

**Seminar 15: Tuesday 11 June 1974**

*Voilà!* I had to make an effort to ensure that this room was not occupied today by people who are doing exams and I must say that people were good enough to leave it to me. It is obvious that it is more than kind on the part of the University of Paris I to have made this effort since, classes being over for this year – which of course I did not know, this room should have been at the disposition of another part of the administration whose business is to channel you. There you are.

So then all the same, since it cannot be done again, beyond a certain limit, today will be the last time this year that I will speak to you. This forces me naturally to cut things a little short, but that is not going to hold me back since in short one must always finish by cutting things short. For my part I do not know moreover very well why I am lodged in this place, since in short the University, if this is what I am explaining to you, it is perhaps *the woman*. But it is the prehistoric woman, it is the one whom you see is made of folds (*replis*). Obviously for my part it is in one of these folds that she shelters me. She does not realise – when one has a lot of folds one does not feel very much – otherwise, who knows, she would perhaps find me burdensome. Good.

So then, on the other hand, on the other hand – you'll never guess – you will never imagine what I wasted my time on – wasted, in short,

yes, wasted – what I wasted my time on in part since I last saw you gathered together here. You'll never guess: I was in Milan at a (226) semiotic congress. That is extraordinary. It is extraordinary and of course, it left me, it left me a little nonplussed. It left me a little nonplussed in the sense that it is very difficult precisely from a University perspective to tackle semiotics. But anyway, this very lack that I, as I might say realised in it, threw me back, as I might say, on myself. I mean made me realise that it is very difficult to tackle semiotics – for my part of course, I did not make a face because I was invited, like here, very, very kindly, and I do not see why I would in short have disturbed this Congress by saying what – that the same, in short, cannot be approached like that in the raw starting from a certain idea of knowledge, a certain idea of knowledge that is not very well situated, in sum, in the university. But I reflected on it and there are reasons for that which are, perhaps, due precisely to the fact that the knowledge of *the woman* – since it is like that that I situated the university – the knowledge of *the woman*, is perhaps not quite the same thing as the knowledge with which we are occupied here.

The knowledge with which we are occupied here – I think I have made you sense it – is the knowledge in which the unconscious consists. And it is, in sum, on this that I would like to close this year.

I never, in sum, I never attached myself to anything other than what is involved in this knowledge described as unconscious. If for example I marked the accent, in short, about knowledge in so far as the discourse of science may situate it in the Real, what is singular and that whose impasse I believe I have articulated in a way here, the impasse which is the one for which Newton was assailed inasmuch as, not making any hypothesis, any hypothesis inasmuch as he articulated the thing scientifically, well then, he was quite incapable, except of course for the fact that he was reproached for it, he was quite incapable of saying where there was situated this knowledge thanks to which in short the heavens move in the order that we know, on the foundation of gravity.

If I emphasised, is that not so, this character of a certain knowledge in the Real, this may seem to be beside the question, beside the question in this sense that unconscious knowledge, for its part, is a knowledge that we have to deal with. And it is in this sense that one can say that it is in the Real.

This is what I am trying to support for you this year with the support of a writing, of a writing that is not easy, since it is the one that you have seen me handle more or less adroitly on the board in the form of the Borromean knot. And this is how I would like to conclude this year; it is by coming back to this knowledge and to say how it is (227) presented. How it is presented, I would not say altogether in the Real, but on the path that leads us to the Real.

I must all the same start again from that, from what was also presentified to me, presentified in this interval, namely, that there are some very funny people in short, people who continue in a certain Society described as International, who continue to operate as if all of that was self-evident. Namely, that this could be situated, be situated in a world; in a world like that that is supposed to be made up of bodies, of bodies that are called living – and of course there is no reason for them to be called that, is that not so – that are plunged into a milieu, a milieu that is called ‘world’ and all that, in short, why should it be rejected all of a sudden?

