

Seminar 12: Wednesday 21 June 1972

[Lacan, before beginning, writes on the board]

*That one says remains forgotten
as a fact behind what is said,
in what is understood.*

This statement is assertive by its form,
belongs to the modal in terms of the existence
(*existence*) that it emits.

Today, I am taking leave of you. From those who came and then from those who did not come and who are coming for this leave-taking. There you are. There is no need to put out bunting, huh? Good! What can I do? That I should sum up as they say, is absolutely out of the question. That I should mark something, a point, a point of interruption. Of course, I could say that I continued to circumscribe this impossible in which there is collected what can be grounded for us, for us in the analytic discourse, as real.

There you are! At the last moment, and, faith, by chance, I had the testimony, the testimony that what I say is heard. I had it because of the one who was willing – and this is a great merit – to speak at the last moment, like that, of this year. Who was willing to prove to me that for some people, for more than one, for veins that I cannot at all foresee from what angle they will happen, to find in short an interest in what I try to state. Good! (168) I thank then the person who gave me, not simply me, who gave to all a kind of...I hope that there are enough people who found an echo in that, who saw that this can produce something. It is always difficult naturally to know, to know how far it extends.

So then, in Italy, I made a little allusion to it, because after all this does not seem to be superfluous to me, I met someone that I find very nice, who is involved in, I don't know, the history of art. The idea of the *oeuvre*, we do not know why, but one can manage to understand that what is stated under the title of structure, and specifically what I had been able myself to produce about it, interests him. That interests him because of personal problems. This idea of *oeuvre*, this history of art, this vein, it is certain that this makes you a slave. This can be clearly seen when you sees that someone who was neither a critic nor a

historian, but who was a creator, formed as an image, as image of this vein, the slave, the prisoner, huh? There is someone called Michelangelo who showed that. So then, in the margin, there are historians and critics who...who pray for the slave. It is a mummery like any other, it is a kind of divine service that can be practiced. Yes! It tries to make us forget who commands, because the *oeuvre* always comes from a command, even for Michelangelo.

Well then, the one who commands, this is what I first tried to put forward for you this year under the title of *Yad'lun*, is that not so? What commands is the *One*, the *One* makes Being. I asked you to go looking for that in *Parmenides*. Some of you have perhaps complied. The *One* makes Being as the hysteric makes the man. Yes! Obviously, this Being that the *One* makes, it is not Being, it makes Being. Obviously it is this that supports a certain creative infatuation. And, in the case of the person I am talking about, who was really very nice to me and who clearly explained to me how he had found himself caught up in what he called my system in order to expose its points, its points and this is also why I am pinpointing him today to avoid a certain confusion, he fastened on to the fact that he finds that I do too much ontology.

It's funny all the same isn't it, and I do not think that here, of course, there are only open ears. I think that there are like everywhere a quantity of deaf people. But to say that I am doing ontology, all the same, is rather funny! And to place it in this...in this big Other (169) that I very specifically show as having to be barred and pinpointed very precisely with the signifier of this barring itself, it is curious! Because, what you must see in the reverberation, the response that you obtain, is all the same that, after all, people respond to you with their problems. And since his problem is that ontology, and even Being, already, gets stuck in his craw, because of that, the fact is, if ontology is simply...the grimace of the *One*, it is obvious that everything that is done on command is clearly suspended on the *One* and, good God, that annoys him.

So then, what he would really like, in short, is for the structure to be absent. This would be more convenient for the hey presto! What people would like, is that the conjuring trick, the conjuring trick that takes place, and which is that, the work of art, is that the conjuring trick has no need of thimbles. You have only to look at that, there is a painting by Brueghel who was an artist who was very much above that, he does not hide how, how the people strolling past are captivated. Good! So then here obviously, this is not what we are occupied with. We are occupied with the analytic discourse. And as regards the analytic discourse, I thought all the same that, it would be no bad thing to punctuate something before leaving you, something that gives you the idea precisely that, not simply is it not ontological but...it is not philosophical. It is simply necessitated by a certain position, a certain position that I recall, which is the one in which I thought I could

condense the articulation of a discourse, and show you all the same the relationship that this has with this fact that the analysts, that the analysts have all the same a relationship – and you would be wrong to believe that I do not recognise it – with something that...that is called like that the human being. Yes of course, but I for my part do not call it that. I do not call it that so that you will not get excited, so that you remain where you should, in so far of course as you are capable of seeing what are the difficulties that confront the analyst.

We are no longer talking of course about knowledge (*connaissance*) because the relationship of man to a world of his own – it is obvious that we have started from that for a long time or even from all time – has never been anything but an affectation at the service of the discourse of the master. There is no world of his own other than the world that the master makes work under his baton. And as regards the famous knowledge of oneself, *gnothi seauton*, which is supposed to make a man, let us start from this which is (170) all the same simple and tangible, is that no so, that, that yes! Good! If you wish; if you wish it has a place; it has the place of the body (*elle a lieu du corps*). The knowledge of oneself, is that not so, of oneself, is hygiene. Let us start indeed from that, is that not so. So then throughout the centuries there remained illness of course. Because everyone knows that sickness is not regulated by hygiene. And that it is indeed something hooked onto the body. And sickness, this lasted throughout the centuries, it is the doctor who was supposed to know it. To know it, I mean, knowledge and I think I have sufficiently rapidly underlined during one of our last talks, I no longer even know where, the failure of these two angles, is that not so. All of that is evident in history, it displays itself there in all sorts of aberrations.

So then, all the same, the question that I would like to get you to sense today is that, it is the analyst who is there and who seems to be acting as a relay. People talk about sickness, we do not know, at the same time people say that there is no such thing, that there is no mental illness, for example. Quite correctly in the sense that it is a nosological entity as it was formerly put, it is not at all an entity, mental illness. It is rather the mentality which has flaws, let us express ourselves like that rapidly.

So then, let us try to see what is supposed for example by that, what is written there, and which is supposed to state where there is placed, where there is placed a certain chain which is very certainly and without any type of ambiguity, the structure. You see two signifiers succeeding one another in it, and the subject is only there in so far as a signifier represents it for another signifier. And then there is something that results from it and that we have, over the years, greatly developed with sufficient reason to justify that we should note it as the *little o-object*. Obviously if it is there, in this form, in this form of tetrad, it is not a topology which is...which is without any kind of sense. This is the novelty that was contributed by Freud. The novelty

that was contributed by Freud, is not nothing.

There was someone who had done something very good, in situating, in crystallising the discourse of the master, by reason of a historical illumination that he was able to lay hold of, it was Marx. It is all the same a step, a step that there is no reason at all to reduce to the first, there is no reason either to mix up the two, one could ask oneself why they absolutely be in harmony. They are not in harmony. They are perfectly compatible. They fit together. They fit together and then there is certainly one which has its place (171) with all ease, it is that of Freud. What has he contributed in short that is essential? He contributed the dimension of over determination. Over determination is exactly what I image with my way of formalising in the most radical fashion the essence of discourse, in so far as it is in a turning position with what I have just called a support.

It is all the same from discourse that Freud made emerge, made emerge the fact that what was produced at the level of the support had something to do with what was articulated in terms of discourse. The support is the body. It is the body, and yet, you have to pay attention, when you say it is the body. It is not necessarily a body. Because from the moment that one starts from enjoyment, this means very exactly that the body is not alone, that there is another one of them. This does not mean that enjoyment is sexual, since what I have explained to you this year is that the least that one can say is that this enjoyment is not revoked (*rapportée*) it is hand to hand enjoyment (*de corps à corps*). What is proper to enjoyment, is that when there are two bodies, much more indeed when there are more, naturally, we do not know, we cannot say, which of them enjoys. This is what ensures that there may be caught up in this affair, several bodies and even series of bodies.

So then over determination consists in the following. It is that, the things that, which are not meaning, meaning would be supported by a signifier, precisely what is proper to a signifier, and I do not know, I set about that bit by bit, God knows why, then a little more, what matter. I found something, a seminar that I gave at the beginning of a trimester, just the trimester which was at the end of the year on the...what is called the case of President Schreber, it was the 11th April 1956. It is very precisely just beyond, it is the first two trimesters that are summarised in what I wrote *A question preliminary to any possible treatment of psychosis*, at the end, 11th April 1956. I posited the fact that it was...then like that I am calling it by its name, the name that it has in my discourse, the structure. It is not always what empty-headed people think, but it is perfectly said at that level. It would amuse me to republish it, this seminar, if the typist had not made a large number of little holes because she hadn't heard properly. If she had only reproduced correctly the (172) Latin sentence that I had written on the board, and I don't know any longer what author it belonged to. I will do it, I don't know, in the next edition of *Scilicet*.

The time I am going to need to find again who this Latin sentence comes from, is certainly going to make me lose time. What matter, everything that I said at that time about the signifier, about the signifier at a time when really one could not say that it was *à la mode*, in '56, remains minted with a metal that...where I don't need to alter anything.

Yes! What I say about it very precisely is that it is distinguished by the fact that it has no meaning. I say it in a decisive way because at that time I had to make myself heard by... can you imagine, that what's more it was doctors that were listening to me! What the hell did they care about that? Simply that it was...anyway they were hearing something from Lacan. Anyway, from Lacan, namely this kind of clown, is that not so, that...good! He was marvelous on his trapeze of course. During this time, they already had their eyes on how they could get back to their digestion, because one cannot say that they dream. That would be beautiful. They do not dream, they digest; it is an occupation after all like any other.

What one must all the same clearly try to see is that what Freud introduces is something which – people imagine I am unaware of it because I am talking about the signifier – is the return to this foundation which is in the body. This means that quite independently of the signifiers with which they are articulated, it is four poles that are determined from the emergence as such of enjoyment precisely as ungraspable. Well then! This is what gave rise to the three others, and, in response, the first, which is the truth, already implies discourse. That does not mean that it can be said. I kill myself saying that it cannot be said, or that it can only be half said.

But anyway as regards enjoyment, anyway it exists. It is necessary to be able to talk about it. As a result there is something different called utterance (*le dire*). Well then, I explained in short throughout a year, I spent enough time articulating it, because, to articulate it, this is what is necessary for you to see that...the necessity that I have, the way in which I proceed, precisely, I can never articulate it as a truth. It is necessary, according to what is your destiny for all of you. You have to go around it. More exactly (173) see how it turns, how it tips over, how it tips over once you touch it and how even up to a certain point, it is unstable enough to lend itself to...to all sorts of errors.

In any case, if I put forward, put forward – which all the same demands a certain cheek – the title *D'un discours qui ne serait pas du semblant*, I think that it was to get you to sense, and that you have sensed, that discourse as such, is always the discourse of a semblance. And that if there is something somewhere which authorises me some enjoyment, precisely, it is to pretend (*faire semblant*). And it is...from this starting point that one can manage to conceive this something that we can only lay hold of there, but in a way that is already so assured, so assured by someone whose memory I must salute, the memory as I write it, in

giving to the *mé* the same sense as the *mé* of *méconnaissance*, the one who, who has been so well remembered that what is at stake is rather to jeer at his words, namely Plato. All the same, if there is someone who has...grasped what is involved in surplus enjoying, something that makes us think that Plato is not simply Ideas and Form but everything that one has with a certain grid, a grid which, I agree, has some verisimilitude, expresses these statements. Plato is all the same the one who has advanced the function of the dyad as being this stopping point where everything happens, where everything leaks away (*fruit*). No greater without a lesser, no older without a younger. And the fact that the dyad is the locus of our loss, the locus of the leak, the locus thanks to which it is forced to forge this *One* of the Idea, of Form, this *One* which moreover is immediately geared down, is inscribed. Yes, it is indeed because it is like us all plunged into this one supplement – I talked about all of that on 11th April 1956 – the supplement, the difference that there is between the supplement and the complement.

Anyway, I had very, very well said all of that since 1956. This could have served, it seems, to crystallise something on the side of this function that is to be fulfilled, that of the analyst and which it seems to be so, so impossible, more than the others, that people only dream of camouflaging it. Yes! So then, it is around this that it turns and that it is very necessary to see certain things. The fact is that between this support, what happens at the level of the body, from which all meaning arises, but unconstituted. Because after what I have just stated about enjoyment, about the truth, about the semblance and surplus enjoying as constituting here the foundation, the ground, as it was put the other day by the person who was willing here to come to talk to us about Peirce inasmuch as it is in the note by Peirce that he had understood what I was saying. There is no point in telling you (174) that it was more or less around the same epoch that I produced Peirce's quadrants to which – this, of course, was of no use. Because what...you may well think that the remarks on the total ambiguity of the universal, whether it is affirmative or negative, and the same about the particular, what effect could that have on those who only dreamt in all of that of rediscovering their own jingles?

Yes! The *ground* is here then. What is at stake in effect is the body with its radical senses on which there is no hold to be had. Because it is not with the truth, the semblance, enjoyment or surplus enjoying that people do philosophy. Philosophy is done, starting from the moment when there is something that stuffs up, that stuffs up the ... this support which can only be articulated starting from discourse. It stuffs it up with what? Indeed it has to be said, huh, that what all of you are made of, and again all the more if you know a bit of philosophy, that happens sometimes, but when all is said and done it is rare, you are above all *astudées*, as I said one day. You are at the place at which the university discourse situates you. You are caught up as *a-formés*. For some time, there has been a crisis, but we will speak about it later. It is secondary. The question then is different.

You really must take into account that what you most fundamentally depend on – because after all the university was not born yesterday – is the discourse of the master. All the same, it is the first one to arise, and then it is the one that lasts and that there is little chance of shaking. It could be compensated, be balanced, by something which might be, anyway, the day that it will be, the analytic discourse. At the level of the discourse of the master, one can perfectly well say what there is between the field of discourse, between the functions of discourse as they are articulated by this S_1 , S_2 , $\$$ and \mathbf{o} , and then this, this body, this body that you represent here and to which, as an analyst, I am addressing myself.

Because, when someone comes to see me in my office for the first time and I punctuate our getting down to business with some preliminary conversations, what is important is that it is the confrontation of bodies. It is precisely because it is from this that it starts, this encounter of bodies, that from the moment when one enters into the analytic discourse, there will no longer be any question of it. But the fact remains that at the level at which discourse functions which is not analytic discourse, the question is posed of how this discourse has succeeded in catching hold of bodies.

(175) At the level of the discourse of the master, it is clear. At the level of the discourse of the master, from which you are as a body, moulded, don't pretend otherwise, however you gambol about, this is what I will call feelings and very precisely good feelings. Between the body and discourse, there is what the analysts gargle on about in pretentiously calling it affects. It is quite obvious that you are affected in an analysis. This is what makes an analysis, this is what they claim obviously, they must have some advantage somewhere, to be sure not to slip up. Good feelings, what were they made with? Well then one is forced to get to this, at the level of the discourse of the master, it is clear, they are made by jurisprudence. It is all the same a good thing not to forget at the moment that I am speaking, where I am the guest of the Law Faculty, not to fail to recognise that it is jurisprudence and nothing else that grounds good feelings. And when something like that comes all of a sudden to move your heart because you do not know very well whether you are not a little responsive to the way in which an analysis has gone badly, listen! Huh? Let us be clear all the same! If there were no deontology, if there were no jurisprudence, where would there be this upset, this affect as it is called? It is all the same necessary from time to time to speak a little truthfully. A little means that what I have just said is not exhaustive. I could also say something incompatible with what I have just said. That would also be the truth.

And this indeed is what happens. It is indeed what happens simply, when simply by the fact not of a quarter turn, of a half a full turn, of two quarter turns of the slippage of these function elements of discourse, it happens, it happens because in this tetrad there are all the

same vectors, vectors whose necessity one can very well establish. They do not belong to the tetrad, neither to the truth, nor to the semblance, nor to anything at all of the kind. They stem from the fact that the tetrad is four. On the simple condition of requiring that there should be vectors in both senses, namely, that there should be two that arrive and two that go, or one that arrives and one that goes. You are absolutely required to find that the way they hang together, stems from the number four, and nothing else. Naturally, semblance, truth, enjoyment and surplus enjoying cannot be added together. So then they cannot make four all by themselves. It is precisely in this that the (176) real consists, the fact is that the number four for its part exists all by itself. This is also something I said on 11th April 1956, but very precisely, I had not yet brought out all of that. Moreover I had not even constructed all of that. Only what proved to me that I am following a good vein, since the fact that I said at that moment that the number four was here an essential number for one to be able to remember (*s'en souvient*), proves that I was all the same on the right track since, now, I do not find anything superfluous in all of that. I said it at the time it was necessary, at the time when there was a question about psychosis.

Good! So then, the question is this, whether the feelings - don't get disturbed about the people who are leaving, they have to do so at this time, they have to go to the funeral of someone whose memory I salute here, who was someone from our School, whom I really cherish. I regret, given my commitments, not to be able to go myself. Yes, what is there in the analytic discourse, between the functions of discourse and this support which is not the meaning of discourse, which does not depend on anything that is said? Everything that is said is a semblance. Everything that is said is true. And on top of that everything that is said gives enjoyment. *What is said*. And, as I repeat, as I rewrote on the board today, *that one is saying as a fact remains hidden behind what is said*. What is said is nowhere else than in what is understood, and that is the word. Only to say it is a different thing. It is on a different plane, it is discourse. It is what, in terms of relations holds each and every one of you together, with people who are not necessarily those who are here. What we call relation, *religio*, the social hooking together, happens at the level of a certain number of intermeshings that do not happen by chance, that necessitate, with very little scope for error this certain order in signifying articulation. And for something to be said in it, it is necessary, it is necessary that there should be something else in it than what you imagine, what you imagine under the name of reality; because reality flows very precisely from the saying.

The saying (*le dire*) has its effects from which there is constituted what is called the phantasy, namely, this relationship between the *little o-object*, which is what is concentrated from the effect of discourse to cause desire, and this something around which like a slit, is condensed, and which is called the subject. It is a slit because the *little o-object* for

its part is always between each of the signifiers and the one that follows and that is why the subject for its part, was always not between, but on the contrary gaping.

(177) Yes! To return to Rome, I was able to grasp, put my finger on the effect, the rather startling effect, an effect in which I recognise myself very well, of the copper plates of someone Fontana, who is dead it appears, and who after having shown great ability as a constructor, as a sculptor, etc. consecrated his last years to making, in Italian that is called *spaccatura*, it appears, but I don't know Italian, I had it explained to me, it is a slit, like that, he made a slit in a copper plate. That has a certain effect. That has a certain effect for those who are a little sensitive, but there is no need to have heard my discourse on the *Spaltung* of the subject to be sensitive to it. The first passer-by, especially if she is of the feminine sex, may experience a little vacillation. It must be that Fontana was not among those who totally failed to recognise structure, who thought that it was too ontological.

So then, what is at stake, what is at stake in analysis? Because if I am to be believed, people ought to think that it is indeed as I stated. It is in term of what, *en corps*, with all the ambiguity of this term, which is justified, it is because the analyst *en corps*, sets up the *little o-object* in the place of the semblance, that there is something that exists called the analytic discourse. What does that mean? At the point that we have got to in it, namely, have begun to see this discourse taking shape, we see as discourse and not in what is said, in its utterance, it allows us to grasp what is involved in the semblance.

This is why it is striking to see that, at the end of a cosmological tradition, as we were made sense the last time, how did the universe come to birth? Does that not seem to you to be a little dated? But to be dated from the beginning of time, it nevertheless remains dated. What is striking, is that this led Peirce to a purely logical even *logicienne* articulation. It is a point of detachment of the fruit on the tree from a certain illusory articulation, I will call it, which from the earliest ages had culminated at this cosmology joined to a psychology, to a theology, to everything that followed.

So there, putting your finger as it was stated for you the last time, putting your finger on the fact that there is no discourse on origins except by treating the origin of a discourse, that there is no origin that can be grasped other than the origin of a discourse. And this is what is important for us when what is in question is the emergence of another discourse, (178) of a discourse which, with respect to the discourse of the master, whose terms and their arrangement I am going to retrace quickly, involves the double inversion precisely of the oblique vectors. And this is very important. What Peirce dares to articulate for us,

and there at the joint of an ancient cosmology, is the fullness of what is at stake in the semblance of the body. It is discourse in its relationship, he says, to nothing. That means what every discourse necessarily turns around.

Along this path, what I am trying to do this year by promoting set theory to those who hold the function of analyst, to suggest, it is that it is along this vein, this one exploited by these statements that are formalised in logic, that it is along this vein that they have to discipline themselves, to form themselves; to form themselves for what? To what should be distinguished from what I earlier called the stuffing, the interval, the plugging, the gap between the level of the body and of enjoyment, the semblance and discourse. In order to see that it is here that there is posed the question of what is to be put in and which is not good feelings, nor jurisprudence. Which has to deal with something different that has name, which is called *interpretation*, what the other day was put on the board in the form of a triangle described as semiotic, in the form of the *representamen*, of the interpreter

and here the object And to show that the relation is always ternary, namely, that it is the couple *representamen-object* which has always to be reinterpreted, this is what is at stake in analysis. *The interpreter*, is the *analysand*. This does not mean that the analyst is not there to help him, to push him a little bit in the direction of the C to be interpreted.

It must indeed be said, that this can be done at the level of a single analyst, for the simple reason that if what I am saying is true, namely, that it is only along the vein of logic, of the extraction of articulation of what is said, and not from the utterance, that if in a word the analyst in his function does not know – I mean *en corps* – to gather enough of what he hears from the interpreter who is the one to whom under the name of analysand, he gives the floor, well then! The analytic discourse remains at what, in effect, was said by Freud without budging by a line. And once that forms part of common discourse, which is now the case, this enters into the framework of good feelings.

For interpretation to progress, to be possible, according to the schema of Peirce which was put forward to you the last time, it is in so far as this relation interpretation and object, note, what is at stake? What is this object in Peirce? It is from there that the new interpretation, that there is no end to what it can come to, except that there is a limit

precisely, which is indeed what analytic discourse ought to arrive at, on condition that it does not wallow in its current stagnation.

What must be substituted for Peirce's schema to make it agree with my articulation of analytic discourse? It is as simple as anything, for the effect of what is at stake in the analytic treatment, there is no other *representamen* than the *little o-object*. The *little o-object* of which the analyst makes himself the *representamen* precisely, at the place of the semblance.

(180) The object that is at stake, is nothing other than what I questioned here with my two formulae, it is nothing other than this the fact of speaking *as* forgotten. This is the object of what is the question for everyone, where am I in the utterance? Because if it is quite clear that neurosis displays itself, it is very precisely because of something that explains to us the vagueness of what Freud puts forward concerning desire, especially desire in the dream. It is quite true that there are dreams of desire, but when Freud analyses one of his dreams, one can clearly see what desire is at stake, it is the desire to posit the equation of desire with *equals zero*.

At an epoch which was not much later than that of 11th April 1956, in 1957 precisely I analysed *the dream of Irma's injection*. That was transcribed as you may imagine in a...of a university person, in a thesis in which it currently does the rounds. The way in which this was, I will not say heard, because the person was not there, he worked on notes, he worked on notes and he thought it was possible to add on some of his own ideas. But it is all the same clear that if there is one thing that this sublime, divine dream of Irma's injection allows to show, this is what is obvious, which ought to be, ever since the time that I announced this thing which should have been exploited by anyone whatsoever in analysis, I left that there, because after all as you are going to see, the matter has not all that many consequences, if as I recalled recently, the essence of sleep, is precisely the suspension of the relationship of the body to enjoyment, it is quite obvious that desire which for its part depends on surplus enjoying, is not going to be for all that put in brackets.

What the dream works on, what it knits together, and one clearly sees

how and with what, with the days residues as Freud says, namely, with what is there still altogether on the surface of memory, not in its depths. The only thing that links the desire of the dream to the unconscious, is the way in which one must work to resolve the solution, to resolve the problem of a formula with *equals zero*, in order to find the root thanks to which the way in which it functions is cancelled. If it is not cancelled, as they say, there is an awakening, as a result of which of course the subject continues to dream in his life.

If the desire is of interest in the dream, Freud underlines, it is in so far as there are cases in which one cannot resolve the phantasy, except by noticing that desire – allow me to (181) express myself because then I will have reached the end – has no *raison d'être*. It is that something has happened which is the encounter, the encounter from which there proceeds neurosis, Medusa's head, the slit we mentioned earlier, directly seen, it is in so far as it for its part has no solution. This indeed is why in the dreams of most people, what is at stake in effect is the question of desire. The question of desire in so far as it refers much further on, to the structure, to the structure thanks to which it is the *small o* which is the cause of the *Spaltung* of the subject.

Yes! So then, what binds us to the one with whom we embarked, broke through the first apprehension of the body? And is the analyst there to harbour resentment at her for not being sexual enough or enjoying well enough? So what? What is it that binds us to the one who, with us, embarks in the position that is called that of the patient?

Does it not seem to you, if we marry to this locus the term brother which is on every wall, Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, I ask you, at the cultural point that we are at, of whom are we brothers? Who are we brothers of in every discourse except the analytic discourse? Is the boss the brother of the proletarian? Does it not seem to you that this word brother, is precisely the one to which analytic discourse gives its presence, even if only what he brings back what is called the family backpack? You think that it is simply to avoid class struggle? You are mistaken, this stems from a lot of other things than the family din. We are brothers of our patient in so far as, like him, we are the sons of discourse.

To represent this effect that I designate as the *little o-object*, to make ourselves for this lack of being the support, the waste product, the abjection to which there can cling on what is going, thanks to us, to be born to saying, to saying that is interpreting, naturally with the help of something which is what I invite the analyst to support himself with, so as to be worthy of the transference. To support himself with this knowledge which can, by being at the place of the truth, question itself as such about what has always been involved in the structure of knowledge, from know-how up to the knowledge of science. From that of course we interpret. But who can do it if it is not the very one himself who commits himself to saying and who from the brother,

certainly, that we are, is going to give us exaltation?

I mean that what is born of an analysis, what is born at the level of the subject, of the subject who speaks, of the analysand, is something which with, by means of – man (182) thinks, Aristotle said, with his soul – the analysand analyses with this shit that is proposed to him, in the figure of his analyst, the *little o-object*. It is with this that something, this split thing ought to be born which is nothing other when all is said and done – to take up something that was put forward to you the other day in connection with Peirce – than the arm by which a weighing scales can establish what is called justice. Our brother transfigured, this is what is born from analytic incantation and this is what binds us to the one that we wrongly call our patient.

This *parasexual*, discourse huh? It must be said like that ... that, that some batons may be handed back. I would not like to leave you uniquely on something over sweet. The notion of brother, so solidly stamped thanks to all sorts of jurisprudence throughout the ages, by coming back to this level, to the level of a discourse, will have what I called just now its return on the level of support.

I did not speak to you in all of that about the father because I think that enough has been said to you already about him, enough explained, to show you that it is around the one who unites, the one who says no! that there can be founded, that there ought to be founded, that there cannot but be founded everything universal. And when we return to the root of the body, if we revalorise the word brother, he is going to enter under full sail at the level of good feelings.

Since I must not all the same allow you to look at the future through rose coloured glasses, you should know that what is arising, what one has not yet seen to its final consequences, and which for its part is rooted in the body, in the fraternity of the body, is racism, about which you have yet to hear the last word. Voilà!

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Seminar 1: Wednesday 8 December 1971

I could begin right away by passing over my title which after all you will clearly see in a little while what it means. Nevertheless, out of kindness, since moreover it is meant to be remembered, I am going to introduce it by giving a commentary on it.

Ou pire. Perhaps after all some of you have understood it,....Ou pire, in short, is what I am always capable of doing. It is enough for me to show it to get into the heart of the subject. I show it in short at every moment in order not to remain in this meaning which, like every meaning, I think you could put your finger on it, is opaque. I am therefore going to give a textual commentary on it.

Ou pire. Some people have already read it wrongly. They thought that it was.....ou le pire. It is not at all the same thing. Pire, is tangible, it is what is called an adverb, like well, or better. You can say, I am doing well, one can say I am doing worse. It's an adverb, but a disjoined one, disjoined from something which is called somewhere precisely the verb, the verb which is replaced here by three dots. These three dots refer to usage, to ordinary usage to mark – it's curious, but we see this, we see this in every printed text – to create an empty place. It underlines the importance of this empty place and it demonstrates moreover that it is the only way to say something with the help of language. And this remark that the void is the only way of catching something with language, is precisely what allows us to penetrate into its nature, into language.

Moreover, as you know, once logic has come to the point of confronting something, something which supports a reference to truth, is when it produced the notion of variable. It is an apparent variable. The apparent variable x is always constituted by the fact that, the fact is that the x , in what is at stake, marks an empty place. The condition for this to work, is that one puts there exactly the same signifier in all these empty places that are reserved. This is the only way in which language reaches something and that is why I have expressed myself in the formula that there is no meta-language. What does that mean? It might seem that in saying that I am only formulating a paradox. Because from where can I say it? Since I am saying it in language, this would seem to sufficiently affirm that there is one from where I can say it. Nevertheless it is obviously nothing of the kind. Of course it is necessary to develop meta-language as a fiction, every time logic is at stake, namely that there has been forged within discourse what is called object language, as a result of which it is the language that becomes meta, I mean common discourse without which there is no means even of establishing this division. There is no meta-language denies that this division is tenable. The formula forecloses that there is discordance in language.

What then occupies this empty place in the title that I have put forward to catch your attention? As I said, necessarily a verb, because there is already an adverb. Only it is a verb elided by the three dots, and that, in language, once one questions it in logic, is the only thing that one cannot do. The verb as it happens, is not difficult to find, it is enough to tip over the letter which begins the word *pire*, and that gives us *dire*. Only, as in logic, the verb is precisely the only term which you cannot make into an empty place, because when you try to make a function of a proposition, it is the verb that functions and it is from what surrounds it that you can make an argument; by getting rid of this verb then, I am making an argument of it, namely some substance; it is not saying, it is a-saying.

This saying, the one that I am taking up from my seminar of last year, is expressed, like every saying, in a complete proposition, there is no sexual relationship. That is what my title is putting forward, it is that there is no ambiguity, it is that in trying to get out of this, you will only state, you will only say something worse.

There is no sexual relationship is proposed then as a truth. But I already said that truth can only be half said. So then, what I am saying, is that what is in question when all is said and done is that the other half should say worse. If there were not worse, how that would simplify things! Make no mistake. The question is, does that not already simplify them since, if what I started from is from what I can do and that it is precisely what I am not doing, is that not enough to simplify them? Only there you are, there is no way that I cannot do this worse, exactly like everyone else.

When I say there is no sexual relationship, I am putting forward very precisely this truth, in the case of the speaking being, that sex does not in its case define any relationship. It is not that I am denying the difference that exists, from the youngest age, between what is called a

little girl and a little boy. It is even from that that I am starting. Lay hold right away, of the fact that you do not know when I start from there what I am talking about. I am not talking about the famous little difference the one for which, to one of the two, it will appear, when he is sexually mature, it will appear to be altogether something in the style of a joke, of a witticism, to shout hurrah! Hurrah for the little difference! The very fact that it is funny should be enough to indicate to us, to denote, to make reference, to the complex relationship, namely to the fact clearly inscribed in analytic experience which is what the experience of the unconscious has led us to, without which there would be no witticism, to the complex relationship with this organ. The little difference, already separated out very early as an organ, which really says it all: *organon*, instrument. Does an animal have any idea that it has organs? Since when has that been seen and to accomplish what? Is it enough to state that every animal – this is a way of taking up again what I recently stated in connection with the supposition of the enjoyment described as sexual as instrumental for the animal, I spoke about that elsewhere, here I will say it in a different way – every animal that has claws does not masturbate. This is the difference between man and the lobster. There you are! That always has a certain effect.

As a result of this you escape from the historical resonances of this sentence. It is not at all because of what it asserts – I am saying nothing more, it asserts – but the question that it introduces at the level of logic. That is hidden in it, huh? But – this is the only thing that you haven't seen in it – is that it contains the not-all (*pas-tout*) which is, very precisely and very curiously what eludes Aristotelian logic in the measure that it put forward and separated out the function of prosdiorisms which are nothing other than what you know, namely the use of all, *pan*, of some, *ti*, around which Aristotle takes the first steps in formal logic. These steps have serious consequences. They are what allowed to be developed what is called the function of quantifiers. It is with the all that there is established the empty place that I spoke

about earlier. Someone like Frege does not fail, when he comments on the function of the assertion, before which he places – the assertion in relationship with a true or false function $f(x)$ – it is necessary for him in order that the x has the existence of an argument – here placed in the little hollows, an image of the empty place – that there is something that is called every x , which is appropriate to the function.

The introduction of not-all is essential here. The not-all is not a negated universal. The not-all, is not nothing, it is specifically not that; no animal with claws masturbates itself, is, not every animal that has claws is not because of that forced into what follows. There is organ and organ, just as there are faggots and faggots (*Il y a fagots et fagots*) the one who deals the blow and the one who receives it.

And this brings us to the heart of our problem. Because you see by simply outlining the first step, we are slipping towards the centre, without even having the time to turn back, to the centre of something where there is indeed a machine that is carrying us. It is the machine that I am dismantling. But, I am making the remark for the use of some people, it is not to demonstrate that it is a machine, and still less indeed so that a discourse should be taken for a machine, as some people do precisely in wanting to engage with mine, of discourse. In this way what they demonstrate, is that they are not engaging with what makes a discourse, namely the real that passes into it.

Dismantling the machine is not at all the same thing as what we have just done, namely to go without any ceremony to the hole of the system, namely to the place where the real passes through you – and how, because it flattens you!

Naturally for my part I would like – I would really like, I would like much more – I would like to preserve your natural blackguardism which is what is most attractive, but which, alas alas, always starting again as someone or other has said, ends up by being reduced to stupidity by the very effect of this discourse that I am demonstrating.

As a result you ought to sense right away that there are at least two ways of demonstrating this discourse; and it remains open that mine, in a way, is still a third. You must not force me to insist, of course, on this energetics of blackguardism and stupidity to which I never make anything other than a distant allusion. From the point of view of energetics, of course, it does not hold up. It is purely metaphorical. But it is one of those kinds of metaphor by which the speaking being subsists, I mean that it constitutes his bread and butter (*le pain e le levain*).

So then I asked you to spare me as regards of this insistence. It is in the hope that the theory will supply for it. You will have heard the emphasis of the subjunctive, I isolated it because, because it might have been covered over by the interrogative accent. Think of all of that, like that, at the moment that it is happening and especially in order not to miss what crops up here, namely the relationship of the unconscious to truth. The right theory, and it is what opens up the path, the very path where the unconscious was reduced to insisting, it would no longer have to do it if the path has been properly opened up but that does not mean that this would have resolved everything, quite the contrary, the theory, because it would have given this ease, ought itself to be light, light to the point of not seeming to touch it. It should have something natural about it that, up to now is only possessed by errors. Not all (*pas-toutes*) once again of course. But does that make it any more sure that there are some that sustain this naturalness that so many others pretend to?

There you are, I am putting forward that for these, the others to be able to make a pretence, it is necessary that among these errors that sustain what is natural, there is at least one: *hommoinzune*. You should recognise what I already wrote last year with a different ending, very precisely in connection with the hysteric and the *hommoinzun* that she requires. This *hommoinzune*, - its role obviously cannot be better sustained than by the natural itself.

It is in this that I denied at the start, it is what on the contrary, it is the way in which I denied at the start the difference that exists, which can be perfectly noted from the earliest years, between a little girl and a little boy, and that this difference which asserts itself as innate is indeed natural, namely corresponds to the fact that there is something real in the fact that, in the species that calls itself like that the daughter of its works, in that as in many other things, which calls itself *homo sapiens*, the sexes appear to be separated into two numbers of more or less equal individuals, and that rather early on, earlier than one might expect, these individuals are distinguished from one another. They are distinguished, that's certain. Only, I am pointing it out to you in passing, this does not form part of a logic. But they only recognise one another, they only recognise one another as speaking beings, by rejecting this distinction by all sorts of identifications and it is commonplace in psychoanalysis to note that this is the major mainspring of the phases of every childhood. But that is a simply parenthesis.

What is important logically is the following it is what I did not deny, it is precisely here that there is a sliding, is the fact that they are distinguished from one another. This is a sliding. What I did not deny, is precisely not that, what I did not deny, is that they are distinguished. They do not distinguish themselves. This is how people say, oh isn't he a real little man, you can see already that he's completely different to a little girl, he is uneasy, inquisitive, isn't he? Already looking for notice. While the little girl is far from resembling him. She is already thinking of playing with this sort of fan which consists in sticking her face into a hole and refusing to say hello.

Only there you are, people only marvel at that because that's the way it is, namely exactly the way it will be later, in other words in conformity to the type of man and a woman as they are going to set themselves up from something completely different, namely from the consequence,

from the value that was subsequently have been taken on by the little difference. No point in adding on that the little difference, hurrah! was already there for the parents for some time and that it could have had an effect on the way in which the little man and the little woman were treated. We can't be sure, that is not always how things are. But there is no need for it in order that the judgement of recognition of the surrounding adults is based then on an error, which consists in recognising them, no doubt by what distinguishes them, but by only recognising them in function of criteria that are formed depending on language, if it is the case that as I am putting forward, it is indeed because a being is a speaking one that there is a castration complex. I am adding that in order to insist, so that you may clearly understand what I mean.

So then, it is in this way that the *hommoinzune* from an error, gives consistency to the naturalness which moreover is incontestable of what I might call the premature vocation that each one experiences for his sex. One must also add of course that in the case when this vocation is not apparent, that leaves the error unshaken, because it can be easily completed by being attributed to nature as such, this of course no less naturally. When it doesn't fit, people say she's a tomboy (*c'est un garçon manqué*), don't they, and in that case, the lack can easily be considered as a success in the measure that nothing prevents there being imputed to it, to this lack, an extra bit of femininity. The woman, the real one, the proper little woman, is hidden behind this very lack. This is a subtlety that is moreover in full conformity to what the unconscious teaches us about never succeeding better than when one fails.

