up of images (which designates the hieroglyphs) whose signs are only *zu übertragen* - to be translated - *in die Sprache* - into the tongue - of the dream-thoughts; and all that follows on the *Zeichenbeziehung*, on the comparison with a rebus, on the fact that one only understands a rebus by reading it and articulating it, for otherwise it is absurd to see an image - he tells us - composed of a house on which there is a ship or a person running with a comma in place of his head - that all of this has only sense in a *tongue* and after having told us that the world of dream-thoughts is illogical by nature ... (I would simply ask you to refer to Freud's text) - which is not simply to bear witness to you of what is really patent and crudely illustrated on every page, namely that nothing is spoken about except language - but to see that what Freud articulates, are all the ways that exist in order that in this world - of things, no doubt, but what does that mean? That means: - *das Bedeutung*, of what this refers to, this sense of the rebus, and what that refers to, namely, in effect, the images which constitute it.

(10) What does Freud do if not show us how, in a certain fashion precisely by altering them - these images, for example - one can designate the index thanks to which, in their sequence, we rediscover all the grammatical functions eliminated at first. And to show us how there is expressed the relationship of a subordinate to a principal (read the whole of this enormous chapter VI of the *Traumarbeit*), how a causal relationship can be expressed, how in fact the form of negation makes its way back. And very precisely, you will find things whose kinship with the schemas that I have given you, brought here, will appear obvious, like the function of the either - or, he says, which serves to express - because it cannot be done otherwise - a conjunction. And when you look more closely at it you will find exactly what I told you, namely, that in the either - or, suspended between two negations, you have precisely the same value as in the negation of this conjunction.

Undoubtedly these ... devices, as I might say, will appear to you a little bit further ahead in their results than those that Freud gives you, but Freud gives you plenty of them to encourage you to go along the same path. Namely, that when you take the *Secerno* dream, the dream in which you have to close either one eye or two eyes, you will notice what that signifies, namely, that this means: that one cannot have, at the same time, one eye open or two eyes open, that it is not the same thing.

In short, the legitimacy of the logic of the phantasy is precisely this something for Freud's whole chapter, to speak of only that one, prepares us. Prepares us by showing us that of which Freud is tracing the path is a *logic* of these thoughts, namely, the following which means: *it* requires this support of the locus of the Other, which cannot very precisely, here, be articulated except by a *therefore, I am not*.

So here we are suspended at the level of this function, at a *you are not, therefore I am not*. Does that not tickle your ears in a certain way? Do we not have here, I would say, the most importunate language of love itself?

What does that mean? Must we take further the sense, which moreover gives its truth: *you are only what I am*. Everyone knows and can recognise that if the sense of love, is indeed in effect this formula that I give, love in fact in its agitation, in its naïve *elan*, as in many of its discourses, does not commend itself as a function of thinking.

I mean that if, from a formula such as: *you are not, therefore I am not*, there emerges (11) the monster whose effect we know rather well in everyday life, it is very precisely in so far as this truth - that of the *you are not, therefore I am not* - is rejected (*verworfen*) in love. The manifestations of love in the real is very precisely the characteristic that I state of every *Verwerfung*, namely: the most inconvenient and the most depressing effects - this is a still further an illustration of it - in which the paths of love are nowhere to be designated as so easily traced out.

Undoubtedly, in Descartes' time there was no one unaware of these laws, of course. We were at the time of Angelus Silesius, who dared to say to God: "If I were not there, well then, it is very simple: you, God, *qua* existing God, you would not be there either". In such an epoch one can talk about the problems of our own; more exactly one can put oneself back there to form a judgement on what constitutes an impasse for us.

What does Freud tell us, to take further the examination of his logic? If you have still preserved the slightest doubt about the nature of this subversion, which makes of the *Bedeutung* - in so far as we grasp it at the moment of its alteration, of its torsion as such, of its amputation, indeed of its ablation - the source which can allow us to recognise in it the re-established function of logic. If you still have the slightest doubt, you would see these doubts vanishing by seeing how Freud, in the dream, reintegrates everything that appears there as judgements, whether these judgements are internal to the lived experience of this dream, but still more when they present themselves as - in appearance - waking judgements.

When, he tells us, in connection with the dream, something in the dreamer's account, is indicated as being a moment of oscillation, of interruption, of a lacuna (as formerly I said at the time when I was making something of the "lacuna") *Lucken*, an *Unterbrechung*, a rupture, in the account that I the dreamer may give of it, this itself is to be reinstated, Freud tells us, as forming part of the text of the dream. And what does this designate? It is enough for me to refer, somewhere, in what Freud gives us as an example of it: - I am going, says one of his dreamers, with Fraulein K. - *in das Volksgartenrestaurant* - into the restaurant of the *Volksgarten* ... and here, there is a *dunkel Stelle*, this is the passage of which there is nothing more to be said: he no longer knows, and then it takes up again: "then I find myself in the salon of a brothel, - *in dem ich zwei oder drei Frauen sehe* - in which I see two or three women, one in a chemise and drawers.

The analysis: the Fraulein K. is the daughter of his previous boss and what is characteristic, is the circumstance in which he had to speak to her and which he designates in these terms: "we recognised - *Mann sich erkante*, - *gleichsam*: in a sort of equality - *in seiner Geschlechtigkeit*, in her sexual description, as if what is being (12) said was: I am a man *Ich bin ein Mann* - *und du ein Weib* - and you a woman."

Here, very precisely is why Fraulein K. is chosen: to constitute the beginning of the dream, but also no doubt to determine its syncopation. For what is going to follow, in the dream, proves itself very precisely to be what comes to disturb this lovely relationship full of certainties between man and woman. Namely, that the three persons who are linked, for him, to the memory of this restaurant and who also represent the ones that he finds in the salon of the brothel are, respectively, his sister, the wife of his brother-in-law, and a friend of hers (or of his, it does not matter), in any case three women with whom one cannot say that his relationships are marked by a frank and direct sexual approach.

In other words, what Freud demonstrates to us as being **always** and strictly correlative to this syncopation of the *Trauminhalt*, to the lack of signifiers, is, precisely, once it is approached, anything whatsoever **in language** (and not simply the mirages of looking into one another's eyes) that would put in question what is involved in the relationships of sex as such.

The original logical sense of castration, in so far as analysis discovered its dimension, reposes on this: that at the level of *Bedeutungen*, of meanings, language - in so far as it is what structures the subject as such - is very mathematically lacking, I mean:

reduces what is involved in the relationship between the sexes to what we designate as we can, by this something to which language reduces sexual polarity, namely: *having* or *not having* the phallic connotation.

It is very precisely what the effect of analysis represents – and only represents.

No approach to castration as such is possible for a human subject, except in a renewal - at a different stage (separated by the whole height of this rectangle that I have drawn here) - of this function, that I earlier called: alienation, namely: where there intervenes - as such - the function of the Other in so far as we ought to mark it as barred.

It is precisely in so far as analysis by its work, comes to invert this relationship, which made of everything that was of the order of the status of the subject in his *I am not*, an empty field - a non-identifiable subject; it is in so far as this field is going to be filled (here: in the bottom left corner) that there is going to appear inversely (here) the minus phi (ϕ) of the failure of the articulation of the sexual *Bedeutung*. *Die bedeutung des Phallus* I entitled (because I gave it in German) this lecture that I gave on the meaning of the phallus ... it is starting from there that there ought to be posed the question of what is involved in what distances these two equally alienating operations: that of (13) pure and simply logical alienation and that of the re-reading of the same alienating necessity in the *Bedeutung* of unconscious thoughts. With, in both cases - as you see - a different result (because they even seem - in looking at them as they are there, shaded - to be strictly opposed to one another).

The fact is that the whole distance between the one and the other of these operations, consists in their field of departure, one of which is the reconstructed one starting from which I designate the foundation of any logical operation, namely, the choice offered between *either I do not think or I am not*, as being the true sense of the Cartesian *cogito*; this culminates in an *I do not think* and at the foundation of everything that makes of the human subject a subject especially subjected to two drives that I designated as scopophilic and sado-masochistic.

That if something of the **Other**, which is related to sexuality, is manifested starting from unconscious thoughts, it is very precisely the sense of Freud's discovery, but also that through which there is designated **the radical inadequation of thinking to the reality of sex.**

The question is not to go beyond what is unthinkable here - unthinkable and nevertheless healthy - because this is the very core of why Freud held so essentially to the sexual theory of the libido.

You have to read, in the really ... shamanic, inspired - God knows, I do not know how to qualify them ... writings of Jung his stupor, his indignation, in gathering from Freud's mouth something which seems to him to constitute some strictly anti-scientific bias, when Freud says to him: "And then above all, huh, you, Jung do not forget it: you have to stick to this theory" - "But why", Jung says to him - "To prevent", says Freud the "*Schlammflut*", the tide of mud! - Of what? "Of occultism" say Freud to him, knowing very well everything that is involved in the fact of not having touched this precisely designated limit; because it constitutes no doubt the

essence of language, in the fact that language does not dominate - from this foundation of sex in so far as it is perhaps most profoundly linked to the essence of death - does not dominate what is involved in sexual reality.

This is the teaching, full of sobriety, that Freud gives us.

But then, why are there thus two paths and two ways in? No doubt because there is something which deserves a name in the operation that we have not spoken about, the one which makes us pass from the level of unconscious thinking to this logical, theoretical status. Inversely the one which can make us pass from this status of the subject - in so far as he is the subject of scopophilic and masochistic drives - to the status of analysed subject, in so far as the function of castration has a sense for him.

(14) This, which we will call "operation truth" - because like the truth itself, it blows and realises itself where it will, when it speaks - this, which was linked to the discovery, to the irruption of the unconscious, to the return of the repressed, this allows us to conceive of why we can rediscover the agency of castration in *the objet-noyau*, in the core-object (c-o-r-e, to say it in English) in the object around which the status of the grammatical subject turns, this can be designated and translated starting from this corner obtained because of the fact that language is, by its very status, "antipathetic" (as I might say) to sexual reality.

This is nothing other than the locus of the operation around which we are going to be able to define, in its logical status, the function of the **o**-object.

Seminar 12: Wednesday 22 February 1967

We continue, by recalling what we are starting from - alienation.

Let us summarise, for those who have already heard us and especially for the others. Alienation - in so far as we have taken it as a start for this logical path that we are trying to trace out this year - is the e-elimination, to be taken in the proper sense: a rejection beyond the threshold, the ordinary elimination from the Other. Beyond what threshold? The threshold in question, is the one determined by the *cut* in which the essence of language consists.

Linguistics is of service to us essentially in this, that it has provided us with the model of this cut.

This is why we find ourselves put on the side - approximately qualified as structuralist - of linguistics. And that all the developments of linguistics, specifically, curiously, what can be called semiology - what is described in this way, what designates itself, and what proclaims itself as such recently - does not interest us to the same degree. Which may, at first approach, seem surprising.

Elimination then from the Other. From the Other. What does that mean, the Other, with a capital O, in so far as here it is eliminated? It is eliminated *qua* closed and unified field. This means that we affirm, with the best reasons for doing so, that there is no universe of discourse, that there is nothing that can be assumed under this term.

Language is nevertheless solidary, in its radical practice, which is what psychoanalysis is ... (note that I could also say its medical practice. Someone that I am surprised not to see here today, in his usual place, asked me for this sign that I left as a riddle of the term that I could have given, more strictly, in Latin of the "I think". If no one has found it, I am giving it today. I had indicated that this could only be conceived of by a (2) verb in the middle voice. It is *medeor*, from which there comes both *medicine* that I am evoking just now and *meditation*.)

Language, in its radical practice is solidary with something that we now are going to have to reintegrate, to conceive of in some fashion under the mode of an emanation from this field of the Other, from the moment that we have had to consider it as disconnected (*disjoint*). But this something is not difficult to name. It is what this field of the Other precariously authorises itself by and this is called - a proper dimension of language - the truth.

To situate psychoanalysis, one could say that it has been constituted everywhere the truth makes itself known only in the fact that it surprises us and imposes itself on us. An example, to illustrate what I have just said. There is no other *jouissance* given to me, or giveable, than that of my body. This does not impose itself immediately, but no one has any doubt about it and there is established, around this *jouissance*, which is indeed henceforth my only good, this protective grill of a law described as universal and which is called "Human rights". No one can prevent me from disposing as I wish of my own body. The result, at the limit - we put our finger, our foot on it, we analysts - is that *jouissance* has dried up for everyone!

This is the other side of a little article that I produced under the title of "*Kant with Sade*". Obviously this is not said there up front - it is at the back. It was not for all that less dangerous to say it as Sade said it. Sade is indeed the proof of that. But since all I was doing there was explaining Sade, it is less dangerous for me!

The truth is manifested in an enigmatic fashion in the symptom. Which is what? A subjective opaqueness. Let us leave to one side what is clear. The fact is that the enigma has already this much resolved, that it is only a rebus. And let us base ourselves for a moment on the fact - which by going too quickly one may leave to one side - that the subject therefore can be non-transparent. The fact is also that what is obvious may be hollow, and that it would be better henceforth, no doubt, to make the word agree with the past participle, emptied (*evidé*).

The subject is perfectly thingy (*chosique*). And is the worst kind of thing! The Freudian thing, precisely.

As regards the facts, we know that it is a bubble and that it can be burst. We have experience of it already on several occasions. Such is the plane on which modern thinking makes its way, as Marx, first of all gave it its tone, then Freud. If the status of what Freud contributed is less evidently triumphant, it is perhaps, precisely, that he went further. You pay for that.

You pay for that, for example, in the thematic you will find developed in the two articles that I am proposing for your attention, for your study if you have enough leisure for that. Because they ought here to form the foundation on which there will find its place what I am going to advance, to take things up again at the point I left them the last time, to complete, in this quadrangle that I began to trace out as having (3) to be articulated fundamentally around repetition.

Repetition. A **temporal locus**, in which there comes to act what I first left suspended around the *purely logical* terms of alienation, at the four poles that I punctuated of the *alienating choice* on the one hand, of the establishment on the other hand at two of these poles, of the *Es*, of the *Id*, of the *unconscious*, on the other hand, in order to put at the fourth of these poles, *castration*. These four terms, which may have left you in suspense, have their English correspondents in what I began, the last time, to articulate by showing you the fundamental structure of repetition on the one hand (by situating it on the right of the quadrangle), of the function, on the other hand, on the right-hand pole, of this privileged and exemplary mode of the establishment of the subject which is the *passage à l'acte* is.

Passage	Repetition
à	
l'acte	_____

What are the two other poles that I have to deal with now? One of them was already indicated to you the last time:

acting-out

acting-out, that I am going to have to articulate in so far as it is situated - at this place - in an elided way, in which something of the field of the eliminated Other, that I have just recalled, is manifested in the form of a truthful manifestation. Such is, fundamentally, the sense of acting-out. I am asking you, simply, to have the patience to follow me, since, moreover, I can only introduce these terms - what they refer to, the structure - without preliminaries (*bille en tête*), as I might say. By wanting to make our way by a progression, or indeed a critique, of what has already been outlined about such a formulation in the theories already expressed in analysis, we would, literally, only lose ourselves in the same labyrinth that this theory constitutes.

(4) This does not mean, of course, that we reject either the data or the experience. But that we submit what we are contributing in terms of new formulae to this test of seeing whether it is not precisely our formulae that will allow there to be defined not only the well-foundedness but also the sense of what has already been initiated.

The acting-out, then, that I am putting forward - you already sense perhaps the relevance of putting it forward in this situation of the field of the Other, which it is a matter for us of restructuring, as I might say, if only because of the following. That history, like experience as it is being pursued, indicate to us, at the very least, a certain global correspondence between this term and what analytic experience establishes. I am not saying that acting-out occurs only during analysis. I am saying that it is from analysis and from what was produced in it, that the problem emerged. That there arose the fundamental distinction which lead acting-out to be isolated, to be distinguished, from the act, and from the *passage à l'acte* as it can pose us problems, as psychiatrists, and be established as an autonomous category. I have only put forward a correlate, then, the one that makes it like the symptom *qua* manifestation of truth. It is **certainly not the only one** and other conditions are necessary.

I hope then that at least some of you know - in parallel to these statements that I am going to be lead to put at your disposition - will be able to glance through at least what, at a certain date - which is more or less 1947 or 1948 - the *Yearbook of psychoanalysis* began to be published after the last war - and the formula that Otto Fenichel gave of it: "*Neurotic acting-out*".

I continue ... What is the term that you are going to see being inscribed at the fourth meeting-point of these operational functions that determine what we are articulating on the basis of repetition? Even if this surprises you - and I think I will be able to sustain it as broadly as possible for your appreciation - it is something which, singularly, has remained in a certain suspense in analytic theory and is undoubtedly the conceptual point around which most clouds and false appearances have accumulated. To name it, and moreover it is already written on this board (since it is to this note by Heinz Hartmann that I would ask you to refer to grasp a typical fruit of the analytic situation as such) it is, *sublimation*.

Repetition

Passage _____
à

l'acte

Sublimation

Acting-out

(5) Sublimation is the term - that I would not call mediating, for it is not that at all - is the term that allows us to inscribe the basis and the conjunction of what is involved in subjective stability, in so far as repetition is its fundamental structure and that it involves this essential dimension about which there remains the greatest obscurity, in everything that has been formulated up to the present in analysis, and which is called satisfaction.

Befriedigung, says Freud. You should sense there the presence of the term *Friede*, whose usual sense is peace. I think that we live in a time in which this word, at least, will not appear to be obvious to you.

What is the satisfaction that Freud conjugates for us as essential for repetition in its most radical form? Since, in fact, this is the mode in which he produces before us the function of the *Wiederholungszwang*, in so far as it encompasses not alone a particular functioning of life, for its part quite locatable under the term of the pleasure principle, but that it sustains this life itself about which we can now admit everything, even up to the point, which has become a tangible truth, that there is nothing in the material that it stirs up which, in the final analysis, is not dead (I am saying of its nature inanimate). But which it is nevertheless clear will not surrender this material that it collects together to its domain of the inanimate, "except in its own way", Freud tells us. Namely, everything being in this satisfaction which means that it has to re-pass and retrace, the same paths that it has - how? - constructed, and that undoubtedly it testifies to us that its essence is to retrace them. There is - let us be very modest! - a **world** between this theoretical illumination and its verification.

Freud is not a biologist and one of the most striking things - which might be disappointing if we believe that it is enough to give the chief place in his thinking to the powers of life, that it is enough to do anything whatsoever which resembles the construction of a science which might be called biology - we analysts have contributed **nothing** to anything whatsoever that resembles biology. It is all the same very striking!

But why, nevertheless, do we hold so firmly to the assurance that, behind the satisfaction that we have to deal with when it is a matter of repetition, there is something that we designate - with all the awkwardness, with all the imprudence that can be involved, at the point that we are at in biological research - this term that we designate ... (this is the sense, the attachment point that I would go so far as to call *fideist* in Freud) - that we call *sexual satisfaction*. And this for the reason that Freud advanced before an astonished Jung, to stave off the "black tide of mud", which is how Freud judges it with respect to the thinking that he designates by the term to which one will not fail to come if one does not hold fast, that he designates as the recourse to occultism.

Does this mean that everything happens so simply, I mean that these affirmations (6) are enough to give an acceptable articulation? This is the question that I am trying to advance today before you and which makes me push forward sublimation as the locus which, since it has been up to the present left fallow or covered with common scribbles, is nevertheless the one which is going to allow us to understand what is at stake in this fundamental satisfaction, which is the one that Freud articulates as a subjective opaqueness, as the satisfaction of repetition.

This conjunction of a basic point for the whole of logic, because what we bring with us into this marginal place of thinking, which is the one - a place of penumbra, a *twilight zone* - in which there is developed analytic action, if we bring with us there the requirements of logic, which is something that we are led to make a merit of so that we will be able to pinpoint it with what I think must be its best name: sub-logic. This is what in this very place, this year, we are trying to inaugurate.

I pronounce the term at the very moment that it is going to be a matter taking our bearings about what is involved in this *sublimation*.

Freud, even though he in no way developed it, for the same reasons which render the developments that I added to it necessary, Freud affirmed, in accordance with the mode of procedure which is that of his thinking, which consists - as someone else said, Bossuet, first name Jacques-Bénigne - which consists in holding firmly to the two ends of the chain. Firstly, sublimation. is *zielgehemmt*, and, naturally, he does not explain to us what that means! I already tried to mark for you the distinction already inherent in this term of *zielgehemmt*. I took my references in English, as being more accessible: the difference between the *aim* and the *goal*. Say it in French. It is less clear because we are forced to take words already in use in philosophy. We can, all the same, try to say *la fin*, it is the weakest word, because it is necessary to re-integrate into it the whole journeying which is what is involved in the *aim*, the target. There is the same distance between *aim* and *goal* as there is in German between *Zweck* and *Ziel*. We are not told that *Zweckmässigkeit*, sexual finality, is in any way *gehemmt*, inhibited, in sublimation. *Zielgehemmt*, and it is precisely here that the word is well made to detain us ... what we gargle with this so called "object" of the blessed genital drive, is precisely what can without any inconvenience be extracted, totally inhibited, absent, in what nevertheless belongs to the sexual drive, without it losing anything of its capacity as *Befriedigung*, in terms of satisfaction.

Such is, from the appearance of the term *Sublimierung*, the way Freud defines it in unequivocal terms. *Zielgehemmt* on the one hand, but on the other hand satisfaction encountered without any transformation, displacement, alibi, repression, reaction or defence. This is how Freud introduces, poses before us, the function of sublimation.

You will see in the second of these articles - (there are three texts here, but what I am (7) calling the second, is the second that I named earlier, that of Heinz Hartmann. The first that I named being that of Fenichel, and Alexander is only a reference by Fenichel) - I mean the point designated by Fenichel, the major point of the introduction of the term acting-out in psychoanalytic articulation. Consult the article by Heinz Hartmann on sublimation. It is exemplary. It is exemplary of what, in our

eyes, is not in any way obsolete in the position of the psychoanalyst. The fact is that the approach to what he is dealing with, taking responsibility for a thinking, always drives him back in some respect to one of these two terms that I will designate in the most temperate way as platitude. And everyone knows that for a long time, I designated as its the most eminent representative, Mr. Fenichel. May he rest in peace! His writings have for us the very great value of being undoubtedly the very scrupulous gathering together of everything that can emerge as holes in experience. All that is lacking at the place of these holes is the necessary question mark. As regards Heinz Hartmann and the fashion in which he sustains - for some fourteen or fifteen pages, if I remember correctly - with an interrogative accent the problem of sublimation, I think that it cannot escape anyone who comes to it with a fresh mind, that such a discourse, the one I am asking you to consult in the text, designating for you where it is, where you can easily find it, is properly speaking a lying discourse.

The whole apparatus of a so-called “energetics”, around which there is proposed to us something which consists precisely in *inverting* the approach to the problem, by questioning sublimation - in so far as it is first proposed to us as being identical, and not displaced, with respect to something which is, properly, (with the quotation marks that the use of the word drive imposes at this level) all the same: the “sexual drive” - overturning this and questioning in the most punctuated manner what is involved in sublimation, as being linked to what is proposed to us. Namely, that the functions of the ego - which in the most improper manner has been posited as being autonomous, even as coming from a different source to what is called, in this confused language, an “instinctual” source, as if there had ever been in Freud a question of that! - to know, then, how these completely pure functions of the ego, related to the measure of reality, and providing it, as such, in an essential fashion - re-establishing here then at the heart of analytic thinking, what the whole of analytic thinking rejects - that there is this isolated, direct, autonomous, identifiable relation, a relation of pure thinking to a world that it is supposed to be able to approach, without itself being completely shot through by the function of desire - how can it happen that there can come from what is then elsewhere, the instinctual focus, some reflection or other, some painting or other, some colouring or other, that is called, textually, “the sexualisation of the ego functions”!

(8) Once introduced like this the question becomes literally insoluble, or, in any case, excluded forever from everything that is proposed to the praxis of analysis.

To approach what is involved in sublimation, it is necessary for us to introduce this first term without which (*moyennant quoi*) it is impossible for us to find our bearings in the problem, which is the one from which I started the last time in defining the *act*: the act is signifying. It is a signifier which is repeated, even though it happens in a single gesture, for topological reasons which make possible the existence of the double loop created by a single cut. It is the establishment of the subject *as such*. Namely, that, from a true act, the subject emerges different. Because of the cut, its structure is modified. And, fourthly, the correlate of misrecognition, or more exactly the limit imposed on this recognition in the subject, or if you wish again, his *Repräsentanz* in the *Vorstellung*, to this act, is the *Verleugnung*. Namely, that the subject never recognises it in its truly inaugural import, even when the subject is, as I might say, capable of having committed this act.

Well then, it is here that it would be well for us to notice the following - which is essential for any comprehension of the role that Freud gives to sexuality in the unconscious - for us to remember something that the tongue already gives us, namely, that *people speak about the sexual act*.

The sexual act, this could at least suggest to us - something moreover that is obvious - since, once one thinks about it ... in any case, you touch on it right away ... the fact is that it is obviously not pure and simple copulation. The act has all the characteristics of the act as I have just recalled them, as we manipulate it, as it has presented itself to us, with its symptomatic sediments and everything that makes it more or less stick and stumble. The sexual act clearly presents itself as a signifier, firstly, and as a signifier which repeats something. Because it is the first thing that was introduced to it in psychoanalysis.

It repeats what? The oedipal scene, of course!

It is curious that it is necessary to recall these things which constitute the very soul of what I proposed to you to see in analytic experience.

That it can be the establishment of something that offers no way back for the subject, is what certain privileged sexual acts, which are precisely the ones that we call incestuous, make us literally put our finger on. I have enough analytic experience to affirm to you that a boy who has slept with his mother is not at all, in analysis, a subject like the others! And even if he himself knows nothing about it, this changes nothing in the fact that it is analytically as tangible as this table here! His personal *Verleugnung*, the contradiction that he may oppose to the fact that this has the value of a decisive break-through, changes nothing in it.

(9) Naturally, all of this would deserve to be supported. My guarantee is that here I have listeners who have analytic experience and that, if I said something too gross, would be able, I think, to protest loudly. But, believe me, they will not say the contrary, because they know it as well as I do. Quite simply, that does not mean that people know how to draw out the consequences, for want of knowing how to articulate them.

In any case, this leads us to try, perhaps, to introduce into it a little logical rigour.

The act is founded on repetition. What, at first approach, could be more welcoming for what is involved in the sexual act. Let us remember the teachings of our Holy Mother the Church, huh! The principle: you do not do that together, you do not have it off, huh!, except in order to bring into the world a new little soul! There must be people who think about it while they are doing it (*laughter*)! In any case, it is a supposition! It is not established. It could be that, however much in conformity this thinking may be with dogma - the Catholic one, I mean - it may be, where it happens, only a symptom.

This is obviously designed to suggest to us that there is perhaps room to try to circumscribe more closely - to see through what aspect there is admitted - the function

of reproduction which is there behind the sexual act. Because when we are dealing with the subject of repetition, we are dealing with signifiers, in so far as they are the *precondition of a thinking*.

At the rate that this biology, that we leave so well to its own resources, is going, it is curious to see that the signifier is showing the tip of its nose, there, right at the root. At the level of chromosomes, at the moment, there is a swarm of signifiers - conveying quite specified characters. We are told that the chains - of DNA or of RNA - are constituted like well ordered messages which come, of course, after being brewed in a certain fashion, is that not so, in a big urn, to make there emerge the new kind of eccentric that everyone in the family is waiting to acclaim.

Is this the level at which the problem is posed?

Well then, it is here that I would like to introduce something that, naturally, I did not invent for you today. There is somewhere, in a volume called my *Ecrits*, an article which is called "*The meaning of the phallus*"; on page 693, on line 10 (I had some difficulty, this morning, in finding it), I write: *the phallus as signifier gives the ratio of desire (in the sense that the term -I mean: "ratio" - is used as the "mean and extreme" ratio of harmonic division)*. This in order to indicate to you that, huh, obviously, it was necessary for time to pass, for me to be able to introduce what I am going to say to you today. I simply marked there the 'little white stone' intended to tell you that it was already from this that the meaning of the phallus was taking its bearings.

In effect, let us try to put an order, a measure, into what is involved in the sexual act in so far as it has a relation with the function of repetition.

Well then, it leaps to the eye, not that it is not known, since the Oedipus complex is known from the beginning, but that people are not able to recognise what that means, namely, that the product of repetition, in the sexual act *qua* act, namely, in so far as we participate in it as subjected to what is signifying in it, has its impact, in other words, in the fact that the subject that we are is opaque, that it has an unconscious.

Well then, it should be pointed out that the fruit of *biological* repetition, of reproduction, is already there in this space, well defined for the accomplishment of the act, which is called the bed.

The agent of the sexual act knows very well that he is a son. And that is why the sexual act, in so far as it concerns us psychoanalysts, has been referred to the Oedipus complex.

So let us try to see, in these signifying terms that define what I called just now "mean and extreme", what results from it.

Let us suppose that we are going to have this signifying relation supported by the simplest support, the one that we have already given to the double loop of repetition: a simple line. And, for still greater ease, let us lay it out, quite simply as follows:

+ _____ passage

à l'acte

A line to which we can give two ends. We can cut this double loop anywhere at all, and once we have cut it, we are going to try to make use of it.

Let us place on it the four points (points of origin), of two other cuts that define the mean and extreme ratio:

O = 1 o Passage
à l'acte

- (11) **small o**; the agreeable product of a previous copulation, which, since it happened to be a sexual act, created the subject, who is here in the process of reproducing it - the sexual act.
- capital O. What is capital O? If the sexual act is what we are taught, *as signifier*, it is the mother. We are going to give her ... (because we find her trace everywhere in analytic thinking itself, everything that this signifying term of the mother carries with it in terms of thoughts of fusion, of a falsification of unity – in so far as she only interests us, namely, a countable unit - of a passage from this countable unit to a unifying unit), we are going to give her the value *One*.

What does the value *One* mean as a unifying unit? We are dealing with the signifier and its consequences for thinking. The mother as subject is *the thought of the One of the couple*. "The two shall be one flesh", is a thought of the order of the maternal capital O.

Such is the mean and extreme ratio of what links the agent to what is patient and receptacle in the sexual act. I mean, in so far as it is an act, in other words, in so far as it has a relation with the existence of the subject.

The *One* of the unit of the couple is a thought determined at the level of *one* of the terms of the real couple. What does that mean? It is that it is necessary that something should emerge, subjectively, from this repetition, which re-establishes the *ratio* - the mean ratio as I have just defined it for you - at the level of this real couple. In other words that something should appear, which - as in this *fundamental* signifying manipulation that the harmonic relationship is - is manifested as the following: this magnitude (let us call it small c), as compared to the sum of the two others, has the same value as the smaller has compared to the larger.

But that is not all! It has this import, in so far as this value - of the smaller as compared to the larger - is the same value as that of the larger with respect to the sum of the first two. In other words, that *o over capital O = capital O over (o plus capital O)*, equals what? This other value that I produced here and which has a name, which is called nothing other than *minus phi* in which there is designated castration, in so far as it designates the fundamental value. I am writing it out again a little further: equals *minus phi over (o plus capital O minus phi)*. Namely, the significant relation of the phallic function *qua essential lack* of the junction of the sexual relation with its subjective realisation; the designation in the very fundamental signifiers of the sexual

act of this: that, although everywhere summoned, but slipping away, the shadow of the unit hovers over the couple, there appears nevertheless, necessarily, the mark - this by reason of its very introduction into subjective functioning - the mark of something which ought to represent in it a fundamental lack.

This is called the function of castration *qua* signifying.

(12) In so far as man is only introduced into the function of the couple by way of a relationship which is *not immediately inscribed* in sexual union and which is only represented in it in this same *exterior* where you see there being outlined what is called, for that very reason, "the extreme ratio".

The relation that the predominance of the phallic symbol has, with respect to sexual union *qua* act, is the one which gives both the measure of the relation of the agent to the patient, and the measure - which is the same - of the *thought* of the couple, as it is in the patient, to what the real couple is.

It is very precisely by being able to reproduce exactly the same type of repetition, that everything that is of the order of sublimation - and I would prefer not to be forced here to evoke it specifically in the form of what is called "artistic creation", but, because it is necessary, I am bringing it in - it is precisely in the measure that something, or some object, can come to take the place that the *minus phi* takes in the sexual act as such, that sublimation can subsist, giving exactly the same order of *Befriedigung* given in the sexual act and as regards which you see the following: that it very precisely depends on the fact that what is purely and simply within the couple *is not satisfying*.

This is so true that this kind of crude homily, that has been introduced into the theory under the name of "genital maturation", is only proposed as what? As very obviously, in its very text, (I mean in whoever tries to state it) as a kind of hold-all, refuse dump, where nothing really indicates what is enough to connect the fact, firstly, of a copulation (a successful one, they add on, but what does that mean?) and of these elements that are qualified as "tenderness", "recognition of the object". What object, I ask you? Is it so clear that the object is there, when already we are told that behind any object whatsoever, there is profiled the Other, which is the object which provided a shelter for the nine month interval between the union of the chromosomes and the coming to birth?

I know well that it is here that there takes refuge all the obscurantism which attaches itself madly to analytic proof. But it is not a reason either for us not to denounce it, if the fact of denouncing it allows us to advance more strictly into a logic, as regards which you will see, the next time, how it is concentrated at the level of the analytic act itself.

For if there is something interesting in this representation in a quadrangle, it is that it allows us to establish also certain proportions. If the *passage à l'acte* fulfils certain functions with respect to *repetition*, it is at least suggested by this arrangement, that it ought to be the same as what separates *sublimation* from *acting-out*. And in the other sense, that sublimation with respect to the *passage à l'acte* ought to have something in (13) common in what separates repetition from acting-out.

Undoubtedly, there is here a much bigger *gap*, the one which, undoubtedly, makes of the analytic act, as we are trying to grasp it in what we will say the next time, something which also deserves to be defined as act.

Seminar 13: Wednesday 1 March 1967

I read last evening, somewhere, perhaps some of you too may have encountered it, this singular title: "*Know Freud before translating him*" ... an enormity! As was said by a gentleman whom I do not claim to resemble because I do not go around like him with a stick, even though sometimes with a hat: "*hénaurme*"!

In any case, it is clear that it seems to me that to try to translate him, is a path that is certainly indispensable as a preliminary to any pretension of knowing him.

That a psychoanalyst should claim to know psychoanalysis may be acceptable, but to know Freud before translating him, invincibly suggests this stupidity of knowing him before having read him. This, of course, supposes all the necessary enlarging of the notion of translation. For undoubtedly, what is striking, is that I do not know if we can ever put forward something, which resembles this pretension of knowing Freud. Measure clearly for yourselves what it means - in the perspective that the thinking of Freud, once it has reached the end of its development, offers us - measure clearly for yourselves what it means to have proposed to us the model of subjective satisfaction in sexual union.

Was not the experience - the experience from which Freud himself started - very precisely that it was the locus of subjective dissatisfaction? And has the situation improved for us?

Frankly, in the social context which is dominated by the function of the *employment* of the individual - the employment, whether it is regulated against the measure of his subsistence purely and simply, or that of productivity - what margin in this context, is there left to what might be the proper time for a culture of love? And does not everything testify to us that this is indeed the reality most excluded from our subjective community?

No doubt this is, not what decided Freud to articulate this function of satisfaction as a (2) truth but, what seemed to him to be protected from this risk, that he avowed to Jung, of seeing a profound theory of the psyche finding itself in the rut of what he himself called "the black tide of mud of occultism".

It is indeed because with sexuality – which, precisely, throughout the centuries, had presided over what seems to us the follies, the delusions of Gnosis, of the copulation of the wise man and *sophia* (and along what path!) - it is indeed because in our century and under the reign of the subject, there was *no risk* that sexuality could presume to be some kind of model for knowledge, that, no doubt, he began this tune of the leader of the game, so well illustrated by this tale of Grimm that he loved, of the Pied Piper, drawing behind him this audience which, one can well say, as regards the paths of any kind of wisdom, represented the dregs of humanity.

For undoubtedly, in what I called earlier the line that he traces out for us, and where one must start from the end, namely, the formula of repetition, it is necessary to measure what separates the *panta rhei* of the ancient thinker, when he tells us that nothing ever repasses in its own trace - that one never bathes in the same river - and what that signifies in terms of a profound tearing apart of a thinking, that can only grasp time in this something which only goes towards the indeterminate, at the price of a constant rupture with absence.

What is added to it by introducing here the function of repetition?

Well then, undoubtedly, nothing much more satisfying, than to always, incessantly, renew, a certain number of circuits.

The *pleasure principle*, undoubtedly, does not guide towards anything, and least of all towards the re-grasping of some object or other.

What can the pure and simple notion of discharge account for, in so far as it is supposed to take its model from the established circuit of the *sensorium*, from something, moreover, rather vaguely defined as being the *motor*, the *stimulus-response* circuit, as they say? Who does not see that by keeping to this the *sensorium* can only be the guide of what ensures, in effect, at the simplest level, that when the frog's leg is stimulated, it is pulled back. It does not lead to grasping anything in the world, but to fleeing what injures it.

What is it that the constant defined in the nervous system guarantees by the pleasure principle? The equality of stimulation, *isostime*, I would say - to imitate the *isobar* or the *isotherm* that I spoke about the other day - or *isorespe*, *isorésponse*. It is difficult to ground anything whatsoever on the *isostime*, for the *isostime* is no longer in any way a *stime*. The *isorespe*, the “groping” for the equality of resistance, here is what can define this isobar that the pleasure principle will lead the organism to avoid in the world. Nothing in all of that, in any case, pushes towards the seeking, to the grasping, (3) to the constitution of an object.