Nevertheless what comes out of a practice, of a practice which is based on the ek-sistence of the unconscious, ought all the same allow us to detach ourselves from this elementary vision which is that of...I would not say of the ego, even though it is encumbered by it and that I read things directly extracted from a certain congress that was held at Madrid where for example, one sees that Freud himself, I must say, said things just as outrageous, just as outrageous as what I am going to put forward to you: that it is from the ego (*le moi*) – the ego, is something other than the unconscious, obviously, it is not underlined

that it is something different, there is a moment where Freud redid his whole topography as it is called, is that not so. There is the famous second topography which is a writing, simply, which is nothing other than something in the form of an egg, the form of an egg which it is all the more striking to see, this form of the egg, that what is situated in it as the ego comes at the place where in an egg, or more exactly on its yolk, on what is called the vitellus, is the place of the embryonic point. It is obviously curious, it is obviously very curious and it brings the function of the ego closer to where, in short, there is going to develop a body, a body which only the development of biology allows us to situate the way it is formed in its first morulations, gastrulations, etc. But since this body – and it is in this that there consists Freud's second topography – since this body is situated by a relation to the id, to the id which is an extraordinarily confused idea; as Freud articulates it, it is a locus, a locus of silence - that is the principle thing he says about (228) it. But in articulating it in this way, he only signifies that what is supposed to be id, is the unconscious when it says nothing. This silence is a saying nothing. And this is no small thing, it is certainly an effort, an effort in the direction, in the direction that is perhaps a little regressive as compared to his first discovery, in the direction let us say of marking the place of the unconscious. It does not say for all that what this unconscious is, in other words, of what use it is. There it says nothing: it is the place of silence. It remains beyond doubt that it complicates the body, the body in so far as in this schema, it is the ego, the ego which is found, in this writing in the form of an egg, the ego which is found to represent it.

Is the ego the body? What makes it difficult to reduce it to the functioning of the body, is precisely that in this schema, it is supposed to develop only on the foundation of this knowledge, of this knowledge in so far as it says nothing, and to draw from this what must indeed be called its nourishment. I repeat: it is difficult to be entirely satisfied with this second topography because what happens,

what we have to deal with in analytic practice, is something which indeed seems to be presented in a quite different way. Namely, that this unconscious, as compared to what would couple so well the ego to the world, the body to what surrounds it, what would order it in this sort of relationship that people persist in wanting to consider as natural the fact is that, as compared to this, the unconscious is presented as essentially different from this harmony. Let us say the word: discordant (*dysharmonique*). I am blurting it out right away, and why not, it must be emphasised. The relationship to the world is certainly, if we give it its meaning, this effective meaning that we see in practice, is something about which one cannot but immediately feel that, as compared to this quite simple vision in a way of exchange with the environment, this unconscious is parasitic. It is a parasite to which it seems a certain species, among others, accommodates itself very well, but it is only in the measure that it does not experience its effects that must indeed be said, to be stated for what they are: namely, pathogenic. I mean that this happy relationship, this supposedly harmonic relationship between what is living and what surrounds it, is disturbed by the insistence of this knowledge, of this knowledge that no doubt is inherited – it is not by chance that it is there – and this speaking being, to call him that, as I call him – this speaking being inhabits it but he does not inhabit it without all sorts of (229) drawbacks. So then if it is difficult not to make life the characteristic of the body, because it is almost all we can say about it, *qua* body, it is there and it seems to be able to defend itself, to defend itself against what? Against this something to which it is difficult not to identify it, namely, what remains of that body when it no longer has life. It is because of this that in English the cadaver is called ‘corpse’; in other words, when it is living, it is called ‘body’. But that it is the same, has a satisfying air like that, materially. In short, one sees clearly what remains of it is the waste scrap, and if one must conclude that life, as Bichat said, is the totality of forces that resist death, it is a schema, it is a schema, in spite of everything, that is a little crude. It does not say at all how life is sustained. And in truth, in truth, we