In these conditions, in order to have access to the other sex, one must really pay the price, that precisely of the little difference which deceptively passes into the Real through the mediation of the organ, precisely, because it ceases to be taken as such and, at the same time, reveals what it means to be an organ, and organ is only an instrument

through the mediation of something by which every instrument is grounded, it is because it is a signifier. So then! It is as signifier that the transsexual no longer wants it and not as an organ. And in this he suffers from an error, which is precisely the common error. The passion of the transsexual is the madness of wanting to free himself from this error, the common error which does not see that the signifier is enjoyment, and that the phallus is only the signified. The transsexual no longer wants to be signified as phallus by sexual discourse, which as I state, is impossible. He is only making one mistake, which is to want to force this sexual discourse which *qua* impossible is the passage of the Real, to want to force it by means of surgery.

There you are. It is the same thing that I stated in a certain programme for a certain Congress *on feminine sexuality*. It is only I said, for those who know how to read of course, it is only I said the homosexual, written here in the feminine, who can sustain the sexual discourse in total security. That is why I invoked the freeing up of the *Précieuses* who, as you know, remain a model for me. The *Précieuse* who as I might say, define so admirable what is excessive to the word, anyway, allow me to stop the word here, the *Ecce homo*, of love. Because they for their part do not run the risk of taking the phallus for a signifier. Phi – then! Signi – phi then! It is only by breaking the signifier in its letter that one gets to the end in the last analysis.

It is a pity nevertheless that this amputates for the female homosexual, the analytic discourse. Because this discourse, it is a fact, casts them, the little darlings into a total blindness about what is involved in feminine enjoyment. Contrary to what one can read in a famous drama by Apollinaire the one that introduces the word surrealist, Therese returns to Tiresias – don't forget that I have just spoken about blindness – not by leaving but by recuperating what are described as the two birds of his weakness. I am quoting Apollinaire, for those who may not have read him. In other words the small and the big balloons

that represent them in the theatre and which are perhaps – I am saying perhaps, because I do not want to distract your attention, I am satisfying myself with a perhaps – which are perhaps this something thanks to which the woman can only enjoy when there is an absence. The woman homosexual is not at all absent in what remains to her in terms of enjoyment. I repeat, this makes the discourse of love easy for her. But it is clear that that excludes her from psychoanalytic discourse which she can scarcely mutter. So then let us try to advance.

Given the time, I can only point out rapidly that as regards everything that posits itself as sexual relationship, emphasising it, establishing it by a sort of fiction that is called marriage, it would be a good rule for the psychoanalyst to say, on this point, that they should sort themselves out as best they can. This is the path that he takes in practice. He doesn't say it, nor does he even say it to himself, in a sort of false shame, because he believes his duty is to mitigate every drama. It is an inheritance from pure superstition. He plays the doctor. Never did a doctor get mixed up in guaranteeing conjugal happiness and since the psychoanalyst has not yet noticed that there is no sexual relationship, naturally, the role of playing providence for households haunts him.

All that, the false shame, the superstition and the inability to formulate a precise rule on this point, the one that I have just stated, let them sort themselves out, comes from a failure to recognise something that his experience repeats to him, but I could even say drums into him, that there is no sexual relationship. It should be said that the etymology of *sernier* (to drum in) leads us straight to *sirène*. That is textually so, it is in the *Dictionnaire Étymologique*, I am not the one who is singing such a tune here in my discourse.

It is no doubt for that reason that the psychoanalyst, like Ulysses did in a similar situation, remains tied to a mast. Yes! Naturally in order for that to continue – what he hears as the song of the Sirens, namely remaining enchanted, namely hearing everything in the wrong way – it

is necessary that the mast, the mast in which naturally you cannot fail to recognise the phallus, namely the major, global signified, well then, he must remain attached to it. That suits everybody, but that only suits everybody in that this has no unfortunate consequences, because it is intended for that, for the psychoanalytic future itself, namely for all those who are in the same boat.

It nevertheless remains that he completely misconstrues this drumming of experience and that is why up to now it has remained a private domain. I private domain, I mean, for those who are on the same boat. What happens on this boat, in which there are also beings of two sexes, is nevertheless remarkable. The fact is that I sometimes hear on the lips of people who sometimes come to visit me from these boats, I who am, good God, on a different one, that the same rules are not enforced there. Which would be nevertheless rather exemplary if the way in which I got a whiff of it was not so peculiar.

In studying what emerges from a certain style of oversight about what constitutes psychoanalytic discourse, namely the consequences that it has on what I will call the style of what refers to the liaison – since after all the absence of the sexual relationship is very obviously something that does not prevent, far from it, a liaison, but something that gives it its conditions – this might perhaps allow us to glimpse what might result from the fact that psychoanalytic discourse remains lodged on these boats on which it currently sails of which we are entitled to fear it may remain the privilege. It may happen that something of this style will come to dominate the register of liaisons in what is inappropriately called the vast field of the word. And in truth that is not reassuring. It would surely be still more unfortunate if the present state which is such that it is to this oversight that I have just highlighted, that it is from it that there emerges something that is after all not unjustified, namely what one frequently sees on entering psychoanalysis, namely fears manifested sometimes by subjects who only know that it is in short if we are to believe the institutionalised

psychoanalytic silence on this point about the fact that there is no sexual relationship which evokes in these subjects fears, namely, good God, about everything that may restrict, affect, their interesting relations, passionate acts, indeed creative disturbances that this absence of relationship requires.

I would like then before leaving you to make a start on something here. Because what is at stake is an exploration of what I called a new logic – the one that has to be constructed from what is not (*ce qui n'est pas*), from this to posit in the first place that in no case, nothing of what happens from the fact of the agency of language, can end up on the formulation of anything satisfying about the relationship – is there not something to be taken from the fact that in logical exploration, namely in the questioning of what to language, not simply imposes a limit, in its apprehension of the real, but demonstrates in the very structure of this effort to approach it, namely to pick out in its own handling what may be in the real that has determined language, is it not appropriate, probably, appropriate to be induced, that if it is at the point of a certain flaw of the real – properly speaking unsayable because it is what is supposed to determine all discourse – that there lie the lines of this field, which are those that we discover in psychoanalytic experience, is it not the case that everything that logic has sketched out, by relating language to what is posited in the real, does not allow us to locate in certain lines to be invented – and this is the theoretical effort from this ease that an emphasis would find – is it not possible here to find an orientation?

Before leaving you today I will only point out that there are three registers, properly speaking, that have already emerged in the development of logic, three registers around which there will turn this year my effort to develop what is involved in the consequences of the fact, posited in the first place, that there is no sexual relationship.

Firstly, what you have already seen, in my discourse, being emphasised the prosdiorismes. Today, in the course of this first approach I have only encountered the statement of not-all (*pas-tout*). Already last year I believe I have isolated this very precisely for you as (blank) with respect to the function itself that I leave here totally enigmatic, of the function not of the sexual relationship, but of the function that, properly, renders access to it impossible. This is it, to be defined, in short to be defined this year. Imagine enjoyment. Why would it not be possible to write a function of enjoyment? It is by testing it that we will see its sustainability, as I might say, or not.

Already last year I was able to put forward to the function of the not-all and certainly from a point much closer as regards what was involved, all I am doing today is tackling our writing, last year I put forward a negative bar (blank), placed above the term which, in the theory of quantors, designates the equivalent. It is only the equivalent of it. I would say more, the purification with respect to the naïve usage made in Aristotle of the prosdiorism all. The important thing, is that I have put forward before you today the function of the not-all pas-tout, pastout.

Everyone knows that in connection of what is involved in the proposition described in Aristotle as particular, what emerges from it as I might say naively is that there exists something which corresponds to it. When you use some, in effect that seems to be self-evident. It seems to be self-evident but it is not self-evident. Because it is quite clear that, it is not enough to deny the not-all for each of these two pieces, if I can express myself like this, existence is affirmed. Of course, if existence is affirmed, the not-all happens. It is around this it exists that our advance should be brought to bear. Ambiguities have been perpetuated around this for such a long time that people have come to confuse essence and existence and in a more astonishing fashion to believe that it is more to exist than to be. It is perhaps precisely that the it exists, undoubtedly, of men and of women, and in a

word who do nothing more than exist, that is the whole problem. Because after all in the correct usage which is to be constructed, starting from the moment when logic allows itself to disengage a little from the real, the only way to really say that it has with respect to it the power to locate itself, it is starting from the moment that it only guarantees that this part of the real in which there is possible a truth, namely mathematics, it is starting from that moment that one can clearly see that what any it exists designates, is nothing other for example than a number to satisfy an equation.

I am not settling whether number is to be considered or not as real. In order not to leave you in any ambiguity, I am going to tell you that I am deciding that number forms a part of the real. But it is this privilege real in connection with which the handling of the truth makes logic progress. In any case, the mode of existence of a number is not properly speaking something that we can hold to be guaranteed as regards what is involved in existence, every time that the prosdiorism some is put forward.

There is a second plane that I am only pinpointing here as a reference to the field we are going to have to advance in terms of a logic that would be appropriate for us, which is that of modality. Modality, as everyone also knows in opening Aristotle, is what is involved in the possible, of what can be. I will also only indicate here the entrance come out (?) the frontispiece. Aristotle plays with four categories, the impossible that he opposes to the possible, the necessary that he opposes to the contingent. We will see that there is nothing tenable in these oppositions and today I am highlighting simply for you what is involved in a formulation of the necessary which is properly this, not to be able not to be (*ne pas pouvoir ne pas*) not to be able not to be, this is properly for us what defines necessity. Where does that take us? From the impossible, not to be able to be able not to be. Is this the possible or the contingent? But what is certain is that, if you want to take the opposite road, what you find is to be able not to be able

(*pouvoir ne pas pouvoir*), namely that that links up the improbable, the out of date, of what can happen, namely not this impossible to which one would return by looping the loop, but quite simply impotence. This simply to indicate as a frontispiece the second field of questions to be opened up.

The third term, is negation. Does it not already seem possible to you, even though I have already written what completes it in the formulae already noted last year on the board, (blank), namely that there are two quite different forms of negation possible, foreshadowed already by the grammarians. But in truth, since it was in a grammar that claimed to go from words to thought, which says it all, embarking on semantics guarantees shipwreck. The distinction nevertheless made between foreclosure and discordance should be recalled at the start of what we will do this year. Again I must specify – and this will be the object of the talks that follow to give to each one of these chapters the development that it deserves – foreclosure cannot be, as Damourette and Pichon, said be linked in itself to *pas*, point, goutte, mie, namely some of these other accessories that appear to support it in French. Nevertheless it should be remarked that what goes against it, is our precisely, *pas tous* (not all). Our not-all is discordance.

But what is foreclosure? Assuredly it is to be placed in a different register to that of discordance. It is to be placed at the point at which we have written the term described as function. Here is formulated the importance of the said (*du dire*). The only foreclosure is of the said, of this something that exists – existence being already promoted to what assuredly, to what assuredly we have to give it as a status – that something can be said or not. This is what is at stake in foreclosure. And as regards something which cannot be said, undoubtedly, the only conclusion can be a question about the real. For example the function (blank), as I have written it, only means the following that for everything that is involved in the speaking being, sexual relationship poses a question. Here indeed is all of our experience, I mean the

minimum that we can draw from it. That to this question, as to any question – there would be no question if there were no response – that the modes in which this question is posed, namely the responses, are precisely what it is a matter of writing in this function.

This is what is going to allow us without any doubt to make a junction between what has been elaborated in logic and that which can, on the principle, be considered as an effect of the real, on the principle that it is not possible to write the sexual relationship, on this very principle of grounding what is involved in the function, in the function that regulates everything that is involved in our experience, in that by being open to question, the sexual relationship which is not, in this sense that one cannot write it, this sexual relationship determines everything that is elaborated from a discourse whose nature it is to be a broken discourse.

Seminar 2: Wednesday 15 December 1971

I was given this morning, I was brought this morning, I was made a present this morning, of this, a little pen. If you knew how difficult it is for me to find a pen that I like, well, you would sense the pleasure it gave me! And the person who brought it to me who is..., who is perhaps here, I think. It is a person...who admires me as they say. I don't give a damn whether I am admired, what I like is to be treated properly. Only, even among those, that rarely happens. Good! In any case, I used it right away to write and it is from this that my reflections start.

It is a fact that, at least for me, that when I write I find something. That does not mean that if I did not write, I would find nothing. But perhaps I wouldn't notice it. When all is said and done, the idea that I have of this function of writing which, thanks to some little smart alecks is on the agenda, and on which I was not too keen, like that, to take sides, but my hand has been forced; why not?

The idea that I have of it, in short, and this is what perhaps in certain cases gave rise to some confusion, I am going to say it, like that, quite crudely, quite grossly. Because today, precisely, I said to myself that writing, can be very useful to help me find something. But to write something to spare myself here, let us say the weariness, or the risk, or indeed other things, while I still want to speak to you, well then in the end of the day that does not give very good results. It is much better (24) that I have nothing to read to you. Besides, it is not the same sort of writing as the writing in which I make some discoveries from time to time, or the writing in which I prepare what I have to say here. And then there is also writing that is intended for publication, which is again something quite different, which has no relationship, or more exactly which...as regards which it would be unfortunate to believe that what I may have written once in order to talk to you, constitutes a quite acceptable writing and that I would put it into a collection.

So then, I take the risk of saying something like that, which skips a step, the idea that I have about writing, in order to situate it, in order to start from there, we can discuss it later, well anyway, let me say it, two points, *it is the return of the repressed*. I mean that it is in this form, and it is that which perhaps gave rise to some confusion in some of my *Ecrits*. The fact is that if I may sometimes have appeared to help people believe that I identify the signifier and the letter, it is precisely because it is *qua* letter that it perhaps touches me most, me as analyst. It is *qua* letter that, most often, I see the signifier returning, the repressed signifier precisely. So then, the fact that I image this

signifier in the *Agency of the letter*, anyway with a letter, and moreover, I must say that it is all the more legitimate in that... everybody does the same. The first time that we enter properly speaking into logic, I am talking about Aristotle, the *Analytics*, well then, the letter is also used. Not quite in the same way as that in which the letter comes back to the place of the signifier that returns. It comes there to mark a place, the place of a signifier that, for its part, is a signifier which is found, which can at the very least be found everywhere. But anyway we see that the letter is in a way made for that. And we notice that it is all the more made for that in that this is how it first manifests itself.

I do not know if you really appreciate it, but anyway I hope that you will think about it, because it presupposes all the same something that is not said in what I am putting forward. It is necessary that there should be a kind of... transmutation which operates between the signifier and the letter, when the signifier is not there, is missing, is that not so, has cleared off, and we have to ask ourselves how that can happen. But this is not what I intend to get involved with today. I will perhaps go into it another day.

Yes! All the same one cannot say that on the subject of this letter, one does not have to deal with the field that is called mathematics, a place (25) where one cannot write any old thing. Of course, it is not... I am not going to get involved in that either. I would simply point out to you that it is in this that this domain is distinguished and that it is even probably this that constitutes something that I have not yet made an allusion to here, namely, here at the seminar, but that I brought forward in some remarks where, no doubt, some of those who are here attended, namely at Sainte-Anne, when I posed the question of what one could call a *matheme*, positing already that it is the pivotal point of any teaching. In other words that the only teaching is mathematical, the rest is a joke. This stems of course from a different status of writing than the one that I first gave you. And the junction, in the

course of this year of what I have to say to you, is what I will try to bring about.

Meanwhile, my difficulty, the one in short that despite everything I hold onto, I do not know whether that comes from me or whether it is not rather through your assistance, my difficulty is that my matheme, given the field of discourse that I have to set up, well then, it is always close to feckology (*connerie*). That is self-evident with what I told you, is it not, because in short, what is at stake, is that as regards sexual relationships, there are none (*il y en a pas*). This should be written *hi! han!*, and *appatât* with two p's and a circumflex accent, and a *t* at the end. Not to be confused, naturally, with sexual relations, there is nothing but that. But sexual encounters always fail. Even and especially when it is an act. Good, anyway let's leave it.

This is what, all the same, gave rise to a remark, like that, I would like while there is still time, that – because, we would have to see it, we will at least have to see things around it – it is a very good introduction to something essential, it is Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. You have to read it in order to ensure that when I come to it perhaps one day, like that, I don't know, at the start of the month of March, to see in it the relationship with what is our business, it is necessary for you to have read it. Naturally, I am not going to talk to you about it. It is not just that I admire feckology, I would say more, I prostrate myself before it. You for your part you do not prostrate yourselves. You are conscious and organised electors. You do not vote for sods. That is where you miss out. A happy political system ought to allow feckology to have its place. And moreover things only work well when feckology dominates. This having been said, it is not a reason to prostrate oneself.

(26) So then, the text that I will take, is something that is a real exploit, it is an exploit since there are a lot of them which are, as I might say unexploited, it is Plato's *Parmenides*, which will be of use to us. But

in order to understand it properly, to understand the relief of this text which is not stupid, you have to have read Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. And I hope, I hope because when I advise people to read *The critique of practical reason* as a novel, as something which is full of humour, I do not know whether anyone has followed this advice and has succeeded in reading it the way I do. I have not been informed, it is somewhere in *Kant with Sade* and I don't know whether it has been read by anyone. So I am doing the same thing, I am going to say to you, read Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, I hope that like me, you will sense that it is bloody stupid. Anyway, I do not want to spend a long time developing this, like that, these little sideways remarks of course that come to me. It cannot fail to strike anyone who reads it, when they read the text, of course.

What is at stake is not Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, like that, in its essence, in the signified, in everything that has been explained to you starting from this magnificent text, namely, everything that metaphysics has done for this part of the world that we are in. Because everything has come out of that. It is absolutely fabulous. People talk about the end of metaphysics. By what right? As long as this book is there it can always be done! This book, it's a book, it is very different to metaphysics, it is a written book that I spoke about earlier. It has been given a meaning that has been called metaphysics, but it is necessary all the same to distinguish the meaning and the book. Naturally, once it has been given all this meaning, it is not easy to rediscover the book. If you really rediscover it, you will see what, all the same, the people, is that not so, who have a discipline and which exists, and which is called the historical, critical, exegetical method, whatever you like, who are capable of reading the text, obviously, with a certain knack of switching off from the meaning, and when one looks at the text, quite obviously, you start to have some doubts.

I would say that, that of course, this obstacle to everything that has been understood about it, this can only exist at the university level and

that the university has not always existed. Anyway in Antiquity, three or four centuries after Aristotle, people naturally began to express the most serious doubts about this text, because, people still knew how to (27) read, did they not. Doubts were expressed, people said that it was a series of notes, or indeed that it was a pupil who did that, who had pulled things together. I must say that I am not at all convinced. It is perhaps because I have just read a book by someone called Michelet – not our one, not our poet, when I say poet, I mean by that that I am putting him in the very first rank, our one – it's a chap, like that, who was at the University of Berlin, who was also called Michelet, Karl Ludwig who wrote a book on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, precisely on this. Because the historical method that flourished at that time had annoyed him a bit with the doubts expressed, not without foundation because it goes back to the earliest Antiquity; I must say that Michelet does not hold that opinion and neither do I.

Because really – how can I put it – feckology acts as a proof of authenticity. What dominates, is the authenticity, as I might put it, of feckology. Perhaps this term *authentic* which is always a little complicated for us, like that, because of the Greek etymological resonances. there are tongues in which it is better represented, there is *echt*; I do not know how you make a noun out of that, it must be *Echtheit* or something like that. What matter. There is all the same nothing more authentic than feckology. So then, this authenticity, is perhaps not Aristotle's authenticity, but the *Metaphysics*, I am talking about the text, is authentic. It cannot be made up from pieces or from fragments. It is always up to the level of what I now must call, what one is justified to call feckology; that is what feckology is. It is what one gets into when one poses questions at a certain level which is precisely determined by the fact of language, when one approaches its essential function which is to fill everything that is left gaping by the fact that there can be no sexual relationship, which means that no writing can take account of it, in a way, in a satisfying fashion, which is written, *qua* language-product. Because of course, ever since we

have seen gametes, we can write on the board, man equals carrier of spermatozoa, which would be a rather funny definition because he is not the only one among animals to carry those spermatozoa, the spermatozoa of man. Ah! So then let's begin to talk about biology. Why are the spermatozoa of man precisely those that man carries? (28) Because it is the spermatozoa of man that makes the man, we are going around in a circle, huh? But what matter, one can write that.

Only this has no relationship with anything whatsoever that can be written as I might say, that is sensible, namely, that has a relationship to the Real. It is not because it is biological that it is any more real. It is the fruit of the science called biology. The Real is something else. The Real is what commands the whole function of significance. The Real is what you encounter precisely by not being able, in mathematics, to write just anything whatsoever. The Real is what involves the fact that in what is the most common function, you are bathed in significance, you cannot lay hold of all the signifiers at the same time, huh? It is prohibited by their very structure. When you have some, a packet, you do not have others. They are repressed. That does not mean that you do not say them after all! Precisely you say them *inter*, they are interdicted. That does not prevent you from saying them. But you say them censured. Either everything that is psychoanalysis has no sense, is to be thrown in the wastepaper basket, or what I am saying to you here ought to be your primary truth.

So then that's it, that is what we are going to be dealing with this year. Which means that in placing oneself at a certain level, Aristotle or not, and in any case the text is there, authentic, when one places oneself at a certain level, things do not happen just like that. It is thrilling to see someone so sharp, so knowledgeable, so alert, so lucid, starting to flounder in this way, because why? Because he is questioning himself about the principle. Naturally, he has not the slightest idea that the principle is that, that there is no sexual relationship, he has not the slightest idea of it. But we see that it is uniquely at this level that all

the questions are posed. And so then what comes out of him like a bird flying out of a hat where simply he has put a question whose nature he is unaware of, you understand, it is like the conjurer who thinks that he has put ..., anyway he has to put in the rabbit, naturally, which is supposed to come out, and then afterwards what comes out is a rhinoceros! That is exactly how it is for Aristotle. Where is the principle? If it is of the genus, and so then if it is the genus, he becomes enraged because is it a general genus or the most specific genus? It is obvious that the most general is the most essential, but that all the same the most specific, is indeed what gives what is unique in each one.

(29) So then without even noticing it, is that not so, because, thanks be to God, thanks to that they are not confused, that this business of essentiality and this business of unicity, is the same thing, or more exactly it is the homonym of what he is questioning. Thanks be to God, he does not confuse them. It is not from there that he makes them emerge. He says to himself, is the principle the One, or indeed is the principle Being? So then at that moment, it becomes bloody well mixed up, huh? At all costs it is necessary that the One should be and that Being should be one. Anyway here we lose our bearings completely because, precisely, the way to avoid being an imbecile is to severely separate them. This is what we will try to do in what follows. Enough about Aristotle.

I announced to you, I already took this step last year, that this non-relationship, if I can express myself in this way, must be written. It must be written at all costs. I mean to write the other relationship, the one which creates a stopper to the possibility of writing what creates the obstacle. And already last year I put on the board some things which, after all, I do not think it a bad thing to posit in the first place. Naturally there is here something arbitrary. I am not going to excuse myself for sheltering behind mathematicians, mathematicians do whatever they want, and so do I. All the same, simply for those who

need to give me excuses, I can point out that in Bourbaki's *Elements* they begin by sticking down letters without saying absolutely anything about what use they may be. I am talking about these...let us call these written symbols, because they do not resemble even any letter, and these symbols represent something that can be called operations. They say absolutely nothing about which ones are at stake, it is only 20 pages later that one will begin to be able to deduce it retroactively from the way they are used.

I will not at all go that far. I will try right away to question what is meant by the letters that I will have written. But since, after all, I think that for you, it would be much more complicated for me to bring them forward one by one in the measure that they animate, that they take on the value of a function, I prefer to put down these letters as what I will subsequently turn around.

Good then, because you stop hearing me when I turn towards the board, there are two ways, either I will write in silence and afterwards I will speak, or else I continue to speak a little bit if people manage to stay within my range. So then can you hear me?

(30) Already last year I thought I could posit what is at stake, , and that I believe, for reasons which are of the order of an endeavour, to be able to write as in mathematics, namely, the function constituted from the fact that there exists this enjoyment called sexual enjoyment and which is properly what creates an obstacle to the relationship. That sexual enjoyment opens the door to enjoyment for the speaking being, and here you should prick up your ears, you should notice that enjoyment, when we describe it as simply that, it is perhaps enjoyment for some people, I am not eliminating that, but really, it is not sexual enjoyment.

The merit that one can give to the text of Sade is to have called things by their name. To enjoy, is to enjoy a body. To enjoy, is to kiss it, is

to embrace it, it is to cut it into pieces. In law to enjoy something, is precisely that, it is to be able to treat something as a body, namely, to demolish it, is that not so, this is the most regular form of enjoyment, that is why these statements always have a Sadian resonance. You must not confuse Sadian with sadistic. Because, so many imbecilic things have been said precisely about sadism that the term is devalued. I am going no further on this point.

What produces this relation of the signifier to enjoyment, is what I express by this notation x . That means that x , which only designates a signifier, a signifier can be any one of you, any one of you precisely at the level, at the slender level at which you exist as sexed. Its thickness is very slight, as I might say, but its surface is much larger than in animals among whom, when they are not in heat, you cannot distinguish them – what I called in the last seminar the little boy and the little girl – from a lion cub, for example. They completely resemble one another in their behaviour. Not you, because precisely, it is as a signifier that you are sexed.

So it is not a matter of making the distinction, of marking the signifier man as distinct from the signifier woman, to call one x and the other y ; because that precisely is the question, it is how one is distinguished. That is why I put this x in the place of the hole that I make in the signifier, namely, that I put there this x as an *apparent variable*. Which means that every time I am going to have to deal with this sexual signifier, namely, with something that has to do with (31) enjoyment, I am going to have to deal with this x , and there are certain someones, specified among these x 's which are such that one can write, for every x , whatever it may be, $f(x)$. Namely, that their functions what is called in mathematics a function f . Namely, that that, that can be written as $f(x)$.

So then I am going to tell you right away, I am going to enlighten – anyway enlighten...you are the only ones who will be enlightened,

anyway, you will be enlightened for a short moment; as the Stoics say, do they not, when it is daytime there is light. Me for my part I am obviously, as I wrote on the back cover of my *Ecrits*, on the side of the *Lumières*, I enlighten, in hoping for the J-day (*jour J*) of course. Only it is precisely it that is in question, the J-day, will not come tomorrow. The first step to be made in the philosophy of the *Lumières* is to know that day has not dawned and that the day in question is only that of some little lights in a perfectly dark field. As a result you are going to believe that there is daylight when I tell you that means the function called castration. Since you believe you know what is meant by castration, I think then that you are happy. At least for the moment. Only imagine that I, if I write all of that on the board – and I am going to continue to do so – it is precisely, I do not know at all what castration is, and that I hope, with the help of this little interplay of letters, to come to the point that finally, precisely, day will dawn. Namely, that people will know that it is necessary to go through castration and that there will be no healthy discourse, namely, which does not leave in the shade half of its status and of its conditioning as long as people do not know that. And it will only be known after having brought into operation at different levels of topological relations a certain way of changing the letters and of seeing how it is distributed. Until then, you are reduced to little stories like *Daddy says it's going to be cut off*, again as if it were not the most typical form of feckology. While there is somewhere a place where one can say that everything that is articulated in terms of signifier falls under the sway of , of this function of castration.

There is a little advantage in formulating things like that. It may come into your head, precisely that, if earlier, not unintentionally – I am much smarter than I appear to be – I put before you a remark on the subject of prohibition, namely, that all the signifiers cannot be there together, ever. This is perhaps related ... I am not saying that the unconscious equals castration, I am saying that it is closely related to

(32) it. Obviously, to write that like that, , is to write a function with an import, as Aristotle might say, that is unbelievably general.

That this might mean that the relationship to a certain signifier, you see that.... I have not said it yet...but anyway let's say it... a signifier which is for example *a man*...all of that is deadly because there is a lot to be stirred up, and because no one ever did it, before me, there is a risk at every instant that it will come toppling down on our heads. *A man*, I have not said *man*....it's funny, the use like that of the signifier *man*, that one says to fellows, *be a man*. One does not say, *be the man*, one says *be a man*, why? What is curious, is the fact that...you don't often hear it said *be a woman*, but on the contrary people speak about *the woman*, the article. There has been a lot of speculation about the definite article, but, anyway, we will rediscover that when we have to. What I simply want to say, is that what is written as , that means, I am not even saying these particular signifiers but those and a certain number of others that are articulated with them, then, have the effect that one can no longer have at one's disposal the totality of signifiers, and that this is perhaps a first approach to what is involved in castration, from the point of view, of course, of this mathematical function that my writing imitates. In a first moment, that I do not ask any more of you than to recognise that it is imitated. This does not mean that for me who have already reflected on it this does not go much further, anyway, there is a way of writing that for every x, that works.

This is proper to a way of writing which has issued from the first logical outlining for which Aristotle is responsible. This has given this prestige which stems from the fact that logic is incredibly enjoyable (*joussif*), precisely because it is connected to this field of castration.

Anyway! How could you justify, throughout history, that a period that was such a great time, so buzzing with intelligence, also flourishing with productivity, that our Middle Ages could have become so excited

to this point about the business of logic, the Aristotelian one, for it to have put them into such a state? Because it got to the point of making people rise up *en masse*. Because through the logicians, this had theological consequences, in which logic completely dominated theology, which is not the case with us where nothing but theology remains, always there, quite solid, in its imbecility and where logic has slightly evaporated. So that this business is enjoyable. It is moreover from that that there arose all the prestige which, in Aristotle's construction, resonated on this famous *Metaphysics*, where he frees (33) things up with all bugles blowing.

But at this level, because I am not today going to give you a class on the history of logic, if you simply want to go to look for the *First Analytics*, what are called more exactly the *Prior Analytics*, even for those, who of course are most of you, who will never have the courage to read it, even though it is fascinating, I recommend to you all the same, at what is called Book 1 chapter 46, is that not so, to read what Aristotle puts forward about what is involved in negation. Namely, on the difference that there is between saying that *the man is not white*, whether this is indeed the contrary of *the man is white* or as many people believed already at his epoch – it has not stopped for all that – or whether the contrary is to say *the man is non-white*. It is absolutely not the same thing. I think that simply by stating it like that, the difference is tangible. Only, it is very important to read this chapter because, you are told so many things about the logic of predicates, at least those of you who have tried to make contact with the places where people speak about these sorts of things, that you might imagine that the syllogism is entirely concerned with the logic of predicates. This is a little indication that I give on the side. Since I did not want to delay on it, perhaps I will have the time to take it up one day. I want simply to say that there has been, for me to be able to write it in this way, at the beginning of the 19th Century, an essential mutation. It is the attempt of applying this logic to what I earlier pointed out to you had a special status, namely, the mathematical signifier. This gave this

style of writing whose relief and originality I think I will subsequently have the time to make you sense, namely, that it no longer in any way says the same thing as propositions – because this is what is at stake – as function in the syllogism. Namely, as I already wrote it last year, the sign of negation placed at the level where there is the \neg , is a possibility that is open to us precisely by this introduction of quantifiers, in the use of these quantifiers that are more generally called quantificators, and that I prefer to call that – I am not the only one nor the first one – because the important thing is that you should know what is obvious, that this has absolutely nothing to do with quantity. It is called that because people found nothing better, which is a sign.

(34) Anyway, this articulation of quantifiers allows us – something that was never done in this logic of quantifiers and what I am doing, because I consider that, for us, it can be very fruitful – is the function of the not all (*pas-tout*).

There is a set of these signifiers that supplies for the function of the sexed, which supplies there for what is involved in enjoyment, at a place where it is the *not all* that functions in the function of castration. I continue to make use of quantifiers. There is a way in which they are articulated, which is to write \exists , which means *there exists*. There exists what, a signifier.

When you treat as mathematical signifiers those which have a different status than our little sexed signifiers, which have a different status and which bite quite differently on the real, it is necessary perhaps all the same to valorise in your minds that there is at least one thing real, and that it is the only thing of which we are sure, it is number. What people have managed to do with it has not been all that bad! To manage to get to the point of constructing real numbers, namely, precisely those that are not such, it is necessary that number, should be something real. Anyway I am addressing that in passing to

mathematicians who are perhaps going to throw cooked apples at me but what matter, they will do it in private because here I intimidate them.

Let us come back to what we have to say, *there exists*. This reference that I have just made is not simply a digression, it is to tell you that *there exists*, it is here that this has a meaning, has a precarious meaning. It is indeed as signifier that all of you exist. You exist certainly, but that does not amount to much. You exist as signifier. Try hard to imagine yourselves, like that, cleansed of all this business, and you can tell me about it. After the war, we were encouraged to exist in an extremely contemporary way. Well then! Take a look at what remains of it, and you will understand. I would dare to say that people had all the same rather more ideas in their head when they were demonstrating the existence of God. It is obvious that God exists, but no more than you! That does not take us very far. Anyway that to highlight what is involved in existence.

What is it that can interest us about this *there exists* in what concerns the signifier? It is that there exists *at least one* for whom this business of castration does not function, and that is why he has been invented, it is what is called the Father, that is why the Father exists at least as much as God, namely, not all that much. So then naturally there are (35) some little smart alecks – I am surrounded by little smart alecks, those who transform what I put forward into intellectual pollution, as one of my patients put it and I thank her for having handed me that, she discovered that all by herself because she is sensitive, huh, moreover in general it is only women who understand what I say – so then there are some people who have discovered that I said that the Father was a myth because it is obvious in effect that does not work at the level of the Oedipus myth. The Father is not castrated, otherwise how could he have them all? Can you imagine! They only exist there as all (*toutes*), because this is applied to women, the *not-all*, but anyway, I will give a further commentary on that soon. So then starting from this

there exists one, it is starting from there that all the others can function, it is with reference to this exception, to this *there exists*. Only there you are, in clearly understanding that one can write the rejection of the function denied, it is not true that it is castrated, that is the myth. Only, what these little smart alecks have not noticed, is that it is correlative to existence and that that posits *there exists* from *this it is not true* of castration.

Good! It is 2 o'clock. So then I am simply going to note for you the fourth way of making use of what is involved in the negation based on the quantifiers, which is to write, *there does not exist*. There does not exist those who what? Why is it not true that the function is what dominates what is involved in the use of the signifier. Is that what that means? Because earlier existence, I distinguished it for you from exception, and if negation here simply meant without the exception of the signifying position, it can be inscribed in the negation of castration, in the rejection, in the *it is not true* that castration dominates everything.

It is on this little riddle that I will leave you today because, in truth, it is very enlightening for the subject. Namely that negation, is not something that one can use like that in such a simply univocal fashion as is done in the logic of propositions, where everything that is not true is false and where, this extraordinary thing, everything that is not false becomes true. Good! I am leaving things at the moment where time cuts me off as it should do. But I will take things up again the second Wednesday of January at the precise point where I left them today.

Seminar 3: Wednesday 12 January 1972

[Lacan, before beginning, writes on the board]

If we should find in logic, a means of articulating what the unconscious demonstrates in terms of sexual value, we would not be surprised. We would not be surprised, I mean here, even at my seminar, namely, at the basic level of this experience, analysis, set up by Freud and from which there is established a structure of discourse that I have defined. Let us take up again what I said in the density of my first sentence. I spoke about sexual value. I would like to point out that these values are accepted values, accepted in every language, man, woman, this is what is called sexual value. That at the start there is man and woman, is the thesis from which I am starting today, it is first of all a matter of language.

Language is such that for every speaking subject it is either *him* or *her*. That exists in every tongue in the world. It is the principle of the functioning of gender, feminine or masculine. That hermaphrodites exist is simply an opportunity for playing with more or less wit at getting into the same sentence the *him* and the *her*; it (38) would not be described as that, in any case, except to manifest in this way a type of sacred horror. It would not be described as neutral.

Having said this, man and woman, we do not know what they are. For a time, this bipolarity of values was taken as sufficiently supporting, suturing what is involved in sex. It is even from this that there resulted this muted metaphor that for centuries underlay the theory of

knowledge. As I pointed out elsewhere, the world was what was perceived, even glimpsed as being in the place of the other sexual value. What was involved in *nous*, in the power of knowing, was placed on the positive side, on the active side, of what I shall question today by asking what its relationship is to the One.

I said that the step that analysis made us take, reveals to us, in any tightly woven tackling of a sexual approach, the detour, the barrier, the roundabout paths, the chicane, the defile of castration, is there and properly what cannot be done except by starting from the articulation that I have given of the analytic discourse. This is what leads us to think that castration cannot in any way be reduced to an anecdote, to an accident, to the awkward intervention of some threatening remark nor even of censorship.

The structure is logical. What is the object of logic? You know, you know from experience, from having simply opened a book entitled *Traité de logique*, how fragile, uncertain, eluded may be the first phase of any treatise that is entitled in this way, the art of properly conducting one's thinking – conducting it where, and catching it by what end? – or again, one or other recourse to a normality by which the rational is supposed to be defined independently from the real. It is clear that after such an attempt to define as object of logic, what presents itself is of a different order and one that is much more consistent. I would propose if necessary, if I could not simply leave a blank there, but I am not leaving it, I propose, what is produced by the necessity of a discourse. This is no doubt ambiguous, but it is not idiotic because it involves the implication that logic can completely change its meaning according to where each discourse takes its meaning ...

So then, since this is what gives its sense to every discourse, namely, starting from another one, I have been proposing clearly enough for a long time so that it is enough to recall it here, the Real – the category

of the triad from which my teaching started, the (39) Symbolic, the Imaginary and the Real – the Real affirms itself by an effect which is in no way the least, by affirming itself in the impasses of logic. I will explain. The fact is that at the start, in its all conquering ambition, logic proposed for itself nothing less than the network of discourse in so far as it is articulated and that by being articulated, this network ought to close itself into a universe that is supposed to embrace and cover like a net anything that was involved in what was offered to knowledge.