The problem of the object as such is left intact by this whole organic conception of a homeostatic system. It is very surprising that its flaw has not been marked up to now.

Freud, here, undoubtedly, has the merit of noting that the seeking of an object is something which is conceivable only by introducing the dimension of **satisfaction**.

Here we again come up against the strangeness of the fact that while they are so many organic models of satisfaction - beginning with digestive repletion and also some of the other needs that he evokes, but in a different register - for it is remarkable that it is precisely in so far as these schemas in which satisfaction is defined as **untransformed** by the subjective agency, (oral satisfaction is something that can put the subject to sleep, at the limit, but undoubtedly it is conceivable that this sleep may be the subjective sign of satisfaction) - how infinitely more problematic it is to highlight that the true order of subjective satisfaction is to be sought in the sexual act, which is precisely the point in which it proves to be the most torn apart.

And this, to the point that all the other orders of satisfaction (those that we have just enumerated as present in effect in the Freudian evocation) only come to take on their meaning when put into a certain dependency - which I would defy anyone to define, to render conceivable, otherwise than by formulating it in terms of structure - into a dependency, I was saying, let us say - crudely - that is *symbolic* with respect to sexual satisfaction.

These are the terms in which I am proposing to you the problem that I am taking up again today and which consists in trying to give you the signifying articulation of what is involved in the repetition implied in the sexual act. Is it truly what I have said - what the tongue promotes for us and what undoubtedly our experience does not invalidate - namely, an *act*, after having insisted on what is involved in the act, in itself, in terms of conditioning, first of all, by the repetition which is internal to it.

As regards the sexual act I would go further, at least I thought I had to go further in order to grasp its import. The repetition that it implies, involves - at least if we follow Freud's indication - an element of measure and of harmony which is, undoubtedly, what the directive function given to it by Freud evokes, but which undoubtedly is what is to be specified by us.

For if there is something that is produced, that is promoted, by any of the analytic formulations, it is that in no case can this harmony be conceived of as being of the order of the *complementary*, namely, as the union of male and female, however simply (4) the populace pictures it, in the style of the union of the key and the lock, or in anything whatsoever which is presented in these habitual modes of gamic symbols. Everything indicates to us - and it seems that I only have to make something of the fundamental function of this third element which turns around the phallus and castration - everything indicates to us that the mode of measure and proportion implied in the sexual act is of a completely different structure and, to say the word, is more complex.

This is what, the last time, in leaving you, I had begun to formulate, in evoking - since it is a matter of harmony - the relation described as anharmonic which ensures that on a simple line that has been drawn, a segment can be divided in two ways:

- by a point which is internal to it - a point *c* between *a* and *b* - giving some relation or other, for example, 1/2.
- Another point *d*, outside, can realise in the segments determined between it - this point *d*, for example - with the points *a* and *b* of the initial segment, the same proportion, 1/2.

Already, this had appeared more suitable to us to guarantee what is involved, according to all our experience. Namely, the relation of one term to another term that is presented to us as a place of unity, the unity, I mean, of the couple. That it is in relation to the idea of the couple, where it is found - I mean effectively, in the subjective register - that the subject has to situate himself, in a proportion that he may find has to be established by introducing an external mediation to the confrontation that he constitutes - as subject - to the **idea of the couple**.

This is only a first approximation and, in a way, the simple schema that allows us to designate what it is a matter of guaranteeing. Namely, the function of this *third element* that we see appearing at every turn of what one could call the *subjective field*, in the sexual relation, whether it is a matter (we pointed it out the last time) of what, subjectively, undoubtedly, appears there in the most distant fashion, namely, its always possible organic product, whether it is considered to be desirable or not. Whether it is this element, at first sight so different, so opposed, and, nevertheless, immediately connected to it by analytic experience, namely, this requirement of the phallus, which appears so internal, in our experience, to the sexual relation as it is subjectively lived. Is not the child-phallus equivalence something from which we can, perhaps, attempt to designate the relevance in some synchrony that we ought to discover in it and which, of course, does not mean *simultaneity*.

(5) What is more, does this third element not have some relation with what we have designated as the division of the Other itself, the $S(\emptyset)$?

It is in order to lead you along this path, that today I am introducing the relation which is structured in a very different order to that of the simple harmonic approach which the end of my last discourse designated. Namely, what constitutes the true *mean and extreme ratio*, which is not simply the relation of one segment to another, in so far as it can be defined in two ways, in a way that is internal or external to their conjunction, but the relation which posits, at the start, the equality of the relation of the smaller to the larger - the equality, I am saying, of this relation - to the relation of the larger to the sum of the two. Contrary to the indeterminacy, to the perfect liberty of the anharmonic relation - which is not nothing as regards the establishment of a structure (for I remind you that this anharmonic relation was something we already had to evoke last year as fundamental to any structure described as projective), but let us leave it now to attach ourselves to the following, which makes of the relation of the mean and extreme ratio, not any relation whatsoever - however directive, I repeat, this may appear, eventually, in the manifestation of projective constants - but a perfectly determined and **unique** relation, I mean numerically speaking.

I put on the board a figure that allows us to give its support to what I am stating here.

Here on the right are the segments in question. The first that I called small o , which for us is going to be the only element that we will be content with to build up everything that is going to be involved in this relation of measure or of proportion. On the single condition of giving to its correspondent, that you see here, from this point to this point (I do not want to give names of letters to these points in order not to

risk confusion, in order not to make your ears spin when they are stated) I designate from here (1) to here (2), we have the value 1.

On condition of giving this value 1 to this segment, we can be content, in what we are dealing with, namely, the relation described as that of the mean and extreme ratio, to give it purely and simply the value o , which means, on this occasion o/I . We have posited that the relation o/I is the same as the relation of $I/I+o$.

(6) Such is this perfectly fixed relation, which has extremely important mathematical properties that I have neither the leisure nor the intention of developing for you today. You should know simply that its appearance in Greek mathematics coincides with the decisive step of putting order on what is involved in the commensurable and the incommensurable.

In effect, this relation is incommensurable. It is, in the search for the mode in which there can be defined - in the way in which there overlap - the succession of points given by the staggered series of two units of measure, incommensurable to one another. Namely, what is most difficult to imagine: the way in which they become confused, if they are incommensurable. What is proper to the commensurable, is that there is always a point where the two measures will come together on the same footing. Two commensurable values will always end up at a certain multiple, different for the one and for the other, constituting the same magnitude. Two incommensurable values, never. But how do they interfere with one another? It is along the line of this research that there was defined this procedure which consists in reducing (*rabattre*) the smaller into the field of the larger and asking oneself what happens - from the point of view of measure - to the remainder.

For the remainder, which is here, which is obviously $I-o$, we will proceed in the same way. We will reduce it within the larger one. And so on to infinity, I mean, without ever being able to arrive at the end of this process. It is in this that there consists precisely the incommensurability of a relation that is nevertheless so simple.

Of all the incommensurables, this one is the one that, as I might say, always leaves the greatest separation in the intervals that define the rationality of the commensurable. A simple indication that I cannot give any further commentary on here.

In any case, you see that it is a matter, anyway, of something which, in this order of the incommensurable, is specified by a very special accentuation, as well as a purity of relation.

(7) To my great regret - because I think that all the guts of occultism are going to tremble on this occasion - I am indeed obliged, for the sake of honesty, to say that this small *o* relation is what is called the *golden number*. After which, naturally, there is going to vibrate, in the inner depths of your cultural acquisitions – especially as regards aesthetics - the evocation of anything you like: cathedrals ... Albert Dürer ... alchemical crucibles and all the other similar fiddle faddles!

I hope nevertheless that the seriousness with which I introduced the strictly mathematical character of the matter - and very specifically its problematic nature, which in no way gives the idea of a measure that is easy to conceive of - made you sense that it is something different that is at stake.

Let us see now some of the remarkable properties of this *small o*. I wrote them in black on the left. You can see already that the fact that $1+o$ is equal to the inverse of o , namely, to $1/o$, was already sufficiently guaranteed in the premises given by the definition of this relation. Because the notion that it consists in the relation of the smaller to the greater, in so far as equal to that of the greater to the sum, already gives us this formula, which is the same as this fundamental one:

$$o = \frac{1}{1+o}$$

Starting from this, it is extremely easy to see other equalities, whose obsolete and, in truth, for us, momentarily unimportant character is marked by the fact that I wrote in red the following equalities.

The only important thing to note being that the *one minus small o* which is here (1), can be equal to *o squared*, which is very easy to prove. And, on the other hand, that *two plus small o* which is here, and you can see - from the simple consideration of *one plus small o over one minus o* - how this *two minus small o* can be easily deduced. Which represents the following. Namely, what happens, when instead of involuting onto itself the reduction of segments, one develops them on the contrary towards the outside. Namely, that the *one over 2 plus small o* – namely, what corresponded earlier to our external segment in the anharmonic relation (it is equal to *one*, being obtained by the outside development of the *one* that the greater length represents) - the *one over two o* has the same value as this initial value that we started from, namely, *small o*, namely, *one over one plus o*. (cf Appendix)

Such are the properties of the mean and extreme ratio, in so far as they are going perhaps to allow us to comprehend something about what is involved in genital satisfaction.

As I told you, *small o* is one of the ordinary (*quelconque*) terms of this genital relation. (8) I am saying, one of the *ordinary* terms, **whatever may be its sex**. The girl, like the boy, in the sexual relation - the experience of the subjective relation in so

far as analysis defines it as oedipal - the girl like the boy enters it first of all as a child. In other words, as already representing the **product** - and I am not giving this term at random, we will have to take it up again subsequently - in so far as it allows to situate, as different from what is called creation, what, in our day, circulates as you know, everywhere and even without rhyme or reason, under the name of *production*.

This relation of the subject as such to what is involved in production should be defined, and is indeed the most imminent, the most current problem proposed to thinking. Whatever may be advanced, I am saying, in a dialectic of the subject where it is not seen **how the subject itself can be taken as a production**, is entirely without value for us. Which does not mean that it is easy to guarantee, starting from this root, what is involved in production.

It is so little easy to guarantee, that if there is anything an unprepared mind might well be astonished at, it is the remarkable silence - the silence of "*Conrard*" - that psychoanalysis maintains on this delicate question, which is nevertheless ... I ought to say which plays its part, however little, in our journalistic, political, domestic, daily, and anything you wish, even commercial life, and which is called *birth control*. We have yet to see an analyst saying what he thinks about it! It is all the same curious, in a theory that claims to have something to say about sexual satisfaction!

There must also, there must also be something in this which is very closely linked - not, I must say, in the most convenient fashion - with what one can call the religion of the Word (*Verbe*), since, undoubtedly, after the very surprising hopes about liberation from the Law (which corresponds to the Pauline generation in the Church), it seems that in what followed, many dogmatic statements were weakened. In the name of what? Of **production** of course, the production of *souls*! In the name of the production of souls, this announcement of the passage of humanity to beatitude as being very near, suffered, it seems to me, a certain postponement.

But you must not believe that the problem is limited to the religious sphere. Another announcement having been made about the liberation of man, it seems that the production of *proletarians* must have played some role, in the precise forms socialist societies took on, starting from a certain idea of the abolition of the exploitation of man by man. As regards this production, it does not seem that a much clearer measure has been reached, and as regards what is produced - just as the Christian field, in the name of the production of souls, has continued to allow there to appear in the world beings of whom the least that one can say is that their soul-like quality is quite mixed - in the same way in the name of the production of proletarians, it does not seem that (9) there is coming to light anything other than this something respectable certainly, but which has its limits, and that one could call, *the production of managers (cadres)*.

Therefore, this question of production and of the status of the subject *qua* product, is now presentified to us at the level of something which is indeed the first presentification of the Other, in so far as it is **the mother**.

We know the value of the unifying function of this presence of the mother. We know it so well that the whole of analytic theory (and practice) has literally tipped over

towards it and has completely succumbed to its fascinating value. The principle, from the origin, and this going (you are able to understand it because you saw it being supported in a debate which ended our last year), the whole analytic situation was conceived of as reproducing, ideally, I mean as being founded on the ideal of this unit of fusion (or this foundational unification if you wish), which is supposed to have united for nine months - as I recalled the last time - the child and the mother. Undoubtedly ...

- **A female voice:** We can't hear you, sir.
- **Dr. Lacan:** What?
- **The same voice:** It's very hard to hear you.
- **Dr. Lacan:** It's very hard to hear me. I'm terrible sorry that all of this is working so badly, but I am very grateful to you for telling me. I going to try to speak more loudly. Thank you.
- **The voice:** It's the microphone.
- **Dr. Lacan:** It isn't working at all today, huh. Good ...

... what unites then the child and the mother. It is precisely *not to make* this union of the infant and the mother ... (whatever way we qualify it, whether we make of it or not the function of *primary narcissism*, or simply the elective locus of *frustration* and of *gratification*) - this is precisely what is at stake, namely, not to repudiate this register, but to put it back in its correct place, that our theoretical efforts are about. It is in so far as there is somewhere - and I am saying at the level of sexual confrontation - this first affirmation of the unity of the couple, as constituted by what the religious statement has formulated as "*one flesh*". What a mockery! Who can affirm in any way whatsoever that, in what is called a genital embrace, the man and the woman form one flesh? Unless the religious statement here has recourse to what is put by analytic investigation, to what, in sexual union is *represented* by the maternal pole. I repeat: this maternal pole - since, in the oedipal myth, it seems to be confused with, to give purely and simply the partner of the little male - has in reality nothing to do with the male-female opposition. Because the girl just as much as the boy has to deal with this maternal locus of unity, as representing for her what she is confronted with at the moment of approaching what is involved in sexual union.

(10) For the boy as for the girl what he is as product, as **small o**, has to be confronted with the unity established by the idea of the union of the child with the mother and it is in this confrontation that there emerges this *I-o*, which is going to bring us this third element, in so far as it also functions as the sign of a lack, or, if you wish again, to use the humorous term, of the *little difference*, of the little difference which comes to play the capital role in what is at stake in terms of sexual union in so far as it involves the subject.

Of course, common humour or common sense, as you wish, makes of this little difference, the fact that, as they say, some people have one and the others do not. This is not at all what is in question, in fact. For the fact of not having it plays for the woman, as you know, just as essential a role, just as mediating and constitutive a role in love, as for man. Much more, as Freud has underlined, it seems that her effective lack confers some advantages on her. And this is what I am now going to try to articulate for you.

In effect, in effect, what do we see if not that, as we said earlier, the extreme ratio of the relation - in other words what reproduces it in its exterior - is going to serve us here in the form of the 1, which gives - which reproduces - the correct proportion, that defined by the **small o**, outside the relation thus defined as the sexual relation.

In order that one of the partners should posit himself *vis-à-vis* the other as an equal *one*, in other words, in order for there to be established the dyad of the couple, we have here, in the relation thus inscribed - in the measure of the mean and extreme ratio - the support, namely, this second 1 which is inscribed on the right and which gives again the proportion with respect to the whole - on condition that there is maintained in it this third term of the **small o**.

It is here, of course, there resides the fact that we can say that, in the sexual relation, it is in so far as the subject manages to make himself equal to the Other, or to introduce into the Other itself, repetition (the repetition of 1), that it finds itself reproducing, in fact, the initial relation, the one which maintains, always pressing, this third element, which here is formulated by the **small o** itself.

In other words, we rediscover here the same process, the one that I previously inscribed, in the form of a bar of division, as making the relation of the subject to the big O begin, in so far as - in the mode in which a division is produced - the O barred is given. That in relation to this big O, it is an S barred which comes to be established, and that the remainder is given there by a **small o** which is an irreducible element of it.

(11) What does that mean? What it means, is that we are beginning to conceive of how it can happen that such a local organ, as I might say, and in appearance a purely functional one, like the penis, can here come to play a role in which we can glimpse what is involved in the true nature of satisfaction in the sexual relation.

Something, in effect, somewhere, in the sexual relation, can symbolise, as one might say, the elimination of this remainder. It is in so far as it is the organ which is the seat of detumescence that, somewhere, the subject can have the illusion - a deceptive one undoubtedly, but even though it is deceptive it is nonetheless satisfying - that there is no remainder, or, at the very least, that there is only a perfectly vanishing remainder.

This, in truth, might be simply of the order of the comic, and certainly belongs to it, because this is, at the same time, what gives its limit to what one can call *jouissance*, in so far as *jouissance* is supposed to be at the centre of what is involved in sexual satisfaction.

The whole schema which supports, *fantastically*, the idea of discharge, in what is involved in instinctual (*pulsionnelles*) tensions, is in reality supported by this schema, where one sees there being imposed this limit to *jouissance*, on the basis of the function of detumescence.

Undoubtedly, this is the most disappointing aspect that one could imagine for a satisfaction, if, in effect, what was involved was purely and simply *jouissance*. But

everyone knows that, if there is something that is present in the sexual relation, it is the *ideal of the jouissance of the other*, and, moreover, what constitutes its subjective originality. For it is a fact that if we limit ourselves to organic functions, nothing is more precarious than this intersection of *jouissances*. If there is, indeed, something that experience reveals to us, it is the radical heterogeneity of male *jouissance* and female *jouissance*.

This indeed is why there are so many good souls occupied, more or less scrupulously, with verifying the strict simultaneity of their *jouissance* with that of their partner. I am certainly not going to lay out today the range of the many failures, lures and deceptions that this lends itself to. But the fact is that what is involved is something quite different to this little exercise in erotic acrobatics.

If something - it is well enough known, the place it has taken in a certain psychoanalytic verbiage is also known - if something comes to be founded around the *jouissance* of the Other, it is in so far as the structure that we have stated today gives rise to the *phantom of the gift*.

It is because she does not have the phallus that the woman's gift takes on a privileged value as regards the individual (*l'être*) and is called love, which is - as I have defined it - *the gift of what one does not have*.

(12) In a love relationship, the woman finds a *jouissance* that is, as one might say, of the order precisely of *causa sui*, in so far as, in effect, what she gives in the form of what she does not have, is also the cause of her desire.

She becomes what she creates, in a purely imaginary fashion, and, precisely, what makes her an object - in so far as in the erotic mirage she can be the phallus - to be it and at the same time not be it. What she gives by not having it, becomes, I have just told you, the cause of her desire. It is only, one can say, because of this, that the woman completes genital union in a satisfying fashion.

But, of course, in the measure that, having provided the object that she does not have, she does not disappear into this object. I mean that this object only disappears - leaving her to the satisfaction of her essential *jouissance* - through the intermediary of masculine castration. So that, in short, she, for her part, loses nothing in it, since she only puts into it what she does not have and that, literally, she creates it.

And this indeed is why **it is always through identification to the woman that sublimation produces the appearance of a creation**. It is always in the mode of a genesis, which is certainly obscure - before I expose its lineaments before you here - but very strictly linked to the gift of feminine love, in so far as it creates this vanishing object - and what is more, in so far as she lacks it - which is the all powerful phallus. This is why there can be somewhere in certain human activities - which remain for us to be examined, according to whether they are a mirage or not - what is called *creation*, or *poetry*, for example.

The phallus is indeed then, if you wish, from one point of view, the penis. But it is in so far as it is its lack with respect to *jouissance* that constitutes the definition of the subjective satisfaction to which there is remitted the reproduction of life.

In fact, in copulation, the subject cannot really possess the body that he embraces. He does not know the limits of possible *jouissance*, I mean the one that he can have of the body of the Other, as such, because these limits are *uncertain*. And this is all that is constituted by this beyond that *scoptophilia* and *sadism* define. That phallic failure takes on the ever renewed value of a fainting of the being of the subject, is something that is essential to masculine experience, and what makes this *jouissance* be compared to what is called *the return of the little death*.

This *fainting* function - for its part, much more direct, directly experienced, in masculine *jouissance* - is what gives the male the privilege from which has emerged the illusion of pure subjectivity.

If there is an instant, a somewhere, when man can lose sight of the presence of the (13) third object, it is precisely in this, this fainting moment at which he loses, because it fails, what is not simply his instrument, but, for him as for the woman, the third element of the relation of the couple.

It is starting from there that there were constructed, even before the advent of what we are calling here the status of pure subjectivity, all the illusions of knowledge.

The imagination of the *subject of knowledge*, whether it is before or after the scientific era, is a male forgery. And male in so far as it has some of the characteristics of impotence, that it denies the *minus something* around which there is constructed the effect of causation of desire, *which takes this minus for a zero*. As we have already said, *taking the minus for a zero*, is proper to the subject and the *proper name* is here designed to mark its trace.

The rejection of castration marks the delusion of thinking, I mean, the entry of the thinking of the *I*, as such, into the real, which is properly what constitutes, in our first quadrangle, the status of the *I am not thinking*, in so far as syntax alone sustains it.

This is what is involved, as regards structure, in what allows there to be edified what Freud designates for us about sexual satisfaction in its relation to the status of the subject.

We will remain there for today, designating for the next time what we now have to advance on the function of *acting-out*.

Seminar 15: Wednesday 15 March 1967.

I want to give all the time, usually reserved for our talk to Dr. Green, whom you see on my right. I am beginning, then, a little bit earlier to say very quickly the few words of introduction that I have thought of for this occasion, without moreover knowing in advance, even, that he had, as he has just told me, many things to tell us, namely, that very probably he will take the whole hour and a half. There you are.

Good. In virtue of the secret and always very sure texture of my super-ego, since today, in short, implicitly, I have given myself a holiday, I found a way to have to speak yesterday evening at 5 o'clock, at 5 o'clock in the evening, to the young psychiatric generation at Sainte-Anne. That means, good God, to the generation of analytic candidates.

What was I doing there? In truth, not a lot, given that those who had preceded me, and specifically my pupils and the ones best equipped to teach them what is destined to illuminate them about my teaching, Mme Aulagnier for example, Piera (what will we not find on this *pierra*?...), Serge Leclair, even Charles Melman, to name them alphabetically, and even others ... yes

Well then, apart from the distraction that pushes me sometimes to say "yes" when I am asked something, I had all the same some reasons to be there. Namely, that all of this was happening in the framework of a teaching which is that of my old friend, of my old comrade, Henri Ey. There you are

Our generation, since it is the same, Henri Ey's and mine, had then some role. This old comrade, in particular, is the one to whom, in my opinion, I would easily give pride of place, as regards a function which is nothing other than the one that I would call that of a *civiliser*.

(2) It is difficult for you to imagine what the students' residence was like in Sainte-Anne, when the two of us arrived there, with others also who had more or less the same vocation, but in fact, who broke down on the way!

The under-development, as I might say, as regards logical arrangements, since we are talking about logic here, were really, at this level, around 1925, huh! - it is not yesterday - something extraordinary. Well then, since that time, Henri Ey introduced his great machine: *organodynamism* ... it is a doctrine. It is a false doctrine, but an incontestably civilising one. In this respect, it has fulfilled its role. One could say that there is not, in the field of psychiatric hospitals, a single mind that has not been touched by the questions that this doctrine puts in the forefront and these questions are questions of the greatest importance.

That the doctrine is false is almost secondary as compared to this effect. First of all, because it cannot be otherwise. It cannot be otherwise, because it is a medical doctrine. It is necessary, it is essential for the status of medicine, that it should be dominated by a doctrine. We have always seen that. The day when there is no longer any doctrine, there will no longer be any medicine either. On the other hand, it is no

less necessary, as experience proves, that this doctrine should be wrong; otherwise it would not be able to lend its support to the medical status.

When the sciences - with which medicine now surrounds itself and helps itself, allows itself ... opens itself to them on all sides - have joined together at the centre, well then, there will no longer be a medicine. There will perhaps still be psychoanalysis, which will then constitute medicine. But this will really be a pity, because it will be a definitive obstacle for psychoanalysis becoming a science. This is why I do not wish it.

Well then, last night, I was lead before this chosen audience, to speak about the operation of alienation. About which, I think, for the majority, given that people do not move so easily from Sainte-Anne to the Ecole Normale, (*It is a long way!*), I thought that, for them, I ought - for those who constitute in short the sector that is summoned to psychoanalytic responsibilities, in other words, for those who are going to become psychoanalysts - I thought I ought to pinpoint for them, because this was really the place, to pinpoint for them how there is posed, as one might say, what is called the inaugural choice which is, as you know, a false choice because it is a forced choice. What are the names suitable for this choice in this central sector of those who are going to be in charge in the future? So then, as a way, like that, of getting them to prick up their ears, I gave it suitable names, appropriate names. I am forced to allude to it, because it is rare for even restricted conversations like these to remain secret, especially in a students' residence, and something about these names may come to your ears in the form of some echoes, as something to gloat over. They are not (3) necessarily helpful names, obviously. But between the "I am not thinking" and "I am not", this has not advanced either, as regards a larger sector, as the fundamental constituents of this primary alienation. This is not very helpful either for the totality of this zone that I detach in the human field, in the shape of the field of the subject. Either he is not thinking, or he is not. Moreover, this changes if you put it in the third person. It is indeed a matter of the "I am not thinking" or "I am not". So then, this tempers a good deal the value of terms that I used last night, especially if you think that in virtue of the operation of alienation, one of these two terms always remains excluded. Then, I showed that the one which remains takes on a completely different value, that is in a way positive, in proposing itself - in imposing itself even - as a scalar term (*terme d'échelle*) which proposes itself, precisely, to the criticism of what I invoked at that moment, that I invoked by considering that the proper position of a candidate is *criticism*. It was very urgent. Because if the old situation was that of the underdevelopment of logic, the current situation in this generation, through a sort of paradox and by an effect which is precisely that of analysis, the incidence, *casus*, of the best optimism, may be in many of these cases *pessimus*, the worst. The others were underdeveloped in logic, but these have a tendency to be its monks. I mean that in the way that monks withdraw from the world, they withdraw also from logic. They wait until their analysis is finished to think about it.

I urged them in a lively fashion to abandon this point of view. I am not the only one, moreover. And it happens that there are others, that there is someone at my side, for example, who is one of those who, in this order, try to awaken, while there is still time, - I mean not at all necessarily at the end of the training analysis, but also perhaps

in the course of it and perhaps this is better - the critical vigilance of those that he may have occasion to indoctrinate.

Nevertheless, I must say that it is as a psychoanalyst, as a representative of this field, the problematic one where for the moment there is still being played out the whole future of psychoanalysis, that Mr. Green is given the floor by me today. This by reason of the fact, good God, which is very important, that he proposed it himself. I mean that it is in no way because he is one of my students if not one of my followers that he is going to tell you today the reflections that the last terms that I have brought forward concerning the logic of the phantasy have inspired in him. I am now going to give him the floor, exactly for all the time that he wants, and reserve to myself the right to profit for your use and for mine, from what he has to say today.

Green, you have the floor.

(presentation by Dr. A. Green)

(32) I want to thank Green very much for the contribution that he brought to us today. I do not need, I think, for people who have their ears well tuned, to underline everything that, in his presentation, was able to satisfy me profoundly. If he contributed numerous questions, on different planes, about my agreement or my distance from Freud, or about the elucidation, the putting in question, of one or other point of what is here a "*work in progress*", of something which is constructed and is developed before you and for your purposes, this is something else that I ought to be grateful to him for. Since, thanks to the stage that his intervention constitutes, the level of these questions is posed which ought to allow us subsequently, not alone what I will undoubtedly do - while also designating the point that I want to connect up with - to reply to him, but even to pursue the construction, I would say, in taking the bearings of this level contributed by the really profound, substantial study that he produced before us today, with reference - I can say it and I think that he will take it as a homage - with reference to my discourse.

I can only add my compliments for the long suffering attitude that he adopted in the course of this little test, to which we were all subjected and I ought in a way to apologise to him since undoubtedly it was not he personally who was aimed at on this occasion.

I am giving you a rendezvous, then, for the next meeting on Wednesday ... four plus seven, that gives us the 11th of April; there will be no seminar on the 4th of April as some might have expected.

In the audience: The 12th, the 12th!

Dr. Lacan: The 12th! The 12th of April.

Seminar 16: Wednesday 12 April 1967

Non licet omnibus adire... since no one ever finishes it: ...*Corintho*. I pronounced the first word in the Latin way, in order to suggest to you the translation that "it is not the bus for Corinth" (*laughter*). The adage, which was transmitted for us in Latin from a Greek formula, signifies more, I think, than the remark that at Corinth the prostitutes were dear! They were dear because they initiated you into something. Therefore, I would say, that it is not enough to pay the price. This is rather what the Greek formula meant.

It is not open to all, either, to (quotation marks)"become a psychoanalyst".

This is way it has been for centuries as regards being a geometer. "*Let there enter here*" ...you know what comes next: "*only those who are geometers*". This requirement was inscribed on the facade of the most celebrated philosophical school of antiquity and it indicates clearly what is involved: the introduction to a certain mode of thinking, that we can specify, by taking a further step, namely, that it is a matter of *categories* (in the plural).

Categories means (as you know), in Greek, the equivalent of the word "*prédicaments*" in Latin: what is most radically predicable to define a field.

This is something that carries with it a specified register of proof. This is why, following the Platonic requirement, there was heard manifested in a reiterated fashion the pretension of proving *more geometrico*; which bears witness to the degree to which the aforesaid style of proof represented an ideal.

You know - I would like you to know, I indicated to you as much as I can, namely, within the limits of the field that is reserved to me - that metamathematics has now, through the range of these categorical reconstructions that have historically punctuated the conquests of geometry, this metamathematics - I am saying - has radicalised still more the status of the *provable*.

As you know, geometry is distancing itself more and more from the intuitions that grounded it - spatial ones for example - in order to attach itself to being no longer (2) anything more than a specifiable, and moreover variously layered, form of proof. To the point that in the end, metamathematics is no longer occupied with anything other than the order of this layering, with the hope of arriving at the most radical requirements for proof.

Let us imagine a science that can only begin with what is - in the reconstructions, thus evoked, of a certain field - their terminal point. There is no point, for such a science, in stammering about an initial survey, in which there would be ordered a first familiarity with the measurable, or even the transmission of the most promising

formulae, emerging singularly under the aspect of the secret of calculation. I mean there is no point in it, or it is at the very least deceptive and vain, to dwell on the Babylonian stage of geometry. This, because every standard of measurement, encountered at the start, carries from it the stain of a mirage that is impossible to dissipate.

This is what we highlighted first of all in our teaching, in denouncing - without naming it yet with its term of the imaginary, as we have pinpointed it - the deceptions of narcissism, when we established the function of the *mirror stage*. Encountering such an obstacle was the lot of many sciences, in effect. It is even here that there is situated the privilege of geometry.

Here of course, there is offered to us almost immediately, the purity of the notion of magnitude. That it is not what foolish people believe is not something that is going to detain us here. For the science that we are imagining, it is a completely different tablature. It is not simply that the standard of measurement is inoperant in it, but that the very concept of a unit does not fit in, as long as one has not realised the sort of equality in which its element is established, namely, the heterogeneity that is hidden in it.

Just remember the equation of value, in the first steps of *Capital* (... by Marx for those who might not know it ... you never know there are perhaps people who are distracted!). Clearly in his writing on this equation, it is the proportion which results from the price of two pieces of merchandise. So much of one equals so much of the other: an inverse relation between the price and the quantity of the merchandise obtained. Now, what is at stake is not at all what is clear, but what it conceals, in terms of what the equation retains in itself, which is the *difference* in nature between values thus connected and the *necessity* of their difference.

It cannot, in effect, be the proportion, the degree of urgency, for example, of two habitual values, which grounds the price, nor of that - and for good reason! - of two exchange values. In the equation of values, one intervenes as a use value and the other as an exchange value. You know that we see a similar trap being reproduced, when it is the value of work that is at stake.

The important thing, is that it is proved, in this "critical" work (as it entitles itself) that *Capital* is, that if it fails to recognise these traps any proof remains sterile and goes astray.

The contribution of Marxism to science - I am certainly not the one who has done this (3) work - is to reveal what is latent as necessary at the start - at the very start I mean of political economy.

It is the same thing for psychoanalysis, and this sort of latent thing, is what I am calling - what I call, for my part - what I call **structure**.

Having given my reservations about every effort to drown this notion - by circumscribing, from starting points necessary in a certain field that cannot be defined otherwise than the critical field - to drown this in something that I identify badly under

the vague name of “structuralism”, you must not believe, of course, that this latency is lacking in geometry! But history proves that it is at its end-point now that one can be content to notice it, since it is not *by chance* that the prejudices about the notion of magnitude, which come from its handling in the real, have damaged its logical progress. Again it is only now that it can be known, by noting that the geometry that has been constructed no longer has any need of measurement, of the metrical nor even of the space that is described *real*.

It is not the same, as I told you, for other sciences and the question: why can some of them not start up without having developed these facts, I mean the facts that one can describe as final, since they belong to the structure. Perhaps we can now pose its question as relevant, if we can make it homologous to these facts.

In truth, we are ready for it, since we have noted as well as practised this structure, from encountering it in our psychoanalytic experience, and because our remarks - if we introduce them from a point of view, that is moreover trivial (I am pushing open doors here) about the order of sciences - our remarks are not without aiming at results such that it is indeed necessary, after all, for this order - I am saying: the order of sciences - to accommodate itself to them.

The structure I have taught, ever since I have been teaching - not since I have been writing, since I have been teaching - the structure is that the subject is a fact of language (*fait de langage*), is something to do with language (*fait du langage*).

The subject thus designated is what the function of the word is generally attributed to.

It is distinguished for having introduced a style of being which is its own energy (I mean in the Aristotelian sense of the term *energy*). This style is the *act* in which he keeps quiet (*il se tait*). *Tacere* is not *silere*, and nevertheless they overlap at an obscure frontier.

To write, as has been done, that there is no point in searching in my *Ecrits* for any allusion to silence, is a stupidity. When I wrote the formula of the drive - on the top right of the graph - as *S barred diamond of capital D* (the demand): it is when the demand keeps quiet that the drive begins.

But if I did not speak at all about silence, it is because precisely *sileo* is not *taceo*. The act of keeping quiet does not liberate the subject from language. Even if the essence of the subject, culminates in this act - if he brandishes the shadow of his liberty - if this *keeping quiet* remains heavy with an enigma, which made heavy, for (4) such a long time, the presence of the animal world, we no longer have any trace of it except in phobia. But let us remember that for a long time the gods were put there.

The eternal silence of anything whatsoever, now only half scares us because of the appearance that science presents to common consciousness of positing itself as a knowledge which refuses to depend on language, without for all that this so-called consciousness being struck by this correlation: that it refuses at the same time to depend on the subject.

What really happens, is not that science does without the subject, but that it clears it out of language, I mean expels it. The fact is that it creates its formulae from a language that is emptied of the subject. It starts from a prohibition on this subject-effect of language. This has only one result, which is to prove that the subject is only an effect of language but it is an empty effect. Henceforth, the void circumscribes it, namely, makes it appear as a pure structure of language. This is the sense of the discovery of the unconscious.

The unconscious is a moment where there speaks, at the place of the subject, pure language; a sentence about which there is always question of knowing who has said it.

The unconscious, its status, that one can well say to be scientific, since it originates because of science, the fact is that the subject ... the fact is that it is the subject which, rejected from the symbolic, reappears in the real, making present there what is now done in the history of science - I mean accomplished - presentifying there its only support, language itself. This is the sense of the appearance, in science, of the new linguistics.

What does language itself speak about, when it is thus unmoored from the subject, but because of that, *representing* it in its structural radicalised void? This we know in general: it speaks. It speaks about sex, with a word - in that I am going to tackle the sexual act to question it - in that the sexual act represents silence, namely - you are going to see how necessary it is - with a tenacious, obstinate word to force this silence and for good reasons.

I will take the time all the same ... I will take the time to dissipate here in a fashion that I do not believe is pointless, the first prejudice to present itself. It is not new, of course! But to illuminate it in a novel way is always important.

The first prejudice to present itself in the psychologising context - the difference is constituted there with reference to the statement, the only true one, that we have given about the unconscious - could be formulated from the fall, in our statement, of an index essential to the structure. Does this unconscious speak in the name of sex, as I said?

Here, frivolous minds - and God knows they abound - swallow this "about" (*du*). The unconscious speaks sex: it bells, it rails, it coos, it mews. It belongs to the order of all those vocal noises of the word. It is a "sexual aspiration". Such is the sense, in effect, that is pre-supposed, in the best cases, by the use that is made of the term life-instinct in psychoanalytic rumination.

Every erroneous use of discourse about the subject has the effect of reducing this discourse itself to the level of what it phantasies in place of the subject. This psychoanalytic discourse of which I speak is itself a rattle. It rattles by summoning up the figure of an Eros that is supposed to be a unitive power and again having a universal impact. To take as the same essence what holds together the totality of the cells of an organism and - as having same essence - the force that is supposed to push the individual thus composed to copulate with another, belongs properly to the domain of delusion, at a time when meiosis, I think, is sufficiently distinguished from

mitosis, at least under a microscope! ... I mean as regards everything that is presupposed by the anatomical phases of the metabolism that they represent.

The idea of *Eros* as a soul with goals contrary to those of *Thanatos* and working through sex, is a discourse of a "*midinette au printemps*"; as it was put by the late lamented Julien Benda, someone who has been quite forgotten in our day but after all who represented, for a while, this sort of swash-buckling style which results from an intelligencia that has become useless.

If something was required to put those who are going astray back on the axis of the unconscious *structured like a language*, would not the facts furnished by these objects, that were never yet appreciated in the way that we were able to do it, be sufficient: namely, the phallus, the different partial objects?

We will return to what results from their inmixing into our thinking, on the turn taken by the fumes of one or other vague contemporary philosophy, more or less qualified as existentialism. For us, these objects testify that the unconscious *does not speak sexuality*, any more than it sings it, but that by producing these objects it finds itself - precisely what I said - *speaking about it*. Since it is by being in a relation of metaphor and metonymy to sexuality that these objects are established.