arrived very late, very late in biology, before having the idea that life is something other – it is all that we can say about it – something other than the totality of forces that oppose the dissolution of the body into a corpse. I would even say more: everything that may allow us to hope a little for something else, namely, about what life is, takes us all the same towards a quite different conception: the one in which I tried this year to situate something by talking to you about a biologist, an eminent biologist, about Jacob and his collaboration with Wollman, and of that which moreover, well beyond - it is through this that I tried to give you an idea of it – of that which, well beyond, is found to be what we can articulate about the development of life, and specifically the fact at which biologists are coming to, thanks only to the fact that they can look at things more closely than has always been done, that life is supported by something as regards which I am not, for my part, going to take the step and say that it resembles a language, and talk about messages that are supposed to be inscribed in the first molecules and which could have obviously singular effects, effects which are manifested in the way in which there are organised all kinds of things that are turned into manure, or to all sorts of constructions that are chemically located and locatable. But in fact, there is certainly a profound eccentricity which happens and which happens in a way as regards which it is at least curious that this comes to be noticed everywhere only from some articulated thing, up to and including a punctuation.

(230) I do not want to enlarge on that; I do not want to enlarge on it, but after all, it is indeed because I in no way assimilate this kind of signalisation that biology makes use of, I in no way assimilate it to what is involved in language, contrary to a sort of jubilation that seems to have laid hold in this connection of the linguist who meets up with the biologist, shakes his hand and says: ‘We’re in this together’. I think that concepts, for example, like that of structural stability can, as I might say, give a different form of presence to the body. For after all, what is essential, is not only how life manages

with itself for there to be produced things that are capable of being living, the fact is that all the same, that the body has a form, an organisation, a morphogenesis, and that it is a different way also of seeing things, namely, that a body, reproduces itself.

So then it is not the same, all the same, it is not the same as the way in which things are communicated inside, as one might say. This notion of communication which is all that is at stake in this idea of first messages thanks to which a chemical substance is supposed to be organised, is something else. It is something else and then, this is where the leap must be taken and we must note that signs are given within a privileged experience, that there is an order, an order to be distinguished, not of the Real, but in the Real, and that it originates, is made original by being solidary with something which, despite us, as I might say, is excluded from this approach of life, but of which we do not take account – that is what this year I wanted to insist on – that life implies it, imaginarily implies it as one might say. What strikes us in this fact which is the one to which Aristotle really adhered, that it is only the individual who truly counts, the fact is that without knowing it, he supposes enjoyment to it. And that what constitutes the One of this individual, is all sorts of signs, but not signs in the sense that I understood earlier, signs which give this privileged experience that I situated in analysis, let us not forget – there are signs in its displacement, in its motion, in short, that it enjoys. And that indeed is why Aristotle had no trouble making an ethics, the fact is that he supposes, the fact is that he supposes *hedone*, that *hedone* had not received the meaning that it received later from the Epicureans; the *hedone* that is at stake, is what puts the body into a current which is one of enjoyment. He can only do so because he is himself in a (231) privileged position. But since he does not know which, since he does not know that he thinks about enjoyment in this way because he belongs to the class of masters, it happens that he tackles it all the same, namely, that only one who can do what he wants, that only he has an ethics.

This enjoyment is obviously linked much more than is believed to the logic of life. But what we discover, is that in a privileged being – as privileged as Aristotle was compared to the totality of human beings – in a privileged being, this life, as I might say, varies or even is damaged (*s'avarie*) is damaged to the point of being diversified into what? Well this precisely is what is at stake: what is at stake are semes namely, this something that is incarnated in *lalangue*. Because one must indeed accept to think that *lalangue* is solidary with the reality of the feelings that it signifies. If there is something that really makes us get in touch with that, it is precisely psychoanalysis. That 'impediment' – as I said at one time in my seminar on *Anxiety* which I regret, after all, is not yet at your disposal – that 'impediment', 'dismay' – dismay as I clearly specified it: dismay is the withdrawal of a power – that 'embarrassment' are words which have meaning, well, they only have the meaning conveyed on the traces opened up by *lalangue*. Of course, we can project these feelings onto animals. I would simply point out to you that if we can project impediment, dismay, embarrassment onto animals, it is uniquely onto domestic animals. That we may be able to say that a dog was dismayed, embarrassed or impeded in some way, is in the measure that he is in the field of these semes, and this by way of our mediation.