Experience, the experience of logicians, showed things to be different. And without having here to enter into any greater detail, this audience is all the same sufficiently aware of where in our day the logical effort was able to be taken up again, to know that in tackling something that in principle is as simplified as real as arithmetic, it could be demonstrated that in arithmetic, something can always be stated, proposed or not to logical deduction, which is articulated as being ahead of what the premises, the axioms, the fundamental terms, on which the aforesaid arithmetic can be based allows to be presumed as being able to be proved or refuted. Here we put our finger, in a domain that is apparently the most certain, on what is opposed to the whole grasp of discourse, of logical exhaustion, what introduces into it an irreducible gap. This is what we designate as the Real.

Naturally before coming to a certain testing ground of it, which may appear on the horizon, indeed appear uncertain to those who have not carefully circumscribed its final tests, it is enough to recall what naïve discourse is. Naïve discourse proposes from the start, is inscribed as such, as truth. It has always appeared easy to prove to this discourse, the naïve discourse, that it does not know what it is saying, I am not talking about the subject, I am talking about the discourse. This is the dawn – why not say it – of the critique that the sophist, to whoever states what has always posited as a truth, that the sophist demonstrates that he does not know what he is saying. This is even the origin of all

dialectic. And then, it is always ready to be reborn, that someone who comes to bear witness before a tribunal, the very beginning of the art of the advocate is to show him that he does not know what he is saying. But here, we are falling to the level of the subject, of the witness, that it is a matter of getting into a tangle. What I said at the level of the action of the sophist, it is discourse itself that the sophist takes on. This year perhaps, since I announced that I would have to take *Parmenides* into account, we may have to show what is involved in the action of the sophist.

(40) The remarkable thing, in the development to which I referred earlier about the statements of logicians - in which perhaps some will have glimpsed that it is a matter of nothing other than Gödel's theorem about arithmetic - is that it is not starting from the values of truth that Gödel proceeds in his proof that there will always be in the field of arithmetic something that can be stated in the proper terms that it involves, which will not be within the grasp of what posits itself as a means to be held as acceptable in the proof. It is not starting from truth, it is starting from the notion of derivation (*dérivation*). It is by leaving in suspense the true or false value as such that the theorem is demonstrable. And this accentuates what I am saying about the logical gap on this point. A vital point, a vital point in that it illustrates what I intend to put forward, is that if the Real, something that can be easily accessed, can be defined as impossible, this impossible in so far as it proves from the very grasp of discourse, the discourse of the logician, this impossible, this Real ought to be privileged by us.

By us, by whom? By analysts. Because it shows in an exemplary way that it is the paradigm of what puts in question what can emerge from language. There emerge from it, certain types, which I have defined, of discourse, as being what establish a definite type of social bond. But language questions itself about what it establishes as discourse. It is striking that it can only do so by fomenting the shadow of a language which would go beyond itself, which would be a metalanguage. I

often pointed out that it can only do so by reducing itself in its function, namely, by already generating a particularised discourse. I propose, by interesting ourselves in this real in so far as it is affirmed from the logical questioning of language, I propose to find in it the model of what is important for us, namely, of what the exploration of the unconscious shows us which, far from being, as someone like Jung thought he could take up again by getting back into the oldest of ruts, far from being a universal sexual symbolism, is very precisely what I earlier recalled about castration, by simply underlining that it is necessary that it should not be reduced to the anecdote of things that we have heard. Otherwise why isolate it, give it the privilege of some trauma or other, indeed the efficacy of a gap?

While it is only too clear that it has nothing anecdotal about it, that it is rigorously fundamental in what does not establish, but renders (41) impossible the statement of sexual bipolarity as such. Namely as – a curious thing, we continue to imagine it at the animal level – as if each illustration of what in each species, constitutes the tropism of one sex for the other was not as variable for each species as their corporal constitution is. As if, furthermore, we have not learned, already learned for some time, that sex, at the level not of what I have just defined as the real, but at the level of what is articulated within each science, once its object has been defined, that in sex, there are at least two or three stages of what constitutes it, from the genotype to the phenotype, and that after all, after the latest steps taken by biology, do I need to evoke which, it is certain that sex only takes its place as a particular mode in what permits the reproduction of what is called a living body. Far from sex being its typical instrument, it is only one of the forms, and what is too easily confused, even though Freud on this point has given an indication, even if an approximate one, what is too easily confused, is very precisely the function of sex and that of reproduction.

Far from things being arranged so that there is the channel of the gonad on the one hand, what Weissmann calls the *germen*, and the branching of the body, it is clear that, that the body's genotype carries something which determines sex and that that is not enough. From its production as body, from its corporal stasis, it detaches hormones which may interfere in this determination. So then there is not on the one hand sex irresistibly associated, because it is in the body, to life, sex imagined as the image of what in the reproduction of life is supposed to be love, there is not this on the one hand and on the other hand the body, the body in so far as it is protecting itself against death. The reproduction of life as we have come to question it, at the level of the appearance of its first forms, emerges from something which is neither life nor death, which is something that very independently of sex and even on occasions of something already living, something intervenes that we will call the programme or again the codon, as they say in connection with one or other point picked out among the chromosomes.

And then, the life-death dialogue happens at the level of what is reproduced, and to our best knowledge that only takes on a dramatic character starting from the moment when in the equilibrium between life and death enjoyment intervenes. The vital point, the (42) point of the emergence of something which is what all of us here believe more or less we form part of, the speaking being to put it plainly, is this unbalanced relationship to one's own body which is called enjoyment. And this, this has as centre, what it has as a starting point is what analytic discourse shows us, this has as a starting point a privileged relationship to sexual enjoyment. This is why the value of the other partner, the one that I began to designate respectively by man and by woman, is unapproachable by language, very precisely because of the fact that language functions, from its origins, in supplying for sexual enjoyment, that it is in this way that it organises this intrusion, in the corporal repetition of enjoyment.

This is how I am today going to begin to show you, by using logical functions, how it is possible to give to what is involved in castration a different articulation than an anecdotal one. In the line of the exploration of the logic of the Real, the logician began with propositions. Logic only began by having been able, in language, to isolate the function of what are called the prosdiorisms, which are nothing other than *the One, the some, the all* and the negation of these propositions. As you know, Aristotle defined, in order to oppose them the Universals and the Particulars, and within each the affirmative and the negative. What I can mark is the difference that there is between this usage of prosdiorisms and that which, for logical requirements, namely, for an approach which was nothing other than to this Real that is called number, the completely different thing that happened. The logical analysis of what is called the propositional function is articulated by isolating in the proposition, or more exactly from the lack, from the void, from the hole, from the hollow which is created from what ought to function as argument.

Specifically, it will be said that any argument from a domain that we will call as you wish x or the gothic \mathcal{D} , any argument from this domain put at the place that is left empty in a proposition, will satisfy it, namely, will give it the value of truth. This is what is inscribed from what is here on the bottom left, this $\forall x \in \mathcal{D}, P(x)$, it does not matter what the proposition is here, the function takes on a true value for every x of the domain. What is this x ? I said that it is defined as a domain. Does that mean for all that we know what it is? Do we know what a man is by saying that all men are mortal? We learn something about him by the fact of saying that he is (43) mortal and precisely by knowing that for all men it is true. But before introducing the *all men* we only know his most approximate features and they can be defined in the most variable way. This is something, I suppose you have known this for a long time, it is the story that Plato reports, does he not, about the plucked hen. So then, it is a good thing to say that we should question ourselves about the phases of logical articulation, namely, the fact that

what the prosdiorism contains has no meaning before functioning as an argument, that it only takes on one by entering into the function. It takes on the meaning of true or of false. It seems to me that this is designed to make us put our finger on the gap between the signifier and its denotation since meaning, if it is anywhere, is in the function and the denotation only begins from the moment when the argument has begun to be inscribed in it.

This at the same time is to put in question the following, which is different, which is the use of the letter E, also inverted, *E*, *there exists*. There exists something that can be used in the function as argument and take from it or not take from it the value of truth. I would like to get you to sense the difference between this introduction of *there exists* as problematic, namely, putting in question the very function of existence as compared to what was implied by the use of particulars in Aristotle, namely, that the use of *some* seemed to carry with it existence so that since the *all* was supposed to include this *some*, the *all* itself took on a value of what it is not, namely, an affirmation of existence. Given the time we will only be able to see this the next time, there is no status of the *all*, namely, of the Universal, except at the level of the possible. It is *possible* to say among other things that *all humans are mortal*. But very far from settling the question of the existence of the human being, it is first necessary, curiously, that he should be assured that he exists.

What I want to indicate, is the path that we are going to begin the next time. I would like to say that the articulation of these four argument conjunctions – function under the sign of quantifiers, it is from there, and from there alone, that there can be defined the domain from which each of these x's takes on its value. It is possible to propose the function of truth which is the following, namely, that all men are defined by the phallic function, is properly speaking what obturates the sexual relationship.

It is in a different way that there is going to be defined this upside- (44) down letter A described as the universal quantifier, furnished, as I do with the bar that negates it . I put forward the essential feature of the *not all*, , as being that from which there can be articulated a fundamental statement as regards the possibility of the denotation that a variable takes on in function of argument.

The woman is situated from the fact that it is *not all* who can be said in truth in function of an argument in what is stated from the phallic function. What is this *not-all*? It is very precisely what deserves to be questioned as structure because, contrary – this is the very important point, to the function of the particular negative, namely, that there are *some* of them which are not so, it is impossible to extract from the *not-all* this affirmation. It is reserved to the *not-all* to indicate that, somewhere and nothing more, she has a relationship to the phallic function.

Now it is from there that there start the values to be given to my other symbols. This means that nothing can appropriate this *all* to this *not-all*, that there remains between what symbolically grounds the argumentative function of terms, the man and the woman, that there remains this gap of an indetermination of their common relationship to enjoyment. They do not define themselves in the same order with respect to it. What is necessary, as I already said using a term which will play a big role about what we have to say subsequently, what is necessary is that despite this *all* of the phallic function on which the denotation man depends, despite this *all*, there exists, and *there exists*, here means there exists exactly as in the solution of a mathematical equation, *there exists at least one*, *there exists at least one* for whom the truth of its denotation does not depend on the phallic function.

Do I need to dot the i's for you and to say that the Oedipus myth, is what was made up to give you an idea of this logical condition which is that of the approach, of the indirect approach that the woman can

make of man? If the myth were necessary, this myth that one can say is already just by itself extraordinary that stating it does not appear farcical, namely, that of the original man who is supposed to enjoy precisely *what does not exist*, namely, *all the women*, which is not possible, not simply because it is clear that...that people have their limits, but because there is no *all* of women.

So then what is at stake, is of course something else, namely, that at the level of the *at least one* it is possible that there is subverted, that (45) the dominance of the phallic function is no longer true. And it is not because I said that sexual enjoyment is the pivot of all enjoyment that I have for all that sufficiently defined what is involved in the phallic function. Provisionally, let us admit that it is the same thing.

What is introduced at the level of the *at least one* of the father, is this *at least one* which means that it can work without him. That means, as the myth demonstrates – because it is uniquely designed to assure that – namely, that sexual enjoyment will be possible but that it will be limited. Which presupposes for each man, in his relationship with the woman, some mastery, at the very least, of this enjoyment. For the woman *at least that* is necessary, that castration should be possible, it is her approach to the man. And she takes responsibility for the aforesaid castration coming into effect.

And so as not to leave you before having articulated what is involved in the fourth term, we will say what all analysts know well, which is what the x means. I will have to come back to it, of course, because today we were a little delayed. I had counted on covering, like every other time moreover, a much larger field, but since you are patient, you will come back the next time.

What does that mean? The *there exists* as we have said, is problematic. It will be an opportunity, this year, to question what is involved in existence. What exists after all? Has it ever even been

noticed that alongside the fragile, the futile, the inessential, that constitutes the *there exists, there does not exist*, for its part means something? What does it mean to affirm that there does exist an x of such a kind that it can satisfy the function _____, furnished with the bar which establishes it as not being true?

Because this is precisely what I put into question earlier. If *not all women* have to deal with the phallic function, does that mean that there are some of them who have to deal with castration? Well, this is very precisely the point at which the man has access to the woman. I mean, I say it for all the analysts, those who dawdle, those who turn, bogged down in Oedipal relationships on the side of the father. When they cannot get out of what is happening on the side of the father, there is a very precise cause, which is that the subject must admit that the essence of woman is not castration, and in a word, that it is starting from the Real, namely, apart from a (46) little insignificant nothing – I am not saying that by chance – they are not castratable. Because the phallus, and I underline that I have not yet said what it is, well then they do not have it. It is starting from the moment when it is from the impossible as cause that the woman is not essentially linked to castration that access to the woman is possible in its indetermination.

Does this not suggest to you – I am sowing the seed so that it can have its resonance here the next time – that what is on the top left, the *at least one* in question, results from a necessity and it is very properly why it is a matter of discourse. The only necessity is one that is said and this necessity is what renders possible the existence of man as sexual value. The possible, contrary to what Aristotle puts forward, is the opposite of the necessary. And this is why _____ is opposed to _____ which is the mainspring of the possible.

As I told you, the *there does not exist* is affirmed from a statement, a statement of the man, the impossible, namely, that it is from the Real that the woman takes on her relationship to castration. And this is

what gives us the sense of _____, namely, of the *not-all*. The *not-all* means, as it was earlier in the left-hand column, means *not impossible*, it is not impossible that the woman should know the phallic function. What is the *not impossible*? It has a name that the Aristotelian tetrad suggests, but arranged differently here, just as the necessary was opposed to the possible, to the impossible it is the contingent. It is in so far as the woman, presents herself to the phallic function in the manner of an argument in contingency, that there can be articulated what is involved in the sexual value *woman*.

It is two sixteen and I am not going to take things any further today. The cut has been made at a place that is not particularly suitable. I think that I have advanced enough with this introduction of the functioning of these terms to have given you the sense that the use of logic is not unrelated to the contents of the unconscious. It is not because Freud said that the unconscious does not know contradiction that it is not the Promised Land for the conquest of logic. Have we come to this century without knowing that logic can do perfectly well without a principle of contradiction? As regards (47) saying that in everything that Freud wrote on the unconscious, logic does not exist, you would have to have never read the use that he makes of one or other term, *I love her, I do not love him*, all the ways that there are to deny the *I love him*, for example, namely, along grammatical paths, to say that the unconscious cannot be explored along the path of a logic.

Seminar 4: Wednesday 19 January 1972

[Lacan, before beginning, writes on the board]

The art of producing a necessity of discourse

The signification of the phallus

Die Bedeutung des Phallus

The objective genitive: a desire → for a child

The subjective genitive: a desire of a child

The law of retaliation

The art, the art of producing a necessity of discourse, this is the formula that I slipped in the last time, or rather that I proposed about what logic is.

(50) I left you in a hullabaloo, with everyone getting up, by pointing out to you that it is not enough that Freud noted as a character of the unconscious that it neglects, that it holds the principle of contradiction cheap, for logic, as some psychoanalysts imagine, to have nothing to do with its elucidation.

If there is a discourse, a discourse that deserves to be pinpointed from the new institution of analysis, it is more than probable that like every other discourse, its logic ought to be able to be separated out. I remind you in passing that discourse is something about which the least that can be said is that its sense remains veiled. In truth, what constitutes it

is very precisely constructed from the absence of sense. There is no discourse that does not have to receive its sense from another one. And if it is true that the appearance of a new structure of discourse takes on a sense, it is not simply from receiving it. It is just as much so if it appears that this analytic discourse, as I situated it for you last year, represents the final slipping onto a tetrahedric, quadripod structure, as I called it in a text that was published elsewhere, by the last slipping of what is articulated in the name of significance. It becomes tangible that something original is produced from this circle which closes in on itself.

The art of producing, I said, a necessity of discourse, is something other than this necessity itself. Logical necessity, think about it, there cannot be another one, is the fruit of this production. Necessity, *ananke* only begins with the speaking being, and moreover everything that might have appeared to have been produced from it, is always a matter of a discourse. If this indeed is what is involved in tragedy, it is indeed inasmuch as tragedy is concretised as the fruit of a necessity which is nothing other - it is obvious, because it is only speaking beings that are in question - from a necessity I am saying, that is logical. Nothing, it seems to me, appears that can be properly speaking called *ananke* except in the case of the speaking being. This moreover is why Descartes thought of animals as simply automatons. This surely was a something of an illusion, an illusion whose incidence we will show in passing, in connection with what we are going, as regards this art of producing a necessity of discourse, of what we are going, I am going to try to open up.

To produce, in the double sense of demonstrating what was there before, is already why it is not sure that something is not reflected, does not contain the initiation of the necessity that is at stake in a (51) preliminary way, in a preliminary way in animal existence. But since we cannot prove it, what has to be produced should in effect be held as inexistent (*inexistant*) before.

Another meaning, a meaning of produce, the one on which a whole research emanating from the development of an already constituted discourse, described as the discourse of the master, has already put forward under the term of to realise by a work (*réaliser par un travail*). It is indeed in this that there consists what is made of...in so far as I am myself the logician in question, the product of the emergence of this new discourse, that the production in the sense of *proof* can be announced before you here. What must be supposed to have been already there, through the necessity of the proof, a product of the supposition of what was always a necessity, but also precisely bore witness of the no lesser necessity of the work to actualise it.

But, in this moment of emerging, this necessity provides at the same time the proof that it cannot be supposed at first except under the title of the inexistent. What then necessitated it? Not what must be said, it is not this *then*, but what *is*, directly. This *this then* involves in itself too much being. It is directly that there *is* the necessity so that, from the very fact of producing it, it cannot but before being produced, be supposed as inexistent, which means posited as such in discourse.

There is an answer to this question as to all, to every question, for the reason that one only poses it, like every question, when one already has the answer. So then you have it, even if you do not know it. What answers this question *what is necessitated*, etc., is what by doing it logically, even if you do not know it, in your every day pottering around (*bricolage*), this pottering around that a certain number of people here, because they are in analysis with me – there are a certain number, of course not all – come to confide in me without being able to take moreover, without a certain step having been taken, the feeling that by doing it, by coming to see me, they suppose me myself to be this pottering around, to be doing it then, I mean all, even those who do not confide it to me, they already answer. How? By repeating quite simply this pottering around, in an unwearying way. This is what is

called the symptom at a certain level. At another, automatism, a not really suitable term but one whose history can account for it. You realise at every instant, inasmuch as the unconscious exists, the proof by which there is grounded inexistence as preliminary to the necessary. It is the inexistence of what is at the source of the symptom, it is the very consistency of the aforesaid symptom, ever since the term, since it (52) emerged with Marx, took on its value, what is at the source of the symptom. Namely, the inexistence of the truth that it presupposes even though it marks its place. So much for the symptom in so far as it is attached to a truth that is no longer available. In this respect, one can say that, like anyone else who subsists in the modern age, none of you is a stranger to this kind of response.

In the second case, the so called automatism, it is the inexistence of the enjoyment that the automatism described as repetition brings to light from the insistence of this marking time at the door which is designated as an exit towards existence. Only, beyond, it is not altogether what is called an existence that awaits you. It is enjoyment as it operates as necessitated by discourse and it only operates, as you see, as inexistence. Only there you are, by reminding you of these jingles, these refrains as I am doing of course with the aim of reassuring you, to give you the feeling that all I am doing there is bringing along the *speeches* [in English] on that in which...in the name of something which is supposed to have a certain substance, enjoyment, truth, as it happens, as it has been preached in Freud. It nevertheless remains that by sticking to that, you will not be able to refer yourselves to the core of the structure.

What is the necessity, I said, that is established from a supposition of inexistence? In this question, it is not what is inexistent that counts, it is precisely the supposition of inexistence, which is only the consequence of the production of the necessity. Inexistence only becomes a question by having already a double answer certainly, of enjoyment and truth, but it already does not exist. It is not through

enjoyment nor through truth that inexistence takes on its status, is able to inexist, namely, come to the symbol that designates as inexistence, not in the sense of not having existence, but of only being existence because of the symbol which would make it in-existent, and which for its part exists. It is a number, as you know, generally designated by zero. Which clearly shows that inexistence is not the nothingness that one may think, because what could come out of it, for belief, belief in itself. There are not an endless number of beliefs. God made the world from nothing, it is not surprising that this is a dogma. It is belief in itself, it is this rejection of the logic that is expressed as – one of my pupils discovered that one day all by himself – and which is expressed in accordance with the formula that he gave for it, I thank him, “Surely (53) not, but all the same”. That can in no way be enough for us. Inexistence is not nothingness. It is, as I have just told you, a number that forms part of the series of whole numbers. No theory of whole numbers if you do not take into account what is involved in zero. This is what was noticed, in an effort which certainly not by chance is precisely contemporaneous, a little earlier certainly, than the research of Freud. It is the one that was inaugurated by logically questioning what is involved in the status of numbers by someone called Frege, born eight years before him and died some 14 years before.

This is destined to be extremely important in our questioning of what is involved in the logical necessity of the discourse of analysis. It is very precisely what I highlighted about something that was in danger of escaping you in the reference with which just now I illustrated as application, in other words the functional usage of inexistence, that it only happens in the after-effect from which there first arises necessity. Namely, from a discourse in which it manifests itself before the logician, as I told you, comes to it himself as a secondary consequence, namely, at the same time as inexistence itself. The end of this necessity is to reduce itself where it manifested itself before it, I repeat, proving it this time at the same time as I am stating it.

This necessity is repetition itself, in itself, by itself, for itself. Namely, that by which life shows itself to be only necessitated by discourse. Because all it finds to resist death, namely, its allotment of enjoyment, is nothing other than a device, namely, the recourse to the same thing that produces an opaque programming which is something quite different, as I underlined, than the power of life, love or some other nonsense. It is this radical programming which is only beginning for us...to emerge a little from the darkness through what the biologists are doing with bacteria and whose consequence is precisely the reproduction of life.

What discourse does, in demonstrating this level where nothing of a logical necessity is manifested except in repetition, appears here to rejoin as a semblance what is carried out in a message that it is in no way easy to reduce to what we know about this term and which is of the order of what is situated at the level of a short combinatorial whose modulations are those which go from desoxyribose nucleic acid to (54) what is transmitted of it at the level of proteins thanks to the goodwill of some intermediaries that are particularly described as enzymes or catalysers. That this should be what allows us to refer to what is at stake in repetition, can only be done by elaborating precisely what is involved in the fiction through which something appears to us suddenly to be reflected back from the very foundation of what brought it about that one day there was a living being capable of speaking.

There is in effect one among all the others which does not escape from a particularly stupid enjoyment that I would describe as local in the accidental sense, and which is the organic form that sexual enjoyment has taken on for him. He colours with enjoyment all his elementary needs, which are only, among other living beings, a clogging up with respect to enjoyment. If the animal feeds regularly, it is quite clear that it is not to know about the enjoyment of hunger. The one who speaks

then colours – and this is striking, it is Freud's discovery – all his needs, namely, that by which he protects himself against death.

It must in no way be believed nevertheless that because of that sexual enjoyment is life. As I told you earlier, it is a local, accidental, organic production and very precisely linked to, centred on, what is involved in the male organ. Which is obviously particularly grotesque.

Detumescence in the male has generated this special type of appeal which is articulated language thanks to which there is introduced, in its dimensions, the necessity of speaking. It is from this that there springs up again logical necessity as a grammar of discourse. You see how slight it is! In order to notice it, it required nothing less than the emergence of analytic discourse.

The meaning of the phallus, in my *Ecrits* somewhere, I took care to place this statement that I had made, very precisely at Munich, sometime before 1960, it is some time ago; underneath I wrote *die Bedeutung des Phallus*. It was not for the pleasure of making you believe that I know German. Even though, even though it is in German, because it was at Munich that I thought I ought to articulate the re-translated text that I gave there. It seemed opportune to me to introduce under the term of *Bedeutung* what in French, given the degree of culture that we had arrived at at that time, I could only decently translate by *signification*. *Die Bedeutung des Phallus*, was already, was there already, but the Germans themselves, given that they were analysts – I mark the distance by a little note that is reproduced at the beginning of the text – the Germans had not of course, I am talking about analysts, we were just coming out of the war and one cannot say that analysis had made much progress during it – the Germans understood not an iota. All of that seemed to them, as I underline at the final term of this note, properly speaking unheard of. It is curious moreover that things have changed to the point that what I talk about today may have become for a certain number of you already, and quite properly so, common currency.

Die Bedeutung, nevertheless, was indeed referred to the use, to the use that Frege makes of this word by opposing it to the term of *Sinn*, which corresponds very exactly to what I thought I ought to recall to you in my statement today, namely, the sense, the sense of a proposition. One could express differently – and you will see that it is not incompatible – what is involved in the necessity which leads to this art of producing as necessity of discourse. One could express it differently. What is necessary for a word to denote something? Such is the sense – pay attention, there are little changes beginning – such is the sense that Frege gives to *Bedeutung*, *denotation*.

It will be clear to you, if you don't mind opening this book called the *Foundations of Arithmetic*, and that a certain Claude Imbert, who formerly, if I remember correctly, came to my seminar, has translated, which means it is entirely accessible for you, within hand's reach. It will appear clear to you, as might have been anticipated, that for there to be denotation without any doubt, that it would be no bad thing to address oneself first of all, timidly, to the field of arithmetic as it is defined by whole numbers. There is someone called Kronecker who could not prevent himself, so great is the need for belief, from saying that whole numbers, were created by God. As a result of which, he added, man has to do all the rest and, since he was a mathematician, the rest, was for him everything that remained in terms of number. It is precisely in so far as nothing is sure in things of this order, namely, that a logical effort can at least attempt to account for whole numbers, that I brought the work of Frege into the field of your consideration.

Nevertheless, I would like to pause for a moment, if only to encourage you to re-read him, about what this statement that I produced from the (56) angle of *The meaning of the phallus*, in which you will see that at the point that I have got to – anyway this is a little merit that I am proud of – there is nothing to be corrected, even though at that time, no one really understood anything about it, as I was able to see on the

spot. What is meant by *The meaning of the phallus*? It deserves to be dwelt on, because after all, in such a determinative liaison, you must always ask yourself if it is a genitive that is described as objective or subjective, of a kind whose difference I illustrate by the rapprochement... of two directions. Here the direction marked by two little arrows:

a desire for a child, it is a child that one desires, objective.

a desire of a child, it is a child who desires, subjective.

the law of retaliation.

You can practice it, it is always very useful. *The law of retaliation* that I write underneath without adding any commentary can have two senses; the law which is that of the talion, I establish it as law or what the talion articulates as law, namely, eye for eye, tooth for tooth. It is not the same thing. What I would like to point out to you, is that the meaning of the phallus – and what I will develop will be designed to make you discover it – in the sense that I have just specified the word direction, namely the little arrow, is neutral. The meaning of the phallus is something very clever in that what the phallus denotes is the power of meaning.

So then it is not this x , an ordinary type of function, it is this that means that on condition of making use of it, to place in it as argument, this something which has no need at first to have any sense, on this single condition of articulating it with a prosdiorism, there exists either all, on this condition, simply according to the prosdiorism, itself produces from the search for logical necessity and nothing else, what is pinpointed by this prosdiorism will take on the meaning of man or of woman according to the prosdiorism chosen. Namely, either the *there exists*, or the *there does not exist*; either the *all*, or the *not-all*.

Nevertheless it is clear that we cannot fail to take account of what is produced in terms of a logical necessity, by confronting it with whole numbers, for the reason from which I started, that this necessity (57) subsequently implies the supposition of what is inexistent as such. Now, it is remarkable that it should be in questioning the whole number, and having tried to find its logical genesis, that Frege was led to nothing other than grounding the number 1 on the concept of inexistence.

It must be said that, in order to have been led there, we have to believe that what was up to then current about what grounds the 1, did not give him satisfaction, the satisfaction of a logician. It is certain that for some time, people were satisfied with very little. People believed that it was not difficult; there are many of them, there are a lot, they can be counted. This posits of course, insoluble problems for the advent of the whole number. Because if it is only a matter of what it is agreed to do, of a sign to count them – that exists, I have just been brought like that a little book to show me how the...there is an Arabic poem about it, a poem that indicates like that, in verse, what one has to do with one's small finger, then with index finger, and with the ring finger and some others to get across the sign of number. But precisely, because one must make a sign, it is because the number must have a different species of existence than simply of designating, even if it were each time with a bark, each one for example of the people here present. In order for it to have the value of 1, it is necessary, as has always been noted, for them to be stripped of all their qualities without exception. So then what remains? Of course, there have been some philosophers called empiricists to articulate that by making use of tiny objects like little balls, a rosary beads of course, that is the best thing.

But this does not resolve in any way the question of the emergence as such of the 1. This was clearly seen by someone called Leibniz who believed that he ought to start, since it forced itself on him, from identity, namely to posit at first:

$$2 = 1 + 1$$

$$3 = 2 + 1$$

$$4 = 3 + 1$$

and he believed he had solved the problem by showing that by reducing each one of these definitions to the preceding one you could prove that 2 + 2 make 4.

There is unfortunately a little obstacle that the logicians of the 19th (58) Century quickly noted. His proof is only valid on condition of ignoring the brackets that are quite necessary to be put around $2 = 1+1$, namely, the brackets enclosing the $1+1$. And that it is necessary, which is something he neglects, that it is necessary to posit the axiom that $a + b$, in brackets $+ c = a +$, open brackets, $b + c$, close brackets:

$$[(a + b) + c = a + (b + c)]$$

It is certain that this carelessness on the part of a logician so truly a logician as Leibniz, certainly deserves to be explained and that from some angle, something justifies it. In any case, the fact that it is omitted is enough to have the Leibniz genesis rejected, besides the fact that it disregards any foundation for what is involved in the 0.

All I am doing here is pointing out to you from what notion of the concept, of the concept supposed to denote something, they have to be chosen for it to hang together. But after all, one cannot say that the concepts, those that he chooses, the satellites of Mars indeed of Jupiter, do not have a sufficient import of denotation for one not to be able to say that a number is associated with each of them. Nevertheless, the subsistence of the number can only be assured from the equinumericity of objects that a concept subsumes.

The order of numbers from then on can only be given through this trick which consists in preceding exactly in the contrary direction to what Leibniz did, by taking 1 from each number, by saying that the predecessor, is the one - the concept of number, issuing from the concept – *the preceding number*, is the one that, setting aside one or

other object that acted as a support in the concept of a certain number, is the concept which, setting aside this object, finds itself identical to a number which is very precisely characterised by not being identical to the preceding one, let us say, to the nearest 1.

This is how Frege regresses to the conception of the concept *qua* empty, which does not include any object, which is that not of nothingness since it is a concept, but of the inexistent. And that it is precisely by considering what he believes to be nothingness, namely, the concept whose number would be equal to zero that he believes he can define from the formulation of the argument *x different to x*, $x \neq x$, namely, different to itself. Namely, something that is assuredly an extremely problematic denotation because, what would we reach, if it is true that the symbolic is what I say it is, namely, entirely in the (59) word, that there is no meta-language, from where can one designate, in language, an object that one can be assured is not different to itself? Nevertheless, it is on this hypothesis that Frege constitutes the notion that the concept *equal to 0*, gives a different number – in accordance with the formula that he had first given as that for the preceding number – gives a different number from what is involved in 0 defined, held, and well and truly as nothingness, namely, of that to which there is appropriate not equality to 0, but *the number 0*.

So then, it is with reference to this that the concept to which the number 0 corresponds rests on the fact that it is a matter the identical to 0, but not identical to zero. [?] That the one that is quite simply identical to 0 is held to be its successor and as such equal to 1. The thing is based, is based on the fact which is the starting point of what is called equinumericity, it is clear that equinumericity of the concept under which there falls no object in terms of inexistence is always equal to itself. Between 0 and 0, no difference. It is the *no difference* by means of which, from this angle, Frege intends to ground the 1. And this in any case, this conquest remains precious for us in so far as it gives us the 1 as being essentially – listen carefully to what I am

saying, the signifier of inexistence. Nevertheless is it sure that the 1 can be grounded on it? Assuredly the discussion could be pursued along purely Fregian paths.

Nevertheless, for your enlightenment, I thought I should reproduce something that may be said not to have any relationship with the whole number, namely, the arithmetical triangle. The arithmetical triangle is organised in the following way. It starts, as a given, from the succession of whole numbers. Each term, by being written down, is constituted with no other commentary – it is a matter of what is under the bar – by addition – you will note that I have not yet spoken ever about addition, any more than Frege – by the addition of two figures, the one that is immediately on its left and the one which is on its left and above. You will easily verify that it is a matter here of something that for example gives us, when we have a whole number of points that we will call monads, which gives us

$$\begin{array}{r}
 0\ 1\ 0\ 0\ 0\ 0\ 0\ 0 \\
 \hline
 0\ 1\ 1\ 1\ 1\ 1\ 1\ 1 \\
 0\ 1\ 2\ 3\ 4\ 5\ 6
 \end{array}$$

automatically what is involved, given the number of these points, of the number of the subsets that can, in the set that includes all these points, be formed by any number whatsoever, chosen as being underneath the whole number that is involved.

Thus for example if you take here the line of the dyad

$$0\ 1\ 3\ 6\ 10\ 15$$

in meeting with a dyad, you immediately get that there will be in the dyad two monads. A dyad is not difficult to imagine, it is a stroke with two terms, a beginning and an end.

And if you question yourselves about what is involved – let us take something more amusing – in the tetrad, you will obtain a tetrad,

0 1 5 15

you will get something which is four possibilities of triads, in other words in order to image for you, four faces of the tetrahedron:

0 1 4 10 20

you subsequently get six dyads, namely, the six sides of a tetrahedron

0 1 3 6 10 15

and you get the four vertices of a monad:

0 1 2 3 4 5 1

To summarise:

0 1 2 3 4

0 1 3 6

0 1 4

0 1 5 15 tetrad



column

This to give support to something that only has to express itself in terms of subsets. It is clear that you see that in the measure that the whole number augments, the number of subsets that can be produced within it goes way beyond, and very quickly, the whole number itself:

0 1 4 10 20.

This is not what interests us. But simply that it was necessary, so that I could account by the same procedure, for the series of whole numbers that I should start from what is very precisely at the origin of what (61) Frege did, Frege who comes here to designate the fact that the number, the number of objects that are appropriate to a concept in so far as the concept of number, of the number N specifically, will be by itself what constitutes the succeeding number. In other words, if you count starting from 0, 0 1 2 3 4 5 6, that will always give what is here, namely, 7, 7 what? Seven of this something that I called inexistent, because it is the foundation of repetition.

Again it is necessary, for the rules of this triangle to be satisfied, that this 1 which is repeated here should emerge from somewhere. And since we have everywhere framed this triangle with a 0

0 1 1 1 1 1 1

there is then here a point, a point to be situated at the level of the line of 0, a point which is *one* and which articulates what? What it is necessary to distinguish in the genesis of 1, namely the distinction precisely between *no difference* between all these 0's, starting from the genesis, 010000, of what is repeated, but is repeated as inexistent.

Frege then does not account for the sequence of whole numbers, but for the possibility of repetition. Repetition is posited at first as the repetition of 1, *qua* the 1 of inexistence. Is there not – here I can only put forward the question – something which suggests that by this fact, that there is not a single 1, but the 1 that is repeated and the 1 that is posited in the sequence of whole numbers. In this gap we have to find something which is of the order of what we have questioned by positing as a necessary correlate of the question of logical necessity the foundation of inexistence?

Seminar 5: Wednesday 9 February 1972

[Lacan, before beginning, writes on the board]

I ask you

To refuse

What I am offering you... because: it is not that

(*Je te demande/ de me refuser/ ce que je t'offre / parce que: c'est pas ça.*)

You love lectures, that is why I asked, yesterday evening, in a little note that I brought him about 10.15, I asked my friend Roman Jakobson, who I hoped would be present here, I asked him then to give you the lecture that he did not give you yesterday, because after having announced – I mean having written on the blackboard something equivalent to what I have just done here – he thought he should remain at the level of what he called generalities, thinking no (64) doubt that this is what you would prefer to hear, namely, a lecture. Unfortunately - he telephoned me early this morning – he was caught for lunch with some linguists, so that you will not have a lecture.

Because in truth I do not give them. As I said elsewhere very seriously, I amuse myself. Serious or funny amusements. Elsewhere, namely at Sainte-Anne, I tried some funny amusements. No need to talk about it. And if I said – I said over there – that it is also an amusement, here I say that I stick to the serious, but it is all the same an amusement. I put that in relationship moreover, instead of funny amusement, with what I called *la lettre d'a-mur*.

Well then here is one, it is typical. *I am asking you to refuse me what I am offering you* – here a pause because I hope that there will be no need to add anything for that to be understood, that is very precisely the *lettre d'a-mur*, the true one, - *to refuse what I am offering you* – one can complete it for those who by chance have never understood what is a *lettre d-amur* – *to refuse what I am offering you because it is not that (parce que ça n'est pas ça)*.

You see I slipped up, I slipped up because good God it is to you that I am talking, you who love lectures, *ça n'est pas ça*. There is an *n* added on. When the *n* is added on there is no need for it to be an expletive for it to mean something, namely, the presence of the enunciator, the

true one, the correct one. It is precisely because the enunciator is not supposed to be there that the statement would be full and that it ought to be written *parce que*, colon, *c'est pas ça*.