However strong, however simple these truths may be, they must generate a very great aversion. Since it is by avoiding their remaining at the centre, that they can no longer be anything more than the pivot of any articulation of the subject, that there is engendered this sort of droll freedom to which I alluded more than once in these last sentences and which characterises lack of seriousness.

What can be *said* about what the unconscious says about the sexual act?

I might say, if I wanted to imitate here Barbey d'Aurevilly: "What is" - one day he imagined saying one of these demoniacal priests that he excelled in simulating - "what is the secret of the church?" The secret of the church, as you know, which is well (6) designed to terrify old women in the provinces, "is that there is no purgatory".

So then I will amuse myself by telling you what will perhaps have a certain effect on you. And, after all, it is not for nothing that I am punctuating what I am going to say about this stage. The secret of psychoanalysis, the great secret of psychoanalysis, is that **there is no sexual act**.

This could be sustained and illustrated by reminding you of what I called *act*, namely, this reduplication of a motor effect as simple as "I am walking". This ensures simply that by just *being said*, with a certain accent, it is repeated, and, from this reduplication, takes on the signifying function that makes it able to be inserted into a certain chain in order *to inscribe* the subject in it.

Is there, in the sexual act, this something in which - *in the same form* - the subject might inscribe itself as sexed, establishing in the same act its union to the subject of the sex that is described as opposite?

It is quite clear that everything in analytic experience speaks against this. There is nothing born of this act, which does not testify that there can only be established a discourse in which this third *counts*, as I earlier sufficiently announced by the presence of the phallus and the partial objects, and whose function must now be articulated, in such a way that it demonstrates to us what role this function plays in this act. A function that is always sliding, a function of substitution, which is equivalent almost to a sort of juggling and which, never allows us in any case to posit in the act - I mean in the sexual act - the man and the woman opposed in some eternal essence.

And nevertheless ... I would efface what I said about the "great secret" as being that there is no sexual act, precisely by the fact, that it is not a great secret! That it is obvious, that the unconscious ceaselessly cries it at the top of its voice and that this indeed is why psychoanalysts say: "Let us close its mouth when it says that, because if we repeat it along with it, people will no longer seek us out!" What is the point if there is no sexual act?

So then, the accent is put on the fact that there is sexuality (*de la sexualité*).

In effect, it is indeed because there is sexuality that there is no sexual act! But the unconscious, perhaps, means that one lacks it! In any case, it really seems to be so!

Only for this to have its impact, it must be accentuated from the first that the unconscious *says it*.

You remember the anecdote about the parish priest who preaches, huh? He preached against sin. What did he say? He was against it ... (*laughter*). Well then, the unconscious which, for its part, also preaches in its way about the subject of the sexual act, well then, it is *not for it!*

It is from there, first of all, that one must begin to conceive of what is involved when it is a question of the unconscious. The difference between the unconscious and the (7) parish priest deserves all the same to be picked out at this level. The fact is that the parish priest says that sin is sin, instead of, perhaps, the unconscious which for its part makes a sin of sexuality. There is a little difference.

On this point, the question is going to be of knowing how the following is proposed to us: that the subject has to measure himself against the difficulty of being a sexed subject.

This is why I introduced into my last logistical remarks, this reference whose aim I think I sufficiently indicated. To establish the status of the little *o*-object, the one called the *golden number*, in so far as it gives properly in an easily handled form its status to what is in question, namely, the incommensurable.

To introduce it, we start from the idea, that in the sexual act there is no question at all that this small *o*, in which we indicate this something which is in a way the *substance* of the subject ... (if you understand this substance, in the sense that Aristotle designated it in the *ousia*, namely - which is forgotten - the fact is that what specifies

it is precisely the following: that it cannot in any way be attributed to any subject, the subject being understood as *upokeimenon*). This little **o**-object, in so far as it serves us as a module to question the one who is supported by it, does not have to search for its complement in the dyad - what it lacks in order to be two - which would be very desirable. The fact is that the solution to this relation, thanks to which the two can be established, depends entirely on what is going to happen in the reference of the **small o**, the golden number, to the One in so far as it generates this lack, which is inscribed here from a simple effect of continuation (*report*) and, at the same time, of difference, under a form of *one minus o* which, by calculation (very simple calculation that I already wrote on this board so that I can ask you to find it yourselves) is formulated by o^2 .

I am only recalling it here, in order to put - at the start of what I want to introduce, about what it is essential to articulate, for you, as I said earlier - at the beginning, at the start of our science, namely, what necessarily, although paradoxically, introduces us to this sexual knot, in which there flees and makes off from us the act which, for the moment, constitutes our question. The link of this **small o**, in so far as here you see it represents, *darstellt*, supports and makes present first of all the subject himself. That this is the *same* as is going to appear in the exchange, whose formula we are now going to show as being able to make use of this object that we touch in the dialectic of the treatment, under the name of partial object. The relation then of these two aspects of the function **small o**, with this index, this form of object, which is at the principle of castration.

I will not close this cycle today. That is why I want to introduce it by two formulae responding to a sort of problem that we pose *a priori*. What value should be given to this little **o**-object - if it is indeed there as having to represent, in the sexual dyad, the (8) difference - for it to produce two results between which there is suspended our question today?

A question that can only be tackled along the path that I am leading you, in so far as it is the logical path. I mean the path of logic. The *dyad* and its uncertainties is what logic itself develops from the beginning, if one knows how to follow its trace.

I cannot retrace for you here the history of logic, but let it be enough for me to evoke here, at the dawn of the Aristotelian *Organon*, which is something quite different to simple formalism, if you know how to plumb it. At the first point of the logic of the predicate, there is established the opposition between *contraries* and *contradictories*. We have made, as you know, a good deal of progress since, but this is not a reason for not interesting ourselves in what constitutes the importance and the status of their entry into history.

It is moreover not ... (I am saying it also in parenthesis, for those who sometimes open books on logic) to prevent us - when we take up line by line what Aristotle stated at the same time, not even in the margin - introducing what, for example, Lukasiewicz has since completed. I am saying this, because in the excellent book of the two Kneale's, moreover, I was struck by a protestation, like that, which arose in turning a page. Because to say what Aristotle said, Mr. Lukasiewicz, for example, is lead to

distinguish what belongs to the principle of contradiction from the identity principle, and from the principle of bivalence! There you are.

The identity principle, is that A is A. You know that it is not clear that A should be A. Luckily, Aristotle does not say it, but that it should be pointed out is all the same interesting!

Secondly, that a thing can be at once, *at the same time*, A and not A, is again something quite different!

As regards the principle of bivalence, namely, that a thing ought to be either true or false, this is a third thing again!

I find that to point it out rather illuminates Aristotle. And to point out that Aristotle surely never thought of all these niceties, has nothing to do with the question! For it is precisely what allows its importance to be given to what I am going to start again from now, namely, this crude business of contraries. First of all, in so far as, for us - I mean as regards what is not in Aristotle, but which is already indicated in my previous teaching - we will designate it by the **not without** (*pas sans*). (This will be of use of us later. Do not worry! Allow me to lead you a little bit.)

Contraries and this is what gives rise to the logical question of whether, yes or no, the particular proposition implies existence. This has always shocked people enormously. In Aristotle it incontestably implies it. It is even on this that his logic depends. It is curious that the universal proposition does not imply it!

I can say, "every centaur has six limbs". It is absolutely true! Except there are no (9) centaurs. It is a universal proposition. But if I say, (in Aristotle!): "there are centaurs who have lost one", this implies that centaurs exist, for Aristotle. I am trying to reconstruct a logic that is a little less lame as regards centaurs! But this does not interest us for the moment.

Simply there is *no* male *without* a female. This is of the order of the real. This has nothing to do with logic. At least in our day.

And then, there is the *contradictory*, which means the following: if something is *male*, then it is not *non-male*, nothing else.

It is a matter of finding our way in these two distinct formulae. The second is of the symbolic order; it is a symbolic *convention*, which has a name, precisely, *the excluded third*.

This ought to make us sense sufficiently that it is not from this angle that we are going to be able to arrange things since, at the start, we have sufficiently accentuated the function of a difference, as being essential to the status of the sexual dyad. If it can be grounded - I mean subjectively - we will need this third.

Let us try, let us not try ... let us not make an ugly grimace by claiming to attempt what we have already introduced, namely, the logical status of the contrary. Of the

contrary in so far as here *the one and the other* are opposed to *the one or the other* there.

This *one and the other*, is the intersection - I mean logical intersection - male and female. If we want to inscribe in a proper way this *one and the other* in the form of the intersection of Boole's algebra, this means this little lune of spatial overlapping. And it fills me with consternation to have once again to present this figure to you because, of course, you see clearly that it does not satisfy you to any degree! What you would like, is that one should be male and the other female, and that from time to time they step on one another's toes! This is not what is in question. It is a matter of logical multiplication.

The importance of recalling this Boolean figure to you, is to remind you, as opposed to here, which is the very important locus of the game of heads or tails (in which I tried to form those who followed me the first years, at least for a trimester, as a way of making them understand what a signifier was). In opposition to the game of heads or tails, which is inscribed quite simply in a succession of *pluses* or *minuses*, the relation of *the one and the other* is inscribed in the form of a multiplication, I mean a logical multiplication, a Boolean multiplication.

What value - since this is what is at stake - can we suppose for the element of difference, in order that the result should be, quite clearly, the dyad? But, of course, to know it is really within everyone's reach. You have all at least preserved this tincture of the mathematics that you were so stupidly taught, provided you are over thirty. If (10) you are twenty, you have perhaps had the chance to hearing it spoken about in a slightly different fashion. What matter! You are all on the same footing, as regards the formula $(a + b)$ multiplied by $(a - b)$. Here is the difference: there is one of them which has it in addition, the other which has it less. If you multiply them that gives you $a^2 - b^2$. What is necessary for $a^2 - b^2$ to be - quite clearly - equal to two, to the dyad? It is very easy: it is enough to make what is written here, b , equal to the *root of minus 1*. Namely, to a numerical function that is described as an *imaginary number* and which now intervenes in all calculations, in the most common fashion, to ground what is called - an extension of real numbers - *complex numbers*.

If it is a matter of specifying a in two opposite fashions, with plus something and with minus something, and for the result to be 2, it is enough to make it equal to i . This is how one usually writes, in an abbreviated fashion, and moreover one much more convenient, this function of the square root of minus one which is described as imaginary.

You must not believe that what I am explaining here is of any use to us! I am introducing it here, on the brink of what I have to explain to you, because it will be of use of us subsequently and because it illuminates a *rapprochement*. What is presented to us as the other possibility, namely, if we ask ourselves in advance what must be obtained - which also has its interest for us! For it is very interesting also to know why, why, in the unconscious, as regards the sexual act, well then, precisely, what circumscribes, what marks the difference in the first rank of what the subject itself is. Well then! Not alone are we forced to say that this remains at the end, but it is required, for it to be a sexual act that it remain at the end! In other words, that $(a + b)$

multiplied by $(a - b)$ equals ... $a!$ In order for this to be equal to \mathbf{o} - (when \mathbf{o} , of course, is naturally not this O here that I was speaking about). [The convention adopted by the translator requires this switch from a to \mathbf{o}]

The O , here, we are going to make (like earlier, when it was a question of obtaining 2) we are going to make equal to 1. It is to be clearly understood that it is $(1 + i)(1 - i)$ which is equal to 2.

$(1 + \mathbf{o})(1 - \mathbf{o})$ gives \mathbf{o} , on condition that \mathbf{o} is equal to this golden number - it is worthwhile repeating it - that I am using to introduce, for you, the function of the little \mathbf{o} -object. Verify this: when small \mathbf{o} is equal to the golden number the product of $(1 + \mathbf{o})(1 - \mathbf{o})$ is equal to \mathbf{o} . [A note in the margin of one French manuscript says: "Jacques Lacan's golden number is thus the inverse of the golden number of the mathematicians"]

This is where I am going to suspend for a time, the time of the lecture that I have to finish, what I wanted to propose to you in terms of a logical *grid*.

(11) Let us now come to consider what is involved as regards the sexual act.

What is going to be of use to us in dealing with it, is what justifies the fact that earlier I introduced Marx's formula.

Marx tells us, somewhere in the *Philosophical manifestos*, that the object of man is nothing other than his very essence taken as object; that the object also to which a subject refers, by essence and necessarily, is nothing other than the proper essence of this non-objectified subject.

People, some of whom are among those who are listening to me, have clearly shown, the aspect that I would describe as primary, of this Marxist approximation. It would be curious if we were to be very far ahead of this formulation.

This object that is at stake, this proper essence of the subject, but objectified - are we not the ones who can give it its veritable substance?

Let us start from the fact - on which we have based ourselves for a long time - that there is a relation between what psychoanalysis states on the subject of the fundamental law of sex: the prohibition of incest - in so far as for us it is another reflection, already very sufficient, of the presence of the *third* element in every sexual act, in so far as it requires the presence and foundation of the subject.

There is no sexual act - this is the entry of psychoanalysis into the world - which does not carry the trace of what is called incorrectly, the traumatic scene, in other words, of a fundamental referential relation to the parental couple.

You know how things are presented at the other end. Levi-Strauss: *The elementary structures of kinship*, the order of exchange on which there is established the order of

kinship. It is the woman who pays the price, it is women who are exchanged. Whatever they maybe: patriarchal, matriarchal, is does not matter! What the logic of inscription imposes on the ethnologist is to see how the women travel between the lines of descentance.

It seems that between one and the other there is some gap. Well then, this is what we are going to try today to indicate: how this gap, for us, is articulated. In other words, how, in our field, it is filled.

We noted earlier that the origin of economic unmasking, demystification, is to be seen in the conjunction of two values of a different nature. This indeed is what we have to deal with. And, for the psychoanalyst, the whole question is this: seeing that what creates a problem about the sexual act is not *social*, since it is here that the principle of the social is established, namely, in the law of an exchange.

Exchange of women or not, this does not concern us yet. For if we perceive that the problem is of the order of value, I would say that, already, everything begins to be sufficiently illuminated, by giving it its name. At the source of what is reduplicated, (12) of what duplicates, in its structure, value at the level of the unconscious, there is something that takes the place of exchange-value, in so far as, from its false identification to use-value, there results the foundation of the object of merchandise. And one can even say more: capitalism is necessary for this choice, which far anticipates it, to be revealed.

In the same way the status of the subject, as science forges it, is necessary - this subject reduced to its function of interval - for us to perceive that what is at stake, in terms of the equalising of two different values, is suspended here between *use-value* - and why not?, we will see this later! - and *jouissance-value*.

I underline: *jouissance-value* plays here the role of *exchange-value*.

You ought, right away, to sense clearly that this function of *jouissance-value* is something that concerns the **very heart** of analytic teaching. And that, perhaps, this is what is going to allow us to formulate in a completely different fashion what is involved in castration. For, after all, if something is accentuated, in the very notion, however confused it may still be, in the theory of instinctual maturation (*maturation pulsionnelle*), it is all the same the fact that there is no sexual act - I mean in the sense that I have just articulated its necessity - which does not involve (a strange thing!) castration.

What do we call castration?

It is not, all the same, like in the formulae so nicely put forward by little Hans that "the little tap is unscrewed"! For it is necessary for it to remain in its place. What is in question, is what is displayed everywhere, moreover, in analytic theory, is that it cannot take its *jouissance* in itself.

I am at the end of my lecture today. So that here, you can be sure, I am abbreviating. I will come back to it the next time. But it is simply to accentuate the following, from

which I would like to start; namely, what this equation of two values, described as *use* and *exchange*, contains as essential for our material.

Imagine man reduced to what has to be described - he has never yet been reduced institutionally - to the function that the stallion has among domestic animals. In other words, let us use English, where as you know, to say *une chèvre*, you say *a she-goat*, which means an *elle-bouc*. Well then, let us call man, appropriately, a *he-man*. It is quite conceivable, instrumentally. In fact, if there is something that gives a clear idea of use-value, it is what one does when one brings along a bull to cover a certain number of times. And it is quite curious that no one should have imagined inscribing the elementary structures of kinship in this circulation of the all-powerful phallus!

It is a curious thing. It is we who discover that it is the woman who represents this phallic value!

(13) If *jouissance* - I mean penile *jouissance* - carries the mark described as that of castration, it seems that it is in order that, in a way that we will call with Bentham, "fictional", the woman should become what one enjoys (*jouit*).

A singular pretension! Which opens up to us all the ambiguities proper to the word, *jouissance*, in so far as in terms of the juridical development that it involves since then, it implies possession.

In other words, here is something turned inside out. It is no longer the sexual organ of our bull - use-value - which will serve for this sort of circulation in which there is established the sexual order. It is the woman, in so far as she herself has become on this occasion, the locus of transference of this value subtracted at the level of use-value, in the form of *object of jouissance*.

It is very curious! It is very curious, because this leads us: if I introduced earlier for you, the *he-man* - here I am, and moreover in a way very much in conformity with the genius of the English tongue, which calls *la femme* "woman", and God knows that literature has gloated over this "wo", which indicates nothing good (*laughter*) - I would call her *she-man*, or again, in French, by this word - which is going to lend itself, once I introduce it, to some gloating and, I suppose an enormous amount of misunderstanding: *l* - apostrophe - *homme-elle*.

I am introducing here the *homme-elle*! (*laughter*). I present her to you, I hold her by the little finger. She will be of great service to us.

The whole of analytic literature is there to bear witness to the fact that everything that has been articulated about the place of the woman in the sexual act is only in the measure that the woman plays the function of the *homme-elle*.

Let the women who are here not wince, for in truth, it is precisely to reserve, where it is, the place of this Woman (capital W), about whom we have been speaking from the beginning, that I am making this remark.

Perhaps everything that is indicated to us about feminine sexuality - in which moreover, in conformity with eternal experience, a role is played that is eminently one of *masquerade*, namely, the way in which she uses an equivalent of the phallic object, which has always made her the wearer of jewels - "indiscreet jewels", Diderot says somewhere. We are going to be able, perhaps, to finally know how to make them speak.

It is very curious that, from the subtraction somewhere of a *jouissance* which is only chosen for its character of easy handling - if I can designate penile *jouissance* in this way- we should see there being introduced here, with what Marx and ourselves call the *fetish*, namely, this extracted, fixed, use-value, a hole somewhere - the only point of insertion necessary for any sexual ideology.

This subtraction of *jouissance* somewhere, is the pivot.

But you must not believe that the woman - there where she is the *alienation* of analytic theory and that of Freud himself who is the great enough father of this theory (14) to have noticed this alienation in the question that he repeated: "What does the woman want?" - you must not believe that the woman, on this subject, is any worse off! I mean that she disposes of **her** own *jouissance* in a way that totally escapes this ideological grasp.

Even though she is an *homme-elle*, she is never lacking in resources and it is because of this that even feminist demands do not involve anything particularly original. It is still the same masquerade that continues, simply with a contemporary flavour. Where she remains impregnable, impregnable as a woman, is outside the system described as the sexual act.

It is starting from there that we have to gauge the difference between what is involved, concerning the act, as regards the respective status of the original sexes - man and woman - in what the sexual act establishes, in so far as a subject can be grounded on it. They are brought to the height of their disunion through the point to which I have led you today. Because if I spoke to you about the *homme-elle* ... the *homme-il*, for his part has disappeared! Ha! There are no more of them! Since they are precisely, as such, withdrawn from use-value.

Naturally this does not prevent them circulating *really*. Man, as a penile value, circulates very well. But it is clandestine! Whatever may be the certainly essential value that this plays in social climbing. Through the left hand, generally speaking.

I would say further. We ought not to omit this. If the *homme-il* is not recognised in the status of the sexual act in the sense that it is foundational in society, there exists "a society for the protection" of *homme-il*. This is even what is called masculine homosexuality. It is on this point that, in a way, is marginal and humorously pinpointed, that I will stop today, simply because time has set a term to what I had prepared for you today.

Seminar 17: Wednesday 19 April 1967

I brought you a certain number of statements the last time. I formulated ones such as, for example, “*there is no sexual act*”. I believe that the news of this has gone all over town (*laughter*). But anyway, I did not give it as an absolute truth. I said that this is what was properly speaking articulated in the discourse of the unconscious.

That said, I framed this formula and some others into a sort of reminder, that I must say was rather dense, of what gives it its sense and also its premises. This lecture was a sort of stage marked by assembly points, which will perhaps serve as a written introduction to something, then, that I am pursuing, that I want to pursue today, I would say in a form that is perhaps more accessible, in any case conceived of as an easier path, a first way of disentangling the articulations into which I am going to advance, which are still those that I presented to you on the last two or three of my lectures. Namely, this triple articulation between the **small o**, one value *One* (which is only there to give its sense to the value **small o**, given that this is a number, properly speaking the golden number) and a second value *One*.

Naturally, I could, once again, re-articulate them in a fashion that I could describe as apodictic, show their necessity. I will proceed differently, thinking rather to begin by exemplifying the use that I am going to make of them, even if it entails taking things up again subsequently in the necessity way, which I am therefore going to put to one side. I am going to do it in a mode that one could call eristic.

This, then, thinking of those who do not know what is at stake. What is at stake is psychoanalysis. It is not necessary to know what is involved in psychoanalysis to draw profit from my discourse. But you must still have spent a certain time dealing with this discourse. I must suppose that this is not the case for everyone, especially among those who are not psychoanalysts.

If I am concerned in this way about those who are to be introduced to what I called my (2) discourse, it is, of course, not without thinking about psychoanalysts. But it is also the fact that up to a certain point, it is necessary for me to address myself to those whom I have first of all defined, and whom I found myself one day pinpointing as being “the number”. It is necessary for me to address myself to them in order that my discourse should return, in a way, from a point of reflection to the ears of psychoanalysts.

It is in effect striking - and *internal* to what is at stake - that the psychoanalyst does not enter all that easily into this discourse, precisely in the measure that this discourse involves his practice. And that it is demonstrable - the continuation even of my discourse, of my discourse today, will put the point on why it is conceivable - that the

psychoanalyst finds in his very status, I mean in what establishes him as psychoanalyst, this something which creates a resistance very specially to the point that I introduced, inaugurated, in my last discourse.

To say the word: the introduction of *jouissance*-value poses a question, at the very root of a discourse, of any discourse, which can be entitled a truth-discourse. At least in as much - understand me - as this discourse may enter into competition with the discourse of the unconscious, if this discourse of the unconscious is indeed, as I told you the last time, really articulated by this *jouissance*-value.

It is very curious to see how the psychoanalyst always has to retouch a little this competitive discourse. It is precisely where its eventual statement is true, that he always finds something to correct in it. And it is enough to have a little experience to know that this contestation is always strictly correlative - when one can measure it - to this sort of gluttony which is linked in a way to the psychoanalytic institution, that constituted by the idea of having oneself recognised on the plane of knowledge.

Jouissance-value, I said, is at the source of the economy of the unconscious.

The unconscious, I said again - underlining the article *du* - speaks of sex (*du sexe*). Not speaks sex (*parle sexe*) but speaks of sex.

What the unconscious designates for us are the paths of a knowledge. To follow them, one must not want to know before having taken them.

The unconscious speaks of sex. Can one say that it *says* sex? In other words, does it say the truth? To say that it *speaks* it is something which leaves in suspense what it *says*. One can speak in order to say nothing, as often happens. This is not the case with the unconscious.

One can say things without speaking. This is not the case for the unconscious either. It is even the relief - unnoticed of course - like many other features, which depend on what I articulated at this starting point that the unconscious speaks (*ça parle*). If one had a little bit of an ear, one could deduce from it that it is necessary to speak in order (3) to say something! I have never seen anyone yet who brought this out, even though in my Rome discourse it is said in ten different ways. One of these was recently presented to me in the course of conversations with very pleasant young people, very taken by a part at least of my discourse, in connection with the famous formula, which has had its good fortune all the more, of course, because it is a formula - distrust always wanting to gather everything into a formula - when I said that the analysand speaks to you the analyst, then speaks about himself, and that when he speaks to you about himself to you.

The formulae which, like this one, have had the good luck to be picked up, ought to be put back in their context in order to avoid generating confusion.

Does the unconscious, then, *say* the truth about sex? I did not say that, though Freud, you should remember, already raised the question. This of course deserves to be specified. It was in connection with a dream, a dream of one of his female patients,

obviously constructed - this dream - to pull his leg, I mean Freud's; to make him believe the moon is made of blue cheese. The generation of disciples at that time was sufficiently fresh for it to have been necessary for him to explain this as a scandal. In truth it is easy to get out of it. The dream is the royal road to the unconscious! But it is not, in itself, the unconscious.

To pose the question at the level of the unconscious is a different kettle of fish (*paire de manches*) that I already turned inside out- I mean the aforesaid sleeves - which I always do very quickly leaving no place for ambiguity, when, in my text called *The Freudian Thing*, written in 1956 for Freud's centenary - I made emerge this entity which says: "Me, the truth, I speak".

The truth speaks. Since it is the truth, it has no need to say the truth.

We hear the truth. And what it is saying can only be understood by someone who knows how to articulate what it is saying. What it is saying where? In the symptom, namely, in something that is going wrong. This is the relation of the unconscious, in so far as it speaks, to the truth.

It nevertheless remains that there is a question that I opened up, last year, at my first lecture which appeared - when I say last year, I do not mean last October/November, the October/November before - the one that was published in the *Cahiers pour la psychanalyse*, under the title of *Truth and science*. The question remains open in it as to why - the statement by Lenin that introduces this journal - why "the theory will conquer because it is true"?

What I said earlier about the psychoanalyst, for example, does not immediately give to this statement a very convincing sanction.

Marx himself on this matter, as on so many others, let slip something that does not fail to be an enigma. Like many others before him, in effect, beginning with Descartes, he proceeded, as regards the truth, according to a singular strategy that he states somewhere in these pungent words: "The advantage of my dialectic is that I say things (4) little by little and, since they believe that I am finished, in rushing in to refute me, they only display their stupidity". It may appear curious that someone from whom there proceeds this idea that "the theory will conquer because it is true", should express himself in that way.

Politics of the truth and, in a word, its complement, in the idea that, in short, only what I called earlier "the number" - namely, what is reduced to being only number, namely, what is called in the Marxist context "class consciousness", in so far as it is the class of number - cannot be mistaken! A curious principle, nevertheless, on which all those who have the merit of having pursued Marxist truth in faith have never varied.

Why should class consciousness be so sure in its orientation, I mean, when it even knows nothing or knows very little about the theory, when class consciousness functions, to listen to the theoreticians, even at the uneducated level, if it is reduced

properly to those who belong to the level defined on this occasion by the term of “ the class excluded from capitalist profits”?

Perhaps the question about the force of the truth is to be sought for in this field into which we are introduced, the metaphorical one that we can - I repeat in a metaphor - call the *truth-market*, if, like the last time, you can glimpse that the main-spring of the market is *jouissance*-value.

Something is in effect exchanged, which is not the truth in itself. In other words, the link between the one *who speaks* to the truth is not the same depending on the point at which he sustains his *jouissance*.

This indeed is the whole difficulty of the position of the psychoanalyst. What does he do? What does he enjoy (*de quoi jouit-il*) at the place he occupies? This is the horizon of the question that I still have only introduced, marking it at its splitting-point, with the term of *desire of the psychoanalyst*.

The truth, then, in this exchange which is transmitted by a word, whose horizon is given to us by analytic experience, is not in itself the object of exchange. As can be seen in practice, the psychoanalysts who are here bear witness to it by their practice. Naturally they are not here for nothing, they are here for the bit of truth that may fall from this table, even indeed what they can make of it by faking a little.

Such is the necessity they are obliged to by the fact of a status that is fettered as regards the *jouissance*-value attached to their position as psychoanalysts. I had, I can say, confirmation. I will undoubtedly have it again. I am going to take an example.

(5) Someone who is not a psychoanalyst, M Deleuze to name him, presents a book by Sacher Masoch: *Présentation de Sacher Masoch*. He writes on masochism undoubtedly the best text that has ever been written! I mean the best text, compared to everything that has been written on the theme in psychoanalysis. Naturally he has read these texts. He is not inventing his subject. He starts first of all from Sacher Masoch, who has all the same his little word to say when masochism is involved! I know well that his name has been shortened a little, that nowadays one says, “maso” (*laughter*). But in any case it is up to us to mark the difference between “maso” and “masochist”, or even “masochian” or “masoch” just by itself. In any case, this text, to which we will certainly return, for, literally, I can say... (as a subject on which I have not remained mute, since I wrote *Kant avec Sade*, but in which there is literally only a glimpse, specifically on the fact that sadism and masochism are two strictly distinct paths, even if of course, one should always locate both of them in the structure, that every sadist is not automatically “maso”, nor every “maso” a sadist who does not know it. It is not like a glove that one turns inside out. In short, it could be that M Deleuze - I will swear it all the more from the fact that he quotes me abundantly - has profited from these texts. But is it not striking that this text really anticipates everything that I am, now, going to have effectively to say about it, along the path that we have opened up this year. While there is not a single one of the analytic texts which do not have to be completely taken up again and remade in this new perspective.

I took care to have it confirmed to me by the author himself whom I am quoting, that he has no experience of psychoanalysis.

Such are the points that I want to mark here, with their date, because after all, with time, they may change, the points which take on an exemplary value and deserve to be retained even if only to require of me that I take them fully into account, I mean in detail.

With this, it remains for me to enter into the articulation of this structure, whose very simple line, which is on the board, gives the basis and foundation and which you already are not without having had, from my mouth, some clarifications about the way it is going to be of use.

Nevertheless, I repeat, the **small o**, here, is what already, in connection with the object thus designated, I was able to make you sense as being in a way what one could call the "setting" (*monture*), the setting of the subject. A metaphor which implies that the subject is the jewel and the setting - what supports it, what sustains it - the frame. Already, I recall, nevertheless, that we have defined and imaged the little **o**-object as what falls in the structure, at the level of the most fundamental act of the existence of the subject, since it is the act from which the subject, as such, is engendered, namely, repetition. The *fact* of the signifier, signifying what it repeats, is what engenders the subject and something *falls* from it.

(6) Remember how the cut of the double loop, in this tiny mental object that is called the *projective plane*, cuts these two elements which are, respectively, the Moebius strip which, for us, figures as a support of the subject, and the ring which necessarily remains of it, which cannot be eliminated from the topology of the projective plane.

Here, this little **o**-object is supported by a numerical reference in order to image what is incommensurable about it - incommensurable to what is involved in its functioning as subject, when this functioning operates at the level of the unconscious, and which is nothing other than sex, quite simply.

Naturally, this golden number is only a support chosen here because it has the following privilege - which makes us retain it, but simply as symbolic function - has this privilege, that I already indicated to you as I could, for want of being able to give you - this would certainly take us too far - the most modern and the strictest mathematical theory of it, of being, as I might say, the incommensurable which circumscribes least quickly the intervals in which it can be localised. In other words, the one which, in order to arrive at a certain limit of approximation, demands, of all the forms - they are multiple and I think almost infinite - of the incommensurable, to be the one which demands most operations.

I recall to you at this point what is involved. Namely, that if the **small o** is here referred back to the 1, allowing its difference from the 1, ($1-\mathbf{o}$), to be marked by \mathbf{o}^2 - this depending on its own property as **small o**, which is that it should be such that $1+\mathbf{o} = 1/\mathbf{o}$, from which it is easy to deduce that $1-\mathbf{o} = \mathbf{o}^2$. Do a little multiplication and you will see it immediately. The \mathbf{o}^2 subsequently will be referred back to this **o** which is here in the -1 (here for example) and will generate an \mathbf{o}^3 , the which \mathbf{o}^3 will be referred

back to \mathbf{o}^2 , in order for there to emerge, at the level of difference, an \mathbf{o}^4 which will be referred back thus, so that there can appear here an \mathbf{o}^5 .

You see that, on either side, there are displayed, one after the other, all the even powers of \mathbf{o} on the one side and the odd powers on the other. Things being such that by continuing them to infinity, since there will never be a stop or a term for these operations, their limit will nevertheless be \mathbf{o} , for the sum of the even powers, \mathbf{o}^2 – namely, the first difference - for the sum of the odd powers.

It is here then that there will come to be inscribed, at the end of the operation, what in the first operation, was here marked as the difference. Here, at the \mathbf{o} , the \mathbf{o}^2 is going to come at the end to be added, realising in its sum, here, the 1, constituted by the complementing of \mathbf{o} by this \mathbf{o}^2 .

Which here is constituted by the addition of all the remainders, being equal to the first \mathbf{O} , from which we started.

I think that the suggestive character of this operation does not escape you, all the more so because for a good while - for a least a month or a month and a half - I have been pointing out to you how it could support, give an image, for the operation of what is (7) realised on the path of the sexual drive, under the name of sublimation.

I will not come back to it today, because I must advance. Simply, by indicating it in this way, to give you the aim of what we are going to have to do in making use of this support. As you will see and already have suspected, it will not be enough for us. Everything indicates to us - even in the very “sublime” success, it has to be said, of what it presents to us - makes us sense that if things were thus, if sublimation were able to make us reach this perfect *One*, itself placed at the horizon of sex, it seems to me that given the time that people have been talking about this *One*, it should be known. There must remain, between these two series - those of the even powers and the odd powers of the magical **small o** - something like a gap, an interval. In any case, everything in experience indicates it.

Nevertheless, it is not a bad thing to see that with the most favourable support for such traditional articulations, we already see, still, the necessity for a complexity from which, in any case, we ought to start.

Let us not forget that if the first 1, the 1 on which I have projected the succession of operations, is there, it is only there to image the problem with which, precisely, as such, the subject has to be confronted, if this subject is the subject that is articulated in the unconscious. It is, namely, sex. The 1 in the middle of the three elements of my little pocket ruler - this 1 in the middle, is the locus of sexuality.

Let us stay there! We are at the door!

Sexuality, huh, is a type, a moire, a puddle, a “black tide” as has been said for some time. If you put your finger in it and you put it to the tip of your nose, you will smell what is involved. When people say “sexuality”, that refers to sex. For it to be part of sex, it would be necessary to articulate things a little bit more firmly.

I do not know, here, what point of a bifurcation I ought to engage myself on, because it is an extremely litigious point. Must I give you here, immediately, the idea of what the subjectification of sex might be - if it worked! Obviously you can dream about it! Indeed that is all you do, because this is what constitutes the text of your dreams! But this is not what is at stake. What could that be, if it were so? If it were so and if you give a sense to what I am in the process of developing before you: a signifier. On this occasion what is called - and you are going to see immediately how embarrassed you are going to be! - for if I say "male" or "female", all the same, huh, that is very animal, so it is! So then, I do not mind, "masculine" or "feminine". There, it proves right away that Freud, the first one who advanced along this path of the unconscious, speaks quite clearly about this. There is not the slightest way, I am saying ... (not that I am saying to you who are here before me "what proportion of you is masculine and (8) what proportion feminine?") This is not what is at stake. It is not a matter either of biology, nor of the organ of Wolf and Muller) ... it is *impossible* to give a sense, I mean an analytic sense, to the terms *masculine* and *feminine*.

If a signifier, nevertheless, is what represents a subject for another signifier, this ought to be here the elective terrain. For you see how good things would be, how pure, if we could put some subjectification - I mean a pure and valid one - under the term *male*. We would have what we need. Namely, that a subject manifesting itself as male, would be represented as such, I mean as subject, with respect to what? To a signifier designating the term *female*, and there would be **no need** for the latter to determine the slightest subject! The reciprocal being also true!

I underline that if we question sex as regards its possible subjectification, we are not giving proof here of any manifestly exorbitant requirement for intersubjectivity. It may be that this would hold up like that. It would not only be suitable, but what, quite clearly - if you question what I called earlier class consciousness, the class of all those who believe that man and woman exist - could not be anything other than that and as that, it would be very nice if it were so. I mean that the source of what is comically called - I must say, that here, the comic is irresistible - "the sexual relation", if I could make ... (in a gathering like this, which is becoming familiar to me, a gathering in which I can make understood, in just the right way, that there is no sexual act, which means, there is no act at a certain level and this indeed is the reason why we have to search out how it is constituted) ... if I could bring it about that the term "sexual relation" should take on in each one of your heads exactly the farcical connotation that this locution deserves, I would have gained something!

If the sexual relation existed, this is what it would mean: that the subject of each sex could touch something in the other, at the level of the signifier. I mean that this would involve in the other, neither the conscious nor even the unconscious! Simply agreement. This relation of signifier to signifier, when it is found, is undoubtedly what makes us marvel in a certain number of striking little points ... tropisms in the animal. We are far from what is involved in man, and perhaps, moreover, in the animal, where things only happen through the intermediary of certain *phanères* reference points, which, certainly, must lead to some failures!

In any case, the virtue of what I have thus articulated is not completely disappointing. I mean that these signifiers, designed so that one presents and represents to the other, in the pure state, the opposite sex, already exist at the cellular level! They are called sexual chromosomes!

It would be surprising if we were able one day, with some chance of certainty, to establish that the origin of language – namely, what happens *before* it engenders the (9) subject - had some relation with these operations of matter which give us the aspects that we find in the union of sexual cells. We are not at that point and we have other things to do! Simply, let us not be surprised at the distance we are at from this level, in which there would be manifested, in short, something which is not at all designed not to seduce us, at this level where there could be designated something which might be called “the transcendence of matter”. Believe me, I am not the one who invented that, it already appeared in some other people. Simply if I do not designate this extreme point - while expressly underlining that it is completely unresolved, that the bridge has not been made - it is simply to mark for you that on the contrary, in the order of what is called more or less properly thinking, people have, throughout the course of the centuries - I mean those that we know about at least - never done anything other than talk as if this point had been resolved! For centuries, knowledge, under a more or less masked form, a more or less imaged, a more or less contraband one, never did anything other than parody what would be involved if the sexual act existed to the point which allows us to define what is involved, as the Hindus say, between *Purusha* and *Parakrita*, between *animus* and *anima*, and all the rest of the music!