So then I would like all the same to make you sense what analytic experience implies: the fact is that when it is a question of this semiotics, of what creates meaning and of what involves feeling, well then, what this experience demonstrates, is that it is from *lalangue*, as I write it, that there proceeds what I will not hesitate to call animation – and why not, you know very well that I do not bore you with the soul: animation, is in the sense of a series fiddling about, a fiddling, a scratching, in a word of a fury – the animation of the enjoyment of the body. And this animation is not experience, does not come from just anywhere. If the body is animated in its motive power, in the sense (232) that I have just told you, namely, that it is the animation that a

parasite gives, the animation that perhaps I give to the University for example, well then, that comes from a privileged enjoyment, distinct from that of the body. It is certain that to speak about it, in short, one is rather embarrassed because to put it forward like that is laughable, and it is not for nothing that it is laughable: it is laughable because it makes us laugh. But it is very precisely this that we situate in phallic enjoyment. Phallic enjoyment is what, in short, is contributed by the semes, since today alongside – since today, worried as I was by this Congress on semiotics, I allow myself to put forward the word ‘seme’. It is not that I insist on it, you understand, because I do not try to complicate your lives. I do not try to complicate your lives, nor especially to make semioticians of you. God knows where that could lead you! That would lead you moreover into the place where you are, namely, that would not lead you out of the University. Only here is what is at stake: the seme is not complicated, it is what makes meaning. Everything that creates meaning in *lalangue* proves to be linked to the ek-sistence of this tongue, namely, that it is outside the business of the life of the body, and that if there is something that I have tried to develop this year before you – that I hope to have made present, but who knows – it is that it is in so far as this phallic enjoyment, that this semiotic enjoyment is added on to the body that there is a problem.

I proposed to you to resolve this problem if indeed it is a complete solution, but to resolve it simply in short, from the observation that this sliding semiosis tickles the body in the measure – and this measure, I propose to you as absolute – in the measure that there is no sexual relationship. In other words, in this confused totality that only the seme, the seme once one has awakened it to ek-sistence, namely, that one has said it as such, it is by this, it is in the measure that the speaking body inhabits these semes that it finds the means to supply for the fact that nothing, nothing apart from that, will lead it towards what we have indeed been forced to bring out in the term ‘other’, in the term ‘other’ which inhabits *lalangue* and which is designed to

represent the fact precisely that there is no relationship with the partner, the sexual partner, except by the mediation of what creates meaning in *lalangue*. There is no natural relationship, not that if it (233) were natural, one could write it, but that precisely one cannot write it because there is nothing natural in the sexual relationship of this being which finds itself less a speaking being than a spoken being.

That imaginarily, because of that, this enjoyment as regards which you see that in presenting it to you as phallic, I qualified in an equivalent way as semiotic, of course, it is obviously it appears to me quite grotesque to imagine this phallus in the male organ. It is all the same in that way indeed that it is imagined in the facts that analytic experience reveals. And it is certainly also the sign that there is in this male organ something which constitutes an experience of enjoyment which is apart from the others, not only which is apart from the others, but which ... the other enjoyments, the enjoyment which is, faith, quite easy to imagine. Namely, that a body, good God, is designed so that one has the pleasure of lifting one arm and then another, and then of doing gymnastics, and of jumping and running and of pulling and doing whatever you want, good. It is all the same curious that it should be around this organ that a privileged enjoyment should come to birth. For this is what analytic experience shows us, namely, that it is around this grotesque shape that there begins to pivot this sort of supplying that I described as what in Freud's statement, is marked by the privilege, as one might say, of sexual meaning, without it being truly realised, even though all the same, that tickled him also and he glimpsed it, he almost said it in *Civilisation and its discontents* – namely, that meaning is only sexual because meaning is substituted precisely for the sexual which is lacking. That is what is supposed by everything implied by its use, its analytic use of human behaviour: not that meaning reflects the sexual, but that it supplies for it.