I said that here the amusement was serious, what can that mean? In truth I looked, I informed myself about how *serious* was said in different languages. For the way in which I conceive of it, I found none better than our own which lends itself to wordplay. I do not know the others well enough to have found what, in the others, would be the equivalent, but in ours, *sérieux*, as I hear it, is *sériel* (serial). As you already know I hope, a certain number of you, without me having to tell you, the serial principal, is this sequence of whole numbers that people have found no other way to define than by saying that a property is transferred there from n to $n+1$ which can only be the one that is transferred from 0 to 1, reasoning by recurrence or mathematical induction, other people have said. Only there you are, this indeed is (65) the problem that I am trying to approach in my last amusements. What indeed can be transferred from 0 to 1? There's the rub! It is nevertheless what I have given myself as an aim to circumscribe this year...or worse. I will not advance today into this interval which to begin with is bottomless, of what is transferred from 0 to 1. But what is sure and what is clear, is that by taking things 1 by 1, you must have a sound heart. Because whatever effort has been made to make logical the succession, the series of whole numbers, nothing better has been found than to designate the common property in it, it is the only one, as being that of what is transferred from 0 to 1.

In the meantime, you have been, those of my School, advised not to miss out on the light that Roman Jakobson could bring you about what is involved in the analysis of the tongue, which is in truth very useful in order to know where I am now bringing the question. It is not because I started from it, in order to get to my present amusements, that I should see myself as bound to it. And what assuredly struck me among other things, in what Roman Jakobson brought you, is

something concerning this point of history that it is not just today that the tongue, *lalangue*, is on the agenda. He spoke to you among others, about a certain Boetius Daccus, very important, he underlined, because he articulated *suppositiones*. I think that at least for some people, that will have echoed what I have been saying for a long time about what is involved in the subject, in the subject radically, what the signifier supposes. Then he told you that it happened that from a particular time on this Boetius, this Boetius who is not the one that you know, that one extracted images from the past. He is called Daccus, namely a Dane, he is not the right one, he is not the fellow in the dictionary, he told you that he disappeared like that because of a little question of deviationism. In fact he was accused of Averroism, and, at that time, one cannot say that this could not be forgiven, but this might not be forgiven when people had their attention drawn by something which had a rather solid appearance, as for example speaking about *suppositiones*. So that it is not quite correct to say that the two things are unrelated and that is what strikes me. What strikes me is that for centuries, when you touched on *lalangue* you had to be careful. There is a letter which only appears altogether in the margin of phonetic composition, is that not so, that is pronounced *hache*, in French, *H*. Do not touch the *H*, this was considered prudent for centuries when people touched on the tongue. Because it happened that throughout the (66) centuries, when people touched the tongue, this created in the public an effect that was different to amusement.

One of the questions that it would be no harm for us to look at, like that, right at the end, even though here where I am amusing myself in a funny fashion, I gave an indication of it in the shape of this famous wall (*mur*), it would perhaps be no harm for us to glimpse why, now, linguistic analysis forms part of scientific research. What can that mean? The definition – I am letting myself go a little – the definition of scientific research, is very exactly the following – you do not have to search too far. It is a research that is well named in that it is not to

find that there is a question, in any case nothing that upsets precisely what I was talking about earlier, namely, the public.

I received recently from a distant country – I do not want to make trouble for anyone, so then I will not tell you from where – a question about scientific research, it was a “Committee of scientific research on arms”. Textually! Someone who is not unknown to me – that indeed is why I was consulted about him – was putting himself forward to do some research on fear. What was involved in that, was to give him an advance which, translated into French francs, ought to be slightly more than a million old francs, thanks to which he would spend – it was written in the text, the text itself, I cannot give it to you, but I have it – it was a matter of him spending three days in Paris, twenty eight in Antibes, nineteen in Douarnenez, at San Montano which, I think – Antonella, are you there? San Montano there ought to be a rather pleasant beach there unless I’m mistaken? No, you don’t know? I think it’s close to Florence, anyway I don’t know – at San Montano 15 days, and afterwards three days in Paris.

Thanks to one of my pupils I was able to summarise my judgement in these terms *I bowled over with admiration* [in English]. Then I put a big cross on all the detail of the judgements that were demanded of me on the scientific quality of the programme, its practical and social resonances, the competence of the person involved and all the rest of it. This story has only a moderate interest, but it is a commentary on what I was pointing out, it does not get to the foundation of scientific research. But there is something all the same that it denotes, and this is perhaps the only interesting thing in the business, which is that I had first of all proposed, like that, on the telephone, to the person who (67) thank God, corrected me *I bowled over*. Naturally, you do not know what that means. I did not know either. Bowl, b.o.w.l., is a *boule*. So then I am bowled. I am like a whole set of nine-pins when a good bowl knocks them over. You can believe me if you like, what I proposed on the telephone, I who did not know the expression *I bowled*

over was *I'm blown over*. I am winded. But it is naturally completely wrong, because *blow* which means in effect *souffler*, this is what I had found, *blow*, this gives *blown*, it does not give *blowed*. So then if I said *blowed*, is it because without knowing it I knew that it was *bowled over*?

Here we are getting into paraprases, namely, into serious things. But at the same time, it is designed to indicate to us that, as Plato had already glimpsed in *Cratylus*, that the signifier is arbitrary. It is not as certain as all that, because after all, *bowl* and *blow*, huh, it is not for nothing that they are so close, because it is precisely like that that I missed the *bowl* by a hair's breath. I do not know how you would describe this amusement, but I find it serious. As a result, we come back to linguistic analysis, about which certainly, in the name of research, you will hear spoken about more and more. It is difficult to find one's way there where the split is worth the trouble.

You learn things; for example that there are parts of discourse. I avoided them like the plague, I mean burdening myself with them, in order not to get you stuck in them. But anyway, since certainly research is going to make itself heard – since it makes itself heard elsewhere – I am going to start from the verb. You are told that the verb expresses all sorts of things and it is difficult not to get bogged down between action and its contrary. There is the intransitive verb which obviously here creates an obstacle, the intransitive becomes then very difficult to classify. To stick to what is most emphasised in this definition, people will talk to you about a binary relationship in the typical verb where, it must be said, the same sense of the verb is not classified in the same way in every tongue. There are tongues in which they say *the man beats his dog*. There are tongues where they say *there is a beating of the dog by the man*. This is not essential; the relation is always binary. There are tongues where one says *the man loves his dog*. Is it always as binary when in this tongue – because here there are differences – it is expressed in the following way: *the*

man has love for his dog (l'homme aime au chien), to say not that he (68) *likes* it, that he loves it like a trinket, but that he has real love for his dog? *Aimer à quelqu'un* has always delighted me. I mean that I regret speaking a tongue in which one says *I love a woman*, as one says *I beat her*. *Aimer à une femme* would seem more appropriate to me. This even gets to the stage, I noticed, because we are still talking about parapraxes, let us continue – I wrote *tu ne sauras jamais combien je t'ai aimé* (you will never know how much I loved you) I did not put an *e* at the end, which is a slip, a spelling mistake if you like, undoubtedly. But it was by reflecting on it precisely that I said to myself that if I wrote it like that, it is because I must have sensed *j'aime à toi*. Anyway, it's personal.

In any case, one distinguishes with care from these first verbs those that are defined by a ternary relation *I give you something*. That can go from a rap on the nose to a trinket, but anyway there are three terms here. You will have noted that I have always used the *je te* (I you) as an element of the relation. This already draws you in the direction which indeed is the one that I want to lead you in, since there, as you see, there is something of the *I ask you to refuse me what I am offering you*. This is not self-evident, because one can say that *the man gives the dog a little caress on his forehead*. This distinction between the ternary relation and the binary relation is altogether essential. It is essential in that when the function of the word has been schematised for you, people talk to you about small d and capital D, from the addresser to the addressee (*du destinateur et du destinataire*). To which there is added the relation that, in the present schema, you identify to the message and certainly it is underlined that the addressee must possess the code for that to work. If he does not have it, he will have to master it, he will have to decipher it.

Is this way of writing satisfactory? I claim, I claim that the relation, if there is one – but you know that this can be put in question – if there is one that passes through speech, implies that there should be inscribed a

ternary function, in other words that the message should be distinguished here

(69) and that it nevertheless remains that, there being there an addresser, an addressee and a message, what is stated in a verb is distinct, namely that the fact that what is stated in a verb is distinct. Namely, that the fact that what is at stake is a demand, *d [sic]* here deserves to be isolated. To group the three elements, it is precisely in this way that it is obvious, and obvious only when I use *I and you*, when I use *you and me*. The fact is that this *I* and this *you*, this *you* and this *me* are precisely specified from the statement of the word. Here there can be no kind of ambiguity.

In other words, there is not only what is vaguely called the code, as if it were only there at one point; grammar forms part of the code, namely, this tetrahedric structure that I have just marked as being essential to what is said. When you trace out your objective schema of communication, the emitter, the message and at the other end the addressee, this objective schema is less complete than grammar, which forms part of the code. This indeed is why it was important that Jakobson put forward for you this generality that grammar, also, forms part of the meaning and that it is not for nothing that it is used in poetry.

This is essential, I mean to specify the status of the verb, because soon you will be saddled with substantives according to whether they have more or less weight. There are what I might call heavy substantives that are called concrete. As if there were other things besides substitutes that are substantive. But anyway, substance is necessary, while what I think it is urgent to mark first of all, is that all we are dealing with are subjects. But let us leave things there for the moment.

A critique that curiously only comes to us in a reflected way, from the attempt to logicise mathematics, is formulated in the fact, in the fact where you will recognise the import of what I am putting forward. It is that, by taking the proposition as a propositional function, we will have to mark the function of the verb and not what one makes of it, namely, a function of the predicate. The function of the verb, let us take here the verb *demander, je te demande* (to ask, I ask you) F, I open the brackets, x, y is I and you: F (x, y) what do I ask you? To refuse, another verb. Which means that instead of what may be here this little caress of the dog's head, namely z, you have for example f and again x, y, F (x, y, f (x, y)). And are you forced to end here, namely, to put here z? This is no way necessary because you can very well have, for example I put a , let us not put because later that will cause (70) confusion. I put here a small , and again x, y, what I offer you, as a result of which, we have to close three brackets:

$$F(x, y, f (x, y, (x, y))).$$

What I am leading you to is the following. Not to know, as you are going to see, how meaning arises, but how it is from a knot of meaning that the object arises, the object itself and to name it, since I named it as I could, the *little o-object*.

I know that reading Wittgenstein is very captivating. Wittgenstein, throughout his whole life, with admirable asceticism, stated something that I concentrate as what one cannot say, well then, let us not talk about it. As a result he could say almost nothing. At every instant, he got down from the footpath and he was in the stream, so that he got up again on the footpath, the footpath defined by this requirement. It is assuredly not because in short my friend Kojève had explicitly formulated the same rule – God knows he did not observe it – but it is not because he formulated it that I believe myself obliged to remain at

the demonstration, the living demonstration that Wittgenstein gave of it.

It is very precisely, it seems to me, what one cannot speak about that is at stake when I designate by *it is not that* which just by itself justifies a demand such as *to refuse what I am offering you*. And nevertheless there is something that may be tangible to everybody, it is indeed this *it's not that*. We are confronted with it at every instant of our existence. But let us try then to see what it means. Because this *it's not that*, we could leave it at its place, at its dominant place, as a result of which obviously we would never see the end of it.

But instead of cutting it, let us try to put it in the statement itself. It is not that – what? Let us put it in the simplest way, here the *I*, here the *you*, here, *I ask you, D, to refuse me, capital R, what I am offering you, capital O* and then there is the loss, capital C.

(71) But if it is not what I am offering you, if it is because *it is not that* that I ask you to refuse it, it is not what I am offering you that you refuse, so then I have no need to ask you for it. And you see that here also that is cut up – into R,

as a result of which, if I do not need to ask you to refuse it, why do I ask you? It is cut also here – in D, as a result of which, to take it up in a more correct schema, where the *I* and the *you* are here, the *demand*,

here, the *refuse*, here, and the *offer* here, namely, a first tetrad which is the following: *I ask you to refuse*; a second: *to refuse what I am offering you*. Perhaps what will not surprise us, we can see in the distance that there is between the two distinct poles of the demand and the offer that it is perhaps there that there lies the *it's not that*.

(72) But, as I have just explained to you, if we have to say here that this space that there is, that there may be between what I have to ask you and what I can offer you, from that moment on, it is also impossible to sustain the relation of the demand to refuse, and of the to refuse to the offer.

Do I need to give a detailed commentary on it? It might not be any harm all the same. For this reason first of all, that you might be asking yourselves how it happens that, after all, I am giving you a spatial schema for all of that. It is not space that is at stake. It is space in so far as we project into it our objective schemas. But that already indicates to us enough about it. Namely, that our objective schemas determine perhaps something about our notion of space, I would say again, before it is determined by our perceptions. I know we are inclined to believe that it is our perceptions that give us the three dimensions. There was someone called Poincaré who is not unknown to you, who made a very nice attempt to prove it. Nevertheless this reminder of what is preliminary to our objective schemas will perhaps be no harm to appreciate more exactly the import of his proof.

What I want, what I want rather to insist on, is not simply this rebounding of *this is not what I am offering you* to *this is not what you can refuse*, nor even to the *this is not what I am asking you*. It is the following, it is that what is not that, that is perhaps not at all what I am offering you and that we take things wrongly by starting from there, it is *that I offer it to you*, because what does it mean that I am offering it to you? It does not mean at all that I give, as you can see by reflecting on it. That does not mean either that you take, which would give a meaning to *refuse*. When I offer something it is in the hope that you will give it back to me. And that indeed is why the *potlatch* exists. The *potlatch*, is what swamps, it is what goes beyond what is impossible in the offering, the impossible in the fact that it is a gift. (73) This indeed is the reason why the *potlatch*, in our discourse, has become completely foreign to us. Which does not make it surprising that in our nostalgia we make of it what supports the impossible, namely, the Real. But precisely, the Real as impossible.

If it is no longer in the *that which* of what I offer you that there resides the *it's not that*, let us observe then what follows from the putting into question of offering as such. If it is, not what I offer you, but *that I offer you that I ask you to refuse*, let us remove the offer – this famous verbal substantive which is supposed to be a lesser substantive, it is nevertheless something quite different. Let us remove the offer and we see that the demand and the refusal lose all meaning, because, what indeed could it mean to ask to refuse?

A small little exercise will be enough for you to notice that it is strictly the same if you take out from this knot *I ask you to refuse what I am offering you*, any of the other verbs. Because if you take out the refusal, what indeed could be meant by the offer of a demand and, as I told you, it is of the nature of the offer that if you remove the demand, to refuse no longer means anything. This indeed is why the question that is posed for us is not to know what is involved in the *it's not that* which would be in operation at each one of these verbal levels, but to

see that it is by unknotting each of these verbs from its knot with the two others that we can find what is involved in this effect of meaning in so far as I call it the *little o-object*.

A strange thing, while I was questioning myself last evening about the way in which I would present that to you today with my geometry of the tetrad, it happened, while dining with a charming person who is following Monsieur Guilbaud's classes that, like a ring on a finger, I was given something that I am now going to, that I am going to show you, something which is nothing less, it appears, I learnt last evening, than the coat of arms of the Borromeans.

It needs a little care, and that is why I am taking it. And there you are! You can redo it, you did not bring any string? You can redo it with pieces of string. If you copy that very carefully, I did not make a mistake, you will notice the following, which is that – pay careful attention – this one, there, the third one there, you no longer see it, you (74) can make an effort like that, it is accessible, you no longer see it. You can note that the two others, as you see, this one passes over the one on the left and it also passes over here. So then they are separated. Only because of the third they hold together. You can make an attempt at that, if you do not have the imagination you have to make the attempt with three pieces of string. You will see that they hold together. But there is nothing to be done, huh? It is enough then for you to cut one of them, for the two others, even though they seem to be knotted together exactly like in the case of what you know well, namely, the rings of the Olympic Games, is that not so, and which for their part continue to hold together when one of them has gone. Well as regards this, it's finished! It is something that all the same is interesting, because you must remember that when I spoke about a signifying chain, I always implied this concatenation.

What is very curious – this is also going to allow us to return to the binary verb – is that the binaries, which does not seem to have been

noticed, have a special status that is very very much in relationship with the *little o-object*. If instead of taking the man and the dog, these two poor animals, as example, I had taken the I and the you, we would have noticed that the most typical of binary verbs, is for example *je t'emmerde* (you piss me off) or indeed the *I look at you*, or again *I talk to you* or again *I eat you*. It is the four species, like that, the four species which are only interesting because of their grammatical analogy, namely, being grammatically equivalent.

So then, do we not have here, reduced, in miniature, this something which allows us to illustrate this fundamental truth that every discourse only takes on its sense from another discourse? Assuredly the demand is not enough to constitute a discourse but it has its fundamental structure which is to be, as I have expressed myself, a quadripode. I (75) underlined that a tetrad is essential to represent it, just as a quaternion of letters f, x, y, z, is indispensable.

But demand, refusal and offer, it is clear that in this knot that I put forward before you today, only take on their sense each from the other, but that what results from this knot as I tried to unknot it for you, or rather, to take on the test of its unknotting, to tell you, to show you that it never holds holds up in twos by itself, that this is the foundation, the root, of what is involved in the *little o-object*.

What does that mean? It is that I have given you its minimum knot. But you can add on others. *Because it is not that*, what? That I desire. And who does not know that what is proper to demand, is very precisely not to be able to situate what is involved in the object of desire? With this desire, what I am offering you which is not what you desire [we could easily put a stopper on the thing with what you desire] that I am asking you. And the letter *d'a-mur* will thus extend indefinitely. But who does not see the fundamental character, for analytic discourse, of such a concatenation?

I formerly said, a long time ago, and there are people who still cherished it, that an analysis only ends when someone can say not *I am talking to you*, nor *I am talking about me*, but *I am talking about me to you*, it was a first sketch. Is it not clear that what grounds the discourse of the analysand, is precisely that, *I am asking you to refuse me what I am offering you, because it is not that?* That is the fundamental demand, and it is the one that by neglecting it, the analyst always makes more pregnant.

I made ironical remarks at one time, with the offer, he creates the demand. But the demand that he satisfies, is the recognition of something fundamental: that what is demanded, *is not that*.

Seminar 6: Wednesday 8 March 1972

The way things stand, since my aim this year is to talk to you about the *One*, I will begin today by stating what is involved in the Other. This Other, with a capital O, in connection with which I picked up, some time ago, the distinct unease of a Marxist, to whom I owed the place

from which I was able to take up my work again, an unease which was the following; that this Other, was the third, and that by putting it forward in the relationship of the couple, he, the Marxist, for his part, could only identify it to God. Did this unease subsequently go as far as to inspire in him an irreducible distrust with respect to the trace that I may have left? This is a question that I will leave to one side for today, because I will begin with the quite simple unveiling of what is involved in this Other that I write in effect with a capital O. The Other that is at stake, the Other is that of the sexual couple, that very thing. And it is indeed for that reason that it is going to be necessary for us to produce a signifier that can only be written by the fact that it bars this capital O. *You* – it is not easy – *you* – I am underlining it without pausing on it because I would not take a step – *you only enjoy from the Other (on ne jouit que de l'Autre)*.

(78) It is more difficult to put forward because, which seems to be required, because what characterises enjoyment, after what I have just said, would slip away. Would I put forward that you are only enjoyed by the Other? This indeed is the abyss that in effect the question of the existence of God offers us, precisely the one that I leave on the horizon as ineffable. Because what is important, is not the relationship with what enjoys what we might believe to be our being, the important thing when I say that you only enjoy from the Other, is the following, is that *you do not enjoy it sexually* – there is no sexual relationship – nor are you enjoyed. You see that *lalangue*, that I write as a single word, *lalangue* which is nevertheless a good girl, resists here. She gives a pout (*elle fait la grosse joue*). You enjoy, it has to be said, the Other, you enjoy it *mentally*. There is a remark in this *Parmenides*, anyway, which... here takes its value as a model. That is why I recommend you to go and clean yourself up a little in it. Naturally, if you read it through the commentaries that are given in the University, you will situate it in the line of descent of philosophers. You will see there that it is considered to be a particularly brilliant exercise. But, after this little salutation, you will be told that not much can be made of it, that

Plato had simply pushed there to its final degree of sharpness something that you will be able to deduce from his theory of forms. You should perhaps read it differently; it should be read with innocence. Notice that from time to time something may touch you, even if it is only for example this remark, when he tackles, like that, altogether in passing, at the beginning of the seventh hypothesis which starts from *if the One is not*, altogether in the margin, and he says, *and if we were to say that the Not-One is not?* And then he sets about showing that the negation of anything whatsoever, not simply of the *One*, of the not-big, of the not-small, this negation as such is distinguished by not denying the same term.

It is indeed as regards what is at stake, the negation of sexual enjoyment, that I would ask you to pause on for a moment. That I write this capital S brackets of O barred, $S(\bar{O})$, and which is the same thing as what I have just formulated, that you enjoy the Other mentally, this writes something about the Other and, as I have put it forward, as a term of the relation which, by fading away by not existing, becomes the locus where it is written, where it is written as these four formulae here are written, to transmit a knowledge.

(79) Because, I think I already sufficiently alluded to it, knowledge, in this business, this knowledge may be taught, but what is transmitted, is the formula. It is precisely because one of the terms becomes the locus in which the relation is inscribed that it can no longer be relation because the term changes its function. It becomes the locus where it is written and the relation is only by being written precisely at the place of this term. One of the terms of the relation must be emptied out in order to allow this relation to be written down.

This indeed is why this *mentally* that I put forward earlier, between the quotation marks that the word cannot state, this is what radically removes from this *mentally* any notion of idealism. This incontestable idealism as we see it being developed from the pen of Berkeley, remarks that, I hope, you know, which are all based on the fact that anything that is thought is only thought by someone. This indeed is the argument or more exactly the irreducible argumentation and which would have more bite if it was a matter, if he admitted what was at stake, namely, enjoyment. You only enjoy your phantasies. This is something that gives an import to idealism that no one, moreover, even though it is incontestable, takes seriously. The important thing is that your phantasies enjoy you and this is where I can come back to what I was saying earlier. The fact is, as you see, even *lalangue* which is a good girl does not allow this word to emerge easily.

That idealism puts forward that there is nothing at stake but thoughts, to get out of it, *lalangue* which is a good girl, but not such a good girl as all that, can perhaps offer you something that I will not all the same need to write to ask you to harmonise what otherwise...anyway if I am to make you understand it, *q.u.e.u.e, queue de pensées*. This is what the good daughterhood of *lalangue* in French allows. It is in this tongue that I express myself, I do not see why I should not take advantage of it. If I were speaking a different one, I would find something else. There is nothing at stake here *queue* thoughts, not, as the idealist says, in so far as one thinks them, nor even simply that one thinks them therefore I am, which is nevertheless a progress, but that (80) they are really thought. That is why I classify myself - in so far as that has the slightest interest, because I do not see why I should classify myself - why I will classify myself philosophically, I through whom there emerges a discourse which is not philosophical discourse, specifically the psychoanalytic discourse, the one whose schema, I reproduced on the right, that I describe as discourse by reason of something that I underlined, which is that nothing takes on meaning except from the relationships of one discourse to another discourse.

This presupposes of course this exercise which I cannot say or even hope that you are really accustomed to. All of this passes over you of course like water off a duck's back, since – and moreover that is what constitutes your existence, you are solidly inserted in the discourses that preceded you, that are there for some time, a long time, including the philosophical discourse, in so far as the university discourse transmits it to you, namely, in what a state! You are solidly installed in it and that is what you are grounded on.

Those who occupy the place of this Other, of this Other that I am bringing to light, should not believe that they have any more advantage over you, they have been handed some furniture that is not easy to handle. In this furniture, there is an armchair whose nature has not yet been fully mapped out. The armchair is nevertheless essential because what is proper to this discourse, is to allow this something which is written there on the top right, in the form of \$, and which is, like every writing, a delightful shape – that the S is what Hogarth proposes as the tracing out of beauty, is not completely by chance, this must have a meaning somewhere, and then the fact that it is necessary to bar it, surely has one also. But in any case, what is produced starting from this barred subject, is something that it is curious to see I write in the same way as what in the discourse of the Master has another place, the dominant place. This S₁, is precisely what I am trying, in so far as I am speaking here, is what I am trying to produce for you. As a result, I already said it on several occasions, I am at the place, the same one, and this is what is educative about it, I am at the place of the analysand.

What is written, is it thought? That is the question. One may no longer be able to say by whom it is thought. And this is even what you have to deal with in everything that is written. The queue of thoughts (81) that I spoke about, is the subject himself, the subject *qua* hypothetical for these thoughts. This hypothetical, it has been drummed into you so much since Aristotle, of the *hupokeimenon*,

which was nevertheless quite clear. It has been made into such a thing has it not, that a cat would not find her kittens in it. I am going to call it the train (*traîne*), the train, precisely, of this queue of thoughts, of this something real which gives this impression of a comet that I called the queue of thoughts and which may well be the phallus.

What happens there is not capable of being mastered by what I have just called the train. It is only conceivable because the effect that it is, comes from the same source as its advent, namely, the disarray, if you will allow me to call it that, the disjunction of the sexual relationship. If what happens there is not capable of being mastered *nachträglich*, if what has been thought is open, within the range of means of rethinking, which consists precisely in noticing, in writing it, that it was thoughts – because writing whatever one says about it, comes after these thoughts, these real thoughts have been produced, it is in this effort of rethinking, this *nachträglich* that there lies the repetition which is the foundation of what analytic experience uncovers. That it should be written, is the proof, but only the proof of the effect of taking it up again, *nachträglich*, is what grounds psychoanalysis. How often in philosophical dialogues do you see the argument, ‘anyway, if you do not follow me that far, there is no philosophy’. What I am going to tell you, is exactly the same thing. It is either one thing or the other. Either what is still commonly accepted, in everything that is written about psychoanalysis, in everything that flows from the pen of psychoanalysts, namely, that if what thinks is not thinkable, and then there is no psychoanalysis. In order for there to be psychoanalysis, and in a word interpretation, it is necessary that what starts from the queue of thoughts has been thought, thought *qua* real thought.

It is indeed for that reason that I gave you these long winded speeches about Descartes. The *I think therefore I am* means nothing if it is not true. It is true because *therefore I am*, is what I think before knowing it and whether *I* want it or not, it is the same thing. The same thing, it is precisely what I called *The Freudian thing*. It is precisely because it

is the same thing, this *I think*, and what I think, namely, *therefore I am*, it is precisely because it is the same thing that it is not equivalent.

(82) Because that was why I spoke about the Freudian thing, it is because in the thing, there are two faces and you can write that as you wish, *face* or *fasse* – two faces are not simply not equivalent, namely, replacable by one another in the statement. It is not equivalent, it is all the same similar. That is why I only spoke about the Freudian thing in a certain way.

What I wrote, can be read. It is even curious that this is one of the things that forces it to be re-read. It is even designed for that. And when you re-read it, you notice that I am not talking about the Thing, because you cannot talk about it, talk *about it*. I make it speak itself. The Thing in question states: *Me, the truth, I speak*. And it does not say it, of course, like that, but that should be seen. That is even why I wrote it, it says it in all sorts of ways and I would dare say that it is not too bad a piece, *I can only be grasped when I play at being mysterious*. What is written about it, about the Thing, must be considered as what is written about her as coming from her, not from the one who writes. This indeed is what ensures that ontology, in other words the consideration of the subject as being, ontology is a shame (*honte*) if you will allow me to say so.

So then you have clearly understood, you have to know what you are talking about. Either the *therefore I am* is only a thought, to prove that it is the unthinkable that thinks, or it is the fact of saying it that can act on the Thing, sufficiently for it to behave otherwise. And it is because of that that every thinking is thought, from its relationships to what is written about it. Otherwise, I repeat, no psychoanalysis. We are not dealing with the *i.n.a.n.* which is currently so widespread, the unanalysable (*inan-analysable*). It is not enough to say that it is impossible, because that does not rule out it being practised. For it to be practised without being u.n.a.n., it is not the qualification of impossible that is important, it is its relationship to the impossible that

is in question, and the relationship to the impossible is a relationship of thinking. This relationship could not have any sense if the impossibility demonstrated is not strictly an impossibility of thinking because it is the only demonstrable one.

If we ground the impossible in this relationship to the Real, there remains to be said the following which I give you as a present. I heard it from a charming woman, long ago in my past, who has remained nevertheless marked with a charming odour of soap, with the Vaudois accent that she knew how to use, in order, even though she had been purified of it, she knew how to take it up again, *nothing is impossible to man* she used to say - I can't imitate the Vaudois accent, I was not (83) born there - *what he can't do, he leaves*. This to centre you on what is involved in the impossible in so far as this term, anyway, is acceptable for anybody sensible.

Well then! The cancellation of the Other is only produced at this level in which there is inscribed in the only possible way, namely, as I inscribe it, \bar{x} , with the bar above it. Which means that one cannot write that what creates an obstacle to the phallic function is not true. So then what is meant by \bar{x} ? Namely, that *there exists an x* such that it could be inscribed in this negation of the truth of the phallic function?

This is what would merit us articulating it according to its phases and you see clearly that what we are going to put into question is very precisely this status of existence in so far as it is not clear. I think that for long enough you have had your ears, and your noodle battered by the distinction between essence and existence, so as not to be satisfied with it. That there is here, in what the analytic discourse allows us to contribute in terms of meaning to earlier discourses, something that I could in the final analysis, from the collection of these formulae, pinpoint only by the term of a motivation which by being unnoticed is what generated for example Hegelian dialectic which, by reason of

what was unnoticed, cannot avoid, as I might say, considering that discourse as such dominates the world. Yes! Here I encounter a little note on the side. I do not see why I would not take up this digression, all the more so that you would like nothing better. You would like nothing better because if I go straight to it, you find it tiring. What leaves a shadow of meaning in Hegel's discourse, is an absence, and very precisely this absence of surplus value as it is drawn from the enjoyment in the real of the discourse of the Master. But this absence all the same notes something. It notes really the Other not as abolished, but precisely as impossibility of correlative and it is by making present this impossibility that it colours the discourse of Hegel. Because you would lose nothing in re-reading, I don't know, simply the preface of the *Phenomenology of the spirit* in correlation with what I am putting forward here. You can see all the holiday homework that I am giving you, *Parmenides* and the *Phenomenology*, at least the preface, because naturally you are never going to read the *Phenomenology*. But the preface is bloody well done. Just by itself it is worth the work of re-reading it and you will see that it...you will see (84) that it confirms, that it takes on meaning from what I am saying to you. I do not yet dare to promise you that *Parmenides* will do as much, take on a meaning, but I hope so, because what is proper to a new discourse is to renew what is lost in the dizziness of old discourses, precisely the meaning.

If I told you that there is something that colours this discourse of Hegel, it is because here, the word colour means something different to *sense*. The promotion of what I am putting forward, precisely, discolours it, completes the effect of Marx's discourse, in which there is something that I would like to underline and that constitutes its limit. The fact is that it includes a protest in which we find that it consolidates the discourse of the Master by completing it, and not simply with surplus value, by encouraging – I sense that this is going to provoke some disturbance – by encouraging the woman to exist as an equal. Equal to what? No one knows, because one can also very

well say that man is equal to zero because he needs the existence of something that denies him in order for him to exist as *all!* In other words, the sort of confusion which is not unusual, we live in confusion and one would be wrong to believe that we live from it, because that is not obvious, I do not see why a lack of confusion would stop people living. It is even very curious that people precipitate themselves into it, make no mistake, people rush into it. When a discourse, like analytic discourse emerges, what it proposes to you is to be sturdy enough to sustain the conspiracy of the truth. Everyone knows that conspiracies can suddenly change direction. It is easier to talk so much blather that one ends up by clearly picking out all the conspirators. People confuse, people precipitate themselves into the negation of sexual division, of difference, if you wish. If I say division, it is because it is operational. If I say difference, it is because it is precisely what claims to efface this use of the *equals* sign, woman equals man. What is extraordinary, is it not, what is extraordinary I am going to tell you, is that not all this feckology, and this is extraordinary, it is the obstacle that they claim, with this grotesque word, *to transgress*. I taught things that did not claim to transgress anything but to circumscribe a certain number of nodal points, points of the impossible. As a result, there are of course people who were upset by that, because they were the representatives, the well established of the psychoanalytic discourse in practice, is that not so, who gave me, like that one of these blows that weakens your voice.

(85) It happened to me, by, by a charming chap, physically, like that, he did that to me one day, he was an angel, it took him a lot of courage! He did it to me *despite* the fact that I was at the same time threatened by a thing in which I did not especially believe, anyway I acted as if, a revolver. But the people who silenced me at a certain moment, did it *despite* the fact that...they did it *because I was* threatened by a gun, this time a real one, not a toy like the other. That consisted in subjecting me to an investigation, namely, to the *standard* precisely of people who...who wanted to understand nothing about the

analytic discourse even though they occupied established positions in it. So then what could I do? From the moment that I was subjected to this investigation, I was condemned in advance, was I not, which naturally made it much easier to silence me, ha!

Because a voice exists. It lasted like that for several years. I must say that I had so little voice, I have all the same a voice from which was born the *Cahiers pour la psychanalyse*, very, very, very good literature, I highly recommend it to you, because I was so entirely occupied with my voice that for my part, these the *Cahiers pour la psychanalyse*, to tell you everything, I can't do everything, I can't read *Parmenides*, re-read the *Phenomenology* and other things and then also the the *Cahiers pour la psychanalyse*. I had to pull myself together! I have them now, I have read them, from one end to the other, they are fantastic! They are fantastic but it is marginal because it was not done by psychoanalysts. Throughout that time psychoanalysts were chattering, there was never so much talk about transgression around me as during the time that I had there... Anyway! There you are!

Yeah! Because imagine when what is at stake is the veritable impossible, the impossible that shows itself, the impossible as it is articulated - and for that of course some time is necessary. Between the first scriblings that allowed the birth of a logic by means of the questioning of the tongue, then the fact that people noticed that these scriblings encountered something that existed, but not in the way that people thought up to then, in the way of being. Namely, in the way that each one of you believes, believes himself to be, on the pretext that you are individuals. It was noticed that there were things that existed in the sense that they constituted the limit of what could hold (86) up from the advance of the articulation of discourse. That is what the real is. Its approach, its approach along the path of what I call the symbolic which means the ways of what is stated by this field, this field, which exists, of language, this impossible in so far as it shows itself, does not transgress itself. There are things that have for a long

time mapped it out. A mythical mapping out perhaps, but a very good mapping out. Not simply of what is involved in this impossible but its motivation. Very precisely, namely, that the sexual relationship is not written.

Along this line nothing was better constructed than, I will not say religion because, as I will tell you, I will explain it to you *per longum et latum*, you do not do ethnology when you are a psychoanalyst. And swamping religion in a general term, is the very thing that ethnology does. I cannot say either that there is only one of them, but there is the one in which we are steeped, the Christian religion. Well then! Believe me Christian religion manages your transgressions bloody well. There is even nothing that it wants more. This is what consolidates it. The more transgressions there are the more satisfied it is.

And this indeed is what is in question, it is a matter of demonstrating where is the truth of what makes a certain number of discourses that encumber you hold up. I will end today – I hope that I have not damaged my ring – I will end today on the same point at which I began. I started from the Other, I did not get out of it because time is passing and then after all you must not believe that at the moment when the session finishes that I for my part do not also have enough.

I will link up then what I said, a local feature, about the Other. Let us leave to one side what may be involved about what I have to put forward to you about what is the pivotal point, the point that I am aiming at this year, namely, the *One*. It is not for nothing that I did not tackle it today. Because you will see, huh, there is nothing as slippery as this *One*. It is very curious, people make things that have faces in order that they should be, not at all innumerable, but singularly divergent, you will see, this indeed is the *One*.

The Other, it is not for nothing that I must first take my support on it. The Other, understand it properly, is then a between (*un Entre*) the between that is supposed to be at stake in the sexual relationship, but displaced and precisely by positing itself elsewhere (*s'Autreposer*). By posing oneself Otherwise, it is curious that in positing this Other what I put forward today concerns nothing but the woman. And it is indeed she who gives us an illustration within our reach of this figure of the Other, by being as a poet has written, *between centre and absence*. Between the sense that she takes on in what I called this *at least one* where she only finds it in the state of what I announced for you, announced no more, by being only pure existence, *between centre and absence*.

Which becomes what for her? Precisely this second bar that I was only able to write by defining it as not all (*pas toute*). She who is not contained in the phallic function without nevertheless being its negation. Her mode of presence is between centre and absence, between the phallic function in which she participates, singularly, by the fact that the *at least one* who is her partner, in love, renounces it for her. Which allows her, for her part, to leave that through which she does not participate in it, in the absence which is no less enjoyment by being *jouis-absence*. And I think that no one will say that what I am stating about the phallic function arises from a failure to recognise what is involved in feminine enjoyment. It is on the contrary from the fact that the *jouisse-presence*, if I can express myself in this way, of the woman, in this part which does not make her completely open to the phallic function, it is from the fact that this *jouisse-presence*, the *at least one* is forced to inhabit it, in a radical misinterpretation about what his existence requires. It is by reason of this misinterpretation which means that he can no longer even exist, that the exception of her very existence is excluded, while this status of the Other, constructed from not being universal, vanishes and that the man's failure to recognise is required by it. Which is the definition of the hysteric.

It is on this that I will leave you today. I put in a full stop and I will give you a rendezvous in a week's time.

Seminar 7: Wednesday 15 March 1972

The last time I told you something that was centred around the Other, which is more manageable than what I am going to talk about today, which I have already characterised for you as what one could call the relationship, the relationship to the Other, very precisely in that it cannot be inscribed, which does not make things any easier.

What is at stake is the *One*. The *One* in so far as I already indicated to you, also indicating to you how its track is opened up in Plato's *Parmenides*. The first step you have to take to understand anything in it is to notice that everything that is stated in it as dialectical, as developing from every possible discourse on the subject of the *One*, is first of all and is only to be taken at this level which is to say nothing else, as he expresses it, except *it is One*. And perhaps there are a certain number of you who have, after my entreaties, opened this book and have noticed that it is not the same thing as saying that the *One* is. It is *One*, this is the first hypothesis, and the *One* is, is the second. They are distinct. Naturally, for this to have any impact, it is necessary for you to read Plato with a little bit of something that comes from you. Plato must not be for you, as it were, simply an author. You have been formed from your childhood to hitch onto authors [*faire de l'auteur-stop*]. Ever since this has become the accepted thing, this way of addressing yourself to somebody or other, who is there as authorised,

you ought to know that it leads nowhere. Except of course that it may take you too far.