What is required of us, is to do more serious work. Work that is required simply by the following. The fact is that between this interplay of primordial meanings, as they might be inscribable in terms, I underline, implying some subject, well then, we are separated from it by the whole thickness of something that you can call, as you wish, *the flesh* or *the body*, on condition of including in it the specific things contributed by our condition as mammals, namely, a quite specific and in no way necessary condition, as the abundance of a whole kingdom proves to us (I am speaking about the animal kingdom). Nothing implies the form that the subjectification of the sexual function takes on for us, nothing implies that what comes into play here, symbolically, is necessarily linked to it. It is enough to reflect on what this might be in an insect and, moreover, besides, the images which may depend on it - let us not deprive ourselves of using them - to make there appear, in phantasy, one or other singular trait of our relations to sex.

So then, I took one of the two paths offered to me earlier. I am not sure that I was right. Now I have to take up the other again; the other and in order to designate for you why the *One* comes here on the right of the **o**, at this point that I designated as representing here locally, by a signifier, the fact of sex.

There is here a surprising convergence between what is really at stake – namely, what I am in the process of telling you - and what I would call on the other hand the major point of psychoanalytic abjection.

I ought to say that you owe it uniquely to Jacques-Alain Miller, who made a reasoned index of my *Ecrits*, that it does not have the alphabetical index at which I would have, (10) I ought to say, however little, exulted in imagining it beginning with the word *abjection*. It never happened. It is not a reason why this word should not take its place.

The *One* that I am putting here - through a purely mathematical reference, I mean that it images simply the fact that in order to talk about the incommensurable I have to have a unit of measure and there is no unit of measure that is better symbolised than by the One - the subject *in the form* of its support the **small o** is measured, **is measured by sex** (*se mesure au sexe*) - you should understand that as if one were to say that he is measured by the bushel or by the pint. That is what the *One* is: the *sex unit*, nothing more!

Well then, this *One* is not nothing. It is always a matter of knowing the degree to which it converges, as I said earlier, with this *One* which reigns at the very mental foundation of psychoanalysts, to this day, in the form of the unitive virtue, which is supposed to be at the source of everything that they unfold in terms of a discourse on sexuality. The vanity of the formula that sex “unites” is not enough. It is also necessary that the primordial image of it should be given them by ... the fusion from which the enjoyer of his enjoyment (*jouissance*) is supposed to benefit: the little *baby* in its mother’s womb (where no one up today has been able to bear witness that it is in any more comfortable position than is the mother herself in carrying it); and where there is supposed to be exemplified what you heard again here, last year, in the discourse of M Conrad Stein (whom, moreover, we have not seen since, to my regret), as necessary for psychoanalytic thinking, as representing this lost Paradise of the fusion of the ego and the non-ego, which, I repeat, in listening to them, the psychoanalysts, is supposed to be the *cornerstone* (*la pierre angulaire*), without which nothing could even be thought about the economy of the libido - for this is what is at stake!

I think that there is here a veritable touchstone – I take the opportunity to signal it to whoever intends to follow me. The fact is that anyone who remains in any way attached to this schema of *primary narcissism*, may well put in his buttonhole all the Lacanian carnations he wants, the aforesaid person has nothing to do, from near or far, with what I am teaching.

I am not saying that this question of primary narcissism, is not something that poses a question in the economy of the theory and deserves one day to be emphasised.

I am beginning today precisely, by remarking that if *jouissance-value* takes its origin in the lack marked by the castration complex - in other words, the prohibition of auto-eroticism being brought to bear on a precise organ, which only plays there the role and the function of introducing this element of unit (*unité*) at the inauguration of a status of exchange, from which there depends everything that is going to be subsequently economy, in the speaking being whom we are dealing with in sex - it is clear that the important thing is to see the *reversal* which results from it. Namely, that it is in so far as the *phallus* designates - from something raised to a value, by this *less* which the

castration complex constitutes- this something which constitutes precisely the distance between the **small o** and the unit of sex.

(11) It is starting from there, as the whole experience teaches us, that the individual (*l'être*) who is going to come, to be raised, to the function of partner - in this test to which the subject is put, of the sexual act - the woman, to image my discourse, is going to take on, for her part, her value as *object of jouissance*.

But, at the same time and by the same operation, look at what has happened. It is no longer a matter of he enjoys (*il jouit*); he enjoys something (*il jouit de*). *Jouissance* has passed from the subjective to the objective, to the point of sliding to the sense of possession, in the typical function, as we have to consider it as deducible from the incidence of the castration complex and - I already brought this forward the last time - it is constituted by this change of direction which makes of the sexual partner a phallic object. A point I am only highlighting here, in the direction of the "man" to the "woman" (both in inverted commas), in so far as it is here that the operation is, as I might say, most scandalous. For it can be articulated, of course, just as much in the other direction, except that the woman does not have to make the same sacrifice, since it is already attributed to her, at the beginning.

In other words, I am underlining the position of what I would call the *male fiction*, which can be expressed more or less as follows: "one is what has" (*on est ce qui a*). There is no one happier than a chap who has never seen further than the end of his nose and who expresses a provocative formula like that: "to have or not" ... "one is what has". The one who has you know what... And then: "*one has what is*". The two things hold up. "*What is*", is the object of desire: it is the woman.

What I should call this simplistic fiction is being seriously revised. For some time people have noticed that it is a little bit more complicated. But, again, in a report named "*Direction of the treatment and the principles of its power*", I thought I had to re-articulate with care that people do not seem to have seen very clearly what is involved in what I would oppose to this male fiction, as being - to take up one of my words from the last time - the value *homme-elle*: "*one is not what one has*" (*on n'est pas ce qu'on a*). This is not altogether the same sentence, pay attention, huh? "One is what has", but "one is not what one has". In other words, it is in so far as the man has the phallic organ that he is not it. Which implies that, on the other hand, one can and even one *is* what one has - what one does not have. Namely, it is precisely in so far as she does not have the phallus that the woman can take on its value.

Such are the points that it is extremely necessary to articulate at the start of any induction into what the unconscious says about sex, because this is properly what we have learnt to read in its discourse! Only, where I speak about castration complex - with, of course, all the litigiousness that it involves, for the least that one can say is that it may lend, however little, to an error about the person, especially on the male side, concerning what Genesis describes for us so well, namely, the woman conceived of as this something of which the body of man has been deprived. (This is called, in (12) this chapter that you know well, a "rib", for the sake of modesty!) What has to be seen, is that in any case, where I speak about the castration complex as original in the economic function of *jouissance*, the psychoanalyst gargles the term of "objectal

libido". The important thing is to see that if there is something that deserves this name, it is precisely the carry-over of this negated function which is grounded in the castration complex.

The *jouissance-value* prohibited at the precise point, at the organ-point constituted by the phallus, is what is brought forward as "objectal libido"; contrary to what is said, namely, that the libido described as narcissistic is supposed to be the reservoir from which there has to be extracted what will be objectal libido.

This may appear as a subtlety to you. Because after all, you will tell me, if, as regards narcissism, there is the libido which is brought to bear on one's own body, well then - even though you specify things - it is a part of this libido that is at stake, you will tell me. In what I am presently stating, it is nothing of the kind! Very precisely because to tell you that one thing is extracted from another, it would be necessary to suppose that it is purely and simply separated from it by way of what is called a *cut*, but **not simply** by a cut, by something which subsequently plays the function of an *edge*.

Now this is precisely what is debatable and not simply what is debatable, but what is already settled. The fact is that there is no homomorphism, there is no structure such that the phallic scrap (as one might say) is graspable in the same way as a part of narcissistic investment. The fact is that it does not constitute this edge, which is what we must maintain between what allows narcissism to construct this false assimilation of the one to the other which is the doctrine in the traditional theories of love. The traditional theories of love, in effect, leave the object of the good within the limits of narcissism.

But the relation that is really involved - the economy of *jouissance* - is distinct. Objectal libido, in so far as it introduces something which, as one might say, leaves us desiring the exact note of the act which claims to be sexual, is of a nature (it has to be said) that is properly speaking settled, distinct. It is here that there lies the live point, around which it is essential not to weaken. For, as you will subsequently see, it is only around this point that there can take their correct place, especially everything that happens in the field of the analytic act, whether it is a matter of the relation of the analysand-analyst or the effects of regression.

I apologise for leaving things in suspense. The law of my discourse does not allow me to cut it always at the end point that suits me. Time interrupts us here today. I will continue the next time.

Seminar 19: Wednesday 10 May 1967

Good ... I want first of all to announce to you that to my great regret I will not be giving this lecture - or this seminar, whatever you want to call it - next Wednesday. Because of the fact that there is a strike and that after all I intend for my part to respect it, besides the inconveniences that would be caused by the fact that it is announced that, all electricity being cut off, what has given me so much trouble, for several sessions, to make function here for your benefit and my own, would be rendered useless. Therefore, it should be written up again between now and the end of the session, so that the people who arrive late will not be unaware of the fact that the next seminar, since it is called that, will only take place in a fortnight's time. This, I believe, is the 10th May, so that gives us then the 24th. We will meet therefore on the 24th.

Has anyone any observation to make to me about what I communicated to you at the last session? Has anyone reflected especially - I am putting my cards on the table - about what I wrote on the blackboard?

It seems not ... and I do not know whether or not this should make me breathe again! Is it because of the profound distraction with which people receive what I may write? But in any case, I was furious with myself when I went home, for having written on the blackboard the formula of **small o**, which is, of course, the square root of 5 minus 1 over 2 - and then immediately afterwards, the value of the square root of 5 as 2.236 ... anyway, and something ... I was making some jokes about the logarithmic tables, but I would have been better off specifying for you, of course, that what I was writing there was not the value of **small o**, of course, but the square root of 5. You must not imagine that **small o** is two point something or other! Since on the contrary **small o** is less than unity. It is a figure which is a little bit greater than six tenths, and this is something that it is not pointless to know when you want to inscribe these lengths or these lines that I make use of, and to put in an almost exact proportion the length of **small o** next to the (2) length defined as being equivalent to the unit.

The second error that I made, is that after a long series of equalities, specifically that inscribed by the *one plus o over 1*, for example, I finished at the end by writing, equals **small o**, when it was $1/o$ that should have been written. Good, in any case, let those who have copied these formulae correct them!

We continue to advance into our object for this year and, of course, this logic that I am developing before you under the name of a *logic of the phantasy*, has a goal that I frequently defined and which must necessarily finally come to be applied. To be applied to something that could only be, of course, a work of sifting or even properly

speaking criticism, against what is advanced at a certain level of experience and in a theoretical form, which, sometimes, leads to mistakes.

With this in mind, I opened, or rather reopened, for your use, a work which did not fail to appear important to me when it was produced, and it is quite accessible to all of you since it has been translated into French under the name of *La névrose de base*, by someone who undoubtedly lacks neither talent nor analytic penetration and who is called Mr. Bergler. It is a work that I recommend to you - since you are again going to have a fortnight before you - that I recommend to you by way of example or of occasional ... support, of the use that our work here can be put to. In recommending it to you by way of example, of course, this does not mean that I am recommending it to you as a model! It is, nevertheless, as I have already said, a work of great merit. It is certainly not along these paths that we will in any way see being clarified what is involved in the nature of neurosis. But undoubtedly, this does not mean either that something is not glimpsed there about some essential mainspring. The notions of structure which are put forward here (and which, moreover, in the sense that I am using this word at the moment, are not the privilege of this author), what is stated usually in the notion of *layers* - that for the same reason one layers things from the superficial to the deep or, inversely, from the deep to the superficial - those specifically from which the author starts. Which means that in the cases that he envisages, but again it must be added that he considers them as by far the most numerous in neurosis, the cases defined in his sense by what he calls "oral regression", are defined by something that after all I have no reason - since it is summarised there in a few lines - not to directly borrow from his text (it would be safer!):

"Oral neurotics are people who constantly provoke the situation of the following triad of the 'mechanism of orality'::

(1) I shall repeat the masochist wish of being deprived by my mother ..."

(3) Will someone write: 1° *"To be deprived (Etre rejeté)"*, in the top right hand corner. Muriel! If you do not mind, will you do that for me. Take one of these big gadgets that are there for that.

"Secondly, I shall not be" ... I am finishing the first paragraph: *"I shall repeat the masochistic wish"*, therefore, *"of being deprived by my mother, by creating or misusing situations in which some substitute of my pre-oedipal mother-image shall refuse my wishes."*

This is the deepest layer, the one to which access is most difficult, the one against the revelation of which the subject will defend himself most strongly and for the longest time. (I am saying this for listeners in this room who are complete novices).

"(2) I shall not be conscious of my wish to be refused and initial provocation of refusal, and see only that I am justified in self-defense, righteous indignation and pseudo-aggression because of the refusal."

2° *"Pseudo-aggression"*. Write only these words, please.

“(3) Afterwards, I shall pity myself because such an injustice ‘can only happen to me’, and enjoy once more psychic masochistic pleasure.”

I pass over what Bergler adds in terms of what he calls “the clinical picture”, a singular differentiation, moreover, that he makes between what he considers as summarising the genesis of the problem – “the genetic picture” - this clinical form or aspect being defined for him by the intervention of a super-ego, whose vigilance consists precisely in maintaining the presence of the element that he designates here as masochistic, as an always active element in the maintenance of the defence.

This second point of view is in itself debatable and I will not treat it today. What I am putting forward today on this subject is the following: that nowhere is there articulated the way - which, moreover, is correct - the oral position of the subject, let us say, wants to be refused. Why it is not true to say that the oral drive consists in wanting to obtain, specifically, the breast. If the observation is justified in its radical position, at no point in this work by Bergler is there in any way taken into account what this means with respect to the drive defined as oral. And why, in a way, at the start, what seems, let us say, its most natural tendency is thus overthrown. An important point, nevertheless, because of the fact, precisely, that it is from his natural position that the subject will argue to sustain this aggression that Bergler, very correctly, calls “pseudo”, because it is not one. This, of course, leaving open what is involved at the level of an aggression that is non-pseudo.

Since, on this subject, I introduced a register which is properly speaking that of (4) narcissism, equivalent to what, in the generally accepted theory, is called “secondary narcissism”, since I put aggression into it as being its constitutive dimension, distinct, in this respect, from pure and simple aggression, we find ourselves here before a range of notions: from the raw one of aggression, which is almost never appropriate when it is a question of neurotic phenomena, through that of narcissistic aggression, and finally to, this pseudo-aggression that Bergler specifies as emerging, at a certain level, from the oral neurosis.

I am simply highlighting these distinctions, without for the moment giving them their full development.

In any case, the question is posed of what should be maintained as the status - up to the present defined as aggressive - of a certain moment of the oral drive and why, in the oral neurosis, this accent of “to be refused” is posited by Bergler as being the most radical. The only import of my remark is not to settle it as regards the facts, (besides the fact, of course, that to settle it would imply seeking out what he is talking about, namely, what neurosis, and the moment at which it is approached), but on the following, which is lacking in the theoretical text, namely, that there is no need to focus, precisely at the point where here things come to a halt, namely, on what the term “to be refused” means, and why it is relevant.

“To be refused” suggests some questioning suspense: “to be refused” in what respect?
 “To be refused” as what?

All the same, what happens when we present ourselves in a relation, for example, that will be described as intersubjective, is not something novel for us, if we suppose ourselves on the threshold of analytic theory. You know, in this respect, what has been put forward in a certain style of thinking, the Hegelian one, whose value Sartre himself, detaching a branch, has accentuated at a certain level that he takes up, the one that has been qualified by a radical and mutual exclusion of consciousnesses, the incompatible character of their coexistence, of this “*either him or me*” which is supposed to arise once the dimension of subject appears, properly speaking.

This also sufficiently states the degree to which this putting into relief falls within the range of criticisms that have been put forward against the genesis initially taken in the “fight to the death”, the fight to the death which takes its status from this radical conception of the subject as absolutely autonomous, as *Selbstbewusstsein*.

Is it something of this order that is at stake? It certainly seems not. Since everything that analytic experience brings us concerning the stage that is described as oral makes many other dimensions intervene in it, and specifically, this corporal dimension of oral aggression, of the need to bite and of the fear of being devoured.

Is this “to be refused” then to be taken on this occasion as concerning the object? In truth, we would easily see its justification being highlighted in the following: that *to be refused* would be, in this register, properly speaking, to save oneself from being (5) engulfed by the maternal partner.

It would also perhaps be a little bit too simple to answer in this way the question of the status of the “to be refused”. And to say that it is too simple is sufficiently underlined by something which is repeated twice in the lines that I have just read to you, by Bergler, and which associates to this oral neurosis, as being essential to it, the dimension of masochism. The “to be refused” in question is a defeated refusal, it is a “humiliating refusal”, the author again writes elsewhere, and this is why he allows himself to introduce the label of masochism, which he describes as “psychic masochism” on this occasion, consecrating, in a way, a popular use of the term masochism, which I am not saying that one or other text of Freud does not give a pretext for introducing, but understood and taken in this use, which is now more and more current, is properly speaking ruinous.

The allusion to the reference to the object, at the level of this refusal, is here what alone might justify the introduction of the dimension of masochism at this level.

It is incorrect to say that what characterises masochism, is the painful aspect of a situation, assumed as such. To tackle things from this angle culminates in the abuse of making, as some do, the pseudo-masochist dimension, the essential register, for example, of the whole analytic relation. There is here a veritable perversion, as much of Freud’s thinking as of the theory and the practice. And this is, properly speaking, unsustainable, when the dimension of masochism is defined, specifically, no doubt, by the fact that the subject assumes the position of an object, in the most accentuated sense that we give to the word *object*, in order to define it as this effect of falling and of waste, of remainder from the advent of the subject.

The fact that the masochist establishes a situation regulated in advance and regulated in its details, which can go as far as to put himself under the table, in the position of a dog, forms part of a production, of a scenario, which has its sense and its advantage and which, incontestably, is at the source of a gain of *jouissance*, whatever note we may or not add to it, concerning the maintenance, the respect and the integrity of the pleasure principle.

That this *jouissance* is closely linked to a *manoeuvre* of the Other which, I would say, is most commonly expressed in the form of *contract* (when I say “of contract”, I am saying of *written* contract), of something which dictates just as much to the Other - and much more to the Other than to the masochist himself - his whole behaviour - is what ought to instruct us about the relation which gives its specificity, its originality, to masochistic perversion and is supremely designed to illuminate for us, into its depths, the part that the Other - in the sense that I understand this term, I mean the Other with a capital O - plays in it. The Other, the locus in which there is deployed on this occasion a word (6) which is a contract word.

To reduce the use of the term “masochism”, after that, to being something which is presented as simply an exception, an aberration, to reaching the simplest pleasure, is something likely to generate every abuse, of which the first, of which the first is the following, for which, good God, I do not believe I am using too strong nor inappropriate a term, in picking it out in Bergler’s lines, from one end to the other of this remarkable book, full of observations that are very thorough and altogether instructive, in picking out, nevertheless, this something that I would call an exasperation which is not far from producing a spiteful attitude with respect to the patient: all these people that he calls, that he calls as if this were a great wrong on their part, “injustice collectors”! As if, after all, we were in a world in which justice was such an ordinary state that you really would have to go out of your way to have to complain about something! These “injustice collectors”, in whom, undoubtedly, he uncovers their most secret operation in the fact of having been rejected. But, after all, can we not put forward against Bergler this idea that in certain cases, after all, to be rejected - as we have it moreover sufficiently in phantasies, but that is something different, I am speaking here about reality -- it is perhaps better, from time to time, to be rejected than to be accepted too quickly! The encounter that one may have with one or other person, who asks for nothing better than to adopt you, is not always... the best solution is not always not to escape from it!

Why this partiality which, in a way, implies that it would be in the order, in the nature of things, taking them at their proper angle, to do everything necessary to be admitted. This supposing that “to be admitted” is always to be admitted to a benevolent table.

It is, undoubtedly, not something undisturbing or something that may not appear to us, on occasion, to require to be highlighted, to remark that one or other thing that may happen in the world, and for example, quite simply at the moment, in a certain little district of South West Asia. What is at stake? It is a matter of convincing people that they are quite wrong not to want to be admitted to the benefits of capitalism! They prefer to be rejected! It is starting from there, it seems, that there ought to be posed questions about certain meanings. And specifically the following, for example, which will show us - which will show us no doubt, but today it not the day that I will even take

the first steps in this direction - that if Freud wrote somewhere that “anatomy is destiny”, there is perhaps a moment, when people have come back to a sound perception of what Freud discovered for us, that it will be said - I am not even saying “politics is the unconscious” - but, quite simply, *the unconscious is politics!*

(7) I mean that what binds men together, or what opposes them, is precisely to be justified by that whose logic we are trying for the moment to articulate.

Because it is for want of this logical articulation that these slippages can be produced. This means that before noting the fact that in order to be rejected, for the “to be rejected” to be essential as a dimension for the neurotic, the following, in any case, is essential: **that he offers himself.**

As I wrote somewhere: just as much with the neurotic as with what we do ourselves - and with reason, since these are the paths that we are following - this consists precisely, with an offer of trying to make a demand. And such an operation, of course, does not always succeed, either in neurosis or in analytic treatment, especially if it is conducted in a clumsy way. This also, moreover, is of a nature ... (for no analytic discourse fails to present to us with the opportunity - in questioning it - the opportunity of seeing what it implies along a certain innocent path, in which it never knows - I mean, this analytic discourse - how far it is going in what it articulates). This allows us to see, in effect, that if the key to the neurotic position depends on this close relation to the demand of the Other, in so far as he tries to make it emerge, it is indeed - as I was saying just now - because he is offering himself. And that, at the same time, we see here the phantastical and therefore obsolete character of this myth - of this myth introduced by analytic sermonising - called oblativity. It is a neurotic's myth.

But what motivates these needs which are expressed in these biases that are paradoxical and always so badly defined if one refers them purely and simply to the reality gain, collected or not in their train, if one omits this first essential stage, in the light of which alone (I mean, the stage) what emerges from these results in the real can be judged? It is the *logical articulation* of the position, the neurotic one in the present case, and, in fact, of all the others. Without a logical articulation which does not bring in any prejudice about what is to be wished for the subject, what do you know about it? What do you know about it, if the need ... if the subject needs to get married to this or that person? And if he has messed up his marriage at one or other turning point, whether it is not for him a piece of good luck? In other words, what are you interfering with? When the only thing that you have to deal with, is the logical structure of what is involved. Of what is involved specifically, as regards a position like the one in which - to describe it as the *wish to be refused* (*désir d'être rejeté*)- you have first of all to know what the subject is pursuing at this level. What is, for the neurotic, the necessity, the gain, perhaps, in being refused? And to pin to it, in addition, the term *masochist* is simply, on this occasion, to introduce into it a pejorative note, which is immediately followed - as I pointed out earlier - by a directive attitude of the analyst which may on occasion go as far as to be persecutory.

(8) This is why it is altogether necessary to take things up again as I intend to do this year. And while we are at it, to recall that, if I started, this year, from the sexual act in its act structure, it is in relation to the fact that the subject only comes to birth through

the relation of a signifier to another signifier and that this requires of them - I mean of these signifiers - the *material*.

To perform an act, is to introduce this relation of signifiers through which the conjuncture is consecrated as significant, namely, as an *opportunity to think*.

People put the accent on mastering the situation, because people imagine that it is the will that presides over the famous *fort-da*, for example, of the child's games. The essential dimension is not the active aspect of motricity. The active aspect of motricity is only deployed, here, in the dimension of the game. It is its logical structure that distinguishes this appearance of the *fort-da*, taken as exemplary and now become a fashion. It is because it is the first signifying thematising - in the form of a phonematic opposition - of a certain situation, that one can qualify it as active, but only in the sense that, henceforth, we will call active only what has, in a sense that I defined it, the structure of the act.

The putting in question of the act, in a relation as distorted, hidden, excluded, put in the shade, as the relation between two beings belonging to two classes, that are definitive for the registry office and for the army medical board but that, precisely, our experience has taught us to see, to see as being absolutely no longer obvious for familial life, for example, and rather obscured for the secret life. In other words, what defines man and woman.

Analytic experience and theory contribute here the notion of satisfaction. I mean as being essential to this act. *Satisfaction* - in Freud's text, *Befriedigung* - introduces the notion of a supervening peace. Is this satisfaction the satisfaction of discharge, of detumescence? A simple satisfaction in appearance and one that it is quite proper to accept. Nevertheless, it is clear that everything we develop in terms that are more or less appropriate, implies that satisfaction - since we distinguish the one, for example, which is supposed to be of the pre-genital order from that which is genital - implies another dimension, the one implied even by these differences.

That, undoubtedly, at first, a term like that of "object relations" should have imposed itself here, is self-evident. This takes nothing from the ridiculous character of what happens when one tries to inscribe under this term, to vary it, to stagger it according to the greater or lesser ease in which the relation is inscribed. For nothing else is at stake when one distinguishes the genital relation by these two traits; on the one hand, the supposed tenderness that one could easily, simply - I pride myself on doing it - hold to (9) be never anything but the reverse of contempt and, on the other hand, what is accentuated in it about this supposed essence of breaking up, even of bereavement. Thus, the progress of the relation, I mean "the sexual relation" (in inverted commas), in so far as it becomes genital, would be that one could all the more easily think about one's partner: "You can croak"!

Let us take things up on a different plane of certainty. What does the sexual act satisfy?

It is quite obvious, at first, that one can answer, legitimately, simply, pleasure. I do not know a single register where this answer is fully tenable. It is an ascetic plane that is at stake in the story of Diogenes, who makes a public gesture of masturbation, as the sign

of this theoretical affirmation of a hedonism described - by very reason of this mode of manifestation – as cynical, that one can consider as a treatment, *Handlung*, a medical treatment of desire.

It is not without paying a certain price, and since, earlier, I introduced the political dimension - a curious and quite tangible thing, this philosophical type excludes himself, as is seen not simply from anecdotes, but from the position of the personage in his barrel, even if he had a visitor like Alexander - who pays for it by an exclusion from the dimension of the city.

I repeat, there is here something that one would be wrong to smile at, it is a properly speaking ascetic aspect, a way of living. It is probably not as common as it appears. I can say nothing about it. I did not try it.

(You can hear or you can't? You can't hear? So what are all these gadgets for? Good, I will try to speak louder.)

So then, one must not forget this locus of pleasure, of the least tension. Good. Only it is clear that this locus is not enough and many other modes, that a great variety of modes of satisfaction appear at the level of the search implied by the sexual act.

Our thesis - it is the one which our course this year embodies - is about the impossibility of grasping the totality of these modes, outside a logical scrutiny, alone capable of assembling, in their variety as in their breadth, the different modes of this satisfaction. The totality in question is the one which establishes what we will call, provisionally and with reservations, a masculine individual (*être*) and a feminine individual, in this foundational act that we evoked at the beginning of our discourse this year, in calling it the sexual act. If I said that there is no sexual act, it is in the sense that this act is supposed to connect together, in a simple form of distribution, the one evoked in technique, in common techniques, in that of the locksmith, the description of the male piece and the female piece. This simple distribution constituting what one might call the inaugural pact through which subjectivity is supposed to be generated as such, male or female.

(10) I considered at its time and in its place the famous “you are my wife”. Well then, it is quite clear that it is not enough for me to say it for me to remain her husband. But anyway, it is enough that this does not resolve anything!

I found myself as “her” something. It is a wish to belong, which is heavy with a pact, at the minimum, a pact of preference. This situates absolutely nothing about either the man or the woman. At the very most one could say that they are two opposing terms and that it is indispensable that there should be two, but what each one is, is altogether excluded from a foundation in the word, as regards what is involved in the union. The matrimonial one, if you wish, or any other. That a certain dimension raises it to the dimension of sacrament changes absolutely nothing. Absolutely nothing in what is at stake, namely, the being of the man or of the woman.

In particular, this leaves so completely to one side the category of femininity, since I took the example of “you are my wife”. And it is never a bad thing to bring in the

example of the master of psychoanalysis himself, of whom one could say that, for him, this pact was extraordinarily dominant. This struck all of those who approached him. *Uxorious*, as they say in English, *uxorieux*, is how Jones describes it, after so many others. And, after all, it is not a mystery either that this thinking up to the end came up against the theme: "What does a woman want?". Which comes back to saying: "What is it to be a woman?"

It must be added that, since then, sixty seven years of psychoanalytic *surgery* have not resulted in us knowing more about what is involved in feminine *jouissance*, even though we ceaselessly speak about the woman and about the mother, people do not really know how to express it. It is all the same something worthwhile noting.

This is why it is important to notice ... and this heuristic schema - which I gave you in the form of these three lines, the **small o**, the One which follows, (a perforated One) and the Other - reminds us simply of this, which is the currency of what we articulate throughout the day, namely, that the sexual act implies a third element at every level. To know, for example, that what is called the *mother* - the mother in the Oedipus complex on whom there are hung all the debasements of love life - is prohibited in every case and, because of this fact, remains always present in desire. Or again the *phallus* in so far as it must be lacking to the one who has it - namely, to the man, in so far as the castration complex means something, something which is still not at all clarified, because it implies that we have to invent in connection with it the import of a special negation; for after all, if he does not have it, in the register and in so far as the sexual act can exist, this is not to say, for all that, that he loses it either!, (the subject of this negation, I hope, will be able to be tackled before the end of this year - that this (11) phallus, on the other hand, becomes the being of the partner who does not have it.

It is here that we no doubt find the reason why Aristotle, as I recalled the last time, however subjected to grammar he may appear to have been, we are told, in developing the range, the list, the catalogue of *Categories*, curiously, after having said everything (quality, quantity, *pote*, *pom*, *toti*, and everything ... all the rest that follows with that lot), did absolutely not breathe a word about it. Even though the Greek tongue, like ours, is absolutely subject to what Pichon calls "*sexuiseblance*", namely, that there is *le fauteuil* and that there is *la photo* (as moreover ... wait a minute ... in passing you can amuse yourself by reversing the spelling; this will tell you a lot about a completely hidden dimension in the analytic relation: the *photeuil* and the *fauto*, it is very amusing!) Anyway, in any case, Aristotle never dreamt of sustaining in connection with any being, what all the same imposed itself just as much in his time as in ours, of knowing whether there was a category of sex.

It is either one thing or the other. Either he was not guided by grammar as much as we are told, or there is some reason, then, for this omission. It is probably linked to the following. When I spoke earlier of a masculine individual (*être*) or a feminine individual, it was perhaps a faulty use, namely, that perhaps, the individual is, as Pichon expressed it again, "*insexuable*"; that the *to ti*, the *quiddity* of sex is perhaps lacking, that there is perhaps only the phallus. This, in any case, would explain many things. In particular, this savage struggle which is established around about and which gives us undoubtedly the visible, if not the final reason for what is called "the battle of the sexes"! Only, I also believe, there again, that the battle of the sexes is something about

which, moreover, history shows that it was the most superficial psychoanalysts who dwelt on it. Nevertheless, it remains that a certain *aletheia*, to be taken in the sense, with the accent of *Verborgenheit* that Heidegger gives it, is perhaps, properly speaking, to be established as regards what is at stake concerning the sexual act.

This is what justifies my use of this schema, which, I underline in passing, in order not to confuse it with other things that I have said in other circumstances and specifically concerning the structure and the function of the cut, of which I sometimes told you, that in the way in which I symbolise it when I make it operate on what is called “the projective plane”, I am claiming not to *construct a metaphor*, but, properly speaking, to speak about *the real support* of what is involved. It is obviously not at all the same in this very simply little schema of this One, that I constructed the last time, in dots and perforated, of this Other and of this **small o**.

It is this very simple triad, around which there can and ought to be developed a certain number of points that we have to highlight in this connection, about what is involved, in referring to sex everything that is symptom, and which, this year, I intend to pose - certainly in a repeated fashion and I cannot repeat things too much when it is a matter of new categories -to repeat what is going to serve us as a foundation:

The One, to begin in the middle, is the most litigious. The One concerns this *so-called* sexual union, namely, the field in which there is put in question whether there can be produced this act of partition which the distribution of functions defined as male and female would necessitate.

We have already said, with the metaphor of the cauldron that I recalled the last time, that there is in any case here, provisionally, something that we can only designate by the presence of a *gap*, of a hole, if you wish. There is something which does not fit, which is not self-evident and which is precisely what I recalled earlier about the abyss which separates any promotion, any proclamation, of the male/female bipolarity, from everything that experience give us concerning the act which grounds it.

I want here for today, in the time that I have been given, to underline, that it is from there, from this field of the One, of this fictional One - of this One to which there is limited a whole analytic theory whose fallacy you heard me denouncing on several occasions these last times - it has to be posited that it is from this, from this field designated as One, numbered One, not assumed as unifying - at least until we have proved it - that it is from there that all truth speaks, in as much as for us, analysts, (and for many others, before we even appeared, even though not a long time before, for a thinking which dates from what we can call by its name after all: the Marxist turning point), **the truth has no other form than the symptom.**

The *symptom*, namely, the significance of the discordances between the real and what it pretends to be. The ideology, if you wish. But on one condition, which is that for this term, you should go as far as to include in it perception itself.

Perception is the *model* of ideology. Because it is a sieve with respect to reality. And moreover why should one be astonished at it? Since everything that exists in terms of

ideologies, ever since the world has been full of philosophers, was never after all constructed except on a first reflection, which was brought to bear on perception.

I am coming back to it. What Freud called the “river of mud”, concerning the largest field of knowledge, this whole part of absolutely inundating knowledge from which we are scarcely emerging, to pinpoint it by the term of mystical knowledge. At the basis of everything that has manifested itself to the world, in this order, *there is only the sexual act*. The other side of my formula: *there is no sexual act*.

It is altogether superfluous to pretend to be referring to the Freudian position in any way whatsoever, if one does not take literally the following. At the basis of everything that (13) has been contributed, up to the present, my God, in terms of satisfaction, knowledge ... (I am saying, *knowledge*, I pinpointed it as mystical in order to distinguish it from what has been born in our day in the form of *science*)... of everything that belongs to knowledge, there is nothing, at its source, *except* the sexual act.

To read, in Freud, that there are, in the psyche, *desexualised* functions, means - in Freud - that one must seek sex at their origin. This does not mean that there is what is called in one or other place, for political needs, this famous “non-conflictual sphere”, for example, an ego that is more or less strong, more or less autonomous, that can have a more or less aseptic apprehension of reality.

To say that there are relations to the truth - I am saying: the truth - that do not involve the sexual act, is properly speaking not true. There are none such.

I apologise for these formulae, whose cutting edge, I suggest, may perhaps be felt in too lively a manner. But I made this observation to myself. First of all, that all of this is implied in everything that I have ever stated, in so far as I know what I am saying. But also this remark: that the fact that I know what I am saying is not enough! That is not enough for you to recognise it there. Because, basically, the only sanction of the fact that I know what I am saying, is what I do not say! This is not a fate proper to me. It is the fate of all of those who know what they are saying.

This is what makes communication very difficult. Either one knows what one is saying, and one says it. But, in many cases, we must consider that it is pointless, because no one notices that the core of what you have to get across, is precisely what you never say! This is what the others say and what continues to make noise and, still more, involves certain effects. This is what forces us, from time to time, and even more often than our turn, to do a good sweeping out. Once one is engaged on this path one has no reason to finish. There was, formerly, someone called Hercules who, it appears, finished his work in the stables of someone called Augias. It is the only case that I know of stables being cleaned up, at least when it is a certain domain that is at stake!

There is only a single domain, it seems - and I am not sure about it - which has no relation with the sexual act in so far as it concerns the truth: it is mathematics, at its point of confluence with logic. But I believe that this is what allowed Russell to say that one never knows whether what one is putting forward is true. I am not saying, truly true! Quite simply, true.

In fact, it is true, starting from a definitional position of the truth. If such and such of some axioms are true, then a system develops, which one can judge to be consistent or not.

What is the relation of this with what I have just said, namely, with the truth, in so far as it requires the presence, the putting into question as such of the sexual act?

(14) Well then, even after having said that, I am not sure, all the same, that this marvellous, this sublime modern deployment of mathematical logic, or of logical mathematics, is altogether without a relation with the hesitation about whether there is or not a sexual act.

It is enough for me to hear the groans of someone like Cantor. Because it is in the form of a groan that at given moment of his life he states that people do not know that the great difficulty, the great risk of mathematics, is that it is a place of freedom. We know that Cantor paid very dearly for this freedom!

So that, the formula that the true concerns the real, in so far as we are engaged in it by the sexual act, by this sexual act about which I am advancing, first of all, that one is not too sure that it exists - even though it is the only thing that interests truth - appears to me the most correct formula, at the point that we are getting to in it.

The symptom, then, any symptom, is knotted together at this locus of the holed One. And this is why it always involves, however astonishing this may appear to us, its aspect of satisfaction. I am saying, for the symptom.

Sexual truth is exigent and it is better to satisfy it a little bit more than not enough.

From the point of view of satisfaction, we can conceive that a symptom, in this respect, may be more satisfying than reading a detective story.

There is a greater relation between a symptom and the sexual act, than between the truth and the fundamental "I am not thinking", with which I reminded you at the beginning of these reflections, man alienates his "I am not", which is not easy to tolerate. Compared to which, our earlier alibi of "to be rejected", even though it is not all that agreeable in itself, may appear more tolerable.

So then? We are finished for the moment with the One. I had to indicate this. Let us go to the Other, as the locus where the signifier takes place. Because I did not tell you up till now that the signifier was there, since the signifier only exists as a repetition. Because it is what brings about the thing that is at stake as true.

At the origin, one does not know where it comes from. It is nothing, as I told you the last time, but this stroke which is also a cut, starting from which the truth can be born.