Meaning, it must be said, meaning like that when one does not work on it, well then it is opaque. The confusion of feelings, is everything

that *lalangue* is designed to semiotise. And it is indeed because of that that all words are designed to be pliable in every direction. So then what I proposed, what I proposed from the start of this teaching, from the Rome discourse on, is to grant the importance that it has in practice, in analytic practice, to the material of *lalangue*. A linguist, a linguist of course, is altogether introduced right away to this consideration of the tongue as having a material. He knows this (234) material well: it is what is in the dictionaries, it is the lexical, it is morphology also, in short, it is the object of his linguistics. There is someone who, naturally, is a hundred cubits above a congress like the one that I told you about, who is Jakobson. He spoke a little about me in the margins, not in his opening discourse, but immediately afterwards, he was determined to specify clearly that the use that I had made of Saussure, and behind Saussure – I knew enough about it to know all the same – the Stoics and Saint Augustine. Why not? Me, I retreat before nothing. The fact is that what I borrowed from Saussure simply and from the Stoics under the term of *signatum*, this *signatum*, is meaning and that it is just as important as this accent that I put on the *signans*...

The *signans* has the interest of allowing us to operate in analysis, to resolve, even though like everyone else we are only capable of having one thought at a time, but to put us in this state that is modestly described as floating attention. This means precisely that when the partner, here the analysand, for his part expresses one, a thought, we can have a quite different one, that it is a lucky chance from which there springs forth a flash. And it is precisely here that an interpretation can occur, namely, that because of the fact that we have a floating attention, we hear what he has said sometimes simply because of a kind of equivocation, namely, a material equivalence. We perceive that what he said – we perceive it because we undergo it – that what he said could be understood in the wrong way. And it is precisely in understanding it in the wrong way that we allow him to perceive where his thoughts, his own semiotics, where it comes from:

it comes from nothing other than the ek-sistence of *lalangue*.

*Lalangue* ek-sists elsewhere than in what he believes to be his world.

*Lalangue* has the same parasitic quality as phallic enjoyment, with respect to all other enjoyments. And it is what determines as parasitic in the Real what is involved in unconscious knowledge. *Lalangue* must be conceived of. And why not, why not speak of what *lalangue* might be in relationship with phallic enjoyment like the branches of a tree. It is not for nothing – because all the same I have my own little idea... – it is not for nothing that I pointed out to you that this famous tree at the start, there, the one from which the apple was picked, one could ask the question of whether it enjoyed itself just like any other (235) living being. If I put this forward to you, it is not entirely without reason, of course. And then let us say that *lalangue*, any element whatsoever of *lalangue*, is, with respect to phallic enjoyment, a strand of enjoyment. And that is why it stretches its roots so far into the body.

Good, so then what one must start from – you see that this is being dragged out, it is late, good – is this strong affirmation that the unconscious is not a knowing (*connaissance*): it is a knowledge (*savoir*), and a knowledge in so far as I define it from the connection of signifiers. First point. Second point: it is a discordant knowledge which does not lend in any way to a happy marriage, to a marriage which would be happy. This is implied in the very notion of marriage, this is what is outrageous, what is fabulous: does anybody know a happy marriage? No, but in short... Let us go on. Nevertheless the name is designed to express happiness. Yes, the name is designed to express happiness and it is the one that came to me to tell you what one could imagine in terms of a good adaptation, as they say, of a fitting together, in short of something which would ensure that what I have said to you about life, the life of the body in the one who speaks, this could be judged in terms of a just, of a noble exchange between this body and its milieu, as they say, its old pal the *Welt*.

All the same, these remarks have their historical importance, because you will see, you who will survive me, you will see: everything that has begun to be babbled about in biology clearly gives the impression that life has nothing natural about it. It is something mad. The proof is that they have shoved linguistics into it! In a word, it's outrageous. This life will keep some surprises, when people have stopped talking like bird brains, namely, imagining that life is opposed to death. It's absolutely crazy, this business! First of all what do we know about it? What is dead? The inanimate world we are told. But it is because there is a different conception of the soul than the one that I represented for you now, namely, that the soul is ...is ridiculous (*un crabe*).