(90) Having made these observations, it is about the *One* then, for reasons that I am again going to have to apologise to you for because in the name of what would I concern you with that? It is about the *One* that I am going to talk to you today. That is even the reason why I invented a word which serves as a title for what I am going to say to you about it. I am not very sure, I am even sure of the contrary, I did not invent the unary. The unary trait that in 1962 I believed I was able to extract from Freud who calls it *einzig* by translating it in that way. This appeared miraculous at the time for some people. It is quite curious that the *einziger Zug*, the second form of identification distinguished by Freud, never struck them up to then.

On the contrary, the word that I will give you as an accolade to what I am going to say today is quite new and it is made up as a precaution, because in truth, there are many things that are involved in the *One*. So that it is not possible...I am going, nevertheless, to try to open up for you right away something that situates the interest that my discourse, in so far as it is itself an opening up of analytic discourse, the interest that my discourse has in passing by way of the *One*.

But first of all let us take its field, that *grosso modo* is designated, then as *oneness* (*l'unien*). This is a word that has never been pronounced, which has nevertheless the interest of introducing a note, a wake up note for you every time that the *One* will be involved and that in taking it in this way, in the form of an epithet, this will recall for you what Freud – and what Plato first of all – puts forward, which is that of its nature it has different aspects. That it should be spoken about in analysis is something that does not escape you I think, when you remember the fact that it presides over this bizarre assimilation of Eros to what tends to coagulate.

On the pretext that the body is very obviously one of the forms of the *One*, that it holds together, that it is an individual except in the case of accident, it is, this is singular, promoted by Freud, and it is indeed, to tell the truth, what puts in question the dyad of Eros and Thanatos he puts forward. If it were not sustained by a different image which is quite precisely that in which the sexual relationship fails, namely, that of the *One* and of the *not-one* (*pas-un*), namely, the zero, it is hard to see the function that this stupefying couple could have. It is a fact that it is used, that it is used to the advantage of a certain number of misunderstandings, pinpointings of the death drive, described in this way without rhyme or reason. But it is certain that in any case, the *One* could not, in this wild discourse which is established from the attempt to state the sexual relationship, it is strictly impossible to consider the copulation of (91) two bodies as becoming only one.

It is extraordinary that in this respect, Plato's *Symposium* – while the scholars giggle at *Parmenides* - Plato's *Symposium* should be taken seriously as representing anything whatsoever about love. Some people will perhaps still remember that I used it in a year, exactly the one that preceded the one I mentioned earlier, the year 1961-2. It was in 1960-1961 that I took the *Symposium* as a practice ground and I had nothing else in mind than grounding transference through it. Until further notice, transference, even though there is something of the order of two perhaps at its horizon, cannot be considered as a copulation. I think all the same that I indicated a little bit at that time the style of derision on which there takes place this scene that can very properly be designated as Bacchanal. That it should be Aristophanes who promotes, who invents the famous bi-partition of the being which was first only the beast with two backs who holds tightly onto himself and out of which the jealousy of Zeus made two of them starting from there. It is enough to say in whose mouth this statement is put to indicate that people are amusing themselves, greatly amusing themselves. The most staggering thing is that it does not appear that the one who crowns the whole discourse, the woman called Diotima,

plays any different role. Because what she teaches, is that love only stems from the fact that the beloved, should not be touched whether he is homo or hetero, that the only thing that counts is Uranian Aphrodite. This does not precisely mean that it is the *One* that reigns over Eros.

This would already be a reason by itself for advancing some propositions that have already been opened up moreover on the *One* if there were not besides the following. This is that in analytic experience, the first step is to introduce into it the *One* as the analyst that you are. You make him take the step into it, as a result of which the analysand who is what is at stake, the first mode of the manifestation of this *One*, is obviously to reproach you with only being *One* among others. As a result of which what he shows – but naturally without noticing it – is very precisely that he wants nothing to do with these others. And that is why with you the analyst he would like to be the only one so that that would make two, and that he does not know that what is at stake, is that he should perceive only two, it is this *One* that he believes himself to be, and in which it is a matter of him being divided.

(92) So then there is something of the *One* (*il y a de l'Un*). That should be written, today, I am not very inclined to write, but anyway why not, *Yad'lun*. Why not write it like that? Writing it like that, as you are going to see, has a certain interest which is not without justifying the choice earlier of this *Unien*. The fact is that *Yad'lun* written like that highlights something auspicious in the French tongue, and I do not think one can take the same advantage of *there is* or from *es gibt*. The people who know how to handle it will perhaps indicate it to me. *Es gibt* takes the accusative, does it not? You say: *es gibt einen*...something, when it is in the masculine, *there is*, one can say *there is one*, *there is a*...something. I know of course that there is the *there* which offers a beginning from that point of view, but it is not simple. In French one can say: *Y'en a*. A very strange thing, I have not succeeded – that does not mean that it could not be found, but

anyway like that, in the rather hasty fashion that I proceed despite everything, the function of haste in logic, is something I know a little bit about, I have to hurry, I am short of time – I did not succeed in seeing, in finding something, nor simply situating something – I am going to tell you that I consulted *Littré, Robert* while I was at it, *Damourette et Pichon* and some others all the same, the historical emergence, everything that a dictionary like *Bloch et von Wartburg* is designed to give you – the emergence of a formula that is so important as *il y a*, which means this *y en a*. It is on the basis of the indeterminate that there arises what I am designating and highlight properly speaking *il y a*, of which curiously, *y a* – I am not going to say *n'y a pas* – has no equivalent, it is true, a common equivalent in what we will call ancient tongues.

By what right, precisely, is it designated that discourse, well then, as it is said and as it is demonstrated in *Parmenides* that discourse changes. This indeed is why analytic discourse can represent the emergence and it would be a matter perhaps for you of making something of it, if it is a fact that after I die – in the eyes of many people, always present as possible if not imminent – when I die one can expect, in the same field, a veritable torrent of filth which is already showing itself, because people believe that this cannot be long delayed. Following on the track of my discourse, it would perhaps be better that there should be comforted those who may prolong this path which happily also, I found in a place, a very precise place some premises but rare ones. Because, people spend (93) their time plaguing me and filling my ears with the fact of knowing the relationship between analytic discourse and the revolution. It is perhaps precisely it that carries the germ of any possible revolution, because revolution must not be confused with the emotionalism that you may feel, like that, on all sorts of occasions under this label. It is not quite the same thing.

Y en a, then, it is on the basis, on the basis of something that has no shape. When one says *y en a*, that means usually *y en a du*, or *y en a*

des. One can even add on from time to time to these *des, des qui*, some who think, some who express themselves some who talk about things like that, there remains a background of indetermination. The question begins about what that means about the *One*. Because once the *One* is stated, the *de* is only there as a slender pedicle about what is involved in this background. From where does this *One* arise? This is very precisely what in the first hypothesis, Plato tries to put forward by saying as he can, since he has no other words at his disposition: *eis an estin, if it is One?* Because *estin* has manifestly the function of supplying for what is not emphasised as in French with *il y a*. And what should surely be translated – I understand the scruple that stops translators from doing it – it should surely be translated: *s'il y a Un, or l'Un*, it is for you to choose. But what is certain, is that Plato choses and that his *One* has nothing to do with what encompasses. There is even something remarkable, which is that what he immediately demonstrates about it, is that there cannot be any relationship with anything whatsoever with something whose metaphysical recension he had carried out in a thousand forms and which is called the dyad inasmuch as in experience, in the experience of thinking, it is everywhere, the greater, the lesser, the younger, the older, etc., the enclosing and the enclosed and everything else of that kind. What he begins by demonstrating is very precisely the fact that by taking the *One* by means of a discursive questioning – and *who* is questioned there? It is obviously not the poor little, the little dear, someone called Aristotle if I remember correctly, of whom it seems difficult to believe that it should be he at that moment who left the memory of it.

It is quite clear that, as in every dialogue, in every Platonic dialogue, there is no trace of an interlocutor. This seems to be called a dialogue only to illustrate what I stated a long time ago, that (94) there is no such thing precisely as a dialogue. That does not mean that there is not, present at the foundation of the Platonic dialogue, a quite different presence, a human presence let us say, than in many other things that have been written since. To bear witness to this, all we would need is

the fact that in the first approaches, the way in which there is prepared what constitutes the core of the dialogue, what I would call the preliminary conversation. That which explains to us, as in all the dialogues, how it happens that this crazy thing that does not in the least resemble anything at all that one could call a dialogue – it is here that, truly, you can sense, if already you did not know by the ordinary experience of life that you have never seen a dialogue culminating in anything whatsoever – what is at stake in what is called dialogue, in this literature which is dated, precisely by circumscribing what is the real that may give rise to the belief, that gives the illusion that one can arrive at something by dialoguing with someone. So then this means it is worthwhile preparing the business, that someone should say what kind of yoke is involved. Old Parmenides and his clique, who are there, no less than that was necessary for something to be able to be stated that makes who speak? Well then, precisely, the *One*. And from the moment that you make the *One* speak, it is worth the trouble to look at what use is the person holding the other spittoon, who can only say things like the following: *tauto ananke ou gar oun ti de alethe*, oh, la, la. Even three times more true than you were saying, is that not so? That's what dialogue is, naturally, when it is the *One* who speaks.

What is curious, is the way in which Parmenides introduces it. The *One*, he puts his hand on its back, he explains to him, the little darling: *On you go, speak dear little One, all that is only chatter*. Because do not translate *adoleschia* by the idea that what is at stake are adolescents, I am saying this for those who are not aware of it. Especially since, on the opposite page, you are told it is a matter of behaving like innocents, like young kids, you might become confused. They are not called that, the young kids in the Greek text; *adoleschia* means chatter. But one might consider that this is something of the beginning of the foreshadowing, the foreshadowing of what we call in our crude language, woven by what people were able to do in phenomenology that one might have at that very moment within hand's

reach, what is translated by free associations. Naturally association is not free, if it were free it would be of no interest, would it, but it is the same thing as (95) chat. It is designed to tame a sparrow.

Association, of course is linked. I cannot see why it would be interesting if it were free. The chatting in question, it is certain that, there is no doubt, just as it is not someone who speaks but that it is the *One*, you can see from this the degree to which it is linked. Because this is very instructive.

Putting things into this relief allows us to situate a lot of things, and in particular the step taken from Parmenides and Plato. Because a step had already been taken by Parmenides in this milieu where what was at stake in short was to know what was involved in the Real. We are all still there. After it had been said that there was air, water, earth, fire and that after that you just start up again, there was someone who noticed that, that the only common factor in all this substance that was at stake, was that it was sayable. That is the step taken by Parmenides.

The step taken by Plato is different. It is to show that once you begin to say it in an articulated fashion, what is outlined in terms of structure, as we would say in our...what I called earlier our crude language – the word structure is worth no more than the word free association – but what is outlined creates a difficulty, and that it is along this path that one must search for the Real. *Eidos*, which is wrongly translated as *form*, is something that already promises a tightening up, a circumscribing of what exists as a gap in what is said. In other words, Plato was in a word Lacanian. Naturally he could not have known it. And moreover he was a little handicapped (*débile*). This does not make things easier, but it certainly helped him. I call mental handicap the fact of being a speaking being who is not solidly installed in a discourse. This is what gives his value to the handicapped person. There is no other definition that one could give except that of being a little off beam, namely, wavering between two discourses.

To be solidly established as a subject, you have to stick to the *One*, or otherwise know what you are doing. But it is not because you are on the margin that you know what you are saying. So that in his case, that allowed him solidly – after all there were frames, it must be believed that, in his time, things were not taken up into a solid discourse, and he shows the tip of its ear somewhere, in these preliminary conversations of this *Parmenides*. He all the same is the one who wrote it. It is hard to know whether he is joking or not. But anyway he did not wait for Hegel to construct the Master-Slave (96) dialectic for us. And I should say that what he states has a completely different foundation than what the whole *Phenomenology of the spirit* puts forward. Not at all because he concludes, but he gives the material elements. He advances. He advances, and he can do so because in his time it was no sham. You may ask yourself whether it was rather better than worse, that the masters and the slaves were up front there, that allowed it to be imagined that it could change at any instant. And in effect it did change at every instant. When the masters were made prisoners they became slaves, and when the slaves were freed well then they became masters.

Thanks to this Plato imagines – and he says it in the earlier parts of this dialogue – that the essence of the master, *eidos*, and that of the slave, may be considered to have nothing to do with what is really involved. The master and the slave are between themselves in relationships that have nothing to do with the relationship of the master-essence and the slave-essence. This is why he is a little handicapped. The fact is – we have seen the great mixture, have we not, that always operates, along a certain path and curiously we do not see the aftermath that it promises – the fact is that we are all brothers, huh? There is a region like that of history, of historical myth, I mean of myth in so far as...it *is* history, that has only been seen once, among the Jews where we know what use was made of fraternity, it gave a great model for it. It is designed so that one can sell one's brother, which is something that never failed

to happen in the aftermath of all the subversions which are supposed to revolve around the discourse of the Master.

It is quite clear that the effort that Hegel wears himself out with in the *Phenomenology*, the fear of death, the fight to the death for pure prestige, and I am telling you about it, and leaving it to you, as a result of which, this is what is essential to obtain, there is a slave. But I would ask all of those who have... the shivers to change the roles. I ask, how does it come about, because the slave survives, that there does not come immediately after the fight to the death for pure prestige ...for him, and the fear of death which changes camp. All of that only subsists, has only a chance of subsisting on condition that you see very precisely what Plato puts to one side. What Plato puts to one side – but who will ever know for what reason, because one cannot, good God, examine his heart, it was perhaps simply mental debility – it is clear on the contrary, that it is the best possible opportunity to mark what is involved in what he calls *metechein*, participation. The slave is never a slave except (97) from the essence of the Master. Just as the Master...I am calling that the essence, you can call it what you want, I would much prefer to write S_1 , master-signifier, and as regards the Master, if there were no S_2 , the knowledge of the slave, what would he make of it?

I am delaying, I am delaying to tell you the importance, this unbelievable thing that there should exist, something of the *One*. This is the point to be highlighted. Because, once you question this *One*, what becomes of it, anyway, like something that comes undone, is that it is impossible to put it in relationship with anything whatsoever outside the series of whole numbers, which is nothing other than this *One*. Of course this only emerges, only comes, only arises, at the end of a long development of discourse. In Frege's logic, that inscribed in the *Grundlagen der Arithmetik*, you will see both the inadequacy of any logical deduction of the 1, because it has to go through the 0 which one cannot all the same say that it is the *One* and nevertheless

everything unfolds in such a way that it is from this 1 which is lacking at the level of 0 that there proceeds the whole arithmetical series. Even though already, because already, from 0 to 1, that gives two, henceforth that will give three because there will be 0, 1 and 2 before and so on. And this very precisely up to the first of the alephs which, curiously and not for nothing, can only be designated as aleph zero.

This of course may appear to you to be at a learned distance. That indeed is the reason why it must be incarnated and why I first wrote down *Yad'lun!* And that you cannot protest too much about this announcement, in that so many exclamation marks subsequently because precisely aleph zero is just enough to explore what may be involved, if you approach it sufficiently, in the astonishment merited by the fact that there is something of *One*. Yes! That does indeed deserve to be saluted by this yes (*ouille!*) Huh? In the dialect of Northern France I mean *hoc est ille*.

Here, well then, what is at stake, the *One*, the responsible – because it is by catching it by the ear, is that not so, that *y en a* clearly shows the foundation on which it exists; the foundation on which it exists stems from the fact that it is not self-evident. The fact is, to take first of all the first piece of furniture that I had within hand's reach, the mental handicapped *One*, you can add to it a suitcase, a drawer, a *piéd de nez*, a puff of smoke, a welcome to your Catherine!, a civilisation, an odd garter, that makes eight. However scanty that may appear to you. There are bucketloads of them, but they all come when you call them, come, come, and the important thing – (98) because you must obviously become sensitive to one thing, things otherwise than by 0, 1, and by aleph, must you not? – the important thing is that this always presupposes the same *One*, the *One* that cannot be deduced, contrary to the confusion that John Stuart Mill tries to stir up, simply by taking distinct things and holding them to be identical. Because that is simply something that illustrates, that the abacus gives the model of; but the abacus was deliberately made in order for this to be counted and on

occasion there can be counted the eight scattered things that I showed you earlier. Only what the abacus does not give you, is something that can be deduced directly and without any abacus from the *One*.

Namely, that among these eight pieces of furniture that I spoke to you about earlier, there is, because they are eight, 28 combinations two by two, no more and that this, and it is that way because of the *One*.

Naturally, I hope that this strikes you and since I took eight of them, nothing prevents you, this bewilders you, you did not know in advance that this would give 28 combinations even though it is easy it is something or other: $n \quad \binom{n-1}{2}$ 8: 42, you see that doesn't give 28, that gives 21. [?]

Good! And so then that changes nothing. You may know the number, that is what is at stake. If I had put in fewer of them, this is something that would have encouraged you to work, to say to me that perhaps, that all the same I should also have counted the relationships of each one to the totality.

Why do I not do so? This is something that I will be forced to wait for the next occasion to explain to you. Because the relationships of each one to the totality does not eliminate precisely the fact that there is ONE set and that it is by this fact, that means that you put in one of them. Which would culminate in effect in considerably augmenting the number of combinations two by two. In a triangle, if I had simply put three 1's, that would only have given three combinations. You have six right away if you take the totality as a 1. But precisely what is at stake, is to see here another of the dimensions of the *One* that I will try to illustrate for you the next time by the arithmetical triangle. In other words the *One*, then, does not always have the same meaning. It has the meaning, for example, of this 1 of the empty set which, a curious thing, would add two to our numeration of elements, I will show why and from where it comes. Nevertheless we are already approaching something which, by not at all starting from the *One* as

All, demonstrates to us that the *One* as it emerges is not univocal. In (99) other words, we are renewing the Platonic dialogue.

This indeed is how I claim to lead you somewhere to pursue, through this bifidity of the *One* – even though we have to see whether it holds up – of this *One* that Plato distinguishes so well from Being. It assuredly is the case that Being, for its part, is *One*, always, in every case, but that the *One* does not know how to be as being, is what is perfectly demonstrated in *Parmenides*. It is indeed historically from here that function of existence emerged. It is not because the *One* is not that it does not pose the question and it poses it all the more in that wherever from all time there is a question about existence, the question will always turn around that of the *One*.

In Aristotle the matter is only approached timidly at the level of particular propositions. Aristotle imagines that it is enough to say that *some*, only *some*, not all, are like this or like that for them to be distinguished. That it is by distinguishing them from that which, for its part, is like that, if these are not so for example, that is enough to assure their existence. This indeed is why existence already, from its first emergence, begins right away, is announced by its correlative of inexistence. There is no existence except on a foundation of inexistence and reciprocally, *ex-sistere*, to only have your support from something outside which is not. And this indeed is what is involved in the *One*. Because in truth, from where does it arise? At a point where Plato manages to circumscribe it. You must not believe that it is, as it seems simply with respect to time, he calls it to *exaiphnes*. You can translate that as you wish. It is *the instant*, *the sudden*. This is the only point at which he can make it subsist and it is indeed in effect always where every elucidation of number – and God knows that it has been pushed far enough to give us the idea that there are other alephs than that of numbers – and this, this instant, this point, because this would be its real translation, this is indeed what is found to be decisive only at the level of a superior aleph, at the level of the continuum.

The *One* then here precisely seems to be lost and to take to its highest point what is involved in existence. To the point of getting close to existence as such *qua* arising from the most difficult to reach, the most fleeting in what can be stated. And this is what made me find, made me refer to this to *exaiphnes*, this to *exaiphnes* in Aristotle himself, to seeing that when all was said and done, there was the emergence of this term *to exist*.

(100) Somewhere in the *Physics* where you can find it, where you can find it especially if I give it to you. It is somewhere in Book IV of Aristotle's *Physics* – I don't see it here in my notes, but in truth it ought to be there. Aristotle defines it as precisely this something which *anaisthetos chronos*, in a time that cannot be sensed *dia mikrotos*, by reason of its extreme smallness, *en to extan*.

I do not know whether other than in this place, in this place of Book IV of the *Physics*, the term *extan* is uttered in ancient literature. But it is clear that it comes from... – it is a participle, a past participle, the past participle of this second aorist *iotemi*, of this aorist which is called *esten*, it is *otan* but I do not know whether there exists a verb *existemi*. You would have to check it out. In any case, the *sistere* is already there; the stable being, as stable being starting from the domain of *to extan*, *what only exists by not being*. This indeed is what is at stake, this is what I wanted to open up today under the general heading of *Unien*, and I apologise to you, if I choose *Unien*. Excuse me, it is in fact an anagram of *ennui* [boredom].

Seminar 1: Wednesday 8 December 1971

I could begin right away and pass over my title, after all you will clearly see in a little while what it means. Nevertheless, out of kindness, since moreover it is meant to strike you, I am going to introduce it by giving a commentary on it.

... *Ou pire* (...Or worse). Perhaps after all some of you have understood it, ...*Ou pire*, in short, is what I am always capable of doing. It is enough for me to show it to get into the heart of the subject. I show it, in short, all the time in order not to remain in this meaning which, like every meaning - I think you can put your finger on that - is opaque. I am therefore going to give a textual commentary on it.

...*Ou pire*. Some people have already read it wrongly. They thought that it was ...*ou le pire ou le pire* (...either the worst or the worst). It is not at all the same thing. *Pire*, is tangible, it is what is called an adverb, like well or better. You can say, I am doing well, one can say I am doing worse. It is an adverb, but a disjoined one, disjoined from something that is called somewhere precisely the verb, the verb which is replaced here by three dots. These three dots refer to usage, to ordinary usage to mark – it is curious, but we see this, we see this in every printed text – to create an empty place. It underlines the importance of this empty place and it demonstrates moreover that it is the only way to say something with the help of language. And this remark that the void is the only way of catching hold of something with language, is precisely what allows us to penetrate its nature, that of language.

(10) Moreover, as you know, once logic has come to the point of confronting something, something that supports a reference to truth, it

is when it produced the notion of a variable. It is an apparent variable. The apparent variable x is always constituted by the fact that, the fact is that the x , in what is at stake, marks an empty place. The condition for this to work is that one puts there exactly the same signifier in all these empty places that are reserved. This is the only way in which language reaches something and that is why I have expressed myself in the formula that *there is no metalanguage*. What does that mean? It might seem that in saying this I am only formulating a paradox. Because from where can I say it? Since I am saying it in language, this would seem to sufficiently affirm that there is one from where I can say it. Nevertheless it is obviously nothing of the kind. Of course it is necessary to develop metalanguage as a fiction, whenever logic is at stake, namely, when there has been forged within discourse what is called object language, as a result of which it is the language that becomes *meta*, I mean common discourse without which there is no means of even establishing this division. *There is no metalanguage* denies that this division is tenable. The formula forecloses that there might be discordance in language.

What then occupies this empty place in the title that I have put forward to catch your attention? As I said, it must be a verb, because there is already an adverb. Only it is a verb elided by the three dots, and that, in language, once you question it in logic, is the only thing that you cannot do. The verb, as it happens, is not difficult to find, it is enough to tip over the letter which begins the word *pire*, and that gives us *dire*. Only, as in logic, the verb is precisely the only term which you cannot make into an empty place, because when you try to make a function of a proposition, it is the verb that functions and it is from what surrounds it that you can make an argument. By getting rid of this verb then, I am making an argument of it, namely, some substance; it is not saying, it is *a* saying (*un dire*).

This saying, the one that I am taking up from my seminar of last year, is expressed, like every saying, in a complete proposition, *there is no*

sexual relationship. That is what my title is putting forward, it is that there is no ambiguity, it is that in trying to get out of this, you will only state, you will only say something worse.

There is no sexual relationship is proposed then as a truth. But I (11) already said that truth can only be half said. So then, what I am saying, is that what is in question, when all is said and done, is that the other half might say worse. If there were not worse, how it would simplify things! Make no mistake. The question is, does that not already simplify them since, if what I started from is from what I can do and that it is precisely what I am not doing, is that not enough to simplify them? Only there you are, there is no way that I cannot do this worse, exactly like everyone else.

When I say *there is no sexual relationship*, I am putting forward very precisely this truth, in the case of the speaking being, that sex does not in its case define any relationship. It is not that I am denying the difference that exists, from the youngest age, between what is called a little girl and a little boy. It is even from this that I am starting. Lay hold, right away, of the fact that you do not know when I start from there what I am talking about. I am not talking about the famous little difference the one for which, to one of the two, it will appear, when he is sexually mature, it will appear to be altogether something in the style of a joke, of a witticism, to shout hurrah! Hurrah for the little difference! The very fact that it is funny should be enough to indicate to us, to denote, to make reference, to the complex (*complexuel*) relationship, namely, to the fact clearly inscribed in analytic experience which is what the experience of the unconscious has led us to, without which there would be no witticism, to the complex relationship with this organ. The little difference, already separated out very early as an organ, which really says it all: *organon*, instrument. Does an animal have any idea that it has organs? Since when has that been seen and to accomplish what? Is it enough to state that every animal – this is a way of taking up again what I recently stated in connection with the

supposition of the enjoyment described as sexual as instrumental for the animal, I spoke about that elsewhere, here I will say it in a different way – *every animal that has claws does not masturbate*. This is the difference between man and the lobster (*l'homme et le homard*). There you are! That always produces a certain effect.

As a result of this you escape from the historical resonances of this sentence. It is not at all because of what it asserts – I am saying nothing more, it asserts – but the question that it introduces at the level of logic. That is hidden in it, huh? But – this is the only thing that you have not seen in it – the fact is that it contains the not-all (*pas-tout*) which is, very precisely and very curiously what eludes Aristotelian (12) logic in the measure that it put forward and separated out the function of prosdiorisms which are nothing other than what you know, namely, the use of all, *pan*, of some, *ti*, around which Aristotle takes the first steps in formal logic. These steps have serious consequences. They are what allowed there to be developed what is called the function of quantifiers. It is with the *all* that there is established the empty place that I spoke about earlier. Someone like Frege does not fail, when he comments on the function of the assertion, before which he places – the assertion in relationship to a true or false function $f(x)$ – it is necessary for him in order for the x to have the existence of an argument – here placed in this little dip, an image of the empty place – that there is something that is called *every x*, which is appropriate to the function.

The introduction of *not-all* is essential here. The *not-all* is not a negated universal. The *not-all*, is not a *nullity*, it is specifically not that; *no animal with claws masturbates*, it is, *not every animal that has claws* is because of that forced into what follows. There is organ and organ, just as there are faggots and faggots (*Il y a fagots et fagots*) the one who deals the blow and the one who receives it.

And this brings us to the heart of our problem. Because you see by simply outlining the first step, we are slipping towards the centre, without even having time to turn back, to the centre of something where there is indeed a machine that is carrying us. It is the machine that I am dismantling. But, I am making the remark for the use of some people, it is not to demonstrate that it is a machine, and still less indeed so that a discourse should be taken for a machine, as some people do precisely in wanting to engage with mine, of discourse. In this way what they demonstrate, is that they are not engaging with what makes a discourse, namely, the real that passes into it.

Dismantling the machine is not at all the same thing as what we have just done, namely, going without any ceremony to the hole in the system, namely, to the place where the real passes through you – and how, because it flattens you!

Naturally for my part I would like – I would really like, I would like much more – I would like to preserve your natural blackguardism which is what is most attractive, but which, alas, alas, always starting (13) again as someone or other has said, ends up by being reduced to stupidity by the very effect of this discourse that I am demonstrating. As a result you ought to sense right away that there are at least two ways of demonstrating this discourse; and it remains open that mine, in a way, is still a third. You must not force me to insist, of course, on this energetics of blackguardism and stupidity to which I never make anything other than a distant allusion. From the point of view of energetics, of course, it does not hold up. It is purely metaphorical. But it is one of those kinds of metaphor by which the speaking being subsists, I mean that it is his bread and butter (*le pain et le levain*).

So then I asked you to spare me as regards the point of this insistence. It is in the hope that the theory will supply for it. You will have heard the emphasis of the subjunctive, I isolated it because, because it might have been covered over by the interrogative accent. Think of all of

that, like that, at the moment that it is happening and especially in order not to miss what crops up here, namely, the relationship of the unconscious to truth. The right theory, and this is what opens up the path, the very path where the unconscious was reduced to insisting, it would no longer have to do it if the path had been properly opened up but that does not mean that this would have resolved everything, quite the contrary, the theory, because it would have given this ease, ought itself to be light, light to the point of not seeming to touch it. It should have something natural about it that, up to now, is only possessed by errors. Not all (*pas-toutes*), once again, of course. But does that make it any more sure that there are some that sustain this naturalness that so many others pretend to (*font semblant*)?

There you are, I am putting forward that for these, the others, to be able to make a pretence, it is necessary that among these errors that sustain what is natural, there is at least one: *hommoinzune*. You should recognise what I already wrote last year with a different ending, very precisely in connection with the hysteric and the *hommoinzun* that she requires. This *hommoinzune*, its role, obviously, cannot be better sustained than by the natural itself.

This is why I denied at the start, this is why on the contrary, this is why I denied at the start the difference that exists, which can be perfectly noted from the earliest years, between a little girl and a little boy, and that this difference which asserts itself as innate is indeed natural, namely, corresponds to the fact that there is something real in the fact that, in the species that calls itself, like that, the daughter of its works, in that as in many other things, which calls itself *homo sapiens*, the (14) sexes appear to be separated into two numbers of more or less equal individuals. And that rather early on, earlier than one might expect, these individuals are distinguished from one another. They are distinguished, that is certain. Only, I am pointing it out to you in passing, this does not form part of a logic. They only recognise one another, they only recognise one another as speaking beings, by

rejecting this distinction by all sorts of identifications and it is commonplace in psychoanalysis to note that this is the major mainspring of the phases of every childhood. But that is a simple parenthesis.

What is important logically is the following: it is what I did not deny, it is precisely here that there is a sliding, it is the fact that they are distinguished from one another. This is a sliding. What I did not deny, is precisely not that, what I did not deny, is that they are distinguished. They do not distinguish themselves. This is why people say, *oh! isn't he a real little man, you can see already that he's completely different to a little girl, he is uneasy, inquisitive, isn't he? Already looking for notice.* While the little girl is far from resembling him. She is already thinking of playing with this sort of fan which consists in sticking her face into a hole and refusing to say hello. Only there you are, people only marvel at that because that is the way it is, namely, exactly the way it will be later. In other words in conformity to the type of man and woman as they are going to set themselves up from something completely different, namely, from the consequence, from the value that will subsequently have been taken on by the little difference. No point in adding that the little difference, hurrah! was already there for the parents for some time and that it could have had an effect on the way in which the little man and the little woman were treated. We cannot be sure, it is not always like that. But there is no need for it in order that the judgement of recognition of the surrounding adults is based then on an error, which consists in recognising them, no doubt by what distinguishes them, but by only recognising them in function of criteria that are formed depending on language, if it is the case that, as I am putting forward, it is indeed because a being speaks that there is a castration complex. I am adding that in order to insist, so that you may clearly understand what I mean.

So then, it is in this way that the *hommoinzune*, wrongly, gives consistency to the naturalness, which moreover is incontestable, of

what I might call the premature vocation that each one experiences for his sex. One must also add, of course, that in the case when this vocation is not apparent, this does not change the mistake, because it (15) can be easily completed by being attributed to nature as such, this of course no less naturally. When it does not fit, people *say she's a tomboy (c'est un garçon manqué)*, do they not, and in that case, the lack can easily be considered as a success in the measure that nothing prevents there being imputed to it, to this lack, an extra bit of femininity. The woman, the real one, the proper little woman, is hidden behind this very lack. This is a subtlety that is moreover in full conformity to what the unconscious teaches us about never succeeding better than when one fails.

In these conditions, in order to have access to the other sex, one must really pay the price, that precisely of the little difference which deceptively passes into the Real through the mediation of the organ, precisely, because it ceases to be taken as such and, at the same time, reveals what it means to be an organ. An organ is only an instrument through the mediation of something by which every instrument is grounded. The fact is that it is a signifier. So then! It is as signifier that the transsexual no longer wants it and not as an organ. And in this he suffers from an error, which is precisely the common error. The passion of the transsexual is the madness of wanting to free himself from this error, the common error which does not see that the signifier is enjoyment, and that the phallus is only its signified. The transsexual no longer wants to be signified as phallus by sexual discourse, which, as I state, is impossible. He is only making one mistake, which is to want to force this sexual discourse which *qua* impossible is the passage of the Real, to want to force it by means of surgery.

There you are. It is the same thing that I stated in a certain programme for a certain *Congress on feminine sexuality*. It is only I said, for those who know how to read of course, it is only, I said, the homosexual, written here in the feminine, who can sustain the sexual discourse in

total security. That is why I invoked the freeing up of the *Précieuses* who, as you know, remain a model for me. The *Précieuse* who, as I might say, define so admirably what is excessive to the word, anyway, allow me to stop here the word, the *Ecce homo*, of love. Because they for their part do not run the risk of taking the phallus for a signifier. then! Signi- then! It is only by breaking up the signifier in its letter that one gets to the final term of it.

It is a pity nevertheless that this amputates for the female homosexual, the analytic discourse. Because this discourse, it is a fact, casts them, (16) the little darlings, into total blindness about what is involved in feminine enjoyment. Contrary to what one can read in a famous drama by Apollinaire, the one that introduces the word *surrealist*, Therese comes back to Tiresias – don't forget that I have just spoken about blindness – not *by letting go* but *by recuperating* what are described as *the two birds of his weakness*. I am quoting Apollinaire, for those who may not have read him. In other words the small and the big balloons that represent them in the theatre and which are perhaps – I am saying perhaps, because I do not want to distract your attention, I am satisfying myself with a perhaps – which are perhaps this something thanks to which the woman can only enjoy when there is an absence. The woman homosexual is not at all absent in what remains to her in terms of enjoyment. I repeat, this makes the discourse of love easy for her. But it is clear that that excludes her from psychoanalytic discourse which she can barely stammer. So then let us try to advance.

Given the time, I can only point out rapidly that as regards everything that posits itself as this sexual relationship, emphasising it, establishing it by a sort of fiction that is called marriage, it would be a good rule for the psychoanalyst to say that, on this point, they should sort themselves out as best they can. This is the path he takes in practice. He does not say it, nor does he even say it to himself, by a sort of false shame, because he believes his duty is to mitigate every drama. It is an inheritance derived from pure superstition. He plays the doctor. Never

did a doctor get involved in guaranteeing conjugal happiness and since the psychoanalyst has not yet noticed that there is no sexual relationship, naturally, the role of playing providence for households haunts him.

All that, the false shame, the superstition and the inability to formulate a precise rule on this point, the one that I have just stated, *let them sort themselves out*, comes from a failure to recognise something that his experience repeats to him, but I could even say drums into him, that *there is no sexual relationship*. It should be said that the etymology of *seriner* (to drum in) leads us straight to *sirène*. That is textually so, it is in the *Dictionnaire Étymologique*, I am not the one who is singing such a tune here in my discourse.

It is no doubt for that reason that the psychoanalyst, as Ulysses did in a similar situation, remains tied to a mast. Yes! Naturally in order for that to continue – what he hears as the song of the Sirens, namely, remaining enchanted, namely, hearing everything in the wrong way – it is necessary that the mast, the mast in which naturally you cannot fail (17) to recognise the phallus, namely, the major, global signified, well then, he must remain attached to it. That suits everybody, but that only suits everybody in that this has no unfortunate consequences, because it is meant for that, for the psychoanalytic future itself, namely, for all those who are in the same boat.

It nevertheless remains that he completely misconstrues this drumming of experience and that is why up to now it has remained a private domain. A private domain, I mean, for those who are in the same boat. What happens on this boat, in which there are also beings of two sexes, is nevertheless remarkable. The fact is that I sometimes hear on the lips of people who sometimes come to visit me from these boats, I who am, good God, on a different one, that the same rules are not enforced there. Which would be nevertheless rather exemplary if the way I got a whiff of it was not so peculiar.

In studying what emerges from a certain style of oversight about what constitutes psychoanalytic discourse, namely, the consequences it has on what I will call the style of what refers to the liaison – since after all the absence of the sexual relationship is very obviously something that does not prevent, far from it, a liaison, but something that gives it its conditions – this might perhaps allow us to glimpse what might result from the fact that psychoanalytic discourse remains lodged on these boats on which it currently sails of which we are entitled to fear it may remain the privilege. It may happen that something of this style will come to dominate the register of liaisons in what is inappropriately called the vast field of the world. And in truth that is not reassuring. It would surely be still more unfortunate if the present state which is such that it is to this oversight that I have just highlighted, that it is from it that there emerges something that is after all not unjustified, namely, what one frequently sees on entering psychoanalysis, namely, fears manifested sometimes by subjects who only know that it is, in short, if we are to believe the institutionalised psychoanalytic silence on this point about the fact that there is no sexual relationship which evokes in these subjects fears, namely, good God, about everything that may restrict, affect, their interesting ... relations, passionate acts, indeed creative disturbances that this absence of relationship requires.

I would like then before leaving you to make a start on something here. Because what is at stake is an exploration of what I called a new logic – the one that has to be constructed from what is not (*ce qui n'est pas*), (18) from this to posit in the first place that in no case, nothing of what happens from the fact of the agency of language, can end up on the formulation of anything satisfying about the relationship – is there not something to be taken from the fact that in logical exploration, namely, in the questioning of what to language, not simply imposes a limit, in its apprehension of the Real, but demonstrates in the very structure of this effort to approach it, namely, to pick out in its own handling what in the real may have determined language, is it not appropriate,

probable, appropriate to be induced, that if it is at the point of a certain flaw of the Real – properly speaking unsayable because it is what is supposed to determine all discourse – that there lie the lines of this field, which are those that we discover in psychoanalytic experience, is it not the case that everything that logic has sketched out, by relating language to what is posited in the real, allows us to locate in certain lines to be invented – and this is the theoretical effort I designate from this ease that an emphasis would find – is it not possible here to find an orientation?