The Other is the reservoir of material for the act.

Material accumulates, very probably, because of the fact that the act is impossible.

When I say that, I am not saying that it does not exist. It is not enough to say it. Since the impossible is the real, quite simply. The pure real. The definition of the possible always requiring a first symbolisation.

If you exclude this symbolisation, this formula will appear much more natural to you: *the impossible is the real*.

(15) It is a fact that the possibility of the sexual act has not been proved in any formal system. As you see, I am insisting, huh? I am coming back to it!

What proves that one cannot prove it? Now that we know very well that non-computability, non-decidability do not in any way imply irrationality, that people define, that people circumscribe perfectly well, that whole volumes are written on this domain of the status of the non-decidability and that one can perfectly well define it logically.

At this point, then, what is it? What is this Other, the big one, there, with a capital O? What is its substance? Huh?

I allowed myself to say - for in truth, even though in truth, you must believe that I allow myself to say it less and less, because one no longer hears, anyway, I no longer hear: it no longer comes to my ears - I allowed myself to say, for a time, that I camouflaged under this locus of the Other, what is called agreeably and, after all, why not, the spirit. The trouble is that it is false.

The Other, when all is said and done, and if you have not already guessed it, the Other here, as it is written, is the **body**!

Why would one call something like a volume or an object, in so far as it is subject to the laws of movement, in general, like that, a body? Why should one speak about falling bodies? What a curious extension of the word "body"! What relation is there between a little ball which falls from the tower of Pisa and the body which is ours, if not that it is starting from the fact that it is first of all the body, our presence as animal body which is the first locus in which to put inscriptions, the first signifier, as everything is there to suggest to us in our experience; except, of course, that things always impassion us. When one speaks about a wound, one adds narcissistic and one thinks right away that this ought to annoy the subject, who naturally is an idiot! Nobody imagines that what is interesting in a wound, is the scar.

The reading of the Bible could be there to remind us, with roses put at the bottom of the rushes where Jacob's flocks are going to graze, that different devices to impose a mark on the body do not date from yesterday and are quite radical. That if one does not start from the idea that the hysterical symptom, under its simplest form, that of a "*ragade*" does not have to be considered as a mystery, but as the very principle of any signifying possibility. You do not have to rack your brains. The fact that the body is made to inscribe something that is called the mark would avoid a lot of worries for everyone and the resifting of a lot of stupidities. The body is made to be marked. It has always been done. And the first beginnings of the gesture of love, is always to outline more or less this gesture a little bit.

There you are. This having been said, what is the first effect, that most radical effect of (16) this irruption of the One (in so far as it represents the sexual act), at the level of the body.

Well then, this is what gives us our advantage over a certain number of dialogued speculations about the relation of the One and the many. We, for our part know that it is not as dialectical as all that. When this One irrupts into the field of the Other, namely, at the level of the body, the body breaks into fragments.

The fragmented body; this is what our experience shows us to exist at subjective origins. The child dreams of dismemberment! He breaks the beautiful unity of the empire of the maternal body. And what he experiences as a threat, is to be torn apart by her.

It is not enough to discover these things and to explain them by a little mechanics, a little ball game: aggression is reflected, reflects back, comes back, starts again! What began it? Before this, it could well be useful to put in suspense the function of this fragmented body. Namely, the only angle from which it has interested us in fact, namely, its relation to what may be involved in truth, in so far as it is itself suspended on *aletheia* and on *Verborgenheit*, on the hidden character of the sexual act.

Starting from there, of course, the notion of Eros, in the form that I recently railed against as being the force which is supposed to unite by an irresistible attraction all the cells and the organs that our sack of skin gathers together; a conception that is at least mystical, because they do not put up the least resistance to being extracted from it and the rest do not carry on too badly! It is obviously a compensatory fantasy for the terrors linked to this Orphic phantasy that I have just described for you.

Moreover, it is not at all explanatory. Because it is not sufficient that terror should exist for it to explain anything whatsoever. It is rather it that should be explained. That is why it is better to direct oneself along the path of what I call a consistent, logical system for, in effect, it is necessary that we should now come to the following: **why is there this Other** (with a capital O)?

What is the position of this strange double that – you should note - the single takes on? Because the Other (with a capital O), for its part, is not two.

This position, then, of double that the single takes on, when it is a matter of explaining this curious One which, for its part, is tied together in the beast with two backs, in other words in the embrace of two bodies. Because this is what is at stake. It is not this funny One; that the Other, for its part, is still funnier. There is no link between them - I mean: this field of the One, this field of the Other. Quite the contrary. This is even the reason why the Other is also the unconscious. Namely, the symptom *without its sense*, deprived of its truth, but on the contrary always more responsible for what it contains in terms of knowledge. What cuts them off from one another, is very precisely what constitutes the subject.

There is no subject of the truth, unless it is of the act in general, of the act which, (17) perhaps, cannot exist *qua* sexual act. This is very specifically Cartesian; the subject

knows nothing about itself, except that it doubts. Doubt ... doubt, as the jealous man says when he has just seen through the keyhole hindquarters about to affront legs that he knows well. He asks himself whether it is not God and his soul! The foundation of Descartes' subject, its incompatibility with extension, is not a sufficient reason for identifying the body with extension. But its exis... its exclusion as subject is, on the contrary, grounded in that. And by taking it from the angle that I am presenting to you, the question of its intimate union with the body - I am speaking about the subject, not the soul - is no longer one.

It is enough to reflect on the fact that there is (attention, huh, those who are not used to it!) as regards the signifier, namely, for the structure, no other support - of a surface, for example - than the hole that it constitutes by its edge. This is all that defines it. Raise things by a degree, take things at the level of volume. There is no other support for the body than the sharp edge that presides over its cutting up.

These are topological truths as regards which I will not decide here whether they have or not a relation with the sexual act, but every possible development of what is called an algebra of edges, requires the following - which gives us the image of what is involved in the subject, at this joint between what we have defined as the One and the Other - the subject is always a structural degree below what constitutes its body.

This also explains why in no way, can its passivity, namely, this fact through which it depends on a mark of the body, cannot in any way be compensated for by any activity, even its affirmation in act.

So then, of what is this Other the Other?

I am very distressed. The time, a certain inordinate, perhaps also a certain paradoxical use of the cut - but in this case you can take it as intentional - means that I will leave you here, today, at the end of the hour.

The Other is only the Other of what is the first moment of my three lines: namely, this **small o**. This is where I started from during our last talks, in order to tell you that its nature is that of the incommensurable, or rather, that it is from its incommensurability that there arises every question about measure.

It is on this **small o**, object or not, that we will take up our conversation the next time.

Seminar 20: Wednesday 24 May 1967

I am going to try to make you enter today into this arcanum, which, even though it is trivial in psychoanalysis, is nonetheless an arcanum. Namely, the following that you will meet at every turn: that if the analysed subject, if the analysable subject, adopts what is called a regressive, or again, *pre-* (pre-oedipal, pre-genital, anyway pre-something or other ...) position, which would be very desirable, and one might moreover be astonished, on this occasion, that it is not designated as *post-*, since it is in order to evade the operation, the impact of castration, that the subject is supposed to have taken refuge there ...

If I am trying, this year, to sketch out before you a structure that presents itself as logical - a chancy, very precarious logic, perhaps, in which also I am sparing you, not giving too quickly, the forms that I have come to trust in my own scribblings, but am trying to show you what is accessible in an articulation of such a kind, in this easy form that, after all, I chose among others, which consists very simply in taking what is most incommensurable to the One, specifically, the golden number - and this with the aim simply of making tangible for you how along such a path, in which, I repeat to you, I do not claim at all either to have given you the definitive steps, nor even to have taken them myself, but how much more preferable is such a path, which is guaranteed by some truth concerning the dependency of the subject, rather than giving oneself over to these painful exercises of the usual analytic prose which distinguish themselves by these sort of prevarications, of senseless detours, which seem to be always necessary to account for the operation of libidinal positions; the bringing into play of a whole population of subjective entities, that you know well and which can be found everywhere, the ego, the ego ideal, the super ego, the id (*ça*) even, without counting the new and refined things that can be added to them by distinguishing the ideal ego from the ego ideal. Does not all of this carry in itself, indeed - as has been done in Anglo Saxon literature for some time - to add in the *self*, which, by manifestly being added to remedy this ridiculous multitude, nonetheless fails because it only (2) represents, in the way in which it is handled, a supplementary entity. Entities, beings of reason, always inadequate from the moment that we bring into play in a correct way the function of the subject as nothing other than what is represented by a signifier for another signifier.

In no case is a subject an autonomous entity. Only the proper name can give the illusion of it. The *I*, it is too much to say that it is suspect - since I have been speaking to you about it, it ought even no longer be so! - It is only very precisely this subject that - as signifier - I represent for the signifier walk, for example, or for the couple of signifiers: *la boucle*: "I shut up" (*je la boucle*)!

You can sense that if I took this formula, it is to avoid the pronominal form "I keep myself quiet" (*Je me tais*) which undoubtedly would begin to take us very far if we were to pose ourselves the question of what the *me* means in such a form as in many others. And you would see the degree to which its so-called reflexive acceptance is displayed across a range which does not allow it to be given any degree of consistency. But I will not extend myself, of course, in this direction, which is here only a reminder.

There is therefore a function, a subjective function, called castration as regards which one ought to recall how striking it is that it is presented to us (and this had never been

said previously, I mean before psychoanalysis) ... that it is presented to us as essential to gain admission to what is called the genital. If this expression were appropriate to the highest degree - I mean that it is not so - one might marvel at this something which, in that case, might be expressed as follows. That - let us say, in any case, how it might be presented if one tackled it from outside and after all we are, all of us, still there! - that the passage to the phantasy of the organ is, in a certain function - an undoubtedly privileged one, henceforth, the genital precisely - necessary for the function to be accomplished. I do not see any way of getting out of the blind alley, here, except by saying - and a psychoanalyst of importance, one notable in the political topography, used this means. I mean at the turning point of a sentence, without even properly noticing the import of what he is saying, he affirms to us that, after all, castration ... well, it is a dream! This, used in the sense that it is one of the stories told by sick people.

Now it is nothing of the kind! Castration is a subjective structure - as I recalled just now - altogether essential precisely for something of the subject, however slim, to enter into this affair that psychoanalysis calls: "the genital".

I have to say that I think I have made a little opening in this blind alley, changed - as they say - something in it, in as much as, good God, not too long ago - four or five of our meetings ago - I introduced the remark that it could not simply be a matter of introducing the subject into this function of the genital! ... (If in fact we know what (3) we mean when we call it that). Namely, about the passage from the function to the *act*. And the putting into question of whether this act may merit the title of sexual act. There is none? ... There is? ... *Chi lo sa?* There is, perhaps ... We will know perhaps one day whether there is a sexual act - whether, I am going to give a commentary, sex (mine, yours) reposes on the function of a signifier capable of operating in this act.

In any case, one cannot in any way evade the fact, which is not alone affirmed by the doctrine, but that we encounter at every turn of our experience, that the only one who is capable of operating in the sense of the sexual act - I am speaking about something which resembles it and is not ... (this is what I am going to try to refer myself to today, to introduce register of, properly speaking), namely, ... perversion - the only one capable of operating in a fashion that is not faulty (*fautive*) is, let us say, the subject who is *castrated* and - let us repeat ourselves like dictionaries, (a sense to add to the word "castrated") - *in order* (*en règle*), (expressing ourselves in this way does not take us far), *in order* with this complex called the castration complex. Which of course does not mean that one has a complex, but quite the contrary, as any literature worthy of this name (psychoanalytic, I mean), which is not the chatter of people who do not know what they are saying (which happens to even the highest authorities), which means well and truly, in any sound analytic literature, that one is, I would say, normed (*normé*) with respect to the sexual act. This does not mean that one gets to it. It means, at the very least, that one is on the right path!

In any case, *normed* has a very precise sense in the breakthrough from affine geometry to metric geometry. In short, one enters into a certain order of measure, which is the one that I am trying to evoke with my golden number, which here, I repeat, is of

course only metaphorical. Reduce it to the term of the most spaced out incommensurable there is with respect to the One.

The castration complex, then, - I am saying it, good God, I hope I only have to say it here for the ears of novices - can in no way content itself with the support of the little story of the kind: Daddy said "It's going to be cut off ... if you claim to succeed your father". First of all, because most of the time, (as naturally everyone has been able to see for a long time, as regards this little story, this little remark), it is Mammy who says it. She says it at the precise moment when John, or Johnny, in fact, succeeds his father, but in the moderate measure that he fiddles with himself quietly in a little corner, as quietly as a simpleton (*Baptiste*) ... that he fiddles with his little gadget ... obviously, the way Daddy had already done when he was his age!

This has nothing to do with the castration complex. It is an amusing little story which (4) is not made any more likely by the fact that guilt about masturbation is encountered at every turn in the genesis of the troubles that we have to deal with.

It is not enough to say that masturbation is not physiologically harmful and that it is through its place in a certain subjective economy, we will say precisely, that it takes on its importance. We will even say, as I recalled one of these last times, that it can take on a quite clear hedonistic value, since it can, as I recalled, be pushed as far as asceticism. And that one or other philosophy can make of it, on condition of course of adopting behaviour completely coherent with its practice, can make of it a foundation for one's wellbeing. Remember Diogenes to whom it was not alone familiar, but who promoted it as an example of the way one should treat what remains, in this perspective, of the tiny surplus of organic tickling: *titillatio*. It must be said that this perspective is more or less immanent in every philosophical position and even encroaches on a certain number of positions that can be described as religious, if we consider the retreat of the hermit as something that, of itself, involves it.

It only begins to take on its interest - thus on this occasion its guilty value - where one is trying to reach the sexual act. Then the following appears. The *jouissance*, sought for in itself, of a part of the body, and which plays a role - I am saying "which plays a role" because one must never say that an organ is made for a function. One has organs ... (I am telling you that ... if you generalise a little, if you make yourself from time to time into a mussel or some other little beast and if you try to reflect what would it be like if you were in what one can scarcely call their skin, then you would understand quickly enough that it is not the function that makes the organ, but the organ that makes the function. But, in any case, it is a position that goes too much against the obscurantism described as transformist in which we bathe, for me to insist on it. If you do not want to believe me, go back into the main stream.) ... It is therefore completely out of place to allege, in accordance with the moralising tradition ... anyway, according to the way this is explained in the *Divine Comedy* ... that masturbation is culpable and even a grave sin, because it not only deflects a means from its end ... (the end being the production of little Christians, indeed - I come back to it, even though people were scandalised the last time that I said it - indeed, little proletarians) ... well then, the fact that it raises a means to the rank of an end has absolutely nothing to do with the question as it should be posed, because it is that of the norm of an act, taken in the full sense that I recalled about this word *act*, and that

this has nothing to do with the reproductive shoots that it can take on, with the end of perpetuating the animal.

On the contrary, we ought to situate it with respect to the following. The passage of the subject to the function of signifier, in this precise locus - completely outside the ordinary field in which we are at ease with the word *act* - which is called this problematic point that is the sexual act.

(5) That the passage from *jouissance*, where it can be grasped, should be ... - by such an interdiction (to keep to the word that is used), by a certain negating (in order to be more prudent and keep in suspense the fact that, perhaps, one could arrive at the formula in a more precise fashion) - that this passage, in any case, has the most manifest relation with the introduction of this *jouissance* to a *value* function, is what, in any case, can be said without being imprudent.

That experience - an experience, even, in which, as one might say, a certain listener's empathy is not foreign - announces to us the correlation between this passage of a *jouissance* to the function of a value, namely, its profound adulteration: the correlation between this and ... (I have no reason to refuse myself what the literature gives here, since as I have just told you, the only way in here is an empathic one; this should be purified in a second moment, but after all we do not refuse ourselves this way in either, when we are on a difficult terrain) ... should then, this castration, should have the closest relation with the appearance of what is called the object in the structure of orgasm, in so far - I am repeating it to you: we are still talking about empathy - as it is mapped out as distinct from a *jouissance* that is - ah! what are we going to call it?, autoerotic? this is a concession ... *masturbatory*, and that is all, given what is at stake, namely, an organ, and a quite specific one.

Since, like autoerotism ... God knows what has already been made of it and therefore what is going to be made of it! And as you know this is precisely what is in question here, namely, that this autoerotism which has here, in effect, which can have, an altogether specific sense, that of a local and manageable *jouissance*, like everything that is local! is soon going to be made into the oceanic bath in which we are going to have to map out all of this! As I told you: whoever, whoever grounds anything whatsoever on the idea of a primary narcissism and starts from there to generate what is supposed to be investment in the object, is quite free to continue (since it is with this that psychoanalysis functions throughout the world as a guilty industry) but can, moreover, be sure that everything that I am articulating here is designed to repudiate him absolutely.

Good! I said then, I admitted, I spoke about an object present in orgasm. There is nothing easier, from that, than to slip - and of course people do not fail to do so - towards simpering about the dimension of the person! When we copulate, those of us who have arrived at genital maturity, we have a reverence for the person. This is how it was expressed, twenty-five or thirty years ago, especially in the circle of French psychoanalysts, who have after all their interest in the history of psychoanalysis. Yes ... Well then, there is nothing less sure. For precisely to pose the question about the object involved in the sexual act, is to introduce the question of whether this object is Man, or indeed *a* man, Woman or indeed *a* woman.

(6) In short, the interest of introducing the word *act* is to open up the question, which after all is worth opening up - because I am certainly not the one who makes it circulate among you - of whether, in the sexual act (in as much as for any of you it has ever happened: a sexual act), whether it is related to the advent of a signifier representing the subject as sex for another signifier, or whether it has the value of what I called in another register, the *encounter*, namely, the unique encounter! The one which, once it has happened, is definitive.

Naturally, people talk about all of that. People talk about it and - this is what is serious - people talk about it frivolously.

In any case, to mark that there are two distinct registers, namely, whether in the sexual act, man arrives at Man, in his status as man, and the woman in the same way, is a completely different question to whether one has, yes or no, encountered one's definitive partner. Since this is what is at stake when people evoke the encounter. Curious! It is curious that the more the poets evoke it, the less efficacious it is in the conscience of each one as a question.

That it is the person, in any case, may make anyone who has had a little glimpse of feminine *jouissance* smile a little!

There is here, undoubtedly, a first point that is very interesting to put right in the forefront, as an introduction to any question that may be posed about what is involved in what is called feminine sexuality. When what is at stake is precisely *her jouissance*.

There is one thing very certain and which is worthwhile remarking. It is that psychoanalysis, without a question like the one that I have just produced, renders all the subjects installed in its experience - specifically the psychoanalysts - incapable of confronting it in the slightest way.

The males - the proof has been given superabundantly - this question of feminine sexuality has never taken a serious step, when it comes from a subject apparently defined as male by his anatomical constitution. But the most curious thing is that women psychoanalysts, then, for their part, in approaching this theme, manifestly show all the signs of a feebleness that suggests just one fact. That they are absolutely terrified by what they might have to formulate about it!

So that the question of feminine *jouissance* does not seem to be really going to be studied in the near future, since this is, good God, the only locus in which one could say something serious about it. At the very least, to evoke it in this way, to suggest to everyone, and especially the feminine part of those who are gathered here as listeners, the fact that one can express oneself in this way about feminine *jouissance*, is enough for us to place it, to inaugurate a dimension, which, even if we do not enter it, for want to being able to do so, is absolutely essential to situate everything that we have to say along another route.

(7) The object, then, is not at all given in itself by the reality of the partner! I mean the object involved in the normed dimension, described as genital, of the sexual act. It is much closer - in any case it is the first approach that is given to us - to the function of detumescence.

To say that there is a castration complex, is precisely to say that detumescence in no way suffices to constitute it. This is what we have, rather dully, taken care to affirm at first. Now, of course, this fact of experience that it is not the same thing to copulate or to masturbate.

It nevertheless remains, that this dimension which ensures that the question of the value of *jouissance* is attached, takes its point of support, its pivotal point, where detumescence is possible, ought not to be neglected! Because the function of detumescence, whatever we may have to think about it on the physiological plane, (royally neglected by psychoanalysts, who on this point have not brought the slightest little clinical light that is new, which is not already in all the manuals, about the physiology of sex, I mean, which could not be found everywhere before psychoanalysis was born) but what matter! This only re-enforces what it is a matter of knowing: that detumescence is only there for its subjective utilisation, in other words, to recall the limit described as the pleasure principle.

Detumescence, by being the characteristic of the functioning of the penile organ, specifically, in the genital act - and precisely in the measure in which what it supports in terms of *jouissance* is kept in suspense - is there to introduce, legitimately or not (when I say legitimately, I mean, as something real, or as a supposed dimension), to introduce the fact **that there is *jouissance* beyond**. That the pleasure principle, here, functions as a limit at the edge of a dimension of *jouissance* in so far as it is suggested by the union described as the sexual act.

Everything that experience shows us, what is called premature ejaculation, and what it would be better to call, in our register, *premature detumescence*, gives rise to the idea that the function, that of detumescence, can represent in itself the negative of a certain *jouissance*. Of a *jouissance* which is precisely the following, and the clinic only shows us too much of it, of a *jouissance* which is ... what the subject sets his face against. Indeed the subject makes off, in so far, precisely, as this *jouissance* is, as such, too consistent with this dimension of castration, perceived in the sexual act, as a threat. All this precipitation of the subject with respect to this beyond allows us to conceive that it is not without foundation that, in these stumblings, these lapses of the sexual act, there is demonstrated precisely what is at stake in the castration complex. Namely, that detumescence is cancelled out as a good in itself, that it is reduced to the function of protection, rather, against a dreaded evil, whether you call it *jouissance* or (8) castration, as itself a lesser evil. And, from then on, that the smaller the evil is, the more it is reduced, the more perfect is the evasion. This is the mainspring that we put our finger on clinically, in everyday treatments, of everything that can come under the different modes of impotence, especially in so far as these are centred around premature ejaculation.

Therefore, there is no *jouissance*, in any case one that can be located, except of one's own body. And what is beyond the limits that the pleasure principle imposes on it, it is not chance but necessity which associates it as such with the evocation of the sexual correlate, by making it appear only in this conjuncture of the sexual act, without our being able to say any more about it.

In other words, for all those who already have their ears open to the usual terms of psychoanalysis, it is on this plane and on this plane alone that Thanatos can be found or be in any way connected to Eros. It is in the measure that the *jouissance* of the body - I am saying of one's own body, beyond the pleasure principle - is evoked, and is not evoked elsewhere than in the act, precisely in the act which puts a hole, a void, a gap, in its centre, around what is localised in hedonistic detumescence, it is from that moment on that there is posed a possibility of the conjunction of Eros and Thanatos. It is starting from there that the fact is conceivable, and is not a crude mythical lubrication, that into the economy of the instincts, psychoanalysis introduced what, not by chance, it designates under these two proper names.

Well then, all of that, as you see, it still only turning around it! God knows, nevertheless, that I am making an effort so that it will not be like that! We have to believe then that if we are still going around it, it is because it is not easy to enter into it!

We can, at least, retain, gather, these truths: that the sexual encounter of bodies does not pass, in its essence, by way of the pleasure principle.

Nevertheless, that to orient oneself in the *jouissance* that it involves (I am saying, that it involves, supposedly, because to orient oneself in it does not yet mean entering it, but it is very necessary to orient oneself with respect to it) ... to orient oneself with respect to it, it has no other reference point than this sort of negating brought to bear on the *jouissance* of the organ of copulation, in so far as it is the one that defines the presumed male, namely the penis. And that it is from there that the idea arises, (these words are chosen), that the idea arises of a *jouissance* of the feminine object. I said, that the idea arises, and not the *jouissance*, of course! It is an idea. It is subjective. Only what is curious and what psychoanalysis affirms - only for want of expressing it in a logically correct fashion, naturally, no one notices what it means, what it involves! - is that feminine *jouissance* itself can only pass by way of the same (9) reference point! And that this is what is called, in the case of the woman, the castration complex! It is indeed because of that that the woman-subject is not easy to articulate, and that at a certain level I propose to you the *Homme-elle*. That does not mean that every woman limits herself to that, precisely. There is something of the woman somewhere ... "*odor di femina*" ... But she is not always easy to find! I mean, to put in her place! Since, to organise a place there, a reference is necessary whose organic accidents mean that it is only found in what is called, anatomically, the male. It is only starting from this suspense posed on the male organ, that an orientation for the two, the man and the woman, is encountered, that the function, in other words, takes on the value of being, with respect to this hole, this gap of the castration complex, in a reversed (*renversée*) position.

A reversal is a sense. Before the reversal, it may happen that there is no subjectifiable sense! And after all, it is perhaps to this that there must be referred the altogether striking fact that I told you earlier, namely, that women psychoanalysts have taught us nothing more than men analysts had been capable of lucubrating about their *jouissance*. Namely, very little!

Starting from a reversal, there is an orientation, and however little it may be, if it is all that can orientate the *jouissance* involved, in the woman, in the sexual act, well then, you understand that until further notice we have to be content with it.

In short, this leaves us at a point that has its characteristic. We will say that as regards the sexual act, what can be currently formulated about it, is the dimension of what is called, in other registers, *good intentions*. A good intention, concerning the sexual act, here, at least in what can, at the point that we are in it, be formulated, this is what, reasonably, according to the psychoanalysts, here is what reasonably we can and we should be content with.

All of this is very well expressed in the myth, the fundamental myth. When the Father, the original Father is said to “enjoy all the women”, does that mean that the women have any enjoyment, however little it may be? The subject remains intact. And it is not only with a humorous intention that I am evoking it at this point. The fact is, as you are going to see, this is a key question! I mean that everything that I am going to have to articulate, I am saying in our next meeting, concerning what I am going to take up again, namely, what I left open the last time. That if we had to leave deserted and uncultivated this central field, that of the One, of sexual union - in so far as we find slightly unsettling the idea of a process, whatever it may be, of partition, allowing there to be grounded what are called “the roles”, and that we, for our part, call the *signifiers* of man and of woman - that if what I left you on the threshold of the (10) last time, namely, a quite different conjunction, that of the Other, of the big Other, on the register, on the tablets of which there is inscribed this whole adventure, and I told you that this register and these tablets, were nothing other than the body itself, that this relation of the Other, of the big Other, to the partner which remains to him, namely, what we started from - and it is not for nothing that I called it **small o** - namely, your substance, substance as subject, in so far as, as subject, you have none, except this object fallen from signifying inscription, except what ensures that this **small o** is this sort of fragment, belonging to big O, *en ballade*; namely, you yourselves, who are indeed here as subjective presence, but who, once I shall have finished, will clearly show your nature as **o**-object, from the aspect of a great clearance that will take place immediately in this room! Well then, I will leave in suspense the question of what is involved in the phallic object. Because it is necessary - and it is not a necessity which is imposed only on me - for me to carefully examine the way in which it is supported as object. All of this, precisely, in order for me to perceive that it is not supported itself. This is what the castration complex means: there is no phallic object!

This is what leaves us our only chance, precisely, for there to be a sexual act.

It is not castration, it is the phallic object which is the effect of the dream, around which the sexual act fails!

To make you sense what I am in the process of articulating, there is no lovelier illustration than the one given us by the sacred book, by this unique book, by the Bible itself. And if you have become deaf to its reading, go to the narthex of what is called the Church of St. Mark, in Venice, in other words the Doge's Chapel. It is nothing else, but its narthex is worth the trip. Nowhere, in an image, can there be expressed with more relief what is in the text of Genesis. And among others, you will see there, I must say sublimely magnified, what I would call "this infernal idea of God's" when from Adam-Cadmus, from the one who, since he was One, had to become two - he was man under its two aspects, male and female - "It is good", said God (*Lacan punctuates this with a laugh*) "that he should have a companion"! Which would still be nothing, if we were not to see that, in order to proceed to this adjunct, all the more strange in that it seems that up to then, the Adam in question, a figure made of red earth, had done very well without it, God *takes advantage of his sleep*, to take from him a *rib*, from which he fashions, we are told, the first Eve!

Could there be any more gripping illustration of what introduces, into the dialectic of the sexual act, this fact that man, at the precise moment at which there comes to be marked on him a supplementary divine intervention, is found henceforth to have to deal, as object, with a piece of his own body?

Everything that I have just said, the Mosaic law itself and, moreover, perhaps the (11) accent added to it by underlining that this piece is not the penis, since, in circumcision it is in a way incised in order to be marked by this negative sign. Is this not designed to make there arise before us the perverse gate, I would say, there is in the establishment, on the threshold of what is involved in the sexual act, of this commandment: "*They shall be one flesh*".

Which means that in a field interposed between us and what is involved, in what might be, something that can be called the sexual act, in so far as the man and woman valorise themselves in it for one another. First - and we would have to know whether this thickness can be crossed - there would be the autonomous relation of the body to something that is separated from it, after having formed part of it.

Such is the enigma, the sharp threshold where we see the law of the sexual act in its crucial datum. That the castrated man can be conceived of as never having to embrace anything but this complement, with which he can deceive himself - and God knows he does not fail to do so - by taking it as a phallic complement.

I pose today, in ending my discourse, this question: that we still do not know how to designate this complement. Let us call it, logic.

The fiction that this object is other, undoubtedly requires the castration complex.

It is not astonishing that we are told, that we are told in the mythical asides of the Bible, these asides, curiously, that one finds in the little marginal additions by the rabbis, that we are told that something, which is perhaps indeed precisely the primordial woman, the one who was there before Eve, and whom they call - I mean the rabbis, I am not the one who gets involved in these stories! - whom they call

Lilith. That it was she, perhaps, who, in the shape of a serpent and by the hand of Eve has presented to Adam ... what? The apple! The oral object, and which, perhaps, is there for no other reason than to awaken him to the true sense of what had happened to him while he was asleep! It is indeed in this way, in effect, that things are taken in the Bible. Since we are told that starting from there, he enters for the first time into the dimension of knowledge.

It is precisely because, this dimension of knowledge, the effect of psychoanalysis is the following: that we have located in it at least in two or three of its major forms, and one could say also in two others, even though the link to it is not yet made, what the nature, what the nature and function is of this object completely concentrated in this apple. It is only along this path that we may be able to come to specify better, and, precisely, from a series of contrasting effects, what is involved in this object, the phallic object, of which I said that it would be necessary, in order finally to articulate it, for me to carefully examine it first.

Seminar 21: Wednesday 31 May 1967

For the those who find themselves, for example, returning today after having followed my teaching for a while, I have to signal what I have been able, these most recent times, to introduce into it in terms of new articulations.

An important one, which dates from our antepenultimate meeting, is undoubtedly to have designated, expressly, I would say - since, in fact, it was not inaccessible to those who understand me - expressly, the locus of the Other - everything that I articulated as such up to now (I mean since the beginning of my teaching) - designated the locus of the Other in the body. (“*Voilà*”, murmurs a feminine voice.)

The body itself is, from the origin, this locus of the Other, in so far as it is there that, from the origin, there is inscribed the mark *qua* signifier.

It was necessary for me to recall it today, at the moment that we are going to take the next step, in this logic of the phantasy, which is found - you will see it being confirmed in the measure that we advance - which is found to be able to accommodate itself to a certain logical laxity. *Qua* logic of phantasy it pre-supposes this dimension described as fantasy, in the sense that, at the beginning, exactness is not required of it. Moreover, we find that what is most rigorous in the exercise of an articulation that deserves the title of logic includes in itself a growing approximation. I mean a mode of approximation which involves in itself not alone a growth, but a growth that as far as possible is the best, the most rapid there is, towards the calculation of an exact value. And it is because of this that ... in referring to an algorithm of very great generality, which is none other than the one most proper to guarantee the relation of

an ideal incommensurable, the most simple there is, the most spaced out also, by circumscribing what it constitutes in terms of the irrational by its very progress. I mean that the incommensurability of this ϕ ... that I only image as being the golden number for the legibility of my text. Because those who know, know that this sort of number constituted by the very progress of its approximation is a whole family of (2) numbers and, as one might say, can start from anywhere whatsoever, from any exercise whatsoever of relation, on the single condition, that the incommensurable requires that the approximation should have no term, while being, nevertheless, perfectly recognisable at each instant as rigorous.

This then is what is at stake: to grasp what we are confronted with in the form of the phantasy as reflection of a necessity. In other words, the problem, which for a Hegel could be contained in this simple limit constituted by the certainty included in self-consciousness... [*at this point a loudspeaker starts up in the room: "OK then five ... four ... three ..."*]... this certainty about oneself, with which Hegel can allow himself, can allow himself, given certain conditions that I will evoke later which are the conditions of history, to put in question the relation with a truth - this certainty, in Hegel - and this is how he concludes a whole process through which philosophy is the exploration of knowledge. He can allow himself to introduce into it the *telos*, the end, the goal, of an absolute knowledge. It is in so far as at the level of certainty, he finds himself being able to indicate that it does not contain its truth in itself.

[*Another loudspeaker starts up*]

This is the way that we find ourselves being able not simply to take up again the Hegelian formula, but to complicate it. The truth with which we have to deal depends on this act through which the foundation of self-consciousness, through which subjective certainty is confronted with something which of its nature is radically foreign to it and which is properly the fact that...

[*Dr. Lacan is interrupted once again. "The minister has insisted ...", says another loudspeaker.*

Dr. Lacan – “Can nothing be done to stop this interruption?” **Madame Aubry** – “Unplug the microphone!”

Murmuring and interruptions. One of the audience climbs up onto a window to try to unhook the microphone, without success ... (That's dangerous, someone says, anticipating his gesture). A lot of whispering goes on in the room.

"If there is an examination of perspective, there is an entrance examination."
continues another loudspeaker

Dr. Lacan – “Which loudspeaker seems to be speaking, at the moment? Are all of them?”

Dr. Faladé heads towards the tape-recorder

Dr. Lacan – “Can anything be done?” **One of the audience:** “Switch off the mains”!

Dr. Lacan (pointing at the emergency exit) ... “Yes but it is closed!”

Madame Aubry – “It must be in the projection room.”

Dr. Lacan, (to the official, who arrives and who is heading towards the emergency exit) ... “It's closed. You weren't told? But I have just told you”

The official – “Is it open down there?” (He points at the little room on the left, gets into it and fixes the problem without delay)].

What it is a matter of introducing today, then, and all the more rapidly since our time has been shortened, is the following: psychoanalytic experience introduces the fact that the truth of the sexual act gives rise to questions in experience. Naturally, the importance of this discovery only takes on its relief starting from a positioning of the term *sexual act* as such. I mean, for ears already sufficiently formed to the notion of the prevalence of the signifier in any subjective constitution, to notice the difference between a vague reference to sexuality that - one can scarcely say as a function - as a dimension proper to a certain form of life, the one specifically most profoundly linked to death. I mean, intermixed, interlaced with death. This is not the whole story, once we know that the unconscious is the discourse of the Other. From that moment on, it is clear that everything that brings into play the order of sexuality in the unconscious, only penetrates into it around the putting in question of: is the sexual act possible? Is there this knot, definable as an act, in which the subject grounds himself as sexed, that is, as male or female, being in itself, or, if not, proceeding in this act to something which can - even if only at its term - culminate at the pure essence of male or female? I mean, at the disentangling, at the distribution, in a polar form of what is male and what is female, precisely in the conjunction that unites them in something - whose term I am not introducing here, at this hour, nor for the first time - in something that I named as *jouissance*. I mean introduced a long time ago and, specifically, in my seminar on *Ethics*.

It is in effect required that this term *jouissance* should be put forward, and properly so, as distinct from pleasure, as constituting its beyond.

What indicates it to us, in psychoanalytic theory, is a series of converging terms, in the first rank of which is *libido*, which represents a certain articulation of it. And we must point out - at the end of these talks this year - point out how its use can be so slippery as not to sustain, but make slip away, the essential articulations that we are going to try to introduce today.

Jouissance, namely, this something that has a certain relation to the subject, as this confrontation with the hole left in a certain questionable register of act, that of the sexual act. This subject is suspended by a series of modes or states of dissatisfaction. This is what, just by itself, justifies the introduction of the term *jouissance*, which, moreover, is what at every instant, and specifically in the symptom, is proposed to us as being indistinguishable from this register of satisfaction, since at every moment the problem for us is to know how a knot, which is only sustained by discontent and suffering, is precisely that through which there is manifested the agency of suspended satisfaction, the one, properly speaking, to which the subject keeps in so far as he *tends* towards this satisfaction.

Here the law of the pleasure principle, namely, of least tension, only indicates the necessity of detours from the path by which the subject is sustained along the path of his search - search for *jouissance* - but does not give us its end, which is this proper end, an end nevertheless entirely masked for him in its final form, in as much as one can also say that its completion, its completion is so questionable, that one can just as well start from this foundation that there is *no* sexual act, just as much as the fact that it is *only* the sexual act which motivates this whole articulation.

This is why I wanted to bring in the reference - which everyone knows I have used for a long time - the reference to Hegel, in as much as this process - this process of the dialectic of different levels of the certainty of oneself, of the *Phenomenology of the spirit*, as he said - is suspended on a movement which he calls "dialectical" (and which undoubtedly, in his perspective, can be held to be only dialectical) of a relation that he articulates from the presence of this consciousness, in so far as its truth, its truth escapes it as regards what constitutes the operation of the relation of a self-consciousness to another self-consciousness in the relation of intersubjectivity.

Now it is clear, it has been proved for a long time - if only by the revelation of this social gap, in so far as it does not allow us to assimilate to a confrontation of one consciousness to another consciousness, what is presented as a struggle, specifically, (4) of the master and the slave - it is not even for us to criticise what is left open ... what is left open by the Hegelian development. This has been done by others and specifically by one other, by Marx, to name him, and keeps the question of its outcome and of its modes in suspense.