So then, I am going to tell you, even: at the point that we are at in it, it is paradoxical. It is paradoxical, I say that because I read a little torchon paper that was produced there in the last congress of the *Société de Psychanalyse* and which bore witness to something that at the very least is paradoxical: which is that as regards what I am in the process of rejecting, namely, that there is a knowing, that there is the slightest harmony between what is situated in terms of enjoyment, of (236) corporal enjoyment and what surrounds it. But there is only one place where this famous knowing can happen, a place, according to me and you will never guess it: it is in analysis itself. In analysis, one can say that there can be something that resembles knowing. And I find the testimony for it in the fact that in connection with the paper, the torchon paper that I am talking to you about which deals with the dream, the innocence with which this is acknowledged is absolutely marvellous. There is someone and someone about whom I am not at all surprised should be that person, because all the same he received a little finishing touch that I gave him at one time, the fact is that everything is centred around the fact that he sees there being reproduced in one of his dreams a note, a properly speaking semantic note – namely, that it is only truly here as noted, articulated, written –

he sees there being reproduced in one of his dreams a semantic note of the dream of one of his patients. He is quite right to stick knowing into his title. This kind of co-vibrating, semiotic co-vibrating, it is not surprising that it is called like that modestly transference. And people are quite right also to call it only that. I'm for that. It is not love, but it is love in the ordinary sense, it is love as it is imagined. Love is obviously something else. But as regards the idea, as one might say, that people have of love, there is nothing better than this sort of analytic knowing. I am not sure that it goes very far, this is indeed moreover also why all analytic experience remains bogged down. And that is not what should be at stake. It should be a matter of elaborating, of allowing the one that I call the analysand to elaborate, to elaborate this knowledge, this unconscious knowledge which is in him like a canker, not like a depth, like a canker.

This is something different, of course, it is something different to knowing. And it would need a discipline obviously a little different than the philosophical discipline. There is something in Cocteau – because from time to time I do not see why I should spit on writers, they are rather less stupid than the others – there is a thing in Cocteau that is called *Le Potomak* where he created something that I am not going to try to tell you what it is: *les Eugène*. But there is also within it the Mortimers. The Mortimers have only a single heart, and it is represented in a little drawing where they have a dream in common.

*Si plein, si rond,  
(un seul pour deux)  
le rêve des Mortimer,  
qu'en vain les Eugène  
cherchent, pour y pénétrer,  
une issue*

[So full, so round, (a single one for two) the dream of the Mortimers  
that in vain the Eugenes seek a way out of in order to penetrate it]

Jean Cocteau, *Le Potomak*

It is someone in the style of my psychoanalyst of just now, the one that I did not name: between the analysand and the analyst, it is like among the Mortimers. It is not frequent, it is not frequent even among people who love one another, for them to have the same dream. It is even very remarkable. It is indeed what proves the solitude of each one with what emerges from phallic enjoyment. Good.

So then all the same – there is less than a quarter of an hour left – I would like all the same to make some remarks, I would like to make all the same some remarks about the import – because this seemed to strike like that a pal who is there in the first row, I blurted that out to him like that during a dinner and I had the surprise to see that it filled him with pleasure, so then I realised how badly I explain myself: because I had written for you on the board:

Which means:

**There must be one who says no to phallic enjoyment**

Thanks to which and to which alone

*There are alls (des tous) who say yes*

(238) I put you face to face with the fact that there are – I must have, I must have given rise to some confusion – that there are others among whom there are none who say no. Only, that has as a curious consequence that among these others, in short, there are none at all who say yes. That is the inscription, it is the attempt at inscription in a mathematical function, of something which uses quantifiers. There is nothing illegitimate – I am not going to argue that today because we don't have any more time – there is nothing illegitimate in this quantification of meaning. This quantification stems from an identification. The identification stems from a unification. What did I write for you formerly in the formulae of four discourses? An  $S_1$  that has fixed itself, that has pointed towards an  $S_2$ . What is an  $S_1$ ? It is a signifier, as the letter indicates. What is proper to a signifier – it is the