Before leaving you today I will only point out that there are three registers, properly speaking, that have already emerged in the development of logic, three registers around which there will turn this year my effort to develop what is involved in the consequences of the fact, posited in the first place, that *there is no sexual relationship*.

Firstly, what you have already seen, in my discourse, being emphasised, the prosdiorismes. Today, in the course of this first approach, I have only encountered the statement of not-all (*pas-tout*). Already last year I believe I have isolated this very precisely for you as with respect to the function itself that I leave here totally enigmatic, of the function not of the sexual relationship, but of the function that, properly, renders access to it impossible. This is it, to be defined, in short, to be defined this year. Imagine enjoyment. Why would it not be possible to write a function of enjoyment? It is by testing it that we will see its sustainability, as I might say, or not.

Already last year I was able to put forward to the function of the *not-all* and certainly from a point much closer as regards what was involved. All I am doing today is tackling our writing. Last year I put (19) forward a negative bar $\bar{}$, placed above the term which, in the theory of quantifiers, designates the equivalent. It is only the equivalent of it. I would say even more, the purification with respect to the naïve usage made in Aristotle of the prosdiorism *all*. The

important thing, is that I have put forward before you today the function of the not-all, *pas-tout*, *pas tout*.

Everyone knows that in connection with what is involved in the proposition described in Aristotle as *particular*, what emerges from it, as I might say naively, is that there exists something which corresponds to it. When you use *some*, in effect, that seems to be self-evident. It seems to be self-evident but it is not self-evident. Because it is quite clear that, it is not enough to deny the *not-all* for each of these two pieces, if I can express myself like this, existence to be affirmed. Of course, if existence is affirmed, the *not-all* happens. It is around this *There exists* that our advance should be brought to bear. Ambiguities have been perpetuated around this for such a long time that people have come to confuse essence and existence and in a more astonishing fashion to believe that it is more to exist than to be. It is perhaps precisely that the *There exists*, undoubtedly, of men and of women, and in a word who do nothing more than exist, that the whole problem lies. Because after all in the correct usage which is to be constructed, starting from the moment when logic allows itself to disengage a little from the Real, the only way to really say that it has with respect to it the power to locate itself, it is starting from the moment that it only guarantees that this part of the real in which there is possible a truth, namely mathematics, it is starting from that moment that one can clearly see that what any *There exists* designates, is nothing other for example than a number to satisfy an equation.

I am not settling whether number is to be considered or not as Real. In order not to leave you in any ambiguity, I am going to tell you that I am deciding that number forms a part of the Real. But it is this privileged Real in connection with which the handling of the truth makes logic progress. In any case, the mode of existence of a number is not properly speaking something that we can hold to be guaranteed as regards what is involved in existence, every time that the prosdiorism *some* is put forward.

There is a second plane that I am only pinpointing here as a reference to the field we are going to have to advance into in terms of a logic that would be appropriate for us, which is that of modality. Modality, as everyone also knows in opening Aristotle, is what is involved in the *possible*, of what can be. I will also only indicate here the entrance, the frontispiece. Aristotle plays with four categories, the *impossible* that he opposes to the *possible*, the *necessary* that he opposes to the *contingent*. We will see that there is nothing tenable in these oppositions and today I am highlighting simply for you what is involved in a formulation of the *necessary* which is properly this, not to be able not to be (*ne pas pouvoir ne pas*). *Not to be able not to be*, this is properly for us what defines necessity. Where does that take us? From the *impossible*, *not to be able* to *to be able not to be*. Is this the *possible* or the *contingent*? But what is certain is that, if you want to take the opposite road, what you find is to be able not to be able (*pouvoir ne pas pouvoir*), namely, that this links up the improbable, the out of date, of what can happen, namely, not this impossible to which one would return by looping the loop, but quite simply impotence. This simply to indicate as a frontispiece the second field of questions to be opened up.

The third term, is negation. Does it not already seem to you, even though I have already written what completes it in the formulae already noted last year on the board, , namely, that there are two quite different forms of negation possible, foreshadowed already by the grammarians. But in truth, since it was in a grammar that claimed to go from words to thought, which says it all, embarking on semantics guarantees shipwreck. The distinction nevertheless made between foreclosure and discordance should be recalled at the start of what we will do this year. Again I must specify – and this will be the object of the talks that follow to give to each one of these chapters the development that it deserves – foreclosure cannot be, as Damourette and Pichon said, be linked in itself to *pas*, *point*, *goutte*, *mie*, nor

indeed to some of these other accessories that appear to support it in French. Nevertheless it should be remarked that what goes against it, is precisely, our *pas tous* (not all). Our *not-all* is discordance.

But what is foreclosure? Assuredly it is to be placed in a different register to that of discordance. It is to be placed at the point at which we have written the term described as *function*. Here is formulated the importance of the said (*du dire*). *The only foreclosure is of the said*, of this something that exists – existence being already promoted to what assuredly, to what assuredly we have to give it as a status – that (21) something can be said or *not*. This is what is at stake in foreclosure. And as regards something that cannot be said, undoubtedly, the only conclusion can be a question about the real. For the moment the function , as I have written it, only means the following, that for everything that is involved in the speaking being, sexual relationship poses a question. Here indeed is all of our experience, I mean the minimum that we can draw from it. That to this question, as to any question – there would be no question if there were no response – that the modes in which this question is posed, namely, the responses, are precisely what it is a matter of writing in this function.

This is what is going to allow us without any doubt to make a junction between what has been elaborated in logic and what can, on the principle, be considered as an effect of the real, on the principle that it is not possible to write the sexual relationship, on this very principle of grounding what is involved in the function, in the function that regulates everything that is involved in our experience, in that by being open to question, the sexual relationship which is not, in this sense that one cannot write it, this sexual relationship determines everything that is elaborated from a discourse whose nature it is to be a broken discourse.

Seminar 8: Wednesday 19 April 1972

[Lacan, before beginning, writes on the board]

I am beginning now because I have been asked, I have been asked because of...the number of things happening in this place, I have been asked to finish earlier, much earlier than usual. There you are!

So then, to tackle what...what comes, like that, in a thread whose memory I hope is not too distant for you, I am taking up, I am taking up the *Yad'lun*, was that not it, that I already put forward. For those who are here, who have parachuted in from some distant country, I am repeating what that means, because the fact is it does not have a very common sonority. *Yad'lun*, seems to come from somewhere or other, from the *One*, from the *One*, huh? People do not usually express (102) themselves like that. Anyway, it is nevertheless about this that I am talking. About the *One (l'Un)*, the apostrophe, U.N, *y en a*.

It is the way of expressing oneself which will be found, I hope, at least for you, in harmony with something, that I hope is not new for everybody here. And, thank God, I know that I have listeners, certainly some, who are aware of the fields that I must touch on in order to tackle what is involved in the analytic discourse. This will prove to be in harmony, I will explain to you how, this way of expressing oneself with what historically was produced in the theory, the theory of sets...you have heard something about that! You have heard something about that because that is how mathematics are now taught from classes in primary school on. It is not sure that this improves the understanding of them.

The audience – We can't hear a thing.

The audience – We can't hear anything!

J Lacan – What...what's happening?

The audience – We can't hear anything here at the back!

J Lacan – Who...What's happening?

G Gonzalez – They can't hear, get closer to the microphone.

Lacan – I'm terribly sorry...can you hear me better like that?

The audience – No!

Lacan – So then the loudspeaker isn't working?...What? Good! So then let's take the time...like that?...that way that do you hear any better? Is it ok like that?

[J Lacan manipulates the microphone]

The audience – No!

[S. Faladé blows into the microphone]

- It's working fine.

But anyway, the relationship that there is with, with a theory, one of the mainsprings of which is writing – not at all of course that set theory implies a univocal writing, but that like many things in mathematics, it cannot be stated without writing – the difference then between this formula, this *Yad'lun* that I am trying to get across, is precisely the whole difference there is... between writing and the word. It is a break

(103) that is not always...always easy to fill in. It is indeed nevertheless, what I attempt on occasion. And you ought to be able to understand immediately why, if it is true that, as I have re-written them on the board, the upper two of these four formulae in which I attempt to fix what supplies for what I described as the impossibility of writing, precisely, what is involved in the sexual relationship. It is indeed in the measure that, at the upper level, two terms confront one another, one of which is *there exists* and the other *there does not exist*, that I am bringing, that I am attempting to bring the contribution that can be usefully contributed starting from set theory.

It is, it is already remarkable, is it not, it is striking that, that *there should be something of the One* was never the subject of any astonishment as I might say. It is all the same perhaps to go a little quickly to formulate it in this way because, anyway, it can be attributed to what I call astonishment. What I am inviting you to be astonished at, can be attributed precisely to what I have just spoken about, what I have really invited you in the warmest fashion to get to know. It is this famous *Parmenides*, is it not, of dear Plato, which is always so badly read. In any case that I, for my part, practice reading in a way that is not at all the accepted one. For *Parmenides*, it is quite striking to see the degree to which, at a certain level that is properly that of the University discourse, it embarrasses people. The way in which all of those who utter such wise things in the name of the University are always enormously embarrassed. As if it were a question of a bet, is it not, a sort of...purely gratuitous sort of exercise, a ballet. And the unfolding of eight hypotheses concerning the relationships of the *One* and Being remains in a way problematic, an object of scandal. Some people of course distinguish themselves by showing its coherence, but this coherence appears on the whole to be gratuitous and the confrontation of the interlocutors, in itself, appears to confirm the ahistorical character, as one might call it, of the whole.

I would say – if I am able to put forward something on this point – I would say that what strikes me, is really the complete contrary. And if something gave me the idea that there is in the Platonic dialogue some first foundation or other for a properly analytic discourse, I would say that it is indeed this *Parmenides*, that confirmed it for me. It is quite clear in effect that if you remember what I put forward, what I (104) inscribed as a structure – excuse me for saying nothing while I write, because that creates complications –

$$\begin{array}{ccc} & A & \\ \bullet & \longrightarrow & \$ \\ \hline & & \\ S_2 & \longleftarrow & S_1 \end{array}$$

What I put forward as a structure is indeed that something that not by chance is inscribed as the signifier indexed 1 that finds itself at the level of production in the analytic discourse. And it is already something that, even though, I agree, could not be clear to you right away, I would not ask you to take it as something obvious, it is an indication of the appropriateness of centring our subsequent questioning very precisely not on the number (*chiffre*), but on the signifier *One*.

It is not self-evident, that there is d'*lun*. It seems to be self-evident like that, because for example, there are living beings. And that to all appearances you indeed have, each and every one of you, anyway, who are so well behaved, is that not so, of being, of being quite independent from one another and of each constituting what is called in our day an *organic reality*, to hold up as an *individual*. This indeed is what, of course, a whole first philosophy took as a certain support. What is striking for example, is that in Aristotelian logic, the fact of putting in the same column, namely, I recall it to you as it happens, to put at the principle of the same specification of the x, namely, I said, I already stated, about man, about the being who is described as masculine among those who speak, if we take the *there exists, there exists at least one* for whom is not acceptable as an assertion, , well then,

from this point of view, from the point of view of the individual, we find ourselves placed before a position which is clearly contradictory, namely, that Aristotelian logic, which is founded, is it not, on this intuition of the individual that he posits as real, Aristotle tells us that, after all, there is no....., it is not the idea of the horse that is real, it is the horse that is well and truly alive, at which point we are forced to ask ourselves precisely how, how there comes the idea from which we draw it. He upends, he upends not without peremptory arguments what Plato was talking about which is, namely, that it is by participating in the idea of the horse that the horse is sustained, that what is most real, is the idea of the horse.

(105) If we place ourselves from the angle, from the Aristotelian approach, it is clear that there is a contradiction between the statement that *for every x*, x fulfils in the function of argument and the fact that there is *some x* which cannot fulfil the place of argument except in the stating, exactly the negation of the first. If we are told that *all* horses – whatever you want, is that not so? – are fiery and if one adds onto it that there are *some* horses, *at least one* that is not so, in Aristotelian logic this is a contradiction. What I am putting forward is designed to make you grasp that precisely if I can, if I dare to put forward two terms, those on the right of my group of four terms – it is not by chance that there are four – if I can put forward something that is manifestly lacking in the aforesaid logic, it is quite certainly in the measure that the term existence has changed meaning in between times. And that it is not the same existence that is at stake when it is a matter of the existence of a term which is capable of taking the place of the argument in an articulated mathematical function.

Nothing here yet makes the connection between this *Yad'lun* as such and this *at least one* which is quite precisely what is formulated by the notion of the inverted E of x, there exists an x, *at least one* which gives, to what posits itself as a function, a value that can be qualified as true. This distance which is posited between existence, as one might

say – I won't call it anything else today for lack of a better word – the natural existence, which is not limited to living organisms, these Ones, for example, we can see them in the celestial bodies that are not for nothing the...among the first to have held a properly scientific interest, it is very precisely in the affinity that they have with the *One*. They appear as being inscribed in the heavens as elements that are all the more easily marked by the *One* in that they are punctiform and it is certain that they have done a lot to put the emphasis, as a form of passage, to put the emphasis on the point.

If between the individual and what is involved in what I will call the *real One*, in the interval, the elements that signal themselves as punctiform have played an outstanding role for what is involved in their transition, is it not tangible to you – and certainly did this not catch your ear in passing – that I speak about the *One* as a Real, of a Real that moreover may have nothing to do with any reality? I am calling reality what is reality, namely, for example your own existence, (106) your mode of sustaining which is assuredly material, and first of all because it is corporal. But it is a matter of knowing what you are speaking about when you say: *Yad'lun*, about a certain way along the path of which science has become engaged. I mean starting from this turning point where definitively it was in number as such that it trusted for its great turning point, the Galilean turning point, to call it by its name. It is clear that from this scientific perspective, the *One* that we can qualify as individual, the *One* and then something which is stated in the register of the logic of number, it is not really appropriate to question oneself about the existence, about the logical support that one can give to a unicorn as long as no animal can be conceived of in a more appropriate fashion than the unicorn itself. It is indeed from this perspective that one can say that what we call reality, natural reality, can be taken at the level of a certain discourse. And I do not pull back from claiming that the analytic discourse is that one. We can always take reality at the level of phantasy.

As regards the Real I am talking about, analytic discourse is designed to remind us that its access is the Symbolic, the aforesaid Real, it is in and through this impossible which *only* defines the Symbolic that we accede to it. I am coming back to it at the level of the natural history of Pliny. I do not see what differentiates the unicorn from any other animal that is perfectly existent in the natural order. The perspective that questions the Real in a certain direction demands that we state things in this way.

I am not at all, for all that, in the process of speaking to you about anything whatsoever that might look like progress. What we gain on the scientific plane which is incontestable, does absolutely not increase for all that for example our critical sense in the matter of...in the matter of political life for example. I have always underlined that what we gain on the one hand is lost on the other inasmuch as there is a certain limitation inherent to what one can call the field of adequation in the speaking being.

It is not because we have made progress since Pliny about life, biology, that it is an absolute progress. If a Roman citizen saw how we lived, it is unfortunately out of the question to summon him here on this occasion in person, but anyway he would probably be overwhelmed with horror. We can only prejudge it from the ruins left by this (107) civilisation. The notion that we can have of it, is to see, or to imagine what the remainders of ours would be in an equivalent time if one can imagine that.

This, is it not, so that you do not get anything into your skull, as I might say, on the subject of the confidence that I particularly have in science. What is at stake in analytic discourse is not a scientific discourse, but a discourse for which science furnishes us the material, which is quite different. So then it is clear that the grip of the speaking being on the world which he conceives himself as plunged into – already a schema which has the odour of his phantasy, does it not? –

that this grasp all the same only increases, this is certain, this grasp only increases in the measure that something is developed and this is the use of number.

I am claiming to show you that this number is reduced quite simply to this *Yad'lun*. So then, we have to see what allows us historically to have a little bit more to say about this *Yad'lun* than what Plato made of it, as I might say, by putting it on exactly the same level as what is involved in Being. It is certain that this dialogue is extraordinarily suggestive and fruitful and if you look at it closely you will find in it already a foreshadowing of what I can, on the basis, on the theme of set theory, state about *Yad'lun*.

Begin simply with the statement of the first hypothesis, if the *One* – it is to be taken for its meaning – if the *One* is *One*, what are we going to be able to do about it? The first thing that he puts as an objection to it is the following, it is that this *One* will be nowhere, because if it were somewhere, it would be in an envelope, in a limit, and that this is quite in contradiction with its existence as *One*.

What's wrong? Ok then! I am talking quietly. That's the way it is, too bad, that's how I am speaking today, it is no doubt because I can't do any better.

For the *One* to have been able to be developed in its existence as *One* in the way that grounds the *Mengenlehre*, *la théorie des ensembles* [set theory] to translate it as it has been translated not unhappily in French, but certainly with an accent that does not quite correspond to the sense of the original in German which, from the point of view that we are aiming at, is no better. Well then, this only came late, and only came in function of the whole history of mathematics itself, of which of (108) course there is no question of me retracing here even in the shortest of summaries, but in which one must take into account

something which has taken all its emphasis, all its import, namely, from what I could call the... the extravagances of number.

This obviously began very early because already in Plato's time the irrational number created problems and he found himself inheriting – he gives a statement of it with all the developments in *Theaetetus* – does he not, the Pythagorean scandal of the irrational character of the diagonal of a square, from the fact that you never finish with it, this is demonstrable in a figure. And this was indeed the most fortunate thing to make appear to them, at this epoch, the existence of what I am calling numerical extravagance. I mean something that goes beyond the field of the *One*. After that, what? Something that we can in what is described as Archimedes' method of exhaustion, consider as the avoidance of what comes so many centuries later in the form of the paradoxes of infinitesimal calculus, in the form of the statement of what is called the infinitesimally small. Something that takes a long time to be developed in positing, in positing some finite quantity about which it is said that in any way, a certain mode of operating will end up by being smaller than the aforesaid quantity. Namely, when all is said and done, making use of the finite in order to define a transfinite. And then the appearance, faith, one cannot not mention it, the appearance of Fourier's trigonometrical series which certainly does not fail to pose all sorts of problems about its theoretical foundation. All of this conjugated with the reduction, the reduction to...to perfectly finite principles of the calculus described as infinitesimal which is happening at the same time and of which Cauchy is the great representative. I am only giving this ultra rapid reminder to date what is meant by the taking up again from Cantor's pen of what the status of the *One* is.

The status of the *One*, from the moment that what is at stake is to ground it, can only start from its ambiguity. Namely, that the mainspring of set theory stems entirely from the fact that the *One* of the set, is distinct from the *One* of the element. The notion of set

depends on the fact that there is a set even with a single element. That is not usually how it is said, but it is proper to the word precisely to advance with its big boots. It is enough moreover to open any presentation whatsoever of set theory to put your finger on what this (109) implies. Namely, that if the element posited as fundamental in a set is this something that the very notion of the set allows to posit as an empty set, well then, having done this, the element is perfectly acceptable. Namely, that a set can have an empty set as constituting its element, which because of this is absolutely equivalent to what is commonly called a *singleton* in order not to announce right away the card of the number *1*. And this in a most justified way for the good reason that we can only define the number *1* by taking the class of all sets which are a single element and by highlighting its equivalence as being properly what constitutes the foundation of the *One*.

Set theory is designed then to restore the status of number. And what proves that it effectively restores it, this from the perspective of what I am stating is that, very precisely, in stating as it does the foundation of the *One* and in making number depend on it as a class of equivalence, it ends up by highlighting what it calls the non-numerable which is very simple and, as you are going to see, immediately accessible, but that, in translating it into my vocabulary, I call not the non-numerable, an object that I would not hesitate to describe as mythical, but the impossible to number (*dénombrer*). This is demonstrated by the method – here I apologise for not being able to show its make-up immediately on the board, but really after all, what is there to prevent those among you that are interested by this discourse from opening the slightest treatise called *Naïve set theory* to see that, by the method described as diagonal, you can put your finger on the fact that there is a way of stating, in a series of different ways, the sequence of whole numbers. Because in truth it can be stated in 36,000 ways. It will be immediately possible to show that whatever way you have organised it, there will be, simply by taking the diagonal and in this diagonal, by changing the values on each occasion according to a rule determined in

advance, one more way of enumerating them. It is precisely in this that there consists the Real attached to the *One*.

And, if indeed it is a fact that today I can push its proof far enough in the time that I promised I would limit myself to, I am going all the same from now on to put the emphasis on what is involved by this ambiguity placed at the foundation of the *One* as such. It is very exactly the fact that, contrary to appearances, the *One* cannot be (110) founded on sameness (*mêmeté*), but that it is very precisely, on the contrary, by set theory, marked as being grounded on pure and simple difference. What governs the foundation of set theory consists in the fact that, when you notice in it, let us say to go to the simplest case, three elements, each one separated by a comma, so then by two commas, if one of these elements appears in any way to be the same as another, or if it can be united to it by some sign of equality, it is purely and simply one and the same as it. At the first level of the framework constituted by what is called set theory, is the axiom of extensionality which signifies very precisely the fact that at the start it cannot be the *same* that is at stake. What is at stake very precisely is to know at what moment in this construction sameness arises.

Sameness does not simply arise late in the construction and, as I might say, on one of its edges. But what is more I can put forward that this sameness as such is counted in number and that therefore the emergence of the *One*, in so far as it is describable from the same, only emerges, as I might say, in an exponential fashion. I mean that it is starting from the moment that the *One* in question is nothing other than this \aleph_0 in which the cardinal of the infinite is symbolised, this numerical infinity, this infinite that Cantor calls improper and which is made up of elements of what constitutes the first proper infinity, namely, the \aleph_1 in question. It is in the course of the construction of this \aleph_1 that there appears the construction of the same itself, and that this same, in the construction, is itself counted as an element.

This is why, let us say, it is inadequate in the Platonic dialogue to make participation of anything whatsoever existent in the order of the similar (*semblable*). Without the breakthrough by which the *One* is first constituted, the notion of the similar could not appear in any way. This is what we are going, I hope, to see. If we do not see it here today because I am limited to a quarter of an hour less than I usually have, I will take it up elsewhere. And why not the next time, on the Thursday at Sainte-Anne, because a certain number of you know the way there. Nevertheless what I want to mark, is what results from this very start of set theory and from what I will call, why not, *Cantorisation*, on condition of writing it c.a.n. of number. This is what is at stake. To (111) ground the cardinal in it in any way, there are no other paths than those that are called the bi-univocal application of one set onto another. When you want to illustrate it, you find nothing better, you find nothing other than to evoke alternatively some primitive rite or other of potlatch because of the prevalence from which there will emerge the establishment of an at least provisional chief. Or more simply the manipulations of the maître d' who confronts one by one each of the elements of a set of knives against a set of forks. It is from the moment when there will again be *One* on one side and nothing on the other, whether it is a matter of herds that make each competitor for the title of chief break through a certain threshold, or whether it is a matter of the maître d' who is in the process of doing his count, what will appear? The *One* begins at the level at which there is *One* lacking.

The empty set is then properly legitimated by the fact that it is, as I might say, the door whose going through constitutes the birth of the *One*. The first *One* that is designated by an acceptable experience, I mean mathematically acceptable, in a way that can be taught, because this is what is meant by the *mathème*, and not because it appeals to this sort of crude imagery which is that... - it is more or less the same thing – what constitutes the *One* and very precisely what justifies it, which is only designated as distinct and not from any qualifying mapping out, is that it only begins from its lack. And this indeed there appears to us, in

the reproduction that I have given you here of Pascal's triangle. The necessity of distinguishing each of these lines which you know, I think for some time, I underlined it enough, how they are made up, each one being made up of the addition of what is above and on the same line, of what is noted on the right, each of these lines is then constituted as follows:

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc}
 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 & \dots & \\
 & 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 & \\
 & & 1 & 3 & 6 & 10 & \\
 & & & 1 & 4 & 10 & \\
 & & & & 1 & 5 & \\
 & & & & & 1 &
 \end{array}$$

It is important to notice what each one of these lines designates.

(112) The error, the lack of foundation that is stated in the definition of Euclid, which is precisely the following: *monas esti katen exaston ton outon en legepai Arithmos de to sa monadon sogeimenon plethos* [Euclid, elements, 4, VII]. *The monad is that according to which each being can be said to be One*, and the number, *arithmos*, is very precisely this multiplicity which is made up of monads. It is not for nothing that Pascal's triangle is here. It is here to give an image to what is called in set theory, not the elements, but the parts of these sets. At the level of parts, the parts monadically stated of any set whatsoever are on the second line; the monad is second. What will we call the first, that is in short constituted from this empty set whose breaking through is precisely how the *One* is constituted? Why not use the echo that the Spanish tongue gives us and call it the *nade*? What is at stake in this repeated *One* of the first line, is very properly the *nade*, namely, the way in designated by lack.

It is starting from what is involved about the place where a hole is made, about this something that, if you want an image of it, I would

represent as being the foundation of *Yad'lun*, there can only be that of *One* in the image of a sack, which is a sack with a hole in it. Nothing is *One* except what comes out or which, from this sack, or which does not re-enter this sack; this is the original foundation, if we are to take it intuitively of the *One*.

I cannot, because of my promises, and I regret it, push any further here today what I have brought you. You should simply know that we are questioning ourselves, as I already outlined the image, that we will question ourselves, starting from the triad, the most simple form where the parts, the subsets made up of the parts of the set, where these parts can be imaged in a way that satisfies us, to go back to what happens in the dyad and the monad.

You will see that in questioning, not these prime numbers (*nombres premiers*) but these first numbers (*premiers nombres*) a difficulty will arise which the fact that it is a difficulty of imagery, I hope, will not prevent us from understanding what its essence is and to see what is involved in the foundation of the One.

Seminar 9: Wednesday 10 May 1972

It is difficult for me to open up the path for you in a discourse that does not interest all of you. I mean as in *pas tous* (not all) and I even add, *only* as it were like *not all*. One thing is obvious, it is the crucial character, in Freud's thinking of *all* (*tous*). The notion of the crowd that he inherits from this imbecile called Gustave Le Bon is used by

him to entify this *all*. It is not astonishing that he discovers the necessity of a *there exists* of which, on this occasion, he only sees the aspect that he translates as the unary trait, *der einziger Zug*. The unary trait has nothing to do with the *Yad'lun* that I am trying to circumscribe this year because there is nothing better to do, what is expressed by...*ou pire*, and it is therefore not for nothing that I have to say it adverbially.

I point out right away, the unary trait is that by which repetition is marked as such. Repetition does not ground any all nor does it identify anything, because tautologically, as I might say, there cannot be a first of them. This is why all this psychology of something that is translated by crowds, the *psychology of crowds*, misses what is at stake by seeing in it with a little more luck, the nature of the *not all* that grounds it, the nature which is precisely that of the *woman*, to be put in inverted commas, who for father Freud constituted up to the end the problem, the problem of what she wants. I have already spoken to you about that. But let us come back to what I am trying this year to spin out for you. Anything whatsoever, it is true, can be used to write the *One* of repetition. It is not that it is nothing, it is that it is written with anything whatsoever so that it is easy to repeat in figures. There is nothing easier to represent (*figurer*) for the being who finds himself (114) with the responsibility of ensuring that in language, it speaks (*ça parle*), nothing easier to represent than what it is designed to reproduce naturally, namely, as they say, its fellow or its type. Not that he knows from the beginning how to make its representation. But it marks him and this, he can return to it, return to the mark which precisely is the unary trait. The unary trait, is the support of what I started from under the name of the *mirror stage*, namely, imaginary identification.

But not only does this highlighting of a typical support, namely, an imaginary one, the mark as such, the unary trait, constitute a value judgement – as it has come back to me, it has been said that I was making a value judgement of the imaginary kind as *caca!* Symbolic as,

yum yum. But everything that I said, wrote, inscribed in graphs, schematised in an optical model on one occasion, in which the subject is reflected in the unary trait, and where it is only from there that he locates himself as *ideal ego*, all of that insists precisely on the fact that imaginary identification operate by means of a symbolic mark. So that, whoever denounces this Manicheism – value judgement, bah! – in my doctrine, simply demonstrates what is involved in having listened to me in this way from the start of my discourse, of which it is nevertheless contemporaneous. A pig, even if he gets up on his hind legs and becomes an upright pig, nevertheless remains the pig that he was by pedigree; but he is not the only one to imagine that it is remembered.

To return to Freud as regards whom I have up to now only commented on the function that he introduced under the name of narcissism, it is indeed from the error that he committed in linking the *ego* without any relay to his *Massenpsychologie* that there arises the unbelievable nature of the institution with which he projected what he called *psychic economy*, namely, the organisation to which he thought he had to confide the relaunching of his doctrine. He wanted it that way, why? To set up the *protection* of a *kernel of truth*. This is how Freud thought it out and it is indeed also how those who proved to be the fruits of this conception expressed themselves in order, even if they think this kernel is modest, are drawn to consider it. Which, from the point things have got to in public opinion, is comical. To bring it out it is enough to indicate what is implied in this sort of guarantee of a school of wisdom. That is why from all time it has been called that, *Es*, is that not it? Question mark.

(115) Wisdom as it appears in the very book of patience, of sapience, which *Ecclesiastes* is, is what? It is, as it is clearly said there, it is knowledge about enjoyment. Everything that is posited as such is characterised as esoteric and one could say that, there is no religion outside Christianity which does not adorn itself / protect itself (*s'en*

pare) with it in the two senses of the word. In all the religions, the Buddhist and also the Muslim, without mentioning the others, there is this adornment and this way of protecting oneself, I mean of marking the place of this knowledge about enjoyment. Do I need to recall the *tantras* for one of these religions, the *soufis* for the other? This is what the pre-Socratic philosophies take on as an entitlement and this is what Socrates breaks with, substituting for it – and one can say specifically – the relation to the *little o-object* which is nothing other than what he calls *soul*.

This operation is sufficiently illustrated by the partner given to him in the *Symposium* in the perfectly historical species of Alcibiades, in other words sexual frenzy, at which the absolute discourse of the master normally culminates, as I might say, namely, which produces nothing but symbolic castration. I remind you of the mutilation of the Hermes, I did it at one time when I used this *Symposium* to articulate transference. The knowledge of enjoyment from Socrates on will no longer survive except in the margins of civilisation. Not, of course, without it experiencing what Freud modestly calls its discontents. Some madman from time to time bellowed about finding himself in it, along the thread of this subversion. This only had an effect when he was capable of making it understood in the very discourse that produced this knowledge, the Christian discourse, to dot the i's, because, let there be no doubt about it, it is the inheritor of the Socratic discourse. It is the *up to date* discourse of the master, the most up to date model of the master and of the little model daughters (*filles modèles–modèles*) who are its descendants. I am assured that in this *genre*, what I call model, which now decorates itself with different initials but which always begins with *m*, bucket-loads come here. I know it because I am told it. But for my part from where I am, it is not enough for me to see them, to look at you, because precisely, from the start, they are *not all* models.

Yes! Let us note, this obviously has an effect when, this remark was subversive, and I said that it marked an epoch, it was Nietzsche who (116) uttered it. I am simply pointing out that he can only utter it, I mean make himself understood, by articulating it in the only audible discourse, namely, the one that the *up to date* master determines as his line of descent. All these beautiful people are delighted with it, naturally, but that changes nothing about it. Everything that has been produced is part of it from the beginning and, of course, that the initials themselves, of which there was question earlier, are also there from the start, is only discovered *nachträglich*.

I think it is no harm to mark here that the not all (*pas tous*) has slipped as it is natural into not all (*pas toutes*). It is designed for that. All the blather that I only produce – today when one can highlight some movement in the emergence of discourse – to mark that its sense remains problematic, specifically from what should not be understood in what I have just said, namely, a direction of history because, like every other direction, it is only illuminated by what happens. And because what happens only depends on luck. Nevertheless this does not mean that it cannot be calculated, starting from what? From the *One* that is found in it. Only you must not be deceived about what you find of the *One*. It is never what you are searching for. That is why, as I said after someone else who is in my situation, I do not seek, as he said, I find. The way, the only way, not to be deceived, is with a lucky find, to question yourself about what there was to seek, if you had wished it.

What is the formula by which I one day articulated transference? My artefacts of writing demonstrate in this now famous subject- supposed-to-know a pleonasm. In it one can write subject as \$, which recalls that a subject is never anything but supposed, *upokeimenon*, I only use the redundancy because of the deafness of the Other. It is clear that it is the knowledge that is supposed and no one has ever been deceived by that. Supposed to whom? Certainly not to the analyst but to his

position. And on this you can consult my seminars, because this is what is striking in rereading them, no mistakes, which is different from my *Ecrits*. Yes! That's how it is. It is because I write quickly. I had never said this to myself. But I noticed it because I happened to be talking recently to someone. I noticed it since the last time where some of you heard me at Sainte-Anne.

I put forward things starting from set theory, invoked here to put in question this *One* that I spoke about earlier, just now. I always take (117) risks, you cannot say that at that time, I did not take them, with all the necessary humour.

2 , two to the power of Aleph index zero minus one.

I think that I have sufficiently underlined for you the difference between the index 0 and the function of 0 when it is used in an exponential scale. Naturally this does not mean that I did not tickle the sensibility of the mathematicians who may have been there that evening in my audience. What I meant, while waiting for something of it to come back to me – it was a challenge – what I meant, is that if the *One* is subtracted, this whole edifice of numbers ought, if you understand it as the product of a logical operation, specifically that which proceeds from the position of the 0 and from the definition of successor, the whole chain be undone, and return to its start. It is curious that I had to explicitly call on someone in order, from his mouth, to rediscover the well-founded nature of what I also stated the last time. Namely, that this involves not simply the *One* from the 0 but another that, as such, I marked as locatable in the chain, by the passage of one number to another when it was a matter of counting its parts. It is on this that I hope to conclude. But as of now I will content myself with noting that the person who confirmed me in this way, is the one who, in a dedication that she did me the honour of making to me in connection with a little article, that she herself stated that I wrote quickly.

That idea would never have entered my head because what I write, I redo ten times. But it is true that the tenth time, I write it very quickly. That is why some mistakes remain in it, because it is a text. A text, as the name indicates, can only be woven by making knots. When you make knots, there is always something that is left hanging. I apologise for it, I have never written except for people who are supposed to have heard me and when, exceptionally, I was first writing, the report of a congress for example, I only ever gave a speech on my report. Just consult what I said at Rome for the congress thus named. I did the written report that you know and this was published at one time. What I said, I did not take up again in what I wrote, but you would certainly be much more at ease in it than in the report itself. Those for whom then, in short, I took on (118) the labour of taking it up again logically, this labour which begins with the *Discours de Rome*, once they abandon the critical line that results from it, from this work, to return precisely to the Beings from which I precisely demonstrate this discourse ought to abstain, by returning to these Beings and making of it the support of the discourse of the analysand, are only going back to chit-chat. That is why the very people who decamped after this discourse, once it had been pronounced, once it had been spoken, completely missed its meaning.

This indeed is why, in connection with my *subject supposed to know*, what was found, finally, that they expressed, indeed what they printed in black and white, which is worse again, precisely by noticing that by taking off from where I had brought them, from the line on which I maintained them, they no longer knew anything. And starting with this, I repeat, they went as far as to say that supposing this knowledge in the position of the analyst is a very bad thing, because it means that the analyst is pretending (*fait semblant*). There is nothing to that but a bit of chaff that I already highlighted earlier, it is that the analyst does not pretend, he occupies, he occupies with what? This is what I am leaving to come back to, he occupies *the position* of a semblance. He occupies it legitimately because with respect to enjoyment, to the

enjoyment as they have to grasp it in the remarks of him who under the title of analyst, they are standing surety for in his enunciation as subject, there is no other tenable solution. That it is only from there that there can be perceived how far enjoyment, the enjoyment of this authorised statement, can lead without too noticeable damage.

But the semblance is not fed by the enjoyment that he is supposed to flout. According to those who come back to this 'stuck-in-a-rut' discourse, this semblance gives to something other than himself, his speaking-tube and precisely by showing himself as a mask, I mean openly worn, as on the Greek stage. The semblance takes on its effect by being manifest. When the actor wears the mask his face does not grimace, it is not realistic. Pathos is reserved for the choir who go at it, make no mistake, with a joyful heart. And why? In order that the spectator, I mean that of the ancient stage, should find in it his community surplus enjoying, for himself. This indeed is what gives the cinema its value for us. There the mask is something different, it is the unreality of the projection.

But let us come back to ourselves. It is by giving voice to something, that the analyst can demonstrate that this reference to the Greek stage is appropriate. Because what is he doing, in occupying as such this position of a semblance? Nothing other than (119) demonstrating precisely, by being able to demonstrate, that the experienced terror of desire from which neurosis is organised, what is called defence, is only, with respect to what is produced in it in terms of completely lost labour, only a conspiracy that is to be pitied. You find, at the two ends of this sentence, what Aristotle designated about the effect of tragedy on the listener. And where have I said that the knowledge from which this voice proceeds is a semblance? Ought it even to appear so? Take on an inspired tone? Nothing of the kind. Neither the air, nor the song of the semblance is appropriate to the psychoanalyst. Only there you are! Since it is clear that this knowledge is not the esoterics of enjoyment, nor simply the know-how of a grimace, we have to settle

with talking about truth as a fundamental position, even if we do not know everything about this truth. Because I define it by its half-saying, by the fact that it can do no more than half-say itself.