The way in which Freud comes and takes things up at a point that is only analogical to the Hegelian position, is inscribed, is already sufficiently inscribed in this term, in this term of *jouissance*, in so far as Hegel introduced it. The starting point, he tells us, is in the fight to the death between the master and the slave. After which there is established the fact that the one who had not been willing to risk, risk the stake of death, falls into a state of dependency with respect to the other, which for all that is not without containing the whole future of the dialectic in question.

The term *jouissance* comes into it. *Jouissance*, after the end of this fight to the death, of pure prestige, we are told, is going to be the privilege of the master, and for the slave the path then traced out will be that of *work*.

Let us look at things more closely and at this *jouissance* that is at stake. Let us see in Hegel's text ... (that, after all, I cannot produce here and still less with the shortening that we are constrained by today) ... what the master enjoys?

The matter is very adequately seen in Hegel. The relation established by the articulation of the work of the slave means that if, perhaps, the master enjoys, it is not at all absolutely. At the limit and to force things a little, which is to our cost as you are going to see, we might say that he enjoys only his *leisure*. Which means, the disposition of his body.

In fact this is very far from being the case. We will indicate it again later, but let us admit that from everything that he has to enjoy as things, he is separated by the one who is charged to put them at his mercy, namely, the slave, of whom one can then say - and I do not have to defend it, I mean this crucial point, since already in Hegel it is sufficiently indicated - that for the slave there is already a certain *jouissance* of the thing, in so far as he not only brings it to the master, but he has to transform it in order to make it acceptable to him.

After this reminder I have to question myself, with you - make you question - what the word *jouissance* implies in such a register. Of course nothing is more instructive, always, than a reference to what is called the lexicon, in so far as it is attached to goals as precarious as the articulation of meanings. "The terms included in each article", we read somewhere in the note of the preface of this magnificent work called *le grand Robert*, "the terms included in each article constitute just as many references, links, which ought to culminate in the means for expressing thought". "The asterisk", for in effect you can note that in each one of these articles, which fulfil their programme very well, "the asterisk refers on to articles which develop at length an idea suggested (5) from a single word". So that the article *Jouissance* begins with the word *plaisir*, marked by an asterisk. This is only an example, but it is not by chance that the word, no doubt, presents us with these paradoxes. Naturally, *jouissance* was not tackled for the first time by *Robert*. You can also study the word in *Littré*. You will see in it that its use, its most legitimate use, varies from the aspect indicated by the etymology which attaches it to *joie*, to that of possession and what one can dispose of in the final analysis: the *jouissance* of a title. The *jouissance* of a title, that this term signifies some juridical title or some paper representing a value in the stock exchange. To have the *jouissance* of something, of dividends for example, is to be able to give it up. The sign of possession is to be able to resign it. *Jouir de* is something different to *jouir*. And undoubtedly, there is nothing better than these slippages of sense - in so far as they are circumscribed in this apprehension that I called earlier "lexical", in its exercise in the dictionary - to show us to what point the reference to thought is indeed what is most inappropriate there, to designate the function, the radical one, I mean, of one or other signifier.

It is not thinking which gives the effective and final reference of the signifier. It is from the instauration that results from the effects of the introduction of a signifier **into the real**. It is in as much as I articulate in a new way this relation of the word *jouissance* to what is in operation, for us, in analysis, that the word *jouissance* finds and can preserve its final value. And today I intend to make you sense the import of this at its most radical point.

The master enjoys (*jouit de*) something; whether it is himself - he is his own master, as they say - or, moreover, the slave. But what does he enjoy in the slave? Precisely his body. As we read in Scripture, "The master says go and he goeth". As I allowed myself - I no longer know whether I wrote it or whether I simply stated it: if the master says "*jouis!*" (*enjoy*), the other can only answer with this *j'ouis* (*I hear*), with which I amused myself. In general I do not amuse myself by chance. This means something. I might moreover have been picked up by one of those who listen to me. I too often regret gathering nothing more than what forces me to do it myself.

The question is the following: *Does what one enjoys*, if there is this *jouissance* which is inaugurated in the *I* of the subject in so far as he possesses, *does what one enjoys enjoy* (*ce dont on jouit cela jouit-il?*).

It seems nevertheless that this is the real question. Because, moreover, it is clear that *jouissance* is in no way what characterises the master. The master, in so far as he is the one, in the City, who cannot be just anyone, but who is marked by his function as master, has other things to do than to abandon himself to *jouissance*. And the mastery

of his body - for it is not simply a matter of leisure - is something that is only achieved by severe discipline. At every epoch of civilisation, he who is master does not have (6) the time to let himself go even in his leisure!

Types should be distinguished. But after all the type of the ancient master is not of such a purely ideal order that we do not have its reference points. It is sufficiently inscribed, I would say, in the margins of the first philosophical discourse, for us to be able to say that Hegel gives us a sufficient testimony of it.

The question is precisely the following. Is the one - which after all is only just and in conformity with the first stake of the game - who, if we are to believe Hegel, was not able from the beginning to take the eventual risk of the loss of life, (which is indeed, in effect, the surest way to lose *jouissance*), the one who held to *jouissance* enough to submit and to alienate his body, and why then would not *jouissance* remain in his hands?

We have a thousand testimonies of this - that a short sightedness, some phantasy or other, which always wants everything to be on the same side, the whole bunch to be in one hand - we have a thousand testimonies that what characterises the position of the one whose body is put at the mercy of another, is that it is from then on that there opens up what can be called pure *jouissance*. And, moreover, in glimpsing, in following the indices which give us at the very least a crosscheck for it, perhaps certain questions will be eliminated about the sense of certain paradoxical positions and, specifically, the masochistic one. But, after all, it is better sometimes that the most immediately open doors should not be gone through. Because it is not enough for them to be easy to go through for them to be the right ones. I am not saying that this is the source of masochism. Very far from it! Because undoubtedly what has to be said is that if it is thinkable that the condition of the slave is the only one that gives access to *jouissance*, in the measure, precisely, that we formulate him as subject, we will never know anything about it.

Now the masochist is not a slave. He is on the contrary, as I will tell you later, a cute whore, someone very able. The masochist *knows* that he is in *jouissance*. It is precisely in connection with him, for what is to be understood, at stake, about him, that in the end the whole of this discourse progresses, for your use. And in order to make it progress, it was necessary to show that in Hegel there is more than one defect. The first, of course, being the one which allowed me, to produce it before those who listen to me. Namely, that before I put it forward and spoke about it, *with the mirror stage*, I noted that in no case was this sort of aggression which is active and present in the fight to the death for pure prestige, anything other than a lure. And, since then, since then, rendered obsolete any reference to it as a first articulation.

I am only highlighting again in passing the problems posed, posed and left gaping wide, by the Hegelian deduction about the society of masters. How can they get on with one another? And then, good God, the simple reference to what is involved, namely, that the slave, in order to make a slave of him, is not dead! That the result of (7) the fight to the death is something that did not bring death into play. That the master has only the *right* to kill him, but that precisely, and that is why he is called *Servus*, the master *servat*, saves him. And that it is starting from there that the real

question is put: what does the master save in the slave? We are brought back to the question of the primordial law, of what the rules of the game establish, namely, one can kill the one who is defeated, and if one does not kill him, at what price will it be?

At what price? It is indeed here that we re-enter the register of significance. What is involved, in the position of the master, is the following: the consequences - always - of the introduction of the subject into the real.

To measure what is involved concerning the effects of *jouissance*, one has to pose, at the level of this term, a certain number of principles. Namely, that if we have introduced *jouissance*, it is in the logical mode of what Aristotle calls an *ousia*, a substance. Namely, something very precisely which cannot be - this is how he expresses himself in his book of *Categories* - which can neither be attributed to a subject nor put into any subject. It is something that is not susceptible to being greater or lesser, which is not introduced into any comparative, into any *greater* or *lesser* sign, indeed any *lesser* or *equal*.

Jouissance is this something *in which* the pleasure principle marks its traits and its limits. But it is something substantial and which, precisely, is important to produce, to produce in the form that I am going to articulate in the name of a new principle: *There is no jouissance except that of the body (il n'y a de jouissance que du corps)*.

Allow me to say that I consider that the maintenance of this principle, its affirmation as being absolutely essential, appears to me to have a greater ethical import than that of materialism. I mean that this formula has exactly the import, the relief, that the affirmation that *there is only matter* introduces into the field of knowledge. For after all, you have only to see, with the evolution of science, that this matter, when all is said and done, is confused so well with the interplay of elements into which it is resolved, that it becomes at the limit almost indistinguishable to know what is being played out before us, whether it is these elements (*stoicheia*), these final signifying elements, or those of the atom. Namely, what they themselves contain that is quasi-indistinguishable from the progress of your mind, the operation of your research. But what is involved in it in the final analysis is a structure that you can no longer refer in any way to what you have as a common experience of matter.

But to say that there is no *jouissance* except that of the body and, specifically, that this refuses you the eternal *jouissances*, is what is at stake in what I called the ethical value of materialism. Which consists, namely, in taking what happens in your everyday life seriously, and if there is a question of *jouissance*, to look it straight in the face and not reject it into the uncertain future...

(8) There is no *jouissance* except that of the body. This corresponds very precisely to the truth requirement in Freudianism.

So here we are, then, leaving entirely to its wanderings the question of whether what is at stake is to be or not to be. Whether it is a matter of being a man or a woman in an act that is supposed to be the sexual act. And if this is what dominates the whole suspense of *jouissance*, it is also what, ethically, we have to take seriously.

Something in connection with which there arises this something that we could call our right of inspection.

Oedipus is not a philosopher. He is the model of what is at stake as regards the relation of what is involved in a knowledge and the knowledge that he proves to have, this is indicated to us, at least, in the form of the riddle, is a knowledge about what is involved in the body. Through this he breaks the power of a ferocious *jouissance*, that of the Sphinx, which very strangely is offered to us in the form of a vaguely feminine figure, let us say semi-bestial, semi-feminine. What he accedes to after that - which does not make him, as you know, any more triumphant for all that - is undoubtedly a *jouissance*. The moment that he enters it, he is already in the trap. I mean that this *jouissance* is what marks him, already and in advance, with the sign of guilt.

Oedipus did not know what he was enjoying. I posed the question of whether Jocasta, for her part, knew it. And even, why not, did Jocasta enjoy letting Oedipus remain in ignorance of it? Let us say: what part of Jocasta's *jouissance* corresponds to the fact that she left Oedipus in ignorance of it?

It is at this level that, thanks to Freud, there are posed henceforth serious questions about what is involved in the truth.

Now the introduction that I already gave of the function of alienation - in so far as it is consistent with the genesis of the subject as determined by the vehicle of significance - allows us to say that as regards what interests us and is first posited - namely, that there is no *jouissance* except that of the body - the fact is that the effect of the introduction of the subject, himself an effect of significance, is properly to put the body and *jouissance* into this relation that I defined by the function of alienation.

I mean that, as I have just articulated for half an hour before you, the subject, in so far as he is grounded in this mark of the body which privileges him, which ensures that it is the mark, the subjective mark, which henceforth dominates everything that is going to be involved for this body, that it will go here and then there and not elsewhere, and that it is free or not to do so. Here no doubt is what distinguishes the master, because the master is a subject.

Jouissance is, in this first foundation of the subjectification of the body, what falls into dependency on this subjectification, and, in a word, is effaced. At the origin, the (9) position of the master - and this is what Hegel glimpses - is precisely a renunciation of *jouissance*, the possibility of engaging everything on this disposition or not of the body. And not only of his own, but also that of the Other.

The Other is *the set of bodies*, from the moment that the operation of social struggle simply introduces the fact that the relations of bodies are henceforth dominated by this something which, moreover, is called the law. A law that one can say is linked to the advent of the master, but indeed only if one understands it as the advent of the absolute master. Namely, the sanction of death as having become legal.

This, then, allows us to glimpse that if the introduction of the subject as an effect of the signifier, lies in this separation of the body and *jouissance*, in the division put

between the terms which only subsist from on another, it is here, for us, that the question ought to be posed, the question of knowing *how jouissance can be handled starting from the subject*.

Well then, the answer, the answer is given through what analysis discovers as an approximation of this relation to *jouissance*. No doubt, in the field of the sexual act, what it discovers, is the introduction of what I called *jouissance*-value, namely, the cancellation of the *jouissance* most immediately involved as such in sexual union; what it calls *castration*.

This does not solve anything. Of course, it explains to us how it happens that the simplest and the clearest legal form of the sexual act - in so far as it is instituted in a regular formation which is called marriage - was first of all, at the beginning, only the privilege of the master. Not simply, of course, of the master *qua* opposed to the slave, but, as you know, if you know a bit of history and specifically Roman history, even opposed to the pleb. Not everyone who wants it has access to the institution of marriage, only the master.

But, moreover, as everyone knows - everyone knows, good God, through experience, what this marriage, which has since been put within everyone's reach, still carries with it in terms of heartbreak - everyone knows that it does not work automatically! And if you open Livy, you will see that there is an epoch, not all that late in the Republic, when the ladies, the Roman ladies, who are really marked by the true *connubium*, poisoned throughout a whole generation - with a breadth and a perseverance which did not fail to leave some traces in the memory and that Livy wrote down - poisoned their husbands. This was not without reason. It must be believed that the institution of marriage, when it functions at the level of true masters, must bring with it some inconveniences, which are probably not uniquely linked to *jouissance*, since it is rather the accentuated character of the hole put at this level - namely, from the fact that *jouissance* has nothing to do with conjugal choice - that these little incidents result.

When we, for our part, speak about the sexual act at the level that it interests us, us (10) analysts, it is precisely in so far as *jouissance* is in question. As I reminded you the last time, God did not disdain keeping an eye on it. It is enough for the woman to enter into the game of being this object that the biblical myth designates so well for us, of being this phallic object, for the man to be fulfilled. Which means, exactly, to be completely swindled, namely, encountering only his corporal complement.

The discovery of analysis is precisely to notice that it is uniquely in the measure that man is not swindled to the point of only discovering his own flesh - there is nothing astonishing that, from then on, there should only be one flesh, since it is his own - it is precisely in the measure that this swindling operation does not take place, namely, where castration takes place, that there is, yes or no, a chance that there may be a sexual act.

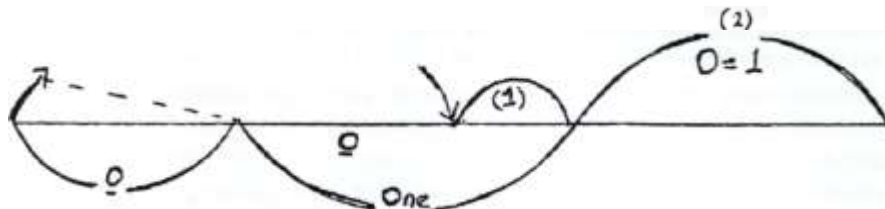
But then! What is meant by what is involved in *jouissance*? Since the characteristic of a sexual act that is grounded, is supposed to be precisely the fact of this lack of *jouissance*, somewhere.

This interrogation about what is involved in *jouissance* as a third function, is precisely what is given to us in a different approach, an approach which is called - exactly the inverse of this step, of this breakthrough, which is made in the sense of the sexual act - which is called ... and precisely, and uniquely because it is in an inverse sense, concerning a certain progression, logical progression - which is called, because of that, *regression*.

And it is here that our algorithm - that our algorithm in so far as it confronts the **small o** with the *One*, or towards the inside as I have already drawn it, namely, **small o** being reduced to the *One*, giving, here (1), the difference *One minus o*, which is at the same time o^2 . There is also another way to treat the question. It is the one suggested to us by the function of the Other, namely, that this *One* here (2), comes to be inscribed here at **o**, that it is the **small o**, here - without being reduced, namely, leaving between it and the capital O the large interval of the *One* - that is in question.

You cannot but see that this privileged fact, that the *One over o* is precisely equal to *One plus o* and that this is what gives its value to this algorithm. It is precisely through this that we are given the locus, the topology of what is involved in *jouissance*.

(11) In the case of the slave, the slave is deprived of his body. How can we know about his *jouissance*? How can we know it, except precisely in what, from his body, has slipped outside subjective mastery. Everything that is involved for the slave, in so



far as his body comes and goes at the whim of the master, allows nevertheless to be preserved these objects which are given to us as emerging, precisely, from the signifying dialectic.

These objects which are its stake but also its forgery, these objects taken at the frontiers, these objects which function at the level of the edges of the body, these objects that we know well in the dialectic of neuroses, these objects on which we will have to come back again and on several occasions, in order to define clearly what gives them their price and their value, their quality as exceptions. I do not need to recall them, as regards what is involved in terms of the *oral* and what is also called the *anal*. But these others also, superior, less known, of a more intimate register, which, as compared to demand, is constituted as desire, and which are called the *look* and the *voice*. These objects, in so far as they cannot in any way be caught in the domination - whatever it may be - of the signifier, were it entirely constituted in the rank of social domination. These objects which, of their nature, escape it, what does that mean?

Is it there? Since for the slave, there is only a *supposed jouissance* on the Other's part (Hegel was mistaken in the fact that it is *for the slave* that there is a *jouissance* of the

master). But the worthwhile question, I posed to you earlier: *does what he enjoys, enjoy?* And if it is true that something of the real of *jouissance* can only subsist at the level of the slave, then it would indeed be for him in this place, left in the margin of the field of his body, that is constituted by the objects whose list I have just recalled. It is there, it is at this place, that there ought to be posed the question of *jouissance*.

Nothing can take from the slave the function, either of his look or of his voice, nor that also of what he is, in his function as nurse, since so frequently this is the function in which antiquity shows him to us, nor indeed either in his function as a warped object, an object of contempt.

At this level there is posed the question of *jouissance*. It is a question and, as you see, it is even a scientific question.

Now, the pervert ... the pervert, well then, this is what he is. Perversion is looking for this point of perspective, in so far as it can give rise to the accent of *jouissance*. But he looks for it in an experimental fashion. Perversion, while having the closest relation to *jouissance*, is - like the thinking of science - *cosa mentale*. It is an operation of the subject in so far as he has perfectly located this moment of disjunction through which the subject tears the body from *jouissance*, but who *knows* that *jouissance* has not only been, in this process, an alienated *jouissance*, that there is also the following: that there remains somewhere a chance that something has escaped from it. I mean that the whole body has not been caught in the process of alienation. (12) It is from this point, from the locus of the **small o**, that the pervert *questions*, questions what is involved in the function of *jouissance*.

By never grasping himself except in a partial fashion, and, as I might say, in the perspective - I would not say of the pervert ... for truly one could say that psychoanalysts comprehend nothing about it ... (was there not one, recently, who posed this sort of equation, in this connection that the pervert cannot be at the same time subject and *jouissance*, and that in the whole measure in which he was *jouissance* he was no longer subject!) ... The pervert remains subject throughout all the time of the exercise of what he poses as a question to *jouissance*. The *jouissance* that he aims at is that of the Other, in so far as *he* is perhaps the only remainder of it. But he poses it through a subject-activity.

What this allows us to reassemble, can be done only on a single condition. It is that we should perceive that these terms - *sado-masochism* - for example, as they are tied together, only make sense if we consider them as researches *along the path* of what is involved in the sexual act.

The relations that we call sadistic between one or other vague unit of the social body are only of interest for the following reason. They image something that involves the relations of man and of woman.

As I will tell you the next time, since this time, faith, I will have been cut short, you will see that in forgetting this fundamental relation, one allows there to escape any means of grasping what is involved in sadism and in masochism. This does not mean

either that these two terms image in any way relations comparable to those of male and female.

A personage of, I must say, unbelievable naivety writes somewhere this truth: that “masochism has nothing specifically feminine about it”. But the reasons that he gives for it go to the level of formulating that undoubtedly, if masochism were feminine, that would mean that it is not a perversion, because it would be natural to the woman to be masochistic. Therefore, starting from there, one can clearly see that, naturally, women cannot be qualified as masochists, because, being a perversion, that could not be something natural!

Here is the kind of reasoning in which people get bogged down. Not at all, certainly, without a certain intuition, I mean the first, namely, that a woman is not naturally masochistic. She is not naturally masochistic, and for good reason! Because if she were, in effect, masochistic, that would mean that she is capable of filling the role that the masochist gives to a woman. Which, of course, gives a completely different sense, in this case, to what feminine masochism would be. The woman has, precisely, no vocation to fill this role. This is what constitutes the value of the masochistic enterprise.

That is why you will allow me to end today on this point, while promising you - as an end point, as the high point of what is put in question by this introduction to perversion - by allowing you to indicate as a high point, that we will finally put, I hope, some order or at least some clarity, about what is at stake, when we are dealing with masochism.

Seminar 22: Wednesday June 7 1967

What is common to what are being called lately the “structuralisms”? It is to make the function of the subject depend on signifying articulation.

This means that, after all, this distinctive sign can remain more or less elided, that in a sense it always is. Naturally, I know that some of you may find that in this regard the analyses of Levi Strauss leave precisely this central point in suspense, leave us, in a word, before this question, in as much as, for some years, this analysis has been centred on myth. Are we to think, after all, that honey was expecting, I mean from all time, was awaiting, in tobacco, the truth of its relations with ashes?

In a certain sense ... [a little laugh from Lacan] ... it is true! And that is why, the putting in suspense of the subject flows from any approach like this. And this is sufficient to make us contribute to something which is nevertheless not a doctrine, which is simply the recognition of an efficacy, which seems indeed to be of the same nature as the one which grounds science.

It nevertheless remains that a notion of class such that it would imply structuralisms, in the plural, that a minimum of characteristics cannot in any way connect into a whole a certain number of researches, in as much as, to take mine, for example: after all, it is not as an office, as a helping system, that it had to encounter, in order to articulate it, this necessity of subjective articulation in the signifier. It is only, in a way, the preface. Nothing can correctly be thought about it without that.

Nevertheless, it is not without good reason that we ought to produce, finally, what in the same field was articulated too quickly, which is the fundamental relation of the *subject* thus constituted to the *body*.

What I am coming to - which accounts for the fact that symbolism always means in the last resort corporal symbolism - had to be set aside for years by me, precisely by reason of the fact that it is thus, from all time, that it is in this way, traditionally, that symbolism was articulated. Namely, in a fashion that lacked the essentials, as (2) happens, from being too precipitate.

The members and the stomach ... I have for a long time, always, evoked at the horizon the fable of Menenius Agrippa. It was not too bad! To compare the nobility to the stomach is better than to compare it to the head! And then it puts the head back in its place, among the members! ...

This all the same is to go a little too quickly. And if we know that, it is because of the fact that what is at the centre of our research, we analysts, is something which, no doubt, passes along no other paths than those of structure, the incidences of the signifier in the real, in so far as it introduces the subject into it. But that its centre ... and it is a sign that I can only recall it with this force at the moment when, properly speaking, I am installing my discourse in what I can legitimately call a logic, that it is at this moment that I can recall that everything turns, for us, around what is involved in what has to be called the *difficulty* - not of *being*, as someone said in his old age - the difficulty *inherent in the sexual act*.

There are other difficulties that foretold this one. To introduce this function of *difficulty*, is not nothing! The day when the difficulty of social harmony took on, legitimately, this name, of *class struggle*, a step was taken. The difficulty of the sexual act may take on a certain weight, if one dwells on it. I mean, if everything that we have to articulate in this field is centred effectively on this difficulty.

I suspect that one of the reasons why psychoanalysts prefer to hold that by putting the Thing, with a capital T, if you wish, that by putting the Thing in the centre, light is thrown on a whole zonal region, I suspect that - apart from something that I will have to signal later - it is, first of all, a logical difficulty.

One could, in this connection, take as an index, that the institution of marriage reveals itself to be all the more, I would not say solid, it is much more than that: *resistant*, as the right is given in our society, for there to be articulated all the "aspirations", as the psychologists say, all the aspirations towards the sexual act. If it has been found that a break-through has been made in the clarification of the difficulty of social harmony, it

is in effect quite striking that it is not especially where the right was most open to articulate aspirations towards the sexual act. That marriage shows itself there - I would not say, more resistant, it did not resist - more established (*institué*) than elsewhere. And that, in the field in which the aspirations are articulated, in a thousand effective forms, in all the fields of art, of cinema, of the word, without counting in that of the great neurotic discontent of civilisation, marriage, of course, remains at the centre, not having budged by an inch in its fundamental status.

In other words, to summarise this institution, to see that it is grounded on this single statement once pronounced, which I used (differently!) as an example, to indicate in it the structuring of the message, in itself: "You are my wife". Which does not even (3) need to be reduplicated by another announcement; which makes it almost purely formal to ask her whether she is in agreement.

It is on this that there depends - and in all the forms in which this institution persists, at least for the moment - it is on this that there depends the inauguration of what we will call a *couple*, defined as productive. This is not quite to say, simply, that it is a matter of the couple in the sense of the sexual pair. Of course it is required, but it should be noted that we could say that its product, is something other than the child reduced to the biological offspring, to the effect of the function of reproduction.

And this is what we mean by designating as **small o** what we have to question, at the start, about its entry into the sexual act. This **small o** - and not simply as a biological offspring - is *already* its product, and I told you could very crudely, if you absolutely want to situate it in your philosophical boxes, identify to what the residue of this tradition has come to in the final term, after having raised to perfection the isolation of the function of the subject and having had to keep mum about the beyond, it nevertheless remains, that before signalling to us, "Bye bye, sail away now", on what succeeds me and into which you have plunged a little, into this world which is stirred up, which is going to be the last to emerge from its contradictions (it is beginning), at that moment also it told you that, all the same, a little residue remained, from the beneficial dialectic to which there was offered in advance total order, *absolute knowledge*, and which is called the *Dasein*. This residue of presence, *qua* linked to subjective constitution, is in fact the only point where we remain in continuity with the philosophical traditions. We receive it from its hand, we who discover it precisely as the *sub-product* of this something that had remained masked in the dialectic of the subject, namely, that it has something to do with the sexual act.

The subjective residue is *already there* at the moment when there is posed the question of the mode in which it is going to operate in the sexual act.

If the whole human discourse is so structured that it leaves gaping wide the very possibility of the subjective establishment implied in the sexual act, the whole human discourse has already produced - not in each subject; at the level of its subjective effect in itself - this rain, this trickling of residues which accompanies each of the subjects involved in the process. And it happens - I think you remember it because it is from this angle that we first approached it - that this residue is, in the final analysis, the surest junction, however partial it may be in its essence, the surest junction of the subject with the body.

That this **small o** presents itself, certainly, as body - but not, as it is said, as total body - as fall, astray with respect to this body on which it depends, according to a structure which must be strongly maintained if one wishes to comprehend it. One can only comprehend it by referring oneself to the centre. And this indeed is what is maintained by certain indications, like those of the incidence of these objects that I am calling **small o**, are all linked – people do not say “to the act”, of course, because I (4) was the first to say it - to something all the same which is destined for it, since it is entirely around, not alone biological prematurity, in so far as it invokes this call made to the body towards the locus of the act, not alone prematurity or its attempt, pre-puberty, we are told, the first pressure which, in a way, indicates its future and horizon and just by itself - but not without invoking a whole conjunction, a whole social circumstance of repression, at least of appreciation, of discursive reference, of demand and of desire - already *pre-formed*, makes the subject, as **small o**, arrive as a sub-product from this central point of difficulty, to the difficulty itself.

Perhaps the relative shirking (*carence*), which, even if it is relative, nevertheless remains radical - I am saying, perhaps - of psychoanalysts, with regard to their task, comes from the fact that they do not posit themselves, as committed to experience, in its extremes, the difficulty of the sexual act.

For if the training analysis is, of course, more than required in order, let us say, to form a scar over the effects of chance that everyone has, of this difficulty, this does not mean that it constitutes in itself the fact of testing oneself against this difficulty!

It is rather convenient, once you have gone through - call it what you will - the cleansing, the purification, to go back to your slippers, which are not, whatever may be said, the chosen locus of the sexual act!

Certainly, it is already a way in to be capable of *thinking about desire* (*Penser le désir*).

Do you believe [a little laugh from Lacan] that I am giving you this slogan that it is a matter of *thinking about the sexual act* (*penser l'acte sexuel*)?

An act, you should note, if you remember the way I introduced it, has no need to be thought, to be an act. The question even arises whether that is not why it is an act! I will not go any further in this sense, which favours seeming acts only too much. It is not an easy business, but it is certain, whether or not one should think it, that one can only think about it afterwards! The nature of the act is that it must first be committed. Which, perhaps, does not prevent it from being thought.

This to tell you that, if one starts from the difficulty of the sexual act, this does not put within hand's reach the *time* to think about it!

So then, let us take up at the lowest level how this is posed. If it is an act, the constitution in act of a signifier - starting from some motion, we will say, invoking here only the register of movement, something measurable in the weighing of a body - there ought to be, if the signifier is reduced to the most simple chain, this opposition

that I already inscribed on two unexpected little plaques in one of my articles, and that we will retranslate here by - I am not even saying *I - am a man*, and its relation to *am a woman*. Namely, that we come back here to what, earlier, was presented as the message, in an inverted form.

Is it not absolutely fabulous that we are absolutely not able, in any case, to account for a link between these terms which would justify our taking them as the inverse of one (5) another? And that it is then necessary for us to question them as they are, namely, as you are not unaware and as it is articulated at every line of Freud, while being totally incapable of giving them any sure correlate whatsoever. Activity, passivity, for example, are only substitutes whose, I would not say inadequate, suspect character Freud underlines every time he uses them.

So then let us pose the question again with the apparatuses furnished by our good little tradition of handling the subject. It ought to be able to be put to the test here! And even if it is of no use, the way in which it will be rebuffed by the object will instruct us perhaps about something concerning the object itself, its elasticity for example!

We are going to find something analogous to the male-being (*l'être-male*), to take him first - but just as much the female-being; they are exactly in the same position at this level of discourse - in what our handling of the subject has lead us to. There must indeed be two aspects there also. Moreover, this leaps to the eye immediately! There is an *in itself* (*en soi*) and then a *for* (*pour*) - a for ... for something! But what is immediately seen is that this is not at all *for itself* (*pour soi*) by very reason of the fundamental requirement of the sexual act. He cannot remain for himself, but let us not say that he is "*for*" the one who makes up the pair!

This is where the introduction of the function of the big Other ought to be of service to us. What corresponds here to our questioning, as opposed to this rather slippery *in itself* - which corresponds to the male-being and much more again to the female-being - is a *for the Other*, with a capital O. Namely, - which we had to evoke first - namely, the locus from which the message returns to him in an inverted form.

I point out to you, it is a little reminder - I will accentuate it more the next time, but here I can only begin it in passing - of this alternative, whose range I broadened by showing that it is not simply that of alienation, since it already allowed us, in the first semester, to establish this logical operation of alienation in its relation with two others - you have perhaps forgotten it - which form with it something that I questioned in the manner of a Klein group. Briefly, the start of this little rectangle in which I situated the fundamental alienation of the subject, precisely in its relation to a possibility which was only the place marked for the sexual act in the logical form of sublimation. This alternative: *either I am not thinking or I am not*, a seductive choice, as you see, which is the start of what is offered to the subject once there is introduced the perspective of an unconscious, in so far as it is constructed from this difficulty of the sexual act. You see here how it is prepared. The *I am not thinking*, is undoubtedly the *in itself*, if ever it manifests itself, of the male-being or of the female-being. The *I am not* being on the other side, namely, on the side of the *for the Other*.

(6) What the sexual act is called on to assure, since it is grounded in it, is something that we can call a *sign* coming from where *I am not thinking*, from where I am as not thinking, in order to arrive where *I am not*, where I am as not being. For, if *I am where I am not thinking* and if *I think where I am not* - this indeed is the occasion to remind oneself of it - in this relation which may well happen where I am not, namely, me, as a male, at the level of the woman. It is here, all the same, that - whatever may have been the pretensions of philosophers to detach the *to phronein*, I am thinking, from the *to khairain*, I am enjoying - it is here, all the same, that my destiny, even at the level of the *to phronein* is played out. The fact of having dialogued with Socrates never prevented anyone from having obsessions that tickle, greatly upset, his *to phronein!*

So then the next step is the one offered us - and this is why I recalled it - by the function of the message. It is a fact that, imprudently and absolutely not knowing what I am saying, I announce myself as being man where I am not thinking, in this form of “*You are my wife*”, where I am not. This has, all the same, the importance of giving to the woman the possibility of announcing herself also. And this is what requires that she should be there *qua* subject. For she becomes it, she, like me, once she announces herself.

This encounter - under the pure form, which is all the more pure, I insist, because one absolutely does not know what one is saying - this is what puts in the very forefront the function of the subject in the sexual act. And it is even as pure subject that we notice, precisely at the level of the foundation of this act, that this pure subject is situated at the junction, or to put it better, at the disjunction of the body and *jouissance*. It is a subject *in the measure of this disjunction*.

How is that best seen here? Naturally, we know from the tradition, since earlier I evoked *Philebus* in particular, where the *to phronein* and the *to khairain* are subjected to this operation of separation, with a rigour which is precisely the reason why on the eve of the last vacation I recommended you to re-read it.

But, here, even if you wanted to tell me that, after all, as regards this act we could well dispense with its exigencies as act, that perhaps one does not need the sexual act in order to fuck in a perfectly appropriate way! It is a matter, in effect, of knowing, in the relief of the act, what in it requires the subject.

It is perhaps not saying much to say that everything depends on the opposition of the signifiers *man*, *woman*, if we still do not know even what they mean.

And, in effect, where one sees the incidence of the subject is not so much in the word *woman*, as in the word *male*.

Jouissance, as I pointed out, is an ambiguous term. It slides. From something which makes us say that there is no *jouissance* except that of the body and which opens the field of the substance in which there come to be inscribed the severe limits in which the subject contains itself from the incidences of pleasure. And then this sense in which to enjoy (*jouir*), as I said, is to possess, the *my*. I enjoy something. Which (7) leaves in suspense the question of whether this something, from the fact that I

enjoy it, enjoys. There, around the *my*, there is very precisely this separation between *jouissance* and the body. Because it is not for nothing that I introduced you to it the last time, with the reminder of this articulation - a fragile one because limited to the traditional field of the genesis of the subject - of the phenomenology of the spirit, of the master and the slave.

My... Henceforth I enjoy your body, namely, your body becomes the metaphor for *my jouissance*.

And Hegel, all the same, does not forget that it is only a metaphor. Namely, that however much of a master I am, my *jouissance* is already displaced, that it depends on the metaphor of the serf. And it remains that for him, as for what I am questioning in the sexual act, there is *another jouissance* which is adrift.

And do I need once more to write it on the board with my little bars?

(my) body	body
?	<u>my</u> <i>jouissance</i>

This body of the woman, which is *my*, is henceforth the metaphor for my *jouissance*. It is a matter of knowing what is there in the form of my body. Of course, I do not even think, innocent that I am, of calling it “*my*”. It is also going to have its metaphor relation, which, undoubtedly, would ground everything in the most elegant and easy fashion, with the *jouissance* that is in question and which creates the difficulty of the sexual act.

You will say to me: “Why is it at the level of the woman that it gives rise to a question?”

We are going to say it right away, very quickly and very simply. Every psychoanalyst knows it! They do not necessarily know how to say it, but they know it! They know it in any case by the following. The fact is that, men or women, they have not yet been capable of articulating the slightest thing that holds up on the subject of feminine *jouissance*!

I am not in the process of saying that feminine *jouissance* cannot take this place. I am in the process of stopping you at the moment where it is a matter of not going too quickly in saying that this is the difficulty of the sexual act!

And this reference - which was less intolerable, uniquely because it is a myth - that I took the last time in the relations of the master and the slave, namely, from the *jouissance* that is adrift, you can well imagine when we are dealing with the slave. Namely, that there is no reason that *jouissance* should not always be there, and this all the more in that he had not, like the master, the foolishness to put it at risk! So then, why would he not have kept it? It is not because his body has become the metaphor of

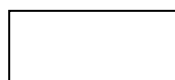
(8) the *jouissance* of the master that his own *jouissance* should not to continue its little life! As everything proves!

If you read ancient comedy, if you re-read our dear Terence, for example, who is not precisely a primitive, who is even quite the opposite, of whom one can even say that things are pushed so far, in his case, so exhausted, that it supersedes in simplicity anything that we might think up. It is much more simplistic than a film by M. Robbe-Grillet, even when it is slap dash! But it is not slap dash! Only we absolutely no longer see what is at stake! There is a certain story, *Andria*, for example. When you read it you will say: "My God, what a story!" All this because a boy who has a father and who ought or ought not to marry a girl who is from good or bad society. And since, at the end, the bad society turns out to be the good, because of this eternal story of recognition, she had been kidnapped when she was a little girl and so forth and so on. What a story! And what an idiotic story! Only the problem is that if you reason in this way there is one thing you do not see. The fact is there is only a single interesting person in this whole comedy, called Davus! He is well and truly a slave! For one can, quite seriously ... he who directs everything, he who is the only intelligent one among all of these persons, and he does not even dream of suggesting to you that the others could begin to be so. The father plays the paternal role to the degree of ... anyway ... desirable brutishness, anyway ... veritably... completely superfluous! The son is a poor pet who is completely astray! The girls involved? We do not even see them, they are of interest to no one! There is a slave who fights for his master so that he almost risks being, from one minute to the next - it is written down - crucified! And he guides the affair with a master's hand, it has to be said!

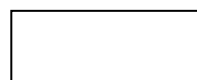
This is what is at stake in ancient comedy. Except for the fact that this has only a single interest for us. Namely, to show you that there can be a question of what happens to *jouissance* when there is produced this little movement of displacement, of *Verschiebung*, which is properly speaking constituted once the function of subject is introduced between the body and *jouissance*.