feature of a tongue about which one can do nothing – is that any signifier can be reduced to the import of the signifier *One*. And it is as signifying *One* – I think that you remember formerly my little brackets:  $S_1 S_2$  in brackets, and there were  $S_1$ 's that stuck themselves in front again, etc., to express the business that I am defining to ensure that the signifier should be what dominates in the constitution of the subject: a signifier is what represents a subject for another signifier. Good so then, so then, any letter  $x$ , whatever it may be means this *One* as indeterminate. This is what is called in the function, in the function in the mathematical sense, the argument. This is where I started to talk to you about identification. But if there is an identification, as sexed identification and if, on the other hand, I am telling you that there is no sexual relationship, what does that mean? That means that there is a sexed identification only on one side, namely, that all these pinpointings of identification described as functional, are to be put – and it is in this that the pal in question manifested his lively satisfaction, it is because I had told him like that in a solid way, instead of to you, I left you in the soup – the fact is that all these identifications are on the same side: that means that it is only a woman who is capable of making them. Why not the man? Because you note that I say of course 'a woman' and then I say 'the man'. Because the man, the man as he is imagined by *the woman*, namely, she who does not exist, namely, an imagination of the void, the man for his part is twisted by his sex. Instead of a woman being able to make a sexed (239) identification. She has even nothing to do but that, because she must pass by way of phallic enjoyment which is precisely what is lacking to her. I am saying that to you because I could speckle it with a reference to my four little pinpointings, there: – I am not going to the board because you won't hear if I write on the board – what does that mean for *the woman*, because you may have been able to believe that with that, that what I was designating were all the men? That means the requirement that *the woman* shows – it is obvious: that the man should be all hers. I begin with this, because it is the funniest bit. It is in the nature of the woman to be jealous, in the nature of her

love. When I think that in 10 minutes I am going to have to explain to you what love is! It's annoying to be hassled to that extent. Good. The not-all (*pas-toutes*) by which I inscribed the other relationship to is that by which this same love, the love that is at stake and that I put like that, generously, entirely on the side of women, we must all the same put, as I might say, a brake (*pédale*) on it, I mean by that, that it is not all that she loves: there remains a bit for herself, for her corporal enjoyment. This is what is meant by the the 'not-allness'. Good. And then after the , existence, the existence of the  $x$ , that for its part, as near as may be – as near as may be and then because I said it clearly here – which is the one where God is situated... One must be more temperate, I mean by that that one must not be too haughty about this business of God, since with time it has become worn out, and it is all the same not because there is knowledge in the Real that we are forced to identify it to God. I for my part am going to propose to you, a different interpretation. The , is the locus of the enjoyment of *the woman* who is much more linked to the saying than is imagined. It has to be said that without psychoanalysis it is quite obvious that in this I would be a complete novice like everyone else. The link of the enjoyment of *the woman* to the impudence of the saying, this is what it appears to me to be important to underline. I did not say shamelessness (*impudeur*). Impudence is not the same, it is not at all the same. And the , both barred, is the way in which *the woman* does not exist, namely, the way in which her enjoyment cannot be grounded on her own impudence.

I am handing you that like that, it is, I must acknowledge that it is... I find you patient. These, these are hammer blows that I am landing on your mug. But anyway, since I am a little bit rushed, I would like all (240) the same to conclude on this fact that the unconscious as discordant knowledge is more foreign to a woman than to the man. It is funny that I should be saying such a thing to you! So then, so then what is going to result from it? What is going to result from it is that there is all the same the woman's side. It is not because it is more

foreign that it is not foreign to the man also. It is more foreign to her because that comes to her from the man, from the man of whom I spoke earlier, from the man of whom she dreams because if I said that the man exists, I clearly specified that it is in the measure that he is, more cankered or even more notched by the unconscious. But a woman preserves, as I might say, a little bit more fresh air in her enjoyments. She is less notched contrary to appearances.