But what then is the knowledge that the truth is guaranteed by? It is nothing but what comes from the notation that results from the fact of positing it starting from the signifier. This is something whose maintenance is difficult to sustain, but which is confirmed by providing a non-initiatory knowledge. Because it proceeds, if nobody minds, from a subject of a discourse subjected as such to production, this subject that one can find mathematicians describing as creative and specifying that it is indeed the subject that is at stake. This crosschecks with the fact that the subject, in my logic, wears itself out by producing itself as an effect of the signifier, naturally remaining as distinct from it as a real number from a series whose convergence is rationally assured.

To say non-initiatory knowledge, is to say a knowledge that is taught by other voices than the direct ones of enjoyment, which are always conditioned by the fundamental failure of sexual enjoyment. I mean because of the way the constitutive enjoyment of the speaking being is demarcated from sexual enjoyment, a separation and a demarcation whose efflorescence is certainly short and limited. And that is why it has been possible to draw up the catalogue of it, precisely starting from analytic discourse in the quite finite list of the drives. Its finitude is connected to the impossibility that is demonstrated in the veritable questioning of the sexual relationship as such. Exactly, it is in the very practice of the sexual relationship that there is affirmed the bond that we promote, we, as speaking beings, promote everywhere else, about the impossible and the Real, namely, that the Real has no other attestation. All reality is suspect by being – not imaginary, as is imputed to me, because in truth it is rather obvious as it emerges (120) from animal ethology, it is an articulation of the Real – what we have to be suspicious about in every reality, is whether it is phantastical. What allows us to escape from it, is that an impossibility in the

symbolic formula which we are able to draw from it demonstrates the Real and it is not for nothing that here, to designate the symbolic in question, we will use the word *term*.

Love after all could be taken as the object of a phenomenology. The literary expression of what has been produced about it is profuse enough for us to be able to presume that one could get something out of it. It is all the same curious that, apart from some authors, Stendhal, Baudelaire, and let us drop surrealism's phenomenology of love whose moralism is astonishing, make no mistake, it is curious that this literary expression should be so short, so that it does not even appear to be the only thing in it that would be of interest to us, is its foreignness. And that, if this is enough to designate everything that is written about it in the 19th Century novel, for everything that comes before, it is the contrary. It is – consult l'*Astrée* which for its contemporaries was quite something – the fact is that we understand so little about it, what it may have been precisely for its contemporaries, that we experience nothing about it but boredom. So that as regards this phenomenology, it is quite difficult for us to do it and even by taking up again what would be its inventory, one cannot deduce from it anything other than the misery of what it was based on.

Psychoanalysis, for its part, went into this in all innocence. Naturally, what it met up with at first was not very cheerful. It must be recognised that it did not limit itself to it, and that what remains of it, in what it opened up first of all as exemplary, is this model of love in so far as it is given by the care given by the mother to the son, to what is inscribed in the Chinese character *Hao* which means the good, or what is good. It is nothing other than this, which means son, *tseu*, and this, which means the woman:

(121) Extending that to the daughter tenderly loving her senile father and even to what I made an allusion to at the end of my *Subversion of the subject*, namely, to the miner whose wife rubs him down before he fucks her, is not something that is going to enlighten us much about the sexual relationship.

The knowledge about truth is useful for the analyst in so far as it permits him to enlarge a little his relationship precisely to these subject-effects, and of which I say he stands surety for them by leaving the field free to the discourse of the analysand. That the analyst should understand the discourse of the analysand seems in effect to be preferable. But to know from where is a question that does not seem to be required in the eyes of the only notation of what he must be for him in the discourse by occupying the position of semblance. It must of course be emphasised that it is as *small o* that he occupies this position of the semblance. The analyst can understand nothing except in the name of what the analysand says, namely, to see himself, not as cause but as effect of this discourse, which does not prevent him from recognising himself in it by right. And that is why it is better that he has taken this path, in the training analysis, which can only of course have been engaged under this title.

There is an aspect of the knowledge about truth which takes on its energy from totally neglecting its content, by ensuring (*d'asséner*) that the signifying articulation is at its place and at its time. In such a way that something which is nothing other than this articulation, whose display in the passive sense is found to take on an active sense and impose itself as a demonstration on the being, on the speaking being who can do nothing other on this occasion than recognise, for the signifier, not only its dwelling in it, but of being nothing other than its mark. Because the freedom to choose one's axioms, namely, the starting point chosen for this demonstration, only consists in undergoing as subject the consequences of their not being free.

Starting simply from the fact that the truth can be constructed starting simply from 0 and 1, which was done only at the beginning of the last century, somewhere between Boole and Morgan with the emergence of mathematical logic. Which means that it must not be believed that 0 and 1 here note the opposition between truth and error. It is a revelation that only takes on its value *nachträglich*, by Frege and Cantor, from the fact that this 0, described as that of error, which encumbered the Stoics for whom it was that, and that that led to this charming folly of material implication which not for nothing was refused by some people. Because of the fact that it posits that the implication that gives rise to the result of truth (122) formulated from error is the veritable one. The error implying the truth is a true implication. It is nothing of the kind in the position of the following: (0 1) 1 with ~~mathematical~~ logic. That 0 implies 1 is a notable implication of 1, namely, of the true. 0 has just as much truth-value as 1, as 1, because the 0 is not the negation of the truth 1, but the truth of the lack which consists in the fact that 2 lacks 1. Which means, on the plane of truth, that the truth can only speak by affirming itself on occasion, as was done throughout the centuries, as being the double truth, but never as being the complete truth.

0 is not the negation of anything whatsoever, in particular of any multitude. It plays its role in the building up of number. It is quite accommodating, as everyone knows. If there were only 0's, how sweetly everything would flow! But what it indicates, is that when it is necessary for there to be two of them, there will never be more than one, and that, is a truth. 0 implies 1, the all implying One, is to be taken not as the false implying the true, but as two trues, one implying the other. But also affirming that the true will never be except by missing its partner.

The only thing that the 0 is opposed to, and resolutely, is to have a relation to 1 such that 2 may result from it. It is not true, which I am marking with the appropriate bar, that 0 implying 1, implies 2:

$$(0 \longrightarrow 1) \longrightarrow 2.$$

How then grasp what is involved in this 2, without which it is clear that no number can be constructed? I did not talk about numerating them, but constructing them. This indeed is why the last time I brought you as far as aleph . It was in order to make you sense, in passing, that in the generation from one cardinal number to another, in the counting of subsets, something somewhere is counted as such which is another *One*, which I marked by Pascal's triangle, while pointing out that each figure, which on the right marks the number of parts, is made up of the addition of what corresponds to it as parts in the preceding set.

It is this 1, this 1 that I characterised when it was a matter of 3 for example, namely, AB opposed to C, and from BA which comes to the same thing; as regards what is involved in the 4, it is necessary that to the AB, to BA, to AC, there should be ABC, the juxtaposition of elements of the preceding set, their juxtaposition as such, which come into account simply because of 1.

This is what I called *the sameness of the difference*. Because it is in as far as nothing other in their property exists except to be difference, that the elements that come here to support the subsets, that these elements are themselves counted in the generation of parts that are going to follow.

I insist. What is in question, is what is at stake as regards the enumerated, it is the extra One (*l'Un en plus*) in so far as it is counted as such in what is enumerated, in the aleph () of its parts at each passage of a number to its successor. It is to be counted as such from difference as property, that the multiplication that is expressed in the exponential 2^{n-1} of the parts of the upper set, of its bipartition which is proved in the aleph, what, to be put to the test of the enumerable? That it is there that it is revealed in so far as from a One, from the One that

is at stake, it is another that is at stake, that what is constituted starting from the 1 and from the 0 as inaccessibility to the 2 is only given at the level of the aleph, namely, of the actual infinity.

To end I am going to make you sense it and in a quite simple form which is the following, of what one can say as regards what is involved in whole numbers concerning a property which is supposed to be that of accessibility. Let us define this from the fact that a number is accessible by being able to be produced either as a sum, or as exponentiation of numbers that are smaller than it. In this respect, the start of numbers is confirmed by not being accessible and very precisely up to 2. The matter interests us very specially as regards this 2, since as regards the relationship of the 1 to 0, I sufficiently underlined that the 1 is generated from the lack marked by the 0.

With 0 and 1, when you add them, or when you put them with one (124) another, indeed 1 by itself in an exponential relation, never will the 2 be reached. The number 2 in the sense that I have just posited it, that it can from a summation or from an exponentiation be generated from smaller numbers, the test proves to be negative; there is no 2 that is generated by means of the 1 and of the 0. A remark of Gödel is enlightening here, it is precisely because the aleph₀ () namely, the actual infinite, is what is produced in the same case. While as regards everything involved in whole numbers starting from 2, begin with 3, 3 is made with 1 and 2, 4 can be made from a 2 put at its proper exponentiation and so on. There is no number that cannot be realised by one of these two operations starting from numbers smaller than it.

This is precisely what is lacking and the reason why at the level of aleph₀ there is reproduced this flaw that I am calling inaccessibility. There is properly speaking no number which, whether one uses it to make of the indefinite addition with all its predecessors, indeed with all its successors, nor either by taking it to as high an exponent as you wish, that will ever accede to aleph.

It is singular, and this is what today I must leave to one side even though I may take it up again, if that interests some people, in a smaller circle, it is quite striking that from Cantor's construction there results that there is no aleph that starting from \aleph_0 cannot be held to be accessible. It is no less true that in the opinion of those who made this difficulty in set theory progress, it is only on the supposition that in these alephs, there are inaccessible, that there can be reintroduced into what is involved in whole numbers what I will call consistency.

In other words that, without this supposition, the inaccessible being produced somewhere in the alephs, what is at stake and what I started from, is something that is designed to suggest to you the usefulness of the fact that there is *dlun*, so that you may be able to understand what is involved in this bipartition that is fleeting at every instant, of this bipartition between the man and the woman. Everything that is not man...is it woman? One might tend to admit it. But since the woman is *not all*, why would everything that is not woman be man? This bipartition, this impossibility of applying, in this matter of gender, something that is supposed to be the principle of contradiction, that nothing less is necessary than to admit the inaccessibility of something beyond the \aleph_0 for the contradiction to be consistent, that one is grounded in saying that what is not 1 is 0, and that what is not 0 is 1, this is what I am indicating to you as (125) being what ought to allow the analyst to understand a little more than through the spectacles of the little *o*-object what is produced, what is produced in terms of an effect, what is created of the *One* by a discourse which is only based on the foundation of the signifier.

Seminar 10: Wednesday 17 May 1972

You wouldn't have a piece of white paper?

What?....Good!

There you are. This revolves around..., what analysis leads us to formulate, this function, of that with respect to which it is a matter of knowing whether there exists, whether there exists an x which satisfies the function .

So then, naturally, this presupposes articulating what existence may be. It is almost certain that, historically, this notion of existence only arose with the intrusion of the real, of the mathematical real as such. But this does not prove anything because we are not here to do a history of thought, there can be no history of thought, thought is a flight (*fuite*) in itself. It projects under the name of memory, is that not so, the failure to recognise its.....its changing texture.

All of this does not prevent us trying to conduct a certain mapping out and, to start from what not by chance I wrote in the form of functions. I began to state something which, I hope, will be of help to you, a statement that if I write it, it is in a sense, in the sense that it is a function unrelated to anything whatsoever which founds from them – *d'e.u.x. – One*.

So then you see that the whole trick concerns the subjunctive which belongs at once to the verb *fonder* and to the verb *fondre*. *D'eux* is (128) not melted into *One*, nor *One* founded by two. This is what...this is what Aristophanes says in a very pretty little fable in the *Symposium*. They were separated in two, they were first of all in the form of...a beast with two backs or a beast with an egg shaped back.

Which, of course, if the fable dreamt in the slightest way for an instant of being something other than a fable, namely, be consistent, would in no way imply that they should not remake their young with two backs, with egg shaped backs. This is something that luckily nobody notices because a myth is a myth and this one says enough about it, it is the one that I first of all projected in a more modern form in the shape of . This is, in short, what as regards sexual relationships, is presented to us as a kind of discourse – I am talking about the mathematical function – a kind of discourse, at least I am proposing it to you as a model which, on this point, might allow us to ground something other than the semblance...*ou pire*.

Good! This morning I, I began with the worst and despite everything, I do not think it is superfluous to let you know about it, even if it were only to see where that might lead. It was in connection with this little cut of the electricity supply. I don't know whether you had it, but I had it until 10 o'clock. It really pissed me off, because that is the time when I usually put together, I rethink these little notes, and that did not make things easy for me. What's more, because of the same cut, someone broke a tooth-glass that I was very fond of. If there are people here who are fond of me, they could send me another one. In that way I will perhaps have several, which will allow me to break all of them except the one that I like. I have a little courtyard explicitly designed for that. So then I said to myself, in thinking that, of course, that this cut did not come from anyone, that came from a decision of the workers! Me for my part I have a respect that one cannot even imagine for the kindness of this thing that is called a cut, a strike. What delicacy to stop at that! But there it seemed to me that, given the time...what?

The audience – We can't hear a thing.

J Lacan – You can't hear? You can't hear? I was in the process of saying that a strike was the most social thing in the world, that it represents a respect for the social bond which is something fabulous. But here there was a point in this cutting of the current which had the

meaning of a strike. The fact is that it was precisely at the time when, just like me, getting my breakfast ready, like that to speak to you now, might this not also annoy the one who, despite everything, being on this occasion the wife of the worker, is called, from the very mouth of the worker who – all the same, I associate with some of them – is called a *bourgeoise*! It is true that this is what they are called! And then all the same I set about dreaming. Because all of this holds together. There are workers, those who are exploited. It is all the same indeed because they prefer that to this sexual exploitation of the bourgeois woman! There you are! That is worse. It is the...*ou pire*. You understand? Because, what is the point of pronouncing articulations on things that one can do nothing about. One cannot say that sexual relationships are only presented in the form of exploitation. It is before, it is because of this that exploitation is organised because there is not even this exploitation.

There you are, that is worse, it is the...*ou pire*. It is not serious. It is not serious even though one clearly sees that this is where a discourse that might not be a semblance ought to go, but it is a discourse that would end up badly. It would not be at all a social bond, which is what it is *necessary* for a discourse to be. Good! So then what is at stake now is the psychoanalytic discourse and it is a matter of ensuring that the one who plays the function of *small o* in it holds a position – I already explained that the last time, of course, this passed over you like water off a duck's back, but anyway some all the same seem to have got, like that, a little wet – should hold the position of a semblance. Those who are really interested in that, I had all the same some echoes of it, this moved them. There are some psychoanalysts with things that torment them, that cause them anxiety from time to time.

That is not what I am saying that, that I am insisting on the fact that the *little o-object* ought to hold the position of a semblance, it is not to load them with anxiety, I would even prefer if they did not have any. Anyway, it is not a bad sign that this gave them some because that

means that my discourse is not completely superfluous, that it may take on a sense. But that is not enough. The fact that a discourse has a sense assures absolutely nothing, because, it is at least necessary that one should be able to locate this sense, is that not so. If you carry out a Brownian motion indeed at every instant it has a meaning. This indeed is what makes the position of the psychoanalyst difficult, it is because his function is the displacing of the *little o-object*. And since it was not in connection with the (130) psychoanalyst that I made the *little o-object* come down from heaven the first time. I began with a little graph which was designed to give you the core, or the map, for the *Formations of the unconscious* to circumscribe it a point from which it could not move. In the position of semblance, it is much less easy, much less easy to stay there because, the *little o-object* slips away in a flash between your paws, since it is, as I already explained, when I began, to talk about it in connection with language. The fact is that *it runs, it runs, the ferret* in everything that you say. At every instant it is elsewhere.

So then, that is why we are trying to grasp from where there could be situated something that is beyond sense, of this sense which ensures moreover that I cannot obtain any other effect than anxiety when it is not at all my aim. That is why we are interested in the fact that the real should be anchored, this real that I say, not for nothing, is mathematical. Because, when all is said and done, from experience, from the experience of what is at stake, of what is formulated, of what is written on occasion, we see, we can always put our finger on the fact that here, there is something that resists, I mean about which one cannot just say any old thing. You cannot give to the mathematical real any meaning you like. It is even quite striking that those who, in short, at a recent epoch have approached this real with the preconceived idea of making it account for its meaning starting from the true, there was like that a very bizarre person, whom you surely know by reputation, because he has created a little stir in the world, who was called Bertrand Russell, who is at the heart of this adventure

and it is all the same he who formulated something like the following: that mathematics, is something which is articulated in such a way that when all is said and done one does not even know whether what is articulated in it is true, or whether it has a meaning.

That does not prevent that precisely, it proves the following. Which is that one cannot give it any one whatsoever, either in the order of truth, nor in the order of meaning. And that it resists to the point that, to end up at this result that I consider to be a success, the very success, is that not so, the style in which this imposes itself, that it is the real. The fact is precisely that neither the true nor meaning dominate in it, they are secondary. And that from there, the position, this secondary position, of these two things that are called the true and meaning remained unusual for them. Anyway that this gives a touch of the staggers to people when they take the trouble to (131) think. This was the case for Bertrand Russell, he thought, it was...it is an aristocratic idiosyncrasy, is it not, and there is really no reason for finding that this is an essential function. But those who construct – I am not being ironical – the *Theory of sets* have indeed enough to do in this real to find the time to think on the side.

The way in which people engaged along a path not only that they cannot get out of but which also leads somewhere by necessity, and then what is more to a fruitfulness, means that they feel they are dealing with something quite different to what is nevertheless used, and what was the approach in the *initium* of this theory. It was to question everything that was involved in this real, because this is where people started from because, people could not fail to see that number was real, and that for some time indeed there was a battle about the *One*.

It was all the same no small matter to see that you could put in question whether the real number had something to do with the *One*, with the *One* like that, the first of the whole numbers, of the numbers

described as natural. The fact is, people had the time, from the 17th Century up to the beginning of the 19th Century, to approach number a little bit differently than the way the ancients had done. If I start from that, it is indeed because that is what is the essential. Not alone *Yad'lun*, but it can be seen from this that the *One*, for its part, does not think. It does not think therefore I am, in particular. When I say it does not think therefore I am, I hope that you remember that even Descartes, this is not what he says...He says *it thinks (ça se pense)*, “*therefore I am*” in inverted commas. The *One* does not think, even all alone, but it says something; this is even what distinguishes it, and it did not wait for people to pose questions about it, about its relationships, the question about what that means from the point of view of truth. It did not even wait for logic. Because it is logic. Logic is to locate in grammar what takes the form of the position of truth, what in language makes it adequate to be truth. Adequate does not mean that it will always succeed; so then by carefully seeking its forms, people think they are approaching what is involved in the truth.

But before Aristotle noticed that, namely, the relationship to grammar the *One* had already spoken, and not to say nothing. It says what it has to say in *Parmenides*, it is the *One* that speaks itself. It speaks itself, it must indeed be said, aiming at being true, (132) hence naturally the panic that results from it. There is no one, there is no one to talk about people who are in the knowledge business, who do not feel on every occasion that they suffer a heavy blow from it. It breaks the tooth-glass! It is indeed for that reason that after all, even though some put a certain amount of good will into it, a certain courage in saying that after all it can be accepted, even though it is a little far fetched, people have still not been able to master this thing which was nevertheless simple, of seeing that the *One* is, when it is truthful, when it says what it has to say, we see where that leads, in any case to a total disclaiming of any relationship to being.

There is only one thing that comes out of it when it is articulated, it is very exactly the fact that there are not two of them. I told you, it is a statement (*dire*). And you can even find in it, like that, within hand's reach, the confirmation of what I say when I say that the truth can only half-say itself; because you only have to break up the formula. To say that, it can only say either *yen a*, and as I say *Yad'lun* or indeed *not two*, which is interpreted, interpreted immediately for us as there is no sexual relationship. So then it is already, as you can clearly see, within hand's reach. Of course, not within reach of the *unien* hand of the *One*, to make of it something in the sense of sense. This indeed is why I recommend to those who want to hold the position of the analyst with what that involves in terms of knowledge not to slip away from it, to bring themselves up to date with what of course for them can only be read by working on the *Parmenides*. But this would be all the same a little limited, it is a difficult morsel to chew. Instead of something else happening which makes quite clear – if of course one persists with it, if you...if you submit yourself to it, if you are even broken by it, even – which makes quite clear the distinction there is between a real which is a mathematical real from any one at all of these trifles that start from something or other which is our nauseating position which is called the true or meaning.

Naturally of course, that does not mean that this will not have an effect, a massaging effect, a reinvigorating effect, an inspiring effect, a cleansing effect on what for us will appear to be required with regard to the true or indeed meaning. But precisely, this indeed is what I expect of it, the fact is that by forming yourself to distinguish what simply is involved in the *One*, by approaching this Real that number supports, that will already allow the analyst a lot. I mean that, he may be able from this angle where it is a question of interpreting, to renew meaning, to say things that are because of this a little less short-circuited, a little less changeable, than all the imbecilities that may come to us and of which earlier, *ou pire*, like that, I gave you a sample of starting simply the vexation I encountered this morning. I could

have embroidered like that about the worker and his bourgeois woman and draw a mythology from it. That made you laugh moreover, because in things of this kind, there is..., there is a vast field, there is no lack of meaning and the true, it has even become precisely the university feeding trough.

There are so many of them, there is such a range that someone will surely be found, one day to make an ontology out of what I am telling you, to say that...that I said that the word, had the effect of filling this gap that I am articulating, there is no sexual relationship. It is quite evident like that. A subjectivist interpretation, is it not? It is because he cannot tickle it that he goes on talking about it. That is simple, it is simple! What I for my part am attempting, is something different, it is to ensure that there are fewer imbecilities in your discourse – I am talking about analysts. And for that, you would try to ventilate meaning with elements that may be a little new.

So then, it is nevertheless not, it is nevertheless not a requirement that is not necessary. Because it is quite clear that there is no way to divide up any two series – *any*, I am saying – of attributes which would make up a male series on the one hand and on the other hand the feminine series. I did not say *man* at first in order not to create confusion.

Because I am going to embroider that still more to remain in the...in the worse. Obviously it is tempting, even for me. Me for my part, I am amusing myself. And then I am sure to amuse you in showing that what is called the active, if it is on this that you base yourselves because, naturally, it is common currency, that that is what a man is, he is active the little dear! In the sexual relationship then, it seems to me that it is, it is rather the woman who puts some vim into it. Good! Then, it has only to be seen all the same in positions that we will not at all describe as primitive, but it is because they are found in the Third World (*le tiers monde*), which is the world of Monsieur Thiers, is it not, yes, that – that it is not obvious that in normal life – I am not talking of course about the guys in the Gas and Electricity company of

France who have taken their distance from it, who have rushed into work – but in a life like (134) that, let us call it simply what it is, what it is everywhere except in...when a great Christian subversion took place, our great Christian subversion, man does no work, the woman grinds, she pounds, she stitches, she does the shopping and she still finds a way, in these solid civilisations that are not lost, she still finds a way to wiggle her bottom afterwards for...I am talking about a dance of course, huh! – for the gleeful satisfaction of the guy who is there! So then as regards what is involved in active and passive allow me to...it's true that he hunts. And it is nothing to laugh about, my little friends! It is very important!

Because you are provoking me then I will continue to amuse myself. It is unfortunate because that way I will not get to the end of what I had to tell you today about the *One*. It is 2 o'clock. But all the same because that makes you laugh, hunting, I don't know, I don't know if all the same despite everything, it is not absolutely superfluous to...if it is not absolutely superfluous to see in it precisely the virtue of the man, the virtue precisely through which he shows himself to be, he shows himself to be the best thing about himself, to be passive. Because, according to everything that we know, all the same, I don't know if you really realise, because of course, all of you here are incapable (*des Jean foutre*), and unless there are some countrymen here, nobody hunts, but even if there were country people here, they hunt badly. For the country person – a countryman is not necessarily a man, huh, whatever one may say about it – for the countryman, game is there to be shot, bang, bang. All of that is brought back to him. That is not what hunting is about at all! Hunting when it exists, you only have to see the trance that it puts him into, because it is known, after all, tiny little traces were found of all the propitiatory offerings they made to the thing which nevertheless was no longer there. You must understand that they were after all no madder than us, a beast that is killed is a killed beast.

Only, if they were not able to kill the beast, it is because they were so well subjected to everything that is involved in his approach, of his track, of his limits, of his territory, of his sexual preoccupations, in order to be precisely, for their part, substituted to something that is not, all of that, to non-defence, to the non-closure, to the non- limits of the beast, to life it must be said. And when they had to take that life, after having become it so much for their part this very life, it can be understood of course, huh, that they found that this (135) was not only lousy, but that it was dangerous. That this could well happen to them also.

It may be things like this that all the same made some people think like that, because these things all the same continue to be experienced. I heard that, myself, formulated in a curious way by someone extremely intelligent, a mathematician who, who – but in this case the lad is extrapolating all the same, but anyway I will put it to you because it is stimulating – that the nervous system in an organism, was perhaps nothing other than what results from an identification to the prey, huh? Good! I am throwing out this idea like that, I am presenting it to you, you will make what you want of it, of course, but you could make up with that a new theory of evolution that might be a little bit more amusing than the preceding ones. I am presenting it to you all the more willingly first of all, because it is not my own. It was palmed off on me too. But I am sure that...that that will excite ontological brains.

It is also true of course for the fisherman. Indeed in everything through which the man is woman. Because the way that a fisherman puts his hand under the belly of the trout there under his rock, there must be a trout fisherman here all the same, there's a good chance, he must know what I am saying there. That is something! Anyway all of that does not give us a very clear division on the subject of the active and the passive. So then I am not going to develop it because it is enough for me to confront each of these habitual couples with any

attempt whatsoever of bisexual distribution to arrive at results that are just as farcical. So then what could that be?

When I say *Yad'lun* – I must all the same sweep my own doorstep and then I do not see why today I would not remain there because I will be speaking to you then on Thursday, Thursday 1st June I believe, something like that. Can you imagine, the first Thursday of June I am forced to come back from a few days' holidays in order not to miss Sainte-Anne.

So then I will already at this point, all the same, make the remark that *Yad'lun* does not mean – it seems to me that all the same for many that ought to be already known, but why not? – that means that there is an individual. This indeed is why, you understand, that I am asking you to root this *Yad'lun* in what it comes from. Namely, that there is no other existence of the *One* than mathematical existence. There is *One* something, *One* argument (136) which satisfies a formula, and an argument that is completely emptied of meaning, it is simply the *One* as *One*. This is what I had intended, at the start, to clearly mark for you in set theory. I will perhaps all the same be able to indicate it to you at least before leaving you, but it is first of all necessary also to liquidate the following that not even the idea of the individual, constitutes in any case the *One*. Because, you can see clearly all the same, that this could be within reach, as regards what is involved in the sexual relationship, on which in short, a lot of people imagine that it is based, and that there are as many individuals on one side as on the other, in principal, at least among speaking beings. The number of men and of women apart from some exceptions, is that not so, I mean little exceptions, in the British Isles, there are fewer men than women, there are big massacres naturally of men, good! But anyway this does not prevent each having his own. The fact that they go one by one is not at all enough to justify the sexual relationship.

It is even funny that you have seen, that there is here a kind of impurity of set theory and of this idea of biunivocal correspondence. You clearly see here how a set is attached to the class and that the class, like everything that has an attribute pinned to it, is something that is related to the sexual relationship. Only it is precisely this, it is precisely this that I am asking you to be able to grasp thanks to the function of the set. The fact is that there is a *One* distinct from what unifies a class as an attribute. There is a transition through the intermediary of this biunivocal correspondence. There are as many of them on one side as on the other and that some people base the idea of monogamy on that. One might ask oneself how this is sustainable, but anyway it is in the Gospel. Since there are just as many, until there is a social catastrophe, this happened it appears in the middle of the Middle Ages in Germany, it was decreed it appears at that time that the sexual relationship could be something other than biunivocal.

But there is something rather amusing, it is that the *sex-ratio*, there are people who posed themselves the problem as such, are there as many males as females? And there was a literature about it, which is really very sharp, very amusing, because this problem is in short a problem that is most frequently solved by what we will call chromosome selection. The most frequent case is obviously the (137) distribution of the two sexes in a quantity of individuals equally reproduced in each sex, equal in number. But it is really very nice that the question should have been posed about what happens when an imbalance begins to occur. One can easily demonstrate that in certain cases of this imbalance, this imbalance can only increase, if one keeps to chromosome selection, that we will not describe as random because it is a matter of distribution. But then the very elegant solution that was given to it, is that in this case it ought to be compensated for by natural selection. Here we see natural selection showing its naked face. I mean that it can be summarised in saying that the stronger are necessarily the least numerous and since they are the stronger, they prosper and that then they are going to catch up with the other in

number. The connection between this idea of natural selection with precisely the sexual relationship is one of those cases where there is clearly seen what one risks in any approach to the sexual relationship - it is to remain at the level of a witticism. And in effect, everything that is said about it is of this order. If it is important that one should be able to articulate something other than... something that makes people laugh, this indeed is what we are seeking to guarantee the position of the analyst from something other than what it appears to be, in many cases, a *gag*.

The starting point can be read in the fact that in set theory that there is a function of element [member]. To be an element in a set, is to be something that has nothing to do with belonging a register that can be described as universal, namely, something that falls under the influence of an attribute. Set theory attempts to disassociate, to disarticulate in a definitive fashion the predicate from the attribute. What, until this theory, characterises the notion precisely at stake on what is involved in the sexual type, in so far as it is supposed to initiate something from a relationship, is very precisely the fact that the universal is grounded on a common attribute. There is there besides the beginning of the logical distinction between the attribute and the subject, and the subject is grounded by that. This is why something that is distinguished can be called an attribute.

From this distinction of the attribute, what results, is quite naturally the fact that one does not put in the same set apples and oranges for example. Over against this category that is called class, there is that of the set in which not only apples and oranges are compatible but (138) that in a set as such of each of these two species there can only be *One*. In a set there can only be, if nothing distinguishes one apple from another, there can only be *one* apple, just as there can only be *one* orange. The *One* as pure difference is what distinguishes the notion of the element. The *One* as attribute is therefore distinct from it. The difference between the *One* of difference and the *One* of attribute is the

fact that when you use to define a class any attributive statement whatsoever, the attribute does not come in this definition, as a supernumerary. Namely, that if you say *man is good*, and if in this connection, what can be said, because who is not obliged to say it, to posit that man is good does not rule out you having to account for the fact that he does not always correspond to this appellation. You always find moreover enough reasons to show that he is capable of not corresponding to this attribute, of experiencing a failure to live up to it. This is the theory you construct and commit yourself to, you have really only.....you have all meaning at your disposition in order, in order to tackle it, to explain that from time to time all the same he is bad but that changes nothing in his attribute. That if you manage now to balance things from the point of view of number, how many of them are there who hold to it and how many do not correspond to it? The attribute *good* will not come into the balance *in addition*, in addition to each one of the good men.

This is precisely the difference between the *One* of difference, it is that when it is a matter of articulating its consequence, this *One* of difference has, as such, to be counted in what is stated about what grounds it which is a set and which has parts. The *One* of difference, is not only countable, but ought to be counted in the parts of the set.

I am coming to 2 o'clock precisely. I can only then indicate to you what will be the continuation of what, as usual, I am led to cut, namely, very often in any old way. And, today no doubt, by reason precisely of another cut, which was that of my electricity this morning, with its consequences, I am therefore led to being only able to give you an indication of what, will be the reprise of this affirmation, a pivotal affirmation. It is this, the relationship of this *One* that has to be counted *in addition* to that which, in what I state as, not as supplying for, but deploying itself in a locus that in place of the sexual relationship, is specified by *there exists* not of x, but saying that this of x *is not* the truth, that it is from there that the *One*

arises which means that this ought to be (139) put, and it is the only characteristic element, ought to be put on the side of what grounds man as such:

Does that mean that this foundation specifies him sexually? This is very precisely what will subsequently be put in question, because naturally, it nevertheless remains that the relation to of x,

is what defines man, here attributively, as all men (*tout homme*).

What is this all (*tout*) or this all (*tous*)? What is meant by *all men* in so far as they ground one side of this articulation of supplying? This is where we will take things up again when we see one another the next time when I meet you. The question all (*tous*), what is an all, is to be completely restated starting from the function that *Yad'lun* articulates.

Seminar 11: Wednesday 14 June 1972

[Lacan, before beginning, writes on the board]

*That one says
- as a fact –
remains forgotten behind what is said,
in what is understood.*

Naturally this statement which is assertive in its form as a universal is connected with the modal in terms of what it is uttering about existence.

So then! Put a bit of yourselves into it, because it seems, like the last time, to be going rather badly. Am I managing to make myself heard this time? A little more? Good! I will do my best. Sibony, come a

little bit closer. Come a little closer, you never know, that may be of some use later. Can you hear me?

So then taking into account what I called earlier the mixing of communications that may have occurred between my audience here and that of Sainte-Anne, I suppose that now they are unified, make no mistake.

You have been able to see that we have gone from what I called one day here with a predicate formed for your use, specifically the unian (*l'unien*), we passed the last time at Sainte-Anne to the term of a different kind of treatment which might be put forward with (142) the term, with the form of *unier*, *unien*, *unier*. What I spoke to you about, what I put forward the last time at Sainte-Anne, is the pivot that is taken in this order that is founded – write *fonde*, ground it in fact, whether it is *fondé–fondu* (grounded–melted). What's wrong?

The audience – We can't hear anything!

I am saying then that this *unier* which is based, and I asked you to ensure that this founded should be...should not appear too fundamental, it is what I called leaving in the melted down, this *unier* which is grounded. There is *One* of them, there exists *One* of them which says no. That is not quite the same thing as denying it. But this forging of the term *unier*, as a verb which can be conjugated and from which we can advance in short as regards what is involved in the function, in the function represented in analysis by the myth of the father, unifies. It is this that those who are able to hear through the petards, the point on which I would like precisely today, anyway allow you, let us say to accommodate yourselves.

So then the father unifies. In the myth he has this correlate of *all, all the women*. It is here, if one follows my quantifying inscriptions, that there is room to introduce a modification. He unifies them certainly, but precisely *not all (pas toutes)*. Here we touch at once on what he is not ... not something that I was the first to say, namely, the kinship of logic and myth, it simply marks that one may be able to correct the other.

That, that is the work that remains before us. For the moment I recall, is that not so, that, with what I have allowed myself, anyway, in terms of approximations of the father, with what I inscribed about the *l'épater*, you see that the path that on occasion joins myth to derision is no stranger to us. This does not interfere in any way with the fundamental status of the structures involved. It is amusing that, like that, there are people who discover, who discover after some delay, this something that I can say indeed from my place, that for the moment all this effervescence, this turbulence taking place around terms like the signifier, the sign, meaning, semiotics, is a little general. The singular delays shown by everything that for the moment is center

stage are curious.

There is a very good little journal, anyway no worse than another, in which I see (143) emerging under the title of *l'Atelier d'écriture* an article, good God, no worse than any other which is called *l'Agonie du Signe* - can you hear me? - which is called the *Agony of the Sign*. Agony is always very touching. Agony means struggle. But also agony means that one is about to faint and in that case the agony of the sign is really pathetic. I would have preferred anyway that all of this did not turn around the pathetic. It starts, it starts from a charming invention, from the possibility of forging a new signifier which would be that of *fourmi*, *fourmidable*. In effect this whole article is *fourmidable* and it begins by posing the question of what may well be the status of *fourmidable*? For my part I really like that. All the more so because it is someone who all the same has been very aware for a long time of a certain number of things that I put forward and who for, in short, at the start of this article, believes himself obliged to play the innocent. Namely, to hesitate, as regards this *fourmidable*, as to whether it should be classified as a metaphor or as a metonymy and to say that, there is something that is neglected then in Jakobson's theory. This would consist in crashing words one against the other. But I explained that a long time ago! I wrote *The agency of the letter* explicitly for that, S over s with the result one, a meaning-effect, ha!... We have displacement, we have condensation, it is very exactly the path along which in effect one can create, which is all the same a little bit more amusing and useful than *fourmidable* one can create *unier*. And also, this is of some use.

It can be used to explain to you along another path what I completely renounced from tackling by that of the Name-of-the-father. Because, I renounced it because I was prevented from doing so at a particular moment, and then that it was precisely the people to whom this would have been some use who prevented me. That would have been of use to them in their personal intimacy. They are people particularly implicated in the business of the Name-of-the-father. There is in the world a very special clique, like that, that one could pinpoint from a religious tradition, they are the ones that this would have exposed to the air, but I do not see why I should devote myself especially to them.

So then I took up the story of what Freud tackled as best he could, precisely, to avoid his own history, is it not *el'shaddai* in particular, it is the name by which he designates himself, he whose name is not pronounced. He fell back on myths, then he did (144) something that was very proper in short, a little aseptic. He took it no further but this indeed is what is at stake, but people let go the opportunities of taking up again, of taking up again what was directing him, and which would now ought to ensure that the psychoanalyst is at his place in his discourse. His opportunity has gone, of course. I already said it. So that, in the plane that was bringing me back from somewhere or other, which was bringing me back from Milan from where I came back

yesterday evening, good! I did not bring it. It is really very good, it is in the plane, in something that is called *Atlas* and which is distributed to all passengers by Air France. There is a very nice little article, luckily I do not have it, I left it at home, luckily because that would have led me to read out passages for you and there is nothing more boring than listening to someone reading, there is nothing as boring as that!

Anyway, there are psychologists, psychologists of the highest level, is that not so, who are working in America carrying out, carrying out investigations on dreams. Because one investigates dreams, is that not so. People investigate and they notice, in fact, that sexual dreams are very rare. These people dream about everything; they dream about sport, they dream about a pile of things, they dream about falling. Anyway, there is not an overwhelming majority of sexual dreams. From which it results, does it not, that since this is the general conception, we are told in this text, of psychoanalysis, to believe that dreams are sexual. Well then! The general public, the general public which precisely is made from the diffusion of psychoanalysis diffusion – you also are for your part a general public – well then, the general public naturally is going to be put out, is that not so, and the whole soufflé is going to collapse like that, be flattened in the bottom of the pot. It is all the same curious that no one, in short, in this supposed general public, because all of that, is supposition, anyway it is true that with a certain resonance, all dreams, this is what Freud is supposed to have said, that they were all sexual; he never said that precisely! Never, never said that!