It is not with the *jouissance* proper to a body in so far as this *jouissance* defines it! A body is something that can enjoy. Only there you are. It becomes the metaphor of the *jouissance* of another! And what becomes of its own? Is it exchanged? That is the whole question. But it is not resolved.

Why is it not resolved? All the same, we analysts know. This does not mean that we can always say it! It is a general observation! I am not going to be repeating it all the time! Let us write it.... We are going to do it like that, huh, for the body, it will be more amusing. ... And this resembles my little plaques, on which, in one of my articles, I wrote, "Men", "Women". You see it going into urinals!



J?



J

A little plaque can serve as a body for us. With a certain number of things, in effect, written on it. This is the function of the body, since we have recalled that it is the locus of the Other. So then, one makes the same little bar, so that you will not be disturbed, and here we write, J, to mean, *jouissance*.

Here, then, there is a question mark because it is this and because, finally, we do not know whether it comes there, whether the body of the male is well and truly, surely, what the male affirms, since he does nothing but affirm it! This is where we start from, in the "You are my wife". Namely, that the body of the woman is the metaphor of his own *jouissance*.

There we are. It is enough to add a line to make this little articulation expressive.

In effect, for reasons that depend... that depend on the fact that there is not only the couple involved in the sexual act. Namely, that, as other structuralists who function in different fields have reminded you, the relation of the man and the woman is subject to exchange functions, which imply at the same time an exchange value. And that the locus where something which is in use is struck by this negating which makes of it an exchange value, is here - for reasons taken from the natural constitution of the function of copulation - is here taken from masculine *jouissance*, since one knows where it is! Anyway one believes one does! It a little organ that one can catch hold of! Which is what the baby does immediately, with the greatest ease.

Ah! This is something, I can tell you, in parenthesis, now here really we have ... I really have to show it to you. I was brought a little romantic book on masturbation! With drawings! It is something that is so ... anyway, so absolutely entrancing, that I cannot believe that if I pass it around it will come back to me! [General laughter] So then, I do not know what to do. I do not know what to do. I will have to put it ... I do not know. There ought to be machines where you can project, like that, objects and open it page by page but ... good, anyway, you have to see this! It is called *Le livre sans titre* and it is intended to ... there are at least twenty five drawings, anyway, or about twenty, which show the ravages [Lacan says these last words interrupting them with a laugh] brought on a misfortunate ... on any misfortunate young man, of course, you know what a bad reputation masturbation had at the beginning of the last century, the ravages and the horrors, anyway, that it produced! And all of that with drawings! And colours! Anyway [laughter], to see this misfortunate young man ... the misfortunate young man vomiting blood! Because this is one of the things that are the consequences ... in any case, it is ... something sublime!

I apologise. This has nothing to do with my discourse [laughter] absolutely nothing to (10) do with it! This is going to cost me an awful lot! It is one of the reasons, also, why I did not want to separate myself from it! [laughter] Yes! It is of a beauty that surpasses everything, and if there exist ... machines with which one can project, even if the thing is not transparent ... I would like to show you that ... it is ... it is ... I never saw anything like it! Good, anyway, in brief! ...

Anyway, in short, as you know, this embargo, huh, on masculine *jouissance*, in so far as it is graspable somewhere, is something which is structural - even though hidden - for the foundation of value.

If a woman, who is after all a subject, in the sexual act - I would say even more, I have just articulated that there cannot be a sexual act if she is not, at the start, grounded as a subject - for a woman to be able to take on her function as exchange value, she must cover something which is what is already established as value and which is what psychoanalysis reveals to us under the name of castration complex.

The exchange of women, I am not in the process of telling you that it is easily retranslated by the *exchange of phalluses*! Otherwise, it is hard to see why the ethnologists could not just as well make their tables of structures by calling things by their name! It is the exchange of phalluses, *qua* symbols of a withdrawn *jouissance* as such.

Namely, not the penis, but what ensures, since the woman becomes the metaphor of *jouissance*, that one can in its place take a new metaphor, namely, this negated part of the body that we call the phallus, in order to distinguish it from the penis. And this leaves the problem that we have just articulated no less open! In other words, something is established, on which a different process, that of social exchange, in the foundation of the *material*, as I might say, destined for the sexual act. This leaves no less in suspense whether we can, by reason of this external element, situate something about the woman in her function as metaphor, with respect to a *jouissance* that has passed to the function of value. This is expressed in many myths. I do not need to remind you of Isis and her eternal mourning, of what is involved in this final part of the body that she has reassembled. I simply signal to you in passing that in this extreme myth, in which precisely the goddess is defined as being for her part (this is what distinguishes her from a mortal) *pure jouissance*, certainly also separated for its part from the body, but why? Because there is no question for her of what constitutes a body in its status as mortal body! This does not mean that the gods do not have bodies! Simply, as you are well aware, they change them! Even the God of Israel has a body! You would have to be mad not to notice it. This body is a column of fire in the night and of cloud during the day. This we are told in the Book and what is at stake there is properly speaking his body!

It is, like my other story, (this is a parenthesis), it is one of the things that I would have better developed if I had been able to give a seminar on the Name of the Father.

The goddess is *jouissance*, it is very important to recall it. Her status as goddess is to (11) be *jouissance*. And to fail to recognise it is properly to condemn oneself to understanding nothing of all that is involved in *jouissance*. And that is why *Philebus* is exemplary, when a reply announces to us that in no case do the gods have anything to do with *jouissance*. It would not be worthy of them. Here, as one might say, is the weak point at the start of philosophical discourse. It is to have radically failed to recognise the status of *jouissance* in the order of beings.

I am only making these remarks in an incidental fashion and to recall to you the import of this reading of *Philebus*, in so far as it allows there to be located, with an exemplary exactitude, the limited field in which there develops what is going to be involved in the status of the subject and what is signified by the re-entry, the recuperation, of questions which, because of it, have been isolated.

Here we are then around this question of what *jouissance* is involved in the sexual act.

Let us say, to introduce the end of this discourse, what it is essential, at first, to articulate with the most extreme scansion. The end of this discourse is to allow us to map out the way in which the acts that are put, legitimately, in the register of perversion, concern the sexual act.

If they concern the sexual act it is because at the point where there is question of *jouissance* - and you will see, from the fact that this point exists, that there can be no less a question at the level of the body of the woman, but that it is from another angle that we can tackle it - given that the hold, the model that is given to us, of what is going to appear in the attempts at solution, in *the instauration of the value of jouissance*, is there on the right. Namely, in the fact that there is negated the function of a certain organ, the very organ through which nature, by the offer of pleasure, assures the copulating function, but in a fashion which is completely contingent, subordinate. In other animal species, it assures it quite differently, it assures it with hooks, for example. And nothing can guarantee for us that, in this organ, there is anything whatsoever that concerns *jouissance*, properly speaking. Here we have the term through which value is introduced. **It is through this, that at the level where the question of *jouissance* is, this *jouissance* comes into play**, very precisely, **in the form of a question.**

To pose oneself the question of feminine *jouissance*, well then, this is already to open the door of all perverse acts.

And the result is this. This is why men have, in appearance at least, the privilege of the great perverse positions. But let the question be posed - it is already something to pose it - whether the woman herself has a suspicion of it. Naturally, through the reflection of what this lack of *jouissance* of the man introduces into her, she enters into this field along the path of desire, which, as I teach, is the desire of the Other, namely, the desire of the man.

But the question of *jouissance* is posed *more primitively* for the man. It is posed because of the fact that it is involved, at the start, at the foundation, of the possibility (12) of the sexual act. And the way in which he is going to question it, is by means of *objects*. Of these objects which are precisely the objects that I call **small o**, in so far as they are *marginal*, that they escape from a certain structure of the body. Namely, from what I called *specular*, and which is the mirage through which it is said that the soul is the form of the body.

That everything belonging to the body passes into the soul, is something that can be retained. Here is the *image* of the body. It is through this that the analysts believe they can grasp what is involved in our reference to the body. Hence so many absurdities.

For it is precisely in this part of the body, in this strange limit which, as I might say in commenting on these images, create a ball or create a symphysis in these parts of the

body, that we will call, as compared to the specular reflection, the *anaesthetic* parts, this is where the question of *jouissance* takes refuge.

And it is to these objects that the subject for whom this question is posed - in the first place, the male subject - that this subject addresses himself, **to pose the question of *jouissance*.**

Naturally, at the moment that I am leaving you, this may appear to you to be a closed formula. And it is true. ... In as much as, at the very least, it is necessary to demonstrate it in an exemplary way, for each of these major objects that I have just evoked which are the ones that I designate under the name of little **o**-objects. But what I will demonstrate to you, this will be for our next meeting, is *how* these objects serve as questioning elements.

This can only be given to us if we start from what I first articulated already the last time, and again today, as the *constitutive separation of the body and jouissance*.

Do I simply need to begin to indicate something about it, so that your thoughts may go immediately onto the path of the drive that is called - that is wrongly called! - sado-masochistic, but which is all the same, nevertheless, with scotophilia, the only term that Freud uses as a pivot when he has properly to define the drive.

That the sado-masochistic drive operates, completely, in an interplay where what is in question is there, in this point of disjunction, sufficiently marked by my siglum or algorithm, as you wish, of the *signifier of the O barred*, namely, the disjunction between *jouissance* and the body. It is in as much (and you will see it the next time in all its details) as the masochist - and it is from him that I will start - questions the completeness and the rigour of this separation and sustains it as such, it is through this that he comes to subtract, as I might say, from the field of the Other, what remains available for him in terms of a certain operation of *jouissance*.

It is in so far as the masochist gives a solution, which *is not* the path of the sexual act, but which passes *along this path*, that we can situate, in the correct fashion, the approximate things that are always said about this fundamental position of masochism. In as much as it is a perverse structure and that at its level - for having (13) articulated it at one time, which is here primordial - he alone allows us to distinguish, because they have to be distinguished, what is involved in the *perverse act* and what is involved in the *neurotic act*.

As you will see, I am pointing it out to you because I have the feeling of not having said so much about it to you today and, after all, time is getting on. I am indicating it to you in as much as it may serve already as a theme of reflection for some of you: *you must radically distinguish the perverse act from the neurotic act*.

The *perverse act* is situated at the level of this question about *jouissance*.

The *neurotic act*, even if it refers to the model of the perverse act, has no other goal than to sustain what has nothing to do with the question of the sexual act, namely, the *effect of desire*.

It is only by posing the questions in this radical fashion - and it can only be radical by being articulated logically - that we can distinguish the fundamental function of the perverse act. I mean, perceive that it is distinct from anything that resembles it, because it borrows its phantasy.

There you are! To the next time.

Seminar 23: Wednesday 14 June 1967

Analysis may be interminable but not a course. It has to have an end. So then, the last of this year will take place next Wednesday. Today's then is the second last.

This year, I chose not to have any closed seminars. I nevertheless made room, at least, I apologise if I forgot it, for at least two people who brought their contribution here.

Perhaps at the beginning of this second last lecture there might be someone among you, someone or several, someone who would like to tell me, perhaps, on what he would like to see me, who knows, putting a greater accent ... or give an answer ... to begin a stage for the future. This, either in the second last lecture or in the last one. Anyway, I will see if I can answer today. I will strive at least to indicate in what sense I can answer, or indeed I do not know, not answer, the next time. In short, if some of you would not mind, here, immediately, rapidly, giving me, as I might say, some indication of their wishes on this, about what I left them desiring concerning the field that I articulated this year on the logic of the phantasy, well then, I would be very grateful to them. Well then, who wants the floor? On the other hand we must not delay. Who wants to speak? Good ... It's hot! Good, well then let us speak no more about it, at least for the moment. Those who may have *l'esprit de l'escalier* can perhaps send me a little word ... my address is in the directory in Rue de Lille. I do not think, moreover, you will have any hesitations. As far as I know I am the only one, at least in that place, called Dr. Lacan.

Good. So then let us start again. I am going to continue then at the point that we left things. And since we no longer have much time to complete what can pass as forming a certain circumscribed field, in what I said this year, I am going, by God, to try to indicate to you the final reference points in as simple a way as I can.

I am going to try to do things simply, of course, which presupposes that I should alert (2) you to what this simplicity means.

You see clearly that at the end of this logic of the phantasy, a term sufficiently justified by the fact that I am going once more to re-accentuate today. The phantasy,

is, in a still narrower way than all the rest of the unconscious, structured like a language. Since, when all is said and done, the phantasy is a sentence with a grammatical structure, which seems to indicate then, that to articulate the logic of the phantasy, which means, for example, posing a certain number of logical questions which, however simple they may be, have, some of them, not been articulated too often, I am not saying for the first time by me, but perhaps for the first time by me in the analytic field, (the relation of the subject of the statement, for example, to the stating subject.) Good, well then this does not rule out that, at the end of this first clarification, this indication, this direction given of the sense in which there may develop in the future in a fuller, more articulated, more systematic fashion this logic of the phantasy, I only claim this year to have opened up the furrow. (Its furrow ... yes who is uneasy, you? - [Someone in the hall: "I can't hear] You can't hear, well now you know!) Not alone does it not rule it out, but it indicates, of course, that somewhere, this logic of the phantasy is attached, is inserted, is suspended on the economy of the phantasy. That indeed is why at the end of this discourse I introduced the term of *jouissance*.

I introduced it while underlining, while accentuating that this is a new term, at least in the function that I give it, and that it is not a term that Freud had put in the forefront of theoretical articulation.

And if my teaching, in short, could find its... axis, from the formula of *setting off to advantage* the doctrine of Freud, this indeed is something which implies, precisely, that I announce in it, that I initiate in it, one or other function, one or other reference point which is in a way circumscribed, outlined, required, implied in it. To set Freud off to advantage, is to do what I always do. First as they say, to render to Freud the things that are Freud's; which does not exclude some other allegiance! The one, for example, of setting him off to advantage, with respect to what he indicates, with respect to what he involves, in terms of the relation to the truth.

I would say that, if something like that is possible, it is precisely in the measure that I never fail to render to Freud what is Freud's, and I do not appropriate it to myself. This is a point that, I must say, has its importance, and perhaps I will have the time to come back to it at the end.

It is rather curious to see that for some people, it is by appropriating to themselves, I mean by not rendering to me what they manifestly owe me - anyone can notice it in their formulations - this is not what is important, it is that this failure to render to me, prevents them from immediately taking the next step, which would be nevertheless quite easy in many fields. Instead, alas, of leaving it always to me to make it, even if it entails, subsequently, their despairing that I should have, as it seems, cut the ground from under their feet.

(3) So then, let us approach this function of the phantasy. And first of all to notice, to simply say, as the very start of our question, it is something which leaps to the eye, that it is something *closed*. That it presents itself to us, in our experience, as a closed meaning - for the subjects who, usually, most commonly, most customarily, support it for us, namely, the neurotics - let it be noted, as Freud does with energy, in the exemplary examination that he made of one of these phantasies, "*A child is being*

beaten”; that I already did, if you remember, when I introduced the first schemas of this year (that, of course, I would advise you, when you have assembled what you have been able to take in terms of more or less extensive notes, to which, I hope, you will have recourse anew, in order to grasp the path which has been gone through here) is something closed, therefore is to be situated, and doubly so, in these two terms that I accentuated: one as the correlative of the choice constituted by the *I am not thinking*, in which the *I* is constituted by the fact that the *I*, precisely, comes in reserve, as I might say, as a negative curtailing (*écornage*) in the grammatical structure.

This phantasy - not “one beats a child”, for example, but to be strict, “a child is being beaten” as it is written in German - this phantasy is indeed the structure that at the level of the only possible term of the choice as it is left by the structure of alienation - the choice of “I am not thinking” - this phantasy appears as this grammatically structured sentence: *Ein Kind ist geschlagen*.

But, as I told you, if this structure - the only one that is proposed to us, the forced choice, at the level of *either I am not* or *I am not thinking* - if it is there, it is in the measure in which it may be called on unveil the other, to reject it, and that at the level of the other, that of the *I am not*, it is the unconscious *Bedeutung* which comes correlatively to bite on this *I*, which is *qua* not being. And the relation to this *Bedeutung* is precisely this meaning, in so far as it escapes, this closed meaning, this meaning that is nevertheless so important to underline, in so far as, as one might say, it is what gives the measure of the *comprehension*, the accepted measure, the received measure, the intuition, the experience, that one challenges, as regards making these false discourses which appeal to comprehension, as opposed to explanation: philosophical sanctity and vanity. Mr Jaspers in the first rank.

The point of your gut that he aims at to make you believe that you understand things from time to time, is this little secret, isolated thing that you have within you, in the form of the phantasy, and that you believe you comprehend, because it awakens in you the dimension of desire.

This is, quite simply, what is at stake as regards what is called *comprehension*.

And recalling it is important here. Because ... it is not because on average all of you as you are, I am saying for the majority, a little neurotic around the edges, that the (4) phantasy gives you the measure of comprehension, precisely at this level at which phantasy awakens desire in you - which is not to be sneezed at, because this is what centres your world - this is not a reason for you to imagine that you comprehend what, alone, betrays the logic of the phantasy, namely, perversion.

You must not imagine that for the pervert phantasy plays the same role. And this is why I am trying to explain to you the roots of what the pervert does which can only be defined with reference to the term that I introduced, new also in being so accentuated, which is called the *sexual act*.

Therefore, as you see, there are connections that have to be distinguished. To articulate the nature of the *jouissance* involved in perversion, with respect to the difficulty or to the impasse of the sexual act, is to produce something which has, with

respect to the phantasy, to the phantasy as it is given to us in the closed state - and that is why I recalled earlier this example of “*A child is being beaten*” in the Freudian text - the function of this phantasy which cannot as such present, be anything other, than strictly this formula, *ein Kind ist geschlagen*. It is not because it can involve, in the sense that it has a configuration that you can point, refer to the economy of perverse *jouissance*, by making some terms of the one correspond to some terms of the other, that it is in any way of the same nature! In other words, in order right away to recall this crucial point that is, all the same, not difficult to pick up in passing in this text of Freud, which is so clear, it is, for example, the following: that it has not such a specificity in the cases of neurosis in which he encountered it.

In the structure of a neurosis, this phantasy - to take this one because we have to take something on which to fix our attention - this phantasy is not linked specifically to one or other. Here indeed is something that might retain our attention for a moment!

Indeed, as regards what is involved in the structure of symptoms, I mean what symptoms signify in the economy, there, we cannot say that this arranges the same thing in one neurosis or in another.

I will never repeat it too much, even if I seem astonished when, among those who trust me enough to come to be supervised by me, I energetically protest against the use of terms like these, for example: “hystero (hyphen) phobic structure”. Why that? A hysterical structure is not the same as a phobic structure! No closer to one another than to the obsessional structure, whose symptom represents a structure.

This is the striking point. The fact is, as Freud indicates to us, that in very different structures, this phantasy can be here what wanders around, with this privilege, this privilege of being more *inadmissible* than anything - I am reading Freud - I repeat (5) it here for the moment: *inadmissible* involves many things. One could dwell on it.

In any case, to remain at the level of a crude approach of the year 1919, when this was written, let us say that there is appended to it, like a cherry on a pedicle, the feeling of guilt. It is at this, in any case, that Freud pauses, to relate it to what he calls a scar. That, precisely, of the Oedipus complex.

This is well designed to make us say that, as regards the way in which it emerged in our experience, the phantasy has the characteristics of the experimental aspect, of a foreign body.

That we should have been led - this by reason of a veritable theoretical bridge in Freud - to sense this firm meaning, is related to something else, much more developable, much richer in virtualities, which is called properly speaking perversion. It is not because Freud made this leap, very quickly, that we, for our part, ought not to reinstall the distances, the correct relation, question ourselves, all the same, after having acquired a lot of experience about what is involved in perversion.

Perversion, then, I said, is something which is articulated, is presented, as a proper way into the difficulty which is generated, let us say: by the project - and you should put this word in inverted commas, namely, that it is only analogical here; I am

bringing it in as a reference to a discourse other than my own - the putting in question, to be more exact, which is situated in the angle between these two terms. **There is no ... , there is only ... something of the sexual act, ... the sexual act** (*il n'y a pas ... , il n'y a que ... , d'acte sexuel ...l'acte sexuel*).

There is no sexual act, I said, in so far as we are incapable of articulating its resulting affirmations. Which does not mean, of course, that there are not some subjects who have acceded to it, who can legitimately say, "I am a man", "I am a woman". But we analysts, [**Lacan punctuates this with a little laugh**] this is what is striking. The fact is that we are not capable of saying it.

Nevertheless, there is *only* this act, put in suspense at this level, that can *account* for this something which, after all, - the matter has not simply remained but still remains ambiguous - could be separated from it, which is called perversion. Why?

If it were a perversion in the absolute sense, in the sense that Aristotle takes it, for example, when he sets aside (*teras*, these are monsters) from the field of his *Ethics* a certain number of practices, which were perhaps, why not, more manifest, more visible, more alive even, in his world than in ours (where, moreover, it must not be believed that they are still not there). Namely, the example that he gives of bestial love, indeed, if I remember correctly, the allusion to the fact that some tyrant or other, Phalaris, if I remember correctly, rather liked to put some of his victims - whether they were friendly or unfriendly to him - to put them through some machine or other where (6) they cooked as in an oven for a certain time. Aristotle sets this aside from the field of ethics. This is not, of course, for us an univocal model, since in his *Ethics*, the sexual act, precisely - as in no ethics of the Greek philosophical tradition - the sexual act does not have a central value, I mean one that is admitted, patent. It remains for us to read it. It is not the same for us, thanks to the fact of the inclusion of the Judaic *Commandments* in our morality.

But, undoubtedly, with Freud the thing is definite. The interest that we take in sexual perversion - even if we find it more convenient to loosen its chains, in the form of a reference to some endogenous development or other, or some stage or other that we claim, I do not know why, to be biological - it remains that perversion only takes on its value by being articulated with the sexual act.

I am saying with the sexual act as such. And that is why I chose this little model ... this little model of incommensurable division *par excellence*, of this **small o**, the one to develop its incommensurability in the widest way, which is defined by the *One over o equals One plus o*, $1/o = 1+o$, and allows us to inscribe it in a schema, in the form of a double development. Am I going to have to write it out again today? I indicate only that this being *One*, there is a way of folding back here the **small o**, then what remains of it - which is found, as it happens, to be the square of **o**, itself equal to $1-o$ (it is not difficult to verify it immediately) - to produce here an o^3 , which is folded back on the preceding o^2 in order to give here an o^4 , the which o^4 , etc... and to culminate here as a sum of the odd powers which is found to be equal to o^2 , while the sum of the equal powers is finally found to be equal to **o**. As a result of which, what you have seen first of all being projected into the *One*, namely the **o** on the left, the o^2 on the right, are found at the end to be separated in a definitive fashion an inverted form.

A schema which it would be easy to show - even though in a purely metaphorical fashion - can represent rather well what, in the sexual act can be presented for us in a fashion that is in conformity with Freud's presentiment, namely, realisable, but only in the form of sublimation.

It is precisely in the measure that this path - and what it implies - remains problematic, and that I exclude it this year. For to say that it can be realised in the form of sublimation, is to separate oneself precisely from what we have to deal with, namely, that in its field there arise, structurally, the whole chain of difficulties which unfold, which are included because of a major gap, and a gap which remains, which is that of castration... It is in the measure ... on that, the common vote, as I might say, of the authors, of those who have experience of it, is clear. It is that as a minimum, one might say, along a path that is the inverse of that leading to the stumbling point of castration, that perversion is articulated.

The interest of this schema is the following. It is to show that this measure **small o**, first projected here onto the 1, can also be developed in an external fashion. Namely, (7) that the relation of the *One over one plus o* is also equal to this fundamental relation that the **small o** designates, which means here, I recalled it at one time, *o over one*.

What is at stake at the level of perversion is the following. It is that in the measure that the presumed One, not of the sexual act but of sexual union - of the pact, if you wish - in the measure that this *One*, is left intact, that a partition is not established in it, that the subject described as perverse, comes to find - at the level of this irreducible, of this original **small o** that he is - his *jouissance*.

What renders this conceivable is the following:

that there cannot be a sexual act, any more than any other act, except in the signifying reference which, alone, can constitute it as act;

that this signifying reference, here, does not involve - by this very fact - *two natural entities*, the male and the female;

that from the very fact that it dominates, because it is a lower field of the sexual act, this signifying reference only introduces these beings - which we can in no way maintain in the state of natural beings - introduces them in the form of a subject-function;

that this subject-function - this is what I articulated the previous times - has as effect the *disjunction of the body and jouissance*, and that it is there, it is at the level of this partition, that perversion most typically intervenes.

What it highlights, to try to reconnect this *jouissance* and this body, separated by the fact of the signifying intervention, is here the way in which it situates itself on the path of a resolution to the question of the sexual act.

It is because in the sexual act, as I showed you in my schema the last time, there is, for whoever of the two partners, whoever, there is a *jouissance*, that of the other, which remains in suspense.

It is because the inter-crossing, the required chiasma - which would make of each of the bodies, by right, the metaphor, the signifier of the *jouissance* of the other - it is because this chiasma is in suspense, that we cannot but, from whatever angle we tackle it, see this displacement which, in effect, makes a *jouissance* dependent on the body of the other. As a result of which, the *jouissance* of the other, as I told you, remains adrift.

The man, for the structural reason which means that it is on his *jouissance* that there is taken a sample which raises it to the function of a *jouissance*-value, the man is found, more electively than the woman, to be caught in the consequences of this structural subtraction of a part of his *jouissance*. The man is effectively the first to support the reality of the hole introduced into *jouissance*. This indeed is also why it is he for whom this question of *jouissance* is, not of course of greater weight - it is just as much so for his partner - but is such that he can give it articulated solutions. He can do so because of this: that there is in the nature of this thing which is called the body, something which reduplicates this alienation, which is - from the structure of the subject - alienation of *jouissance*.

(8) Alongside subjective alienation - I mean that dependent on the introduction of the function of the subject - which is brought to bear on *jouissance*, there is another which is the one incarnated in the function of the **o**-object.

Jouissance, Eurydice, as one might say, twice lost, this *jouissance* that the pervert rediscovers, where is he going to rediscover it? Not in the totality of his body, in which a *jouissance* is perfectly conceivable and perhaps even required, but where it is clear that it is here that it creates a problem when it is the sexual act that is at stake.

The *jouissance* of the sexual act can in no way be compared to what the womaniser (*coureur*) with this free and arrogant approach may experience. Nowhere more than in the field of sexual *jouissance* - and it is not for nothing that it is there that it appears to be prevalent - nowhere more than in this field does the pleasure principle - which is properly the limit, the stumbling point, the term put to every form which is situated as an excess of *jouissance* - nowhere does it appear better that the law of *jouissance* is subject to this limit. And that it is here that there is going to be found very specially for the man - in so far as I said that, for him, the castration complex already articulates the problem - there is going to find its field, I mean that there are objects which, in the body, are defined by being, in a way - with respect to the pleasure principle - *outside the body (hors corps)*.

This is what the **o**-objects are. The **small o** is this something ambiguous, which, however little it may belong to the body, to the individual object itself, it is in the field of the Other, and with good reason, because this is the field in which the subject is outlined, that he has to make the request for it, has to find its trace.

The *breast*, this object which must indeed be defined as this something which, even though it is stuck, attached, as on a surface, parasitically like a placenta, remains this something that the body of the child can legitimately claim as belonging to him. One sees this enigmatic belonging clearly. I mean, of course, that through an accident in

the evolution of living beings, it appears that in this way, for some of them, something of them remains attached to the body of the being who engendered them.

And then, the others ... we have already said *excrement*. It is hardly necessary to underline how marginal this is with respect of the body, but not without being extremely linked to its functioning. It is clear enough to see in all its weight what living beings add to the natural domain in terms of these products of their functions.

And then, there are those I designated under the terms of the *look* and of the *voice*. Seeking, at least for the first of these two terms ... having abundantly articulated here what is involved in the vision relation, the question still remains in suspense which is the one, so simple to articulate - which one can say that, in spite of everything, the phenomenological approach, as the work of Merleau-Ponty proved in his last hours cannot resolve - namely, what is involved in this root of the visible, which ought to be rediscovered in the question of what the look *is*, radically.

(9) The look that cannot, any longer, be grasped as a reflection of the body, that none of the other objects in question can be recaptured in the soul. I mean in this regulatory sensibility (*esthésie*) of the pleasure principle, in this representative sensibility, where the individual rediscovers and supports himself, as identified to himself, in the narcissistic relation in which he affirms himself as individual.

This remainder - this remainder which only emerges from the moment at which there is conceived the limit which grounds the subject - this remainder which is called the *o-object*, is where there takes refuge the *jouissance* that does not fall under the influence of the pleasure principle. It is also there, it is by being there, it is because the *Dasein*, not only of the pervert but of any subject, is to be situated in this outside the body; this part which outlines already this presentiment that is somewhere in *Philebus* (in this passage that I asked you to look for) and what Socrates calls, in the relation of the soul to the body, the *anaesthetic* part. It is precisely in this anaesthetic part that *jouissance* lies, as is shown by the structure of the position of the subject in these two exemplary terms, which are defined as that of sadist and the masochist.

To tame you, as I might say, with this way in, do I need to evoke for you the most elementary marionette of what we can imagine about the sadistic act? Except for the fact, of course, that at the start I established my guarantees, and that I ask you clearly to grasp that here I am asking you to dwell on something other than what, for all of you, I said, more or less vacillating on the edges of neurosis, the slightest little phantasy of this order may awaken in you in terms of vague empathy. It is not a matter of "comprehending" how moving or not, imagined or not, one or other practice of this register may be. It is a matter indeed of articulating the following - which will avoid new questions about the economy, in this function, of pain, for example, about which I hope people have stopped agonising - what the sadist plays with, we will say, is the subject. I am not going to introduce any prosopopoeia about this ... first of all I already wrote something on it which is called *Kant avec Sade*, to show that they are in the same vein.

He plays with the subject. What subject? The subject, I would say, as I said somewhere: "that one is subject to thinking or subject to vertigo", the subject to

jouissance. Which, as you can clearly see, introduces this reflection which, from the subject, makes us pass to what I marked as being its remainder, the little *o*-object.

It is at the level of the Other, with a capital O of course, that he brings about this subversion, in regulating - I say in regulating - what from all time the philosophers have sensed as worthy of qualifying what they call disdainfully the relations of the body to the soul, and which in Spinoza is called, by its true name: *titillatio*", tickling.

Apparently, he enjoys the body of the Other. But you clearly see that the question is to be displaced to the level of the one that I formulated in a field where things are less captivating, when I imaged this relation of the master and the slave by asking, does (10) what one is enjoying, enjoy? So then, you see clearly the immediate relation with the field of the sexual act.

Only the question, at the level of the sadist, is the following. It is that he *does not know* that it is to this question *as such* that he is attached, that he becomes its *instrument*, pure and simple. That he does not know what he himself is doing as a subject, that he is essentially in *Verleugnung*. That he can sense it, interpret it in a thousand ways, which he does not fail to do.

It is necessary, of course, that he should have some powers of articulation, which was the case of the Marquis de Sade, as a result of which, legitimately, his name remains attached to the thing.

Sade remains essential because of having clearly marked the relation of the sadistic act to what is involved in *jouissance* and for having - when he tried in a derisory manner to articulate its law in the form of a universal rule worthy of the articulation of Kant, in this celebrated fragment: "Frenchmen, one more effort to be republican" (the object of my commentary in the article that I evoked earlier) - for having shown that this law can only be articulated in terms, not of *jouissance* of the body - note it clearly in the text - but of *parts* of the body. Each one, in this phantastical State (with a capital S) which is supposed to be founded on the right to *jouissance*, each one being bound to offer to whoever marks his designs on it, the *jouissance* of one or other "part", the author writes (and not in vain here), of his body.

Refuge of *jouissance*, this part, which the sadistic subject does not know is, this part, very exactly what is, for him, his *Dasein*, that it realises the essence of it. Here is what is already given as a key by Sade's text.

Naturally... I do not have the time - because, my God, time is passing - to re-articulate what results from this renewal, from this reclassification, one with respect to the other, of *jouissance* and the subject, and how close it is, of course, to the phantasy immediately articulated by Sade, of *jouissance* where it is, raised to its absolute in the Other, (very precisely in this part of the 1 which is here farthest to the right), where we have seen sliding, at the beginning of the problem, unsupported *jouissance*, the one that is at stake, and for which Sade, the atheist, must construct this figure, who is, nevertheless, the most manifest and the most manifestly like God: that of the *jouissance* of an absolute wickedness.

This essential and sovereign evil, which then and then alone - carried along, as one might say, by the logic of the phantasy - Freud ... Sade admits the sadist is only the servant of; that he ought to open up, for the radical evil that nature constitutes, the paths for the maximum of destruction.

But, let us not forget, what is at stake there is only the *logic* of the thing. If I developed it .. in - or indicated you to refer to its sources - in the so manifestly futile, ridiculous, character, in the always miserably aborted character of sadistic enterprises, it is because it is starting from this appearance that we will better be able to make the (11) truth appear. The truth which is properly given by masochistic practice, where it is obvious that the masochist - in order to withdraw, as one might say, to steal away, to the only corner where manifestly it is graspable, which is the little *o*-object - gives himself over, for his part deliberately, to this identification to this object as rejected. He is less than nothing not even an animal, the animal that is mistreated, and moreover a subject who has abandoned by contract all the privileges of his function as subject.

This search, this almost frantic construction, of an impossible identification to what is reduced to the extremes of waste products, and that this is linked for him to the capture of *jouissance*, here is where there appears naked, exemplary, the economy that is at stake.

Here, let us observe, without pausing at this sublime verse [**a little ironic laugh from Lacan**] which humanises, as I might say, this manoeuvre:

*Tandis que des mortels la multitude vile,
Sous le fouet du Plaisir, ce bourreau sans merci,
Va cueillir des remords dans la fête servile, ...*

[“While the base multitude of mortals, under the lash of Pleasure, that merciless executioner, gather only remorse in their slavish feasting...”]

All of this is only a joke! It is a reflection bearing on the law of pleasure. Pleasure is not a “merciless executioner”. Pleasure maintains you precisely within a rather padded limit, because it is pleasure. But, what is at stake, when the poet expresses himself in this way, is very precisely to mark its distance:

*Ma douleur, donne moi la main; vient par ici,
Loin d’eux, etc...*

[My pain, give me your hand; come this way, far away from them, etc...]

Flute music to show us the charms of a certain path which is obtained, by these colours, thus inverted.

If we are dealing with a masochist, a sexual masochist, let us note the necessity of our schema.

What Reik underlines - with an awkwardness that one could say really makes your head spin - about what he calls the “imaginary” or “fantastical” exactly (*Phantasiert*)

character of masochism. He has not really grasped (even though everything that he contributes as examples designates it sufficiently) that what is at stake is precisely what we have projected there at the level of the *One*, on the right, namely, the absolute *One* of sexual union, in so far as, on the one hand, it is this pure - but *detached - jouissance* of the feminine body. (This, Sacher Masoch - just as exemplary as the other person, for having given us the structures of the masochist relation - incarnates in a woman, essentially in the figure of a woman, this Other, from whom he has stolen her *jouissance*. There is no question even for an instant, that this Other absolute but completely enigmatic *jouissance*, can give pleasure, as I might say, to the woman! This indeed is the least of the masochist's worries! This indeed is why, moreover, his wife - whom he provided with a name that was not hers, the name Wanda in *Venus with furs* - his wife, when she wrote her memoirs, shows us the degree to which she is almost as embarrassed about his requests as a fish with an apple).

On the contrary, why torment oneself about the fact that *it is necessary* that this *jouissance - purely imaginary*, as I told you - should be incarnated, on this occasion, (12) by a couple, required precisely - this is obvious - from the structure of this Other, in so far as it is only the reduction of this *One* not yet distributed into the sexual division. One does not, in a word, have to agonise, to get into these oedipal evocations, to see that it is necessary that this being who represents this mythical *jouissance* - here am referring to feminine *jouissance* - should be on occasion represented by two supposedly sexual partners, who are there for the show, for the *guignol*, and alternate.

The masochist then, for his part in a manifest fashion, is situated and can only be situated *with respect to a representation* of the sexual act, and defines, by his place, the *locus* in which *jouissance* takes refuge from it.

This is even what is derisory in it. And it is not simply derisory for us, it is derisory for him. This is how there is explained this double aspect of *dé-rision* - I mean, to the outside - in so far as he never fails to put into the production - as someone who knows something about it, M Jean Genet, has remarked - this little thing which marks, not for an eternal public, but so that any passer-by should make no mistake about it (this forms part of the *jouissance*), that all of this is a device, even a laugh. And this other aspect that one can call, properly speaking, *mockery*, which is directed at ... that it is enough to have re-read (since you now have it within reach following the admirable *Presentation* by Gilles Deleuze), *Venus in furs*. You see the moment when this personage Sacher Masoch, who was all the same a bit of a *lord*, imagine this personage of his novel - whom he makes into a great lord - who, while he is playing the role of a valet running behind his lady, has all the trouble in the world not to burst out laughing, even though he puts on the saddest appearance possible. It is only with difficulty that he restrains his laughter.

And it is again to introduce into it, therefore, as essential, the following. The aspect that I would call - and which also struck Reik without him being able to account for it completely in this connection - the *demonstration*-aspect of the thing, which forms part of this position of the masochist. That he demonstrates [proves] - like me on the blackboard, it has the same value - that he demonstrates that here alone is the locus of

jouissance. Demonstrating it forms part of his *jouissance*. And the demonstration is no less valid for all that.

All perversion has always this demonstrative dimension. I mean not that it demonstrates for us, but that the pervert is himself a demonstrator. And he is the one who has the intention, not of course the perversion.

It is starting from here that there can be soundly posed the questions about what is involved in what we are calling, more or less prudently, moral masochism. Before introducing the term of masochism at every turn in our remarks, we must first of all have clearly understood what masochism is at the level of the pervert.

I sufficiently indicated to you earlier that what links neurosis to perversion is nothing other than this phantasy that within its own field, that of neurosis, fulfils a very special function, about which, it seems, people have never really questioned themselves enough. It is only by starting from there that we can give a correct value to what we will introduce more or less correctly, at one or other turning of neurosis, by calling it masochism.

I am caught for time today and what I am telling you - by not being able to continue onto neurosis - is literally broken in two. This is linked to the fact that, of course, I always badly judge what I can tell you in one go. But today, I clearly articulated what constitutes the source of perversion in itself, and at the same time showed you that sadism is in no way to be seen as a reversal (*retournement*) of masochism. For it is quite clear that both operate in the same fashion, except that the sadist operates in a more naive fashion. Intervening in the field of the subject, in so far as he is subject to *jouissance*, the masochist, after all, knows well that it matters little to him what is happening in the field of the Other. Of course it is necessary that the other should play the game, but he *knows* the *jouissance* that he has to draw from it. As for the sadist, he finds himself, in truth, a slave of this passion, of this necessity, to bring under the yoke of *jouissance*, what he is aiming at as being the subject. But, he does not take into account, that in this game, he himself is the dupe, making himself the slave of something which is entirely outside himself, and most of the time remaining half-ways from what he is aiming at. But on the contrary, not failing to realise *in fact* - I mean in his case without knowing it, without seeking it, without situating himself in it, without placing himself in it - the function of the *o*-object. Namely, to be objectively, really, in a masochistic position, as the biography of our divine Marquis - I underlined it in my article - sufficiently demonstrates. What could be more masochistic than to have remitted oneself entirely into the hands of the Marquise de Montreuil.

Seminar 24: Wednesday 21 June 1967

It is necessary... it is necessary for me, today, to end abruptly. I announced to you, the last time, that this would be my last lecture for this school year. We must close this subject without having done any more than open it up. I hope that others will take it up, if I have been able to animate them with this desire.

To end abruptly, I intend to terminate on what one could call a clinical reminder. Not at all, certainly, that when I speak about logic and specifically about the logic of the phantasy, I leave, even for an instant, the field of the clinic. Everyone knows, everyone testifies, among the practitioners, that it is in the day-to-day declarations of their patients that they rediscover, very frequently, my principal terms. And, moreover, I, for my part, have not gone looking for them anywhere else.

What I am placing, by what I call these reference-terms of my teaching, what I am placing, I mean what I am arranging the place of, is the psychoanalytic discourse *itself*.

No later than the beginning of this week, in this case it is a testimony which is the inverse, in a way, of the one that I very often hear, namely, that such and such a patient seemed to tell his analyst, the very afternoon or the day after my seminar, something which seemed to be a repetition of it, to the point that people were asking themselves if he could have had an echo of it. And if one marvels all the more at cases where this is really impossible, inversely, I could say that, no later than the beginning of this week, I found, in the accounts of three sessions that were brought to me, of a psychoanalysis - it does not matter whether it was a training or therapeutic one - the very terms that I knew (since it was Monday) that I had been ... "excogitating" the night before, in the place in the country where I prepare my seminar for you.

So then, as regards this analytic discourse, I do nothing other than give, in a way, the co-ordinates in which it is situated. But what does that mean? Because I can bring together, because everyone can, so often, bring together this discourse, and it is not enough to say that it is the discourse of a neurotic. That does not specify this (2) discourse. It is the discourse of a neurotic in the conditions, even in the conditioning, it is given by the fact of being held in the office of a psychoanalyst. And from now on it is not for nothing that I am putting forward this condition of the place (*local*).

Does this mean that these echoes, these transfers even, signify something very strange?

Everyone knows, everyone can see, everyone can have experienced, that my discourse, of course, here, is not one of free association.

Does that mean that this discourse to which we recommend the method, the path, of free association, this discourse of the patients, is the same as, overlaps my one here, only when he fails in it in a way and when he speculates ... when he introspects ... when he lucubrates, when he intellectualises, as we put it so nicely. No of course not. There must indeed be something else which, again, can tell us that the patient is

obeying the recommendation of free association in so far as it is the path that we propose to him, can all the same, in a way legitimately, say things, and, in effect, everyone knows well that if we ask him to pass along the paths of free association, this does not mean a slipshod discourse, nor a broken discourse. But all the same, in order for something to reach, sometimes even in its tricks, such a distinction about the impact of his relation to his own demand, to his question about his desire, is all the same something of a nature of make us reflect for an instant on what conditions this discourse beyond our instructions.

And here we have of course to bring into play this element (today I will really remain at the level of what is most commonly obvious) called interpretation.

Before asking oneself what it is, how, when, it has to be made ... something which does not fail to provoke, more and more, in analysts, some embarrassment, for want perhaps of posing the question at a time prior to the one at which I am going to pose it. It is the following: how is the discourse, free discourse, the free discourse which is recommended to the subject, conditioned by the fact that it is, in some fashion, on the way to being interpreted? And this is what leads us simply to evoke some reference points that the logicians, here, have given us for a long time and this indeed is what pushed me, this year, to speak about logic. Not that here, certainly, I was able to give a course on logic. This was not compatible with what I had to cover. I tried to give the framework of a certain logic, which interests us at the level of two registers: of alienation, on the one hand, of repetition on the other. These two quadrangular, fundamentally superimposed schemas that I hope some of you at least will remember. But I hope also to have stimulated some people to open, like that, to open a little, to cast a side-long glance at some book on logic, were it only to remind themselves about the distinctions of value that the logician introduces into discourse when he distinguishes, for example, the sentences called assertive, from imperative or (3) implorative sentences. Simply to signal that it happens, that it can happen, it can be posed, it is localised, at the level of the first of the questions that the others, which are not, of course, any less words full of impact, and which might also interest the logicians. But, a curious thing, they only tackle them by going around them and, in a way, from an angle, which ensures that up to today, they have left this field rather intact. The sentences that I called imperative, implorative, in so far as, after all, what? They solicit indeed something which, if we refer ourselves to what I defined as an act, cannot but interest logic. If they solicit active interventions it can sometimes be under the heading of acts. Nevertheless, only the first would be, according to the logicians, able to be submitted to what can be called *criticism*.

Let us define this as the criticism which requires a reference to the conditions necessary so that, from a statement, there can be deduced another statement.

A person who, today, might have been parachuted in here for the first time and who would never, of course, have heard tell of these things, would find that this is quite banal. But in fact, I suppose all the same that for all of you, there is resonating for your ears the distinction here between stating and the statement.

And the fact that the statement, in order to understand me - to understand me in what I have just said - is constituted by a signifying chain. This means that what is, in the

discourse, the object of logic, is therefore limited at the start by formal conditions, and this indeed is what makes this logic be designated by the name of formal logic.

Good, well then, there at the start - certainly not stated at the start by the one who is here the great initiator, namely Aristotle, only stated by him in an ambiguous, partial, fashion, but undoubtedly brought out in subsequent progress - we see, at the level of what I called the "necessary conditions", there being highlighted the function of negation in so far as it excludes the third.

This means that something cannot be affirmed and denied at the same time from the same point of view. This, at least, is what Aristotle states. Expressly this.

After all, we can indeed here, immediately, put in the margin what Freud affirms to us: that it is still not this principle which is called that of "non-contradiction", a limit that brings to a halt ... brings to a halt, what? What is stated... in the unconscious.

As you know, Freud, from *The interpretation of dreams* on, underlines it. Contradiction – namely, that the same thing can be affirmed and denied very properly at the same time, and from the same angle - this is what Freud designates for us as being the privilege, the property of the unconscious.

If something were needed to confirm, to those into whose skull this has still not (4) entered, that the unconscious is structured like a language, I would say: how then could you even justify Freud taking the care to underline this absence, in the unconscious, of the principle of non-contradiction? For the principle of non-contradiction has absolutely nothing to do with the real! It is not that there is no contradiction in the real, there is no *question* of contradiction in the real!

If the unconscious... Is that not so? Like those who, having to speak about the unconscious, anyway, in places where, in principle, a teaching is given that begins by saying: "those in this room who believe that the unconscious is structured like a language may leave now!". Certainly they are quite right, because this proves that they already know everything! And that, in any case, they have no need to remain to learn that it is something different! But this something different, if it is the "tendencies", as they say, pure tendency or tension, in any case huh! There is no question of it being anything other than what it is! It can be composed, on occasion, according to the parallelogram of forces, it can be inverted - in so far as we suppose it has a direction - is that not so? But it is in a field that is always subject, as I might say, to composition!

But, in the principle of contradiction, something else is at stake. It is a matter of *negation*. Negation is not found like that in the streams! You can go and look under the foot of a horse and you will never find a negation! Therefore, if it is underlined, if Freud, who all the same ought to know something about it, takes care to underline that the unconscious is not subject to the principle of contradiction, well then, it is indeed because, for him, there can be a question about whether it is subject to it! And if there is a question about whether it is subject to it, it is quite obviously because of what is seen: that it is structured like a language! In a language ... the use of a language is prohibited. Which after all has the characteristics a certain convention. The

prohibition has a sense, the principle of contradiction functions or does not function. If one notes that it does not function somewhere, it is because it is a discourse that is at stake! To invoke it means that the unconscious violates this logical law and that proves, at the same time, that it is installed in the logical field and that it articulates propositions.

So then, to recall this is not, of course, except incidentally, to return to the basics, to the principles, but rather, in this connection, to remind you that the logicians teach us that the law of non-contradiction - even though people were mistaken about it for a long time - is not the same thing. It is to be distinguished, from what is called the law of bivalency.

It is one thing to prohibit in logical usage - in so far as it has given us the limited goals that I told you about earlier, limited in its field to assertive sentences, limited to the following: to bring out the necessary conditions so that from a statement there should be deduced a correct chain. Namely, which permits the same assertion to be made (5) about another statement, an assertion which is affirmative or negative - it is one thing to ground that and to say - the law of bivalency -: every proposition is either true or false.

I am not going to develop further here. First of all, because I already did so. I indicated from my first lectures of this year some ... I gave some *hints*, to make you sense the degree to which it is easy to show that it is not simply because one does not know, that a proposition can easily be constructed which makes you sense the degree to which this bivalency - this bivalency as decided on - is problematic. All the nuances there are and which are inscribed in, between *is it true that it is false*, or *it is false that it is true*. It is not at all something linear, univocal and decided.

But, precisely, this indeed is what gives all its value to the presence of this dimension, which is ours, the one within which there is situated this discourse which we ask not to look any further, as I might say, than the tip of its nose. It is enough that you have to pose yourselves the question, I say to those who come into analysis with me, as to whether you should say that or not. The matter is settled. It is the clearest fashion to state the analytic rule. But, after all, what I do not tell him but which is the position from which he starts, is that it is only the truth, in the final analysis, which is here posed as having to be searched for in the faults (*fautes*) of statements. Faults that in short, I give him plenty of time - that I almost recommend him - to multiply, but which then, of course suppose, suppose at the source of the rule itself that I give him, a coherence implying the eventual restoration of the aforesaid faults. A restoration which is to be done, according to what norms if not those evoked, suggested, by the presence of the of the dimension of truth. This dimension is *inevitable*, in the establishment of analytic discourse.

Analytic discourse, is a discourse submitted to this law of soliciting this truth - which I already spoke about in the terms which are here the most appropriate: a truth that speaks - to solicit it, in short, to state a *ver-dict*, a *dict* that is truthful.

Naturally, the rule takes on a quite different value! This truth which speaks and whose verdict one is waiting for... one strokes it, one tames it, one pats it on the back!

This is the true sense of the rule! One wants him to do better. And in order for him to do better one pretends, in short - this is the sense of the rule of free association - one pretends not to be concerned about it and not to give a feck about it, to be thinking about something else, in that way it will perhaps let something important appear. That is the principle. These things... I almost blush, anyway ... to be making something of it here! But do not forget that I am dealing with psychoanalysts. Namely, with those who –as regards what I am saying here, which is, in any case, tangible and almost within the reach of everyone - who have the greatest tendency to forget it and, of course, they have the strongest reasons for that. I am going to say what they are right away.

(6) So then the question is there, I highlight it in passing. The fact is that, in short, one questions the truth of a discourse, which - if it is true, following Freud, as I said earlier - is the truth of a discourse which can say yes or no, at the same time, about the same thing (since it is a discourse that is not subject to the principle of contradiction) and which in being said, in being constructed, as a strange discourse, introduces a truth. This is also fundamental! For proof, so fundamental (even though of course it is not always brought out in the type of teaching that I evoked earlier), it is so fundamental that it is from there, that there comes the startled response with which we know or sense, we have the testimony, Freud had to deal with, when he had ... - it is surely there that it happened - to explain to his band (you know, the Viennese pals, huh, on Wednesday) that he had a patient who had dreams that were *expressly* designed to drop Freud in it! A startled response! A startled response in the audience and even, probably, an outcry! Since, moreover, one sees that Freud ... finally sets about taking some trouble to resolve the question. He explains it, of course, as he can. Namely, that dreams are not the unconscious, that dreams can be liars. It nevertheless remains that the least that one can say is that you must not push this unconscious! I mean if this dimension is to be preserved, as Freud does, it is in the name of the following. That the unconscious for its part *preserves* a truth that it does not avow! And that if one pushes it, well then, of course, it can start lying on all cylinders. With the *means* that it has. But what does all that mean?

Naturally, the unconscious only has a sense, except for the imbeciles who think that it is evil, only has a sense, henceforth, if one sees that it is not, what we will call, like that, if you wish, a “whole subject” (*sujet à part entière*). Or more exactly that it is before, before the whole subject. There is a language before the subject ... is supposed to know anything whatsoever.

There is then a logical priority of the status of the truth with respect to anything, described as subject, which may come to dwell in it.

It is this that ... I know well that when I say these things, when I wrote them for the first time in the *Freudian thing*, this produced ... in any case this had its little romantic resonance. Who cares, I cannot do anything about it. The truth is a personage to whom one has for a very long time given a skin, hair and even a well to dwell in and to act the imp. It is a matter of finding the reason for that. What I want simply to tell you, is that it is, as I told you earlier, *impossible* to exclude, for the reason that you are going to see.

The fact is that if interpretation does not have this relation to what there is no means of calling anything other than the truth; if it is only what, finally, one shelters behind, like that, in our everyday manipulations, huh ... one is not going to worry, like that, the little dears that one is supervising, stick on their backs the responsibility of truth (7) ... So then one tells them that the interpretation has, or not, "succeeded", as they say because it has ... what? - This is the criterion, huh! - Had its discourse-effect! ... Which can be nothing other ... than a discourse! Namely, that there was material, it rebounded, the chap continued to blather on.

Good. But if that is it then ... if it is only a *pure* discourse-effect, this has a name that psychoanalysis knows perfectly well and which is, moreover, a problem for it, which is funny. This, and not anything else, is very precisely what is called *suggestion*! And if interpretation were only something that produces material, I mean, if one radically eliminates the dimension of truth, all interpretation is only suggestion.

This is what puts in their place these very interesting speculations - because one clearly sees that they are only designed to avoid the word *truth* - when Mr. Glover speaks about correct or incorrect interpretation, he can only do so by avoiding this dimension of the truth and he does it, the dear man, (a man who knows very well what he is saying) not simply to avoid the dimension - for you are going to see that he does not avoid it. Only look. The fact is that one can speak about the dimension of truth, but that it is very difficult to speak about a "false" interpretation. The bivalency is polar, but it leaves us embarrassed as regards the excluded third. And that is why he admits the eventual fruitfulness - I mean, Glover - of incorrect interpretation. Consult his text. Incorrect does not mean that it is false. It means that it has nothing to do with what is at stake at that moment, in terms of truth. But sometimes it is not necessarily wide of the mark for all that, because ... because there is no way here of not seeing it re-emerge. Because the truth rebels! That however inexact it might be one has all the same tickled something.

So then in this analytic discourse designed to capture the truth, it is the interpretative interpretation - response that represent the truth, the interpretation ... as being possible there - even if it does not happen - which orients the whole discourse. And the discourse that we have ordered as free discourse has as a function making room for it. It tends to nothing else then to establish a locus of reservation in order that this interpretation maybe inscribed there as a locus reserved for the truth.

This place is the one that the analyst occupies. I point out to you that he occupies it, that is not where the patient puts him! This is the interest of the definition that I give of transference. After all, why not recall that it is specific? He is placed in the position of a subject who is supposed to know, and he knows very well that this only works because he holds that position, because it is there that the very effects of transference are produced, the ones, of course, on which he has to intervene to rectify them in the sense of the truth. Namely, that he is between two stools. Between the false position, of being the subject *supposed to know* (which he knows well he is not) and that of having to rectify the effects of this supposition on the part of the subject, (8) and this in the name of the truth. This indeed is why the transference is the source of what is called resistance. The fact is, if it is quite true, as I say, that truth in the analytic discourse is placed elsewhere, at the place of the one who is listening to it, in

fact the one who is listening can only function as a relay with respect to this place. Namely, that the only thing he knows, is that he himself, as subject, is in the same relation as the one who is speaking to him, to the truth. This is what is usually called the fact that he is necessarily - like everyone else - in difficulties with his unconscious. And this is what creates the function, the limping character of the analytic relation.

The fact is, precisely, that *only* this difficulty, his very own, can answer, can answer *worthily*, where there is awaited - where there is awaited and where sometimes one can wait for a long time - where one awaits the interpretation!

Only as you see, a difficulty - whether it is one of being or whether it is about the relation with the truth - it is probably the same thing - a difficulty does not constitute a status!

This indeed is why it is on this point that people do everything to give to this, which is the condition of the analyst - to be only able to respond with his own difficulty of being...an analyst, why not? – people do everything to camouflage it. In recounting things. For example that, of course, anyway ... for his unconscious the affair is settled, huh! ... He has had a psychoanalysis and even a training one! And, of course, this all the same allowed him, in any case, to be a little bit more at ease about it, when all is said and done.

Though we are not in the domain of greater or less. We are at the very foundation of what constitutes analytic discourse.

This is not going very quickly, huh? Well then, nevertheless, this is how one must advance.

If this truth is related to desire, this is perhaps going to account for the difficulties that we have in handling this truth here, in the same way as the logicians can do it. Let it be enough for me to evoke that desire, is not something like that, in effect, whose truth is so simple to define.

Because, the truth of desire ... [**a little laugh from Lacan**], is tangible! We always have to deal with it, because that is why people come to us. On the subject of what happens, for them, when desire comes to what is called “the moment of truth”! That means, I desired something a lot - whatever it maybe - but I am in front of it, I can have it ...and that is when an accident happens!

Yes. *Desire*, I already tried to explain it, *is lack*. I am not the one who invented that, it has been known for a very long time. Other deductions have been made from it, but it is from there that people started, because one can only start from there. It is (9) Socrates. *Desire is lack in its very essence*. And this has a sense. The fact is that there is no object that desire is satisfied with, even if there are objects that are the *cause* of desire.

What becomes of desire at the moment of truth?

It is indeed these well-known accidents that wisdom takes advantage of and prides itself on considering it as folly, and then, establishing all sorts of dietary measures in order to be preserved from it. I mean, from desire.

There you are. Only... the problem ... the problem is that there is a moment when desire is desirable. It is when it is a matter of what happens, not without reason, in the execution of sexual action. And then there, the error, the considerable error, is to believe that desire has a function that one inserts into the *physiological*. People believe that the unconscious only brings about a disturbance in it. It is an error! It is an error that today, by God, I ... I, like that, I am putting on a pin, because, like that, [Lacan waves goodbye] I am going to say farewell to you for a few months. But one can very easily see that it is, despite everything, an error that remains inscribed at the bottom ... of even the most alert spirits, I mean of psychoanalysts.

It is very strange that people do not comprehend that what appears, after all, as the measure, the test, of desire, in other words, by God ... erection. Well then, by God, that has nothing to do with desire! Desire can function perfectly, operate, have all its impact, without in any way being accompanied by it. Erection is a phenomenon that must be situated *along the path of jouissance*. I mean that, of itself, this erection is *jouissance*, and that precisely, what is demanded, for the sexual act of operate, is that one should not stop there. It is auto-erotic *jouissance*. One does not see, if it were otherwise, why this *jouissance* should be marked by this sort of veil. Normally, I mean when the sexual act - at least it must be supposed - has its whole value, well then, priapic emblems are raised at every cross-roads! It is an object that must be withdrawn from common contemplation only in the measure, precisely, that this erection is questionable, is questionable with respect to the sexual act as act.

The desire in question, *un-con-scious* desire, the one spoken about in psychoanalysis in so far as it has a relation with the sexual act - it is first necessary, it is fitting, to define it properly and to see from where this term emerges before it functions.

It is very important to recall the fact, which has nevertheless from all time been my whole teaching, for the following. The fact is, if one does not remember, if one does not pose in these terms the operation indispensable for the sexual act, if it is not in the register of *jouissance* - and not of desire - that one puts the operation of copulation, its possibility of realisation, one is absolutely condemned to understand nothing of everything that we say about feminine desire; which we explain is, like masculine desire, in a certain relation to a lack, a symbolised lack which is the phallic lack. How (10) comprehend, how situate correctly, the sense, the place of what we are saying here about feminine desire, if one does not start from the following, which - on the plane of *jouissance* - fundamentally differentiates the two partners, creates an abyss between them that I will designate sufficiently, I think, by taking two reference points. That for the man that I defined just now as erection, on the plane of *jouissance*, and that for the woman for which I will find nothing better than the following, and happily I did not wait to be a psychoanalyst to have the confidences and that each one of you may have. It is the way in which young girls designate among themselves what appears to them to be closest to what I am designating at this level, namely, what they call, "*le coup de l'ascenseur*". When it does something like that to them, like what happens when it goes down a little suddenly, they know, they know very well, that

this is something which is of the order, of the register, of what is at stake in the sexual act.

This is where one must start from in order to know the *distance* at which to place desire, namely, what is involved in the unconscious, desire *in its relation* to the sexual act.

It is not a relation of front to back. It is not a relation of epiphenomena. It is not a relation of things that fit together. This is why it is quite necessary to exercise oneself for many years with the knowledge that desire has nothing to do except with *demand*; that it is what is produced as **subject** in the *act* of demand.

And desire is only involved in the sexual act, in so far as a demand can be involved in the sexual act, which, after all, is not obligatory but, in any case, is common! Is common in the measure that the sexual act - which is what I defined for you, namely, what never ends up by making a man or a woman - anyway, let us say that to provoke you. The fact is that the sexual act is inserted into something that is called the sexual *market* or commerce.

So then, people have to make demands. It is from the demand - and fundamentally from the demand - that desire arises. This indeed is the reason why desire, in the unconscious, is structured like a language. Because it emerges from it!

It is unfortunate that I have to mouth these things which are absolutely within everyone's reach. And which are regularly omitted and forgotten in everything that is lucubrated in the simplest theories concerning psychoanalysis.

There you are. This means, at the same time, that this desire which is only a sub-product of demand (I do not have to construct the theory of that for you), is where, (11) indeed, one grasps why it is *of its nature* not to be satisfied.

Because if desire emerges from the dimension of demand, even if the demand is satisfied on the plane of the need which stimulated it, it is of the nature of demand - because it belongs to language - to generate this break (*faillie*) of desire which comes from the fact that it is an articulated demand, which means that there is something *displaced*, which makes the object of the demand unsuitable for satisfying desire. Such as the breast which is everything - ... which is what *displaces* everything that passes through the mouth for digestive needs, which substitutes for it this something which is properly what is lost, what can no longer be given. There is no chance that desire will be satisfied. One can only satisfy the demand.

And that is why it is correct to say that desire is the desire of the Other. Its break is produced at the locus of the Other, in so far as it is to the locus of the Other that the demand is addressed. This is where it finds itself having to co-habit with what the Other is also the locus of, under the heading of truth. In this sense that there is nowhere a shelter for the truth except where language has a place, and that language finds its place at the locus of the Other.

So then? So then, this is where it is necessary to comprehend a little what is at stake concerning this desire in its relation to the desire of the Other.

I tried, for that, to construct for you a little apologue that I borrowed, certainly not by chance, but for reasons that are quite essential to what is called the art of the seller. Namely, the art of making an offer with the intention of creating a demand. You have to make someone desire an object that he has no need of, in order to push him to demand it.

So then, I do not need to describe for you all the tricks that are used for that. One tells him that he is going to miss it, for example, because someone else is going to take it, who, because of this fact, will have an advantage over him (*aura barre sur lui*). I am using words that echo my usual symbols. It is nevertheless literally like that that this functions in the mind of what is called a good salesman. Or again one tries to show him that this will be an altogether major external sign for the style that he is trying to give his life. We believe in it ... In short, it is through the desire of the Other that every object is present when it is a matter of ... buying it (*l'acheter*).

L'acheter, l'acheter ... lâcheté (cowardice). What do you know! ... It is rather curious, it is a word ... *lâcheté, Feigheit* ... You are a coward sir! ... *Tua res agitur!* It is indeed, in effect, a matter of cowardice. But you are the one involved. Yes. This indeed is what is at stake. Which can be seen from the fact that the principal result, as you know very well, that emerges from this series of malversations, the ones that life summarises under the sign of desire, the principal result will be the one that always pushes you further in the sense of redeeming yourself. Of redeeming yourself from cowardice.

I took care, all the same, before introducing this dimension which is, of course, always (12) masked in analytic interventions, but that those, the others, that those who are in the know, I mean the one who speaks an analytic discourse does not mince words about. He knows very well that the dimension of cowardice is involved, but I do not know. I took the trouble to re-open up for you, in any case ... like that, any one at all of the great observations by Freud. I came right away to the *Ratman*, to the fact that the patient immediately introduces this dimension of his cowardice! Only, what is not clear is where this cowardice is. It is just like the earlier dimension, that of truth. The courage of the subject is, perhaps, precisely to play the game of desire, the desire of the Other. It is to give pride of place to something which is moreover, perhaps, the cowardice of the Other who is buying him and to find oneself there at the end, to rediscover oneself. For, when all is said and done, this indeed is where the problem is when neurosis is at stake.

But, for that, it is important to grasp clearly or, more exactly, to recall, to bring back to the forefront of what I have said about desire, what I said in its time about desire, when I said: desire *is* its interpretation. Huh? One could all the same object. Because after all this desire ... this unconscious desire, whose meaning no one wants to know, an unconscious desire. What ought, in principle, to be more conscious than desire? If one speaks about unconscious desire, it is indeed, in effect, because it is the desire of the Other that it is possible. If there exists, precisely, what I have just evoked, by a reminder of the metaphor of buying, as regards which one does not know who it has a

hold on, of this ac-captivation in the desire of the Other ... it is because there is a step to be taken.

Unconscious desire, we are told, if it is unconscious, it is because in the discourse which supports it, a link has been broken so that the desire of the Other ... is what? ... Unrecognisable! It is the best gadget that has been found to stop this machine. There is a step, well then, we create on the hither side of this step, not the *non-desire*, but the *desire-not*. The definition of unconscious desire is this - which allows us to express the subtleties of negation in French - namely, this point of arrival that the *pas*, the *point*, designate for us, and I already made use of it on the subject of the *pas de sens*.

This desire-not, I would even go - if you leave me a little bit of rope - as far as making of it a single written name and to give to this *des* which dominates it, the same accent as *désespoir*, or as *desêtre*, and to say that the unconscious desire of *désirpas*, is something which collapses with respect to some *irpas* or other. An *irpas* which designates very precisely the desire of the Other. With respect to which to interpret it would be verbalised rather well by an *irpassé*. The inversion can be carried out around this. The fact is that the interpretation, in effect, is for its part what takes the place of desire, in the sense that, earlier, you were objecting to me that it is there first, however unconscious it may be. But it is there, also, as one passes by it again, because it is already articulated and interpretation, when it took its place ... luckily (13) that does not settle anything, because it is not at all sure that the desire that we have interpreted has an outcome. We even count on the fact that it will not have one, and that it will always remain, and all the better, a *désirpas*.

This even gives us, a lot of elbow-room in the interpretation of desire.

But then, it is necessary to know here what is meant by its support under the name of phantasy, and what game we are playing in interpreting unconscious desires, specifically those of the neurotic. It is here that we have to pose the question about the phantasy. We have posed it ceaselessly. Let us pose it again here, at the end, one last time.

When the logicians - from whom the whole of this discourse today started - limit themselves to the formal functions of the truth, I told you, they find a *gap*, they find a singular space, between this principle of non-contradiction and that of bivalency. And you find it in Aristotle, precisely in the book called *On interpretation* and which - I point it out to you for your convenience - is in paragraph 19-a, in the notation which designates the classic manuscripts of Aristotle and that you will find on page 100 (it is easy to remember), in the very bad translation that I am recommending to you: that of Tricot, which is the usual one.

Aristotle puts into question the function involved in the bivalency of the *true* and the *false* in its consequences. I mean in what it involves when it is a matter of the contingent, in what is going to happen. What is going to happen, whether yes or no, if we posit that it is true or false. It is therefore true or false immediately, namely, that it already decided. Naturally, that cannot work.

The solution that he gives of it, the one that consists in casting doubt on bivalency, is not what is in question here. I will not push the discussion here. But, on the contrary, what I will point out is that the logical solution - the banal, current, one given, for example, in the volume by the Kneales (I believe I am pronouncing their name correctly) *The development of logic* - the one which consists in saying that what is true, cannot be the signifying articulation, but what it *means*, is a false solution.

This solution is false, as the whole development of logic shows. I mean that what is deduced from the whole formal set-up cannot, in any case, be founded on meaning, for the simple reason that there is no possibility of fixing any meaning that is univocal, and that, whatever may be the signifiers that you put forward to pinpoint true or false, it is always possible to implicate it in a circumstance in which the most clearly stated truth, under the heading of signified content, will be false, and even more than false: a characteristic deception.

It is only possible to establish an order, by attributing - I am speaking about logic - by attributing the function of truth to a signifying grouping. That is why this logical use of the truth is only encountered in mathematics, where as Bertrand Russell says, one (14) never knows in any case what one is talking about. And if one thinks one knows, one is quickly disabused. You have to tidy things up quickly and get rid of intuition.

I recall this in order to question what is involved in the function of the phantasy.

I am saying – model: *A child is being beaten* - that the phantasy is only a signifying arrangement, whose formula I gave a long time ago, by coupling in it the **small o** to the *S barred*. Which means that it has two characteristics; the presence of the **o-object** and on the other hand, nothing other than what engenders the subject as *S barred*, namely, a sentence. This is why *A child is being beaten* is typical. *A child is being beaten* is nothing other than the signifying articulation, *A child is being beaten*. Except for the fact (read the text, consult it) that, over it there wanders, that over it there flies, nothing other than the following, which is impossible to eliminate, which is called the look.

Before bringing into play the three moment of the genesis of this product called the phantasy, it is important all the same to designate what it is!

It is not because Freud was dealing with illiterates that it does not remain interesting to posit the firm framework of the status of the phantasy and to say: it is strictly nothing other - in conformity with what I brought you at the beginning of this year, about the coupling of a part of *I am not thinking*, with the grammatical structure, to tell you that it is at the very place of this grammatical structure that at the fourth vertex of the quadrangle there emerges the small **o-object** and to add - because we have already designated two of them, the two on the left - that the angle on the bottom right, the one from which *I am not* leaves the place, that it curtails (*écorne*) at the level of the unconscious, to the following, which is the complement of the purely signifying grammatical structure of the phantasy, namely, what I started from today and which is called **a truth meaning**.

What must be remembered, to be picked out, in everything that Freud states about the phantasy is simply this little clinical trait - the one he puts forward here in order certainly to demonstrate so many things for us about its usage, how to manipulate it - but what must be remembered is a feature like the following: that the phantasy, the same one, is encountered in very different neurotic structures. But, moreover, as you know, that this phantasy remains at a singular distance from everything that is debated, from everything that is discussed in analyses, in the measure that what is at stake in it is to translate the truth of symptoms.

It seems that it is there as a sort of crutch or foreign body, something to be used, after all, as you know, which has a well-determined function. It is *to supply* for something that, after all, one may well call by its name: a certain *lack* of desire. In so far as it is (15) brought into play, involved - it is necessary that it should be, if only to step inside, to tidy up the room - at the entry of the sexual act.

This distance of the phantasy, with respect to the zone in which there is played out what I highlighted earlier as primordial, about the function of desire and about its link to demand and the following - so obvious that it is from that that there results the inflection of the whole of psychoanalysis around registers described as frustration and analogous terms - this is what allows us to make the point of the difference there is between a perverse and a neurotic structure.

What does it mean when I say that the phantasy here has the role of a truth-meaning? Well, I am going to tell you! I am saying the same thing as the logicians say. Namely, you miss the command by wanting at all costs to insert this phantasy into the discourse of the unconscious, when, in any case, it resists this reduction very well. And when you have to say that in the middle moment, the second phase of *A child is being beaten* - the one where it is the subject who is there, in the place of the child - this you only obtain in exceptional cases. The fact is that in truth the function of the phantasy... I mean in your interpretation and more especially again in the general interpretation that you will give of the structure of one or other neurosis, (which ought always, in the final analysis, be inscribed in the registers that I gave, namely: for phobia, anticipated desire, for hysteria, unsatisfied desire, for obsession, impossible desire. What is the role of the phantasy in this order of neurotic desire? Well then, truth-meaning, I have said. That means the same thing as when you mark with a capital T - a pure convention in the theory given, for example, of such and such a set - when you mark with the connotation of truth something that you will call an axiom: in your interpretation the phantasy has no other role, you have to take it as literally as possible and what you have to do, is to find in each structure, a way to define the laws of transformation which guarantee for this phantasy, in the deduction of the statements of unconscious discourse, **the place of an axiom.**

Such is the only possible function that one can give to the role of phantasy in the neurotic economy. That this comes, that its arrangement is borrowed from the field of the determination of perverse *jouissance*, is something, as you have seen, that I demonstrated and whose formula, I believe, I sufficiently fixed in our previous talks, with respect to the disjunction, in the field of the Other, of the body and of *jouissance*, and of this preserved part of the body in which *jouissance* can take refuge.

That the neurotic finds, in this arrangement, the support designed *to provide against* the lack of his desire in the field of the sexual act, is something, then, which is less likely to surprise us. And if you want me to give you something which will serve at once as reading - I cannot say it will be a very agreeable read for you (it is as annoying (16) as hell!) - but, all the same, as an example of real rubbish in scientific matters, I would recommend to you the reading, in Havelock Ellis, of the celebrated case of Florie. One could not better see to what point a certain mode of approach of a field in which people pride themselves - in the name of some objectivity or other - on breaking down doors, while they are completely enslaved, and enslaved in a fashion that is really singular. There is not one of the lines of this celebrated observation that does not carry, in a way, the marks of the cowardice of the professor.

It is a sensational text, this case of Florie. Undoubtedly, it will appear to you with all the characteristics - after the reference points that I have given you - to be a neurosis. In no way, does the moment at which Florie breaks through - in the sense of this something which can in a way happen to a neurotic without there ever being for her the equivalent of perverse *jouissance*, but breaks through in the ambiguous sense which makes of it at once a *passage à l'acte* and, for us who are reading it, an *acting-out* - something which ensures that Florie, affected by her phantasy of flagellation, manages, for once, to break through the prohibition that they represent for her. It is worth while confronting this with the absolutely manifest lacks in this observations, to the point that - Florie having confessed to him that it is only exceptionally that she brings a real person into these phantasies, someone that she admires and that she venerates - it is really unbelievable to see from the pen of Havelock Ellis there been written: "I did not ask her who was involved". When it is clear ... - as in the case of Père Ubu when you see him again with the pig's tail between his teeth - that of course it is Havelock Ellis, naturally, who is there rolled in flour from one end to the other by this patient, who is involved! And, after that, it is necessary to have more to do with the great personage to correct the members of the analytic community, who have allowed themselves to give an opinion on the same case, with a respect that is moreover completely unjustified, for the collection of this observation by Havelock Ellis.

This, all the same, is indeed of a nature to show you at once, all together, all the difficulties that I wanted to highlight today, concerning what is involved in the appreciation of the phantasy.

If it can be said, I would say, that from the phantasy - as we imagine it, we poor neurotics - from the phantasy in its function at the level described as perverse, to that of its function in the neurotic register there is exactly the distance - I am ending on this to make it sound clinical - of the *bedroom!*

Are there bedrooms? There is no sexual act ... that leaves, as regards the bedroom, huh? - apart from that of Ulysses where the bed is a trunk rooted in the ground - this leaves, on the subject of bedrooms - and especially at our epoch, huh, when everything is ... is ... thrown against the wall! - that leaves a serious doubt. But anyway it is a (17) place which, at least theoretically, exists.

There is all the same a distance between the bedroom and *the toilet*. Pay careful attention to the fact that everything neurotic that happens, happens essentially in the toilet (these questions of the arrangements of logic are very important) in the toilet or in the *ante-chamber*, it is the same thing.

The man of pleasure in the 18th century also, for him ... everything happened in the *boudoir*. Each to his own place!

If you want specifications, huh? Phobia can happen in the *wardrobe* ... or in the *corridor*, in the *kitchen*.

Hysteria happens in the *parlour*, the parlour of nun's convents, of course. What?!

Obsession, in the *bog*.

Pay careful attention to these things, they are very important.

Yes ... all of this leads us to the door of what I will invite you to cross next year, namely, a bedroom in which there happens ... nothing except that the sexual act is presented there as foreclosure, properly speaking: *Verwerfung*. It is what is commonly called the *analyst's office*.

The title that I will give to my lectures next year, will be, *The psychoanalytic act*.