He said that dreams were *dreams of desire*. He never said that it was sexual desire! Only to understand the relationship there is between the fact that dreams are dreams of desire and this order of the sexual which is characterized by what I am in the process of advancing because, I needed time to tackle it and not to create disorder in the mind of these charming persons, is that not so, who ensured that at the end of me spending ten years telling them things, is that not so, they dreamt of only one thing, re-entering into the (145) bosom of the International Psychoanalytic Association. Everything that I had been able to say, was of course a beautiful exercise, an exercise in style. They were serious. The serious is the International Psychoanalytic.

Yes! Which means that now I can advance, and let it be understood, that there is no sexual relationship, and that that is why there is a whole order that functions *at the place* where this relationship is supposed to be. And it is there, in this order, that something is a consequence as an effect of language, namely, desire. And that people can advance perhaps a tiny little bit and think that when Freud said that the dream is the satisfaction of a desire, it is satisfaction in what sense?

When I think that I am still at that, is that not so, that no one...all these people who spend their time confusing what I say, making noise about

it, no one has ever yet taken it into his head to advance this thing which is nevertheless the strict consequence of everything that I have put forward, that I articulated in the most precise fashion, if I remember correctly, in '57 – wait a minute, not even! in '55, in connection with the dream of Irma's injection – I took, to show how a text of Freud's should be treated, I clearly explained to them the ambiguities in it. That it was there, precisely, but not at all in the unconscious, at the level his current preoccupations, that Freud interprets this dream of desire which has nothing to do with sexual desire, even if there are all the implications of transference that suit us. The term *inmixing of subjects*, I put it forward in '55, can you imagine? Seventeen years, huh? And then it is clear that – I should publish it, like that, because if I did not publish it it was because I was absolutely disgusted by the way in which it was taken up again in a certain book that came out under the title of *Self-analysis* – it was my text, putting it there, in a way that no one understood anything about it.

What does a dream do? It does not satisfy desire, for fundamental reasons that I am not going to set about developing today because this would be worth four or five seminars, for the reason which is simply the following and which is tangible, and which Freud says. That the only fundamental desire in sleep, is the desire to sleep. That makes you laugh, because you never heard that. Very good! Nevertheless, it is in Freud. How come that your common sense does not immediately grasp what sleeping consists of? It consists in (146) the fact that what is here in my tetrad, the semblance, the truth and enjoyment and the surplus enjoying – I don't have to rewrite it on the board, do I? – what it is a matter of suspending, that is what sleep is designed for, all you have to do is look at an animal sleeping to notice it, what it is a matter of suspending precisely, is this ambiguousness that there is in the relationship to the body with itself, the enjoying (*le jouir*).

If there is a possibility for this body to accede to the enjoying of itself, it is quite obviously everywhere, it is when he gives himself a knock, when he hurts himself, that is enjoyment. So then man has here little ways in that the others do not have, he can make a goal of it. In any case when he is sleeping, that's the end of it. It is a matter precisely of him coiling up this body, it becomes a ball. To sleep, is not to be disturbed. Enjoyment, all the same, is disturbing. Naturally he is disturbed, but in any case as long as he is sleeping, he can hope not to be disturbed. That is why starting from there all the rest vanishes; there is no longer any question either about a semblance, nor about truth, because all of that, that holds together, it's the same thing, nor of surplus enjoying.

Only there you are, what Freud says, is that the signifier, for its part, continues during this time to scoot around. This indeed is why even when I am sleeping, I am preparing my seminars. Monsieur Poincaré discovered Fuchsian functions.....

The audience – [?]

J Lacan – What's wrong?

The audience – A pollution!

J Lacan – Who mentioned that term? You must be particularly intelligent. I have already rejoiced publicly that one of my analysands, I don't know whether she is there but – a particularly sensitive person spoke in effect in connection with my discourse, of intellectual pollution. You see pollution is a very fundamental dimension. We must not, probably, push things to that point today. But you look so proud at having made this term emerge that I suspect that you understand nothing about it. Nevertheless, you are going to see that I am going right away, not simply make use of it, but rejoice a second time that someone brought it up, because this is precisely the difficulty of analytic discourse. I pick up this interruption, I jump on it, I take on board something that, in the (147) urgency of a year ending, I will find myself then having the opportunity to say. It is the following, since it is at the place of the semblance that analytic discourse is characterized by situating the *o*-object. Can you imagine, sir, you who believe you have carried out there a distinguished action, that you are going precisely in the direction of what I have to put forward. Namely, that the most characteristic pollution in this world, is very precisely the *little o-object* from which man takes, and you also you take your substance, and that it is by having, from this pollution which is the most certain effect on the surface of the earth...by having to make of it in one's body, in one's existence as an analyst, a representation, that he looks at it more than once. The little darlings are sick of it, and I should tell you that I am not either for my part any more at ease than them in this situation.

What I try to show them, is that it is not altogether impossible to do it a little decently. Thanks to logic, I manage - if they were willing to allow themselves to be tempted - to make tolerable for them this position that they occupy as *small o* in the analytic discourse. In order to allow oneself to conceive of the fact that it is obviously no small thing to raise this function to a position of semblance which is the key position in every discourse. This indeed is the mainspring of what I always tried to get people to sense as the resistance – and it is only too understandable, - of the analyst, to really fulfilling his function. You must not believe that the position of semblance is easy for anyone. It is really only tenable at the level of the scientific discourse and for a simple reason, which is that there, what is raised to the position of commandment is something that is entirely of the order of the real, in so far as everything that we touch in the real, is the *Spaltung*, is the slit, in other words it is the way in which I define the subject. It is because in scientific discourse, it is the capital S, the capital S barred which is there, in the key position, that it holds up.

For the University discourse, it is knowledge. Here the difficulty is

still greater, because of a kind of short circuit because, in order to pretend (*faire semblant*) to know, one must know how to be a semblance. And that is used up quickly. This indeed is why, this indeed is why when I did there, there from where I have come back as I told you earlier, namely, at Milan, I had obviously a much smaller audience than you, say a quarter, but (148) there were a lot of these young people who are those described as being in the movement. There was even an altogether respectable personage of a rather elevated status who happens to be the representative of it there. Does he know or does he not know, I was only told that he was there afterwards. I did not want to question him. Does he know or does he not know that, being there at this high point, what he wants. It is like all of those who are interested here a little by the movement, it is to restore its value to the university discourse; as its name indicates, it culminates in credits (*unités de valeurs*). They wanted to know a little better how to pretend to know. That is what guides them. Well then in effect, it is respectable and why not? The university discourse has a status that is just as fundamental as any other. Simply, what I am marking, is that it is not the same, because this is true, that it is not the same as the psychoanalytic discourse.

And then this is how I was brought over there, good God, how to deal with a new audience and especially if it may be confusing? I tried to explain to them a little bit what my place in the story was. I began by saying that my *Ecrits*, was a publication (*poubellication*) that they must not think that they can find their bearings with it. There was all the same and then the word *seminar* – naturally how get them to understand that, what I was forced to explain, to admit that, that this seminar, is not a seminar. It is a thing that I spout out all alone, my good friends, for years, but there had been a time formerly a time when it merited its name, when there were people who intervened? So then, this is what put me beside myself, to have been forced to get to this point. And since on the return journey someone pressed me to say, well then, how was it that there was a time when it was like a seminar? I said to myself, today I am going to tell them, for the second last time that I am with you, because I will see you one more time, good God, would someone come and say something!

At this point I received a letter from Monsieur Recanati. I am not going to tell you the story for the moment, I am simply going to make it like an intervention coming from the floor. I am simply saying that I

received a letter which was moreover a response to one of mine, from Monsieur Recanati who is here, which proved to my great surprise, is that (149) not so, that he had understood something of what I said this year. So then I am going to allow him to speak because he wanted to talk to you about something that has the closest relationship with what I am trying to open up, in particular with set theory, is that not so, and with mathematical logic. He is going to tell you which.

F Recanati – The letter to which Dr Lacan has just alluded was in fact some remarks and commentaries, on three texts by Peirce that I gave him. Not so much because he did not know them, obviously, but because these texts, precisely, differed from what he had been able, elsewhere, to refer to. What was at stake, on the one hand, were texts on cosmology, and on the other hand, texts relating to mathematics.

I am first of all going to specify the tenor of these three texts before coming to the way in which I can speak about them. As regards mathematics, Peirce gives a critique of the definitions he knows about continuous sets. He examines three definitions, specifically that of Aristotle, that of Kant, and that of Cantor, all of which he criticises, in function of a unique criterion.

The criterion is that he would like there to be marked in each definition the very fact of the definition since, he says, by defining a continuous set, one cannot fail to determine it in a certain way. And this is important for the result of the definition; the very process of the definition ought to be marked somewhere as such.

As regards cosmology, Peirce talks about an almost similar problem, about a similar preoccupation about the problem of the birth of the universe. He problem is that of a before and an after. One cannot reach what there was there before by carrying out a simple analytic operation which would consist in subtracting from what there was after everything that constituted the character of this after. Because one

would only end up through that at an after that had been erased and that it is precisely in the style of this erasure that the after is constituted, which only differs by a precise inscription, here on the style of the erasure of the before. In other words, the before is in a way an after. Or rather the after is a before that is inscribed and one can absolutely not deduce the before from the after because the before which is inscribed in the after, is precisely the after which in this sense has no longer anything to do, precisely, with the before whose property is precisely not to be inscribed.

In other words, it is the inscription that counts, I mean that the before is nothing, this is (150) what Peirce says when he speaks about the birth of the universe: before, there was nothing, but this nothing is all the same a nothing, something specific. Or rather precisely it is not specific, because in any case it is not inscribed, and one can say that everything that is there afterwards is also nothing, but then as nothing, it is inscribed.

This non-inscribed in general that he is going to discover more or less everywhere, and not simply in cosmology, Peirce calls the potential and this is what I am going to say a few words about now.

But before doing this, I would like to say a few words about my position here which is obviously paradoxical, because I am not a specialist in anything, no more in Peirce than in anybody else, and that everything that I am going to say about this author and about others, because I am going to talk about others, is what I am able to pick up from the discourse of Dr Lacan. Even as I speak, I preserve my status as a listener. And how is that possible? Precisely by only signifying in my own discourse, the fact of having listened. This poses the problem of who I am addressing myself to. Because obviously, if I address myself to those who, like me, have listened, this will be of no use to them, and if I address myself to those who have not listened, I can only inscribe the nothing of their non- listening and permit by this an

elaboration which obviously will be of use subsequently and will have nothing to do with the pure nothing that was there at the beginning. In that event then, that would change nothing. And it is in so far as my intervention as a listener does not disturb anything, that I can effectively represent the audience.

Since when all is said and done all the interventions of Aristotle are only presupposed in the discourse of Parmenides and that precisely the quicker it is terminated, the better it is, generally, as regards Aristotle interventions, so that he can himself give a true discourse, it is necessary that in his turn he has a mute listener to whom he can identify, which explains that the other, Aristotle, in the *Metaphysics* says we Platonicians because it is after Plato has spoken, or if you wish that Parmenides has spoken for the other, that he can himself begin to do so. You see the paradox here; but since this paradox is not due to me, I would leave it to Dr Lacan to comment on it afterwards, because I can say nothing about it for my part.

One cannot, says Peirce, oppose the void, the 0 to something, because the 0 is something, (151) it is well known. The void represents something and Peirce says that it forms part of the secondant concepts, important concepts for Peirce that I will come back to a little in what follows. It is not a monad, as inscribed a void, but it is relative. In effect if one posits this void one inscribes it. On this occasion, the inscription of the empty set may give this: \emptyset . This can be recognised as being the empty set considered as an element of the set of parts of the empty set. So then if the void is constituted as *One* and if one wished to repeat a little the operation and make the totality of the parts of the set from the parts of the empty set, one would quickly have something like this: $\{\emptyset\}$, which gives more or less this: \emptyset . And this can be recognised as being very well able to represent the 2. Moreover this can represent the *One*.

It is in this way that one is led to correct this remark that, of course, it is the *repetition of an inexistence* that can ground many things, and specifically, the succession of whole numbers on this occasion. But what interests Peirce in this remark, is that what is repeated, is not inexistence as such, or rather not exactly, it is the inscription of inexistence, insofar as inexistence is marked by this inscription. And this indeed is what he will develop on several occasions in several texts, I will talk to you about it.

We connect up here with his remarks on mathematics. When one wants, he says, to define a system where this inexistence is repeated, it must be specified that it is repeated as inscribed. It is at the beginning that there is an inscription of inexistence. And this is very important for logic. The universal quantor, all by itself, can define nothing. The universal quantor, for Peirce, is something secondant, however paradoxical that may appear, as he says, it is relative to something. What grounds this quantor, is the previous and inscribed annihilation of variables which contradicted it. So then, from a purely methodological point of view, Peirce attacks Cantor. Cantor is wrong because his definition of the continuous specifically refers to all the points of the set.

Peirce specifies that it is necessary to vary the definition from a logical point of view. An oval line is only continuous, because it is impossible to deny that at least one of its points must be true for a function that absolutely does not characterise the set. For example when it is a matter of going from the exterior to the interior, one must necessarily pass by one of the points of the edge.

(152) This is, in a way, a sidelong approach. One cannot posit like that the universal quantor, it is necessary to pass by way of a prior nihilisation, that itself passes, through a prior function. The negation, here, is itself erected into a function and the set of pertinent sets for this function, in the event in the measure there where it is impossible to

deny etc. is the empty set which inscribes the negation as impossible. The same type of example could be taken up eventually in topology. If one listened to Peirce, the theory of fixed points ought to be stated as follows – I am going to write it – . It is impossible to deny that in a distortion of a disk on its edge, at least one point escapes the distortion which authorises it, by this fact even to escape it.

J Lacan – Start that again.

F Recanati – The theorem of fixed points, if one takes for example something like a disk, what is at stake, in a way, what is at stake is distorting a disk on its edge in a continuous manner. It is certain, and it is given as a theorem, that at least one point of the disc escapes this distortion, namely, remains fixed, and that it is because of this fact that there is a point that remains fixed that one can bring about a general distortion. Otherwise it would not be possible, and here, there is obviously a contradiction. Let us say that there is a very clear liaison between this point that escapes and the function that it authorises.

J Lacan – That is, the theorem that has been proved. It is not simply provable, it has been proved. On the other hand, this theorem is symbolised, you could perhaps comment on this, how it is symbolised by this *there exists x*, because it is a formula which is very close, in short, to the one that I am in the habit of inscribing, there exists an x such that it must be denied that there is no x , that it is necessary to deny that there is not existence of x , such that x is denied.

F Recanati – There is indeed a double negation, certainly, but the two negations are not exactly the same, they are not equivalent. And on the other hand, especially this double negation, in the measure that it is inscribed, is not the same thing as simply affirming it. One could have affirmed it. Here, that is why I cited at the beginning the critique of the universal quantor in a way as given like that. If it is the product of a double negation, this first non-inscribed first negation, according to

him, is brought to bear on a negation that (153) has been erected into a function. For example: the points do not remain fixed. Well then, there is a point which precisely, escapes from this function, and in this sense, the necessity is above all to inscribe them. That is why I did it here. And one would have to mark, perhaps in a specific manner what I said was an impossibility. But at the same time, here, it is simply here the empty set posited as the only functioning set for the function of negation.

J Lacan – I believe that what must be underlined here is the fact that the bar drawn here over these two terms each one as denied is an *it is not true that*, an *it is not true* that is frequently used in mathematics, because it is the key point, it is at this that the proof described as contradiction culminates at. It is a matter, in short, of knowing why, in mathematics, it is accepted that one can ground, but only in mathematics, because everywhere else, how could you ground anything whatsoever that can be affirmed on a *it is not true that*?

It is here indeed that the objection comes within mathematics to the use of a proof by absurdity. The question is to know how, in mathematics, the proof by absurdity can ground something, which is proved in effect as such by not leading to contradiction. This is where the domain proper to mathematics is specified. So then it is under this *it is not true that* – it is a matter of giving the status of the negative bar which is the one that I use at a point of my schema, to say that that, is a negation, *, there does not exist an x which satisfied this, denied.*

F Recanati – In Peirce's terms, this bar here is what comes first, is the first inscription. Because he says, the potential – and I was going to come back to that in the class because it is a concept which is finally sufficiently developed – it is the field of the inscription of impossibilities, but before the impossibilities, the non-inscribed impossibilities again, it is the field of possible impossibilities. And in this field, something comes to subvert it by this feature, in a way which

is here impossibility, which is a kind of cut, a cut which is made within a domain which, previously, is in a way unique and it is for that reason, says Peirce, that the first impossibility must be inscribed at the start. That determines everything. And subsequently, eventually, the negation of all these specifications here continue to determine, but it is already there within the impossible.

(154) In other words, he says that there are two field. There is on the one hand the field of the potential, which is the element of pure 0, one could say of the pure void, but I will come back to that. And, on the other hand the impossibles which are those that are born from the potential, but which oppose it very clearly. And within the impossibles one can say things like that, namely: *there does not exist an x such that non* , or *there exists an x such that* .

But he makes an opposition between these two fields as, fundamentally, opposing one another, one being the element of pure 0, the other the element that I will describe as the 0 of repetition, and it is to this that I would like to get.

J Lacan – You admit, for example, that I transcribe everything that you have said by saying that the potential equals the field of possibilities as determining the impossible.

F Recanati – As determining, but I specify right away that he said, it is this field of possibilities that determine the impossible but not in Hegel's sense. You have to pay attention, he says, it determines it not necessarily, but potentially. Namely, that one cannot say, that must necessarily happen; it is pointed out that it has happened; we know that it is this potential that has determined this impossible, but not necessarily, we are in agreement. So then it is exactly what I meant the potential.....

J Lacan – One could perhaps transcribe it like that: potential = the field of possibilities as determining the impossible.

F Recanati – So then, it is with this sort of consideration that Peirce constructs the concept of potential. It is then the locus in which there are inscribed the impossibilities, it is the general possibility of impossibilities not effected, namely not inscribed. But the field of possibilities as determining the impossibilities. But it does not involve, as has been said, with respect to the inscriptions that are produced there, any necessity, which signifies in particular, for a mathematical problem, that from 2 one cannot account rationally, in Hegel's sense, namely, necessarily. The 2 has come, one cannot say where it has come from, one can simply put it in relation with the 0, with what happens between the 0 and the 1, but to say why it has come, impossible.

The potential allows that, to define the paradox of the continuous, and that, is in a text of Peirce – I am quoting that but in fact I have not looked very closely at it so then I will not (155) develop it – if a point of a continuous potential set sees itself conferring a precise determination, an inscription, a real existence, in that case the continuity itself is broken. And this was interesting not from the point of view of the continuous, but from the point of view of the potential. The fact is that the potential really exists as potential and that henceforth, that it is inscribed in one way or another, there is obviously no more potential, namely, that it is itself produced from an impossible which has come from itself.

X – In that, Cantor was wrong.

F Recanati – As regards cosmology, the absolute 0, the pure nothing, as Peirce calls it is different to the 0 that is repeated in the series of whole numbers. It is nothing other, this 0 that is repeated in the series of whole numbers, than the general order of time, and I will come back

to it, while the absolute 0, is in general the order of the potential thus the absolute 0 has its own dimension. And Peirce tries to insist so that this dimension would be inscribed somewhere, or at least marked, should be presented in the mathematical definitions. The problem is obviously.....

J Lacan – Here, Cantor is not against.

F Recanati - ...how one can pass from one dimension, that of the potential for example to the other which I would describe as that of the impossible for that of time whatever you wish.

This is how Peirce presents the problem: how can one think non-temporally what was there before time? That recalls, certainly, Spinoza and St Augustine, but that recalls above all the Empiricists. And here, I should say that it has often been pointed out that Peirce took up again the style of the Empiricists and their preoccupations. But to really situate the originality of Peirce, people have never referred to the Empiricists, people have never sought what among them could have been a preparation for all of that. But nevertheless, these two dimensions, one potential and the other, if you wish temporal, or rather one dimension of absolute 0, the other of the 0 of repetition, were presented from the beginning of the Empiricists epic. And I would like to say a little word on that to show how it can be separated out.

J Lacan – Off you go, belt it out!

F Recanati – I will do that and afterwards I will come back to Peirce's semiotics in relationship with all of that.

Yes, the object of empirical psychology – this is a first point that is explicitly evacuated (156) each time – it is the signs and nothing other, it is the system of signs. It is a matter of an extension, as one might

say, of the quaternary system of Port Royal, such that, when all is said and done, de Saussure also is only an extension at the limit, the thing as thing and as representation, the sign as thing and as sign, the object of the sign, as sign being the thing as representation. This is the same thing as de Saussure says – I said it but I will not develop it – the sign as concept and as acoustic image. Only with the Scholastics the problem in general of the thing in itself was evacuated and people went as far as to see in the world – and that with all the theories of the great book of the world, the sign of thinking. From then on, one culminates at something like that, the world as representation, in so far as the world, cannot be known except as a representation, replaces the thing in the quaternary system of the sign and the thinking of the world in general replaces the representation, which is the equivalent of bringing face to face thinking about the world – the world of thinking. Now, it is obvious that the thinking of the world and the world of thinking which differ perhaps from certain aspects, is the same thing.

So then there is a problem for the quaternary system because there is an irreducible duality in the quaternary system. It must be either abandoned, or changed. We know that Berkeley abandons it in, precisely, establishing a system of identity between the thinking of the world and the world of thinking; as for Locke, he changes it. When he says, it is, and I apologise for delaying a little bit on this introduction, what he says is the representations, the ideas, do not represent things, they represent among themselves. Thus the more complex ideas represent the more simple. There are faculties, for example, of representation of ideas among themselves, and it is very developed, there is a whole topic which is more or less what is said about it, a hierarchy of ideas and of faculties.

But what I would like now precisely to stress a little, and which is not noted by Locke, and which is precisely the most interesting, because that allowed Condillac and because Condillac in this preceded Peirce in a way, which is that there is another faculty for Locke, which allows

all of that. Because how does that happen, it functions all by itself apparently, something is necessary for the system to function. There is a new faculty, a new operation that he calls – and that has (157) never been located because it is not in his classification, it is always in the notes – *observation*. Observation which is something that functions all by itself, that works at every level, that is found everywhere and which is also intrinsic to every element, something rather incomprehensible and which is at once the process of the transformation and the milieu, the element in general of the transformed. It is at once the milieu...through this observation, in a way, a simple idea is transformed into an image of itself. Namely, into a complex idea because its objectivity is placed beside it in the idea, and in this general idea by which it is transformed, there is an inscription, there is a connotation of the inscription of its transformation into an image. Namely, the idea, once it is transformed, it is in a way that it is inscribed, it is in that that it becomes a complex idea and not a more simple idea.

So then, the whole problem in this respect, is, what makes that possible? Or, what was there at the beginning, what is transformed at the beginning, starting from what does one transform in order to obtain the first cause? What is before the first, in a way? And Locke posits it in these terms when he talks about an irreducible sensation of an original reflection. If a reflection is originating, what is reflected that is preoriginary. Or what is the preoriginary, or what is it that allows, properly speaking, what is it that allows this faculty?

And here it is Condillac who takes up the baton. His method was absolutely exemplary. He is going to circumscribe this something that he saw in Locke, this something unattainable, by giving it a name, by making it function as an unknown in an equation. And subsequently, when the authors wanted to criticise Condillac, they said that his system was not at all uniquely psychology, that it was logic, profoundly, that he had made a logical system of it, this system where there was no content etc., you see, precisely, this is the interest of Condillac. And specifically this sensation, from which he says everything derives, at least in one of his major treatises, this sensation, finally, is nothing. At no moment does he define it precisely, on the contrary, the whole development that he gives of it, everything that he shows derives from it, is a kind of contribution to its definition. But what permits, properly speaking and all the rest derives (158) from it, everything that are properly speaking the attributes of sensation,

everything that permits this attribution, is what he indicates as element 0 which is always given at the start, always given in sensation, and he asks what it is, and we are going to question it with him.

He is going to characterize, to try to reach this irreducible element, everything that happens with the help of this element, but with more than this element, namely, in a word, as he says, everything that happens in understanding (*l'entendement*). With that, we are going to be able to manage to see what really grounds the originality of sensation, if indeed it is a case that it is from sensation that there derives everything that happens in understanding. Now, what is proper to understanding, he says, and this in his first essay – I am emphasizing it because there are little divergences afterwards, he distanced himself from this idea which is obviously his greatest originality – what is proper to understanding, is the order, it is the liaison in general, the liaison as liaison of ideas, liaison of signs, liaison of needs, in fact, it is always a liaison of signs, it is always the same thing.

In man, the order functions all by itself, he says, and he explains this a little, while among animals, there is required, to get the order started, a punctual external impulse. And Condillac specifies, between men and animals, and he pronounces a rather lovely sentence, between men and animals there are imbeciles and the mad. The first do not manage to hold onto order, these are the imbeciles, systematically they do not manage to hang onto order, and the others cannot separate themselves from it. They for their part are completely swamped in the order, they can no longer take any distance, they cannot manage to detach themselves from it.

Order in general is what allows the passage from one sign to another. It is the possibility of having an idea of the frontier between two signs. And Condillac has a conception of the sign, but as always, an inaccurate one, always a metaphor, and he says this time, specifically in a short study, where he gives an apologia for tropes, taking up perhaps, and I am not sure, the terms of Quintilian.

It still remains that for him, a sign, is something that comes to fill in the interval between two other signs. In this sense, in a sign, what is considered? They are the two other adjacent signs, at least two that are considered, but not as signs in so far as they may (159) involve a representation, from the point of view of their edges with them, namely, from a formal point of view. And he clearly specifies that these cannot be, properly speaking, representations, but uniquely signs, because he says, there is no formal representation, there is no abstract representation. There is always a representation that represents a representation, namely, that there is always a mediating of the representation of the sign, but never a mediating of the content, for example. As he says himself, the image of a perception, its repetition, is only its hallucinatory repetition. He says that it is the same thing. One cannot differentiate between a perception and its image, and

through this, he carries out a critique of all previous theories.

So then order is what the sign represents, in so far as an interval between the two signs substantiates it. Only, signs in general, are supposed, through all the theories that he, Condillac, inherits, to represent something. And that, that obviously causes him a problem, he cannot manage to get out of it, how is the liaison between the formal sign and its reference in general constructed? This liaison itself, says Condillac, in order to get rid of it, is derived from the unknown, it derives from sensation. So then the unknown is already a relation between the sign as event and the sign as inscription of the event. And that, I specify, is not said by Condillac but he leaves it to be understood, it is Destutt de Tracy, his exegete, who affirms that, and I find that it is not bad. And Maine de Biran who for his part was the pupil....

J Lacan – The two sentences that I had begun to write throughout the whole business, that some people have perhaps noted, are directly the statement that Recanetti is reproducing here.....

F Recanetti – ... Maine de Biran himself, a disciple of Destutt de Tracy is first of all fed by

By this difference between the event and the inscription of the event. And one sees how it is the pivot of the whole theory. There is, he says, a perpetual displacement in the speaking being, and, I am not joking, between the subject of the statement and the stating subject. It is in the foundations of the psychology of Maine de Biran where he shows more or less that, by representing the ego, in the measure that in every representation, there is already an ego, namely, that at that very moment there are two of them. Once (160) one tries to represent the I, that means that automatically there are two of them. That means that immediately there are two of them, that means that there is never one of them....that there is never one of them except in a mediated way.

For Condillac, the order of signs, in so far as the order of signs in the order of this displacement, has as a model the space that he describes as pluridimensional of time, and I am not going to develop that. One could say that time is only the infinite repetition of punctuations. The punctuations of time-zero is the same problem that was posed above; the punctuality that is repeated in time and that from which time has emerged is not the same thing. The punctuality zero the one from which time emerged, the punctuality zero as transparence, precisely, between the inscription and the event. The punctuality that is repeated in time, always for Condillac, is relativised by being considered in time as that punctuality, present, past or to come. It is also considered from the point of view of its edges, from the point of view of its frontier. Time, rather than being a series of punctualities is then the series of interpunctual frontiers, in so far as the frontier is precisely the highlighting of respective edges of two punctualities and also of two signs. There is then the same difference between absolute punctuality

and the time between the empty set and the set of its parts. It is the inscription of zero which is the element of this, just as it is the inscription of punctuality which is the element of time. So then there is a flaw which is given at the start of this whole theory which Maine de Biran tried perhaps to better discern. The system of sign is only the infinite repetition of this flaw, in so far as, as such, pure flaw and that is repeated in all the writings of the Empiricists, it emerges from the experience and the investigation of their school, namely, it is not spoken about.

Condillac, for his part also, this happens rarely, speaks about human nature at one moment in saying that he would be asking himself how, at the start, this relation and this order is made. Why because precisely it has failed, the order between inscription and the event, why because it has failed, because it does not work, why, all the same it exists? Why is there an inscription of what is only *zero*? This is obviously his problem, and at that moment he responds, after a little piece of bravura, I don't really know, it is human nature.

(161) It is this break in general that permits the automotricity of the system of signs, according to Condillac, about which he says that the system of signs there works all alone, while in his *Traité des Animaux* he tells us a whole lot of things to show how, in animals, there is also a system of signs and how it is dependent on all the exterior objects, dependent on all the.....

With this we rejoin the semiotics of Pierce from which we started. Pierce describes as *Phanéron* from the Greek word, the totality of everything that is present to the spirit, it is moreover, more or less, the sense of *Phanéron*, real or not, the immediately observable. And he starts from there, he decomposes the elements of the *Phanéron*. There are three indissociable elements in the *Phanéron* that he calls, on the one had what one could translate by *primant*, the monad in general I think he uses the word monad, the complete element in itself, on the other hand the *secondant*, a static force, opposition, static tension between two elements, namely, that each element immediately, evokes this other with whatever it is in relationship with and it is in a way a set, an absolutely indissociable set. And the most important is the *tertiant*, the element that is immediately relative both to a first and to a third and Pierce specifies that all continuity, every process in general, comes from the ternary. Starting from there, starting from this conception of the ternary, which one can show derives from his astronomical theories, that he produced at the beginning of his life, but anyway I am not saying anything about that.

J Lacan – Pierce as astronomer.....

F Recanatti....So then starting from this ternary he constructs a logic that is specified in semiotics, *Logic of semiotic*, the semiotic itself being specified at certain levels as rhetoric and that is important for

Pierce. Everything depends on his definition of the sign in general, the sign he calls *representamen*, I apologise for quoting, “the *representamen* is something which for someone takes the place of another thing, from a certain point of view or in a certain manner.” In this there are four elements, for someone is the first, and I re-quote Pierce: “This signifies that the sign creates in the spirit of the addressee a sign that is more equivalent or even more developed.” The second point flows from this, the reception of the sign is then a second sign functioning as *interpreter*.

(162) Thirdly, the thing that the sign is taking the place of is described as ‘its object’. It is in these three elements which will constitute the three vertices of the semiotic triangle. The fourth term that comes is more discreet but no less interesting.

Someone in the audience – That’s bullshit!

J Lacan – You think that Pierce is wrong, you too? [Addressing himself to the person who has intervened on several occasions]

The person replies – I think that he is stretching things.

J Lacan – What does that mean? In any case it’s obscene, then!

F Recanatti – The fourth term, more discreet, is what Pierce calls the ground. The sign takes the place of the object, not absolutely but in reference to a kind of idea called the ground, namely the *sol*, the foundation of the relation of the sign and the object. These four terms, in their totality define three relations. And these three relations are the respective objects of three branches of semiotics.

First relation, the relation sign-ground. This is pure or speculative grammar, Pierce says. It is a matter of recognising...

J Lacan – Because speculative grammar was not invented only a few years ago.....as Monsieur [addressing himself to the person who has already intervened] would like to make us believe and ...

F Recanatti – It is a matter of recognising what must be true for the sign to have a meaning, the idea, in general is the focussing of the *representamen* on the object determined according to the ground or the point of view. We see then that meaning arises, in a way, on a

differentiated background and that the ground, the determination of the ground is almost the determination of the first point of view which determines the inscription, all of this on the potential. Namely, that the ground in general, is already the potential. In the same way, the *representamen* is, with respect to its ground, the determination of a certain point of view which commands the relationship to the object. (163) The ground is then the preliminary space of the inscription.

The second relation, *representamen-object*, is the domain of pure logic, for Pierce. It is the science of what ought to be true for the *representamen* in order for it to take the place of an object.

The third, which is the most important for what we are proposing here, is the relation between the *representamen* and the interpreter that Pierce calls with genius pure rhetoric, which recognises the laws. It functions at the level of laws, according to which a sign gives birth to another sign which develops it according to the *cursus* of the interpreter that we are going to see. And this question of pure rhetoric, Pierce tackles with the help of his semiotic triangle. I am going to specify each of these terms so that they can be better grasped.

Someone in the audience – Mirror!

F Recanatti – I follow Pierce for what is involved in this relation. “The *representamen*, the first one, has a primitive relation to a second object.” The object whose second, the sign, is given first. “But this relation can determine a third, the interpreter to have the same relation to its object as it entertains itself.” In other words the relation of the interpreter is commanded to be, by the relation of the *representamen* with the object, to be the same relation.

The same from the point of view of the order, but nevertheless different, different, that is to say more specified, that is to say in a certain way, we have reduced a little the field of possibilities of the sign that comes, and since that continues to infinity, we reduce it more and more, we are going to see that.

The ground is absent here, determines the relation of the *representamen* to the object itself. And the representation of the *representamen* to the object determines as repetition the relation of the representative to the object to the object which determines as repetition itself – what did I say? I said of the representative? Yes then the *representamen-object* determines the interpreter-object. And in a certain way one can say, and Pierce says it, that the object of the relation between the interpreting and the object, it is not exactly the object, which is the object of the interpreter, but it is the totality of this relation, namely, on the one hand, all of that – R-I-O – it is the object of that, I and that on the other hand this I-O ought to repeat that for the object. And one can take an example, Pierce gives an example.

(164) **J Lacan** – This is what I translate by saying that existence is insistence.

F Recanatti – I mean that the whole problem is the start. It is what happens between the *representamen* and the object. Now precisely it is impossible to say anything about what happens there. All that one knows, is that this, R-O what happens within, between the two, this brings all the rest. I am going to finish by inscribing the rest because that, I, continues to infinity.

When one wants to know, once...that to have a meaning, R-O, says Pierce, the process of signification is created starting from there, in order for that to have a meaning, it is necessary that, from the relationship, if one takes the object *qua* justice, and if one takes the *representamen* as being the weighing scales, it is necessary that precisely this relationship, which in itself is nothing should be interpreted by its interpreters. These interpreters, can be anything whatsoever, it could be equality, and under that heading, the relation, in general, namely, of the interpreter at here, R-O is going to itself be interpreted by a second interpreter. One could down a whole list, one could put Communism, one could put whatever one wishes, and that continues without stopping.

So that at the start, there is all the data, there is a kind of ground, a foundation which is chosen within an indifferenced foundation, and starting from there, there is an attempt of absolutely impossible exhaustion, and he makes a mistake, starting from a first separation which is given in the foundation.

The semiotic triangle, as can be seen, it is very clear, reproduces the same ternary relation that you had quoted in connection with the Borromean coat of arms. Namely, and Pierce says it, he does not say the Borromean coat of arms but he employs the same terms, the three poles are linked by this relation that does not admit of multiple dual relations but an (165) irreducible triad. I quote him: “The interpreter cannot have a dual relation to an object, but the relation that is commanded for him of the sign object that he can only have in the form that is nevertheless identical but degenerate. The relation sign-object will be the proper object of the interpreter as sign”. So then, the triangle develops in a chain as an interminable interpretation, and the word is from Pierce, all the same it is fantastic “interminable interpretation”, as expression, namely, that every time it is what one could call a new interpreter at every point.

This thing that I am marking in dots, in a way, sees itself affirmed as an object subsequently for the new interpreter. And this triangle

continues to infinity.

In the example that I took, the relation equality-justice is of the same order as the relation weighing scales-justice but it is nevertheless not the same. Equality aims not just at justice, but also at the relationship weighing scales-justice. So then to come back to Locke, for example, we see that precisely it is this that is taken as an object of an interpretation. But what is new in a way in the terminal point of view, in the result of the interpretation, is that the inscription of the object is marked there as such, because, precisely, the relationship in general weighing scales-justice is set aside from the object itself, namely, justice.

Such is the model of the process of signification in so far as it is interminable. From a first separation, the one that is given by a first stroke within the ground, *representamen-object*, from a first separation there is born a series of others and the pure element of this first separation was this ground analogous to pure zero. Here again there arises the double function of the void.

Given the time, I am not going to continue because there would be perhaps a whole lot of examples to take and this, moreover more or less everywhere in Pierce, that more or less everywhere in all the theories, here I took empiricism, you have in particular looked towards Berkeley, it is a good idea because it is very rich. One could have taken more or less anything to justify these examples, but this would only be keeping to the level of commentary. Lacan has said that his discourse allowed meaning to be given again to older discourses. It is certainly the first fruit that one can draw from it. But the mapping out of what has been produced in general as an opening up, in Pierce's writings for example, is still only an inscription in what was thought up to then to be easy meat. Up to then, up to Pierce, up to Lacan, as you wish.

Henceforth, as regards what is involved in this inscription here of the zero, there ought to arise an infinite series and it is a matter of making a place for this series.

J Lacan – I had to go to Milan to experience the need to obtain a response. I find that the one I have got is very sufficiently satisfying for you also, for today, to be also satisfied with it.