And it is on this that I would like to end. I would like to end on something which is an extract from Peirce: namely, that it was noticed all the same that logic, Aristotelian logic, is a purely predicatory and classificatory logic. So then he started to think around the idea of the relation, namely, what is perfectly, what is self-evident, what is like a billiard table, a billiard table concerning not the function of pinpointing to a single argument that I have just given you as being that of the identification by putting the thing back into the woman's pocket. He started to cogitate around the  $x R (R, \text{the sign of an ideal emptied-out relation, he does not say which}) R$  and  $y: x R y$ : a function with two arguments. What, starting from what I have just put forward for you today, what is the knowledge relation? There is something very, very clever that is noted in Peirce – you see I pay tribute to my authors – when I make a discovery in one, I attribute it to him. I attribute it to him like that, I might moreover not have attributed it to him. Formerly, I spoke about metaphor and metonymy, and all the people started crying out, on the pretext that I had not said immediately that I owed that to Jakobson. As if everyone should not have known that! Anyway it was Laplanche and Lefebvre-Pontalis who were shouting about that. Anyway, what a memory! Make no mistake!

If what I am saying to you today, what I am putting forward is founded, knowledge does not have a subject. If knowledge is made up in the connection of two signifiers and if it is only that, it only has a subject if we supposed one that only serves as a representative of the

(241) subject for the other. There is all the same something which is rather curious there: it is the relation, if you write  $x R y$  in this order, is the result that  $x$  is related to  $y$ ? Can we support what is expressed in the active or passive voice of the verb by the relation? But that is not self-evident. It is not because I said that feelings are always reciprocal – because this is how I expressed myself at one time before people who as usual understood nothing about what I was saying – it is not because one loves that one is loved. I never dared say such a thing. The essence of the relation if in effect some effect is referred back to the starting point, means simply that when one loves one becomes enamoured as I said. And when the first term is knowledge? There we have a surprise, which is that knowledge is perfectly identical, at the level of unconscious knowledge, to the fact that the subject is known. At the level of meaning in any case, it is absolutely clear: knowledge is what is known.

So then let us try all the same to draw some consequences from something that analysis shows us, which is that what is called transference, namely, what I called earlier love, everyday love – the love on which one calmly rests and then, no more trouble – is not altogether the same as what happens when the enjoyment of *the woman* emerges. But there you are, I will reserve that for you for next year. For the moment, let us try to clearly grasp that what analysis has revealed as truth, is that love, the love of which I spoke earlier, love is directed towards the subject supposed to know and so that it would be the reverse side of what I questioned the relation of knowledge about, well then, it would be that the partner, on this occasion, is borne along by this sort of motion that is described as love.

But if the  $x$  of the relation that might be written as sexual, is the signifier in so far as it is connected to phallic enjoyment, we have all the same to draw out its consequence. The consequence is that if the unconscious is indeed the support of what I told you about today, namely, a knowledge, the fact is that everything I wanted to tell you

this year about the non-dupes who err means that anyone who is not in love with his unconscious errs. That says nothing whatsoever against past centuries. They were just as much in love with their unconscious as the others and so they did not err. Simply, they did not know where they were going, but as regards being in love with their unconscious, (242) they certainly were! They imagined that it was knowing (*la connaissance*) because there is no need to know that one is in love with one's unconscious in order not to err. One only has to offer no resistance, to be its dupe. For the first time in history, it is possible for you for you to err, namely, to refuse to love your unconscious, since in short you know what it is: a knowledge, a knowledge that pisses you off. But perhaps in this impetus (*e-r-r-e*), you know, this thing that pulls, when the ship is riding at anchor – it is perhaps here that we can wager on rediscovering the Real a little more in what follows, to perceive that the unconscious is perhaps no doubt discordant, but that perhaps it leads us to a little more of this Real than this very little of reality which is ours, that of the phantasy, that it leads us beyond: to the pure Real.

### **Seminar 1: Tuesday 13 November 1973**

I begin again. I am beginning again because I had thought I might have been able to finish. This is what I call elsewhere the *passe*: I believed that it had passed. Only there you are: this belief – ‘I believed that it had passed’ – this belief gave me the opportunity to notice something. This is even what I call the *passe* is like. It gives

the opportunity all of a sudden to see a certain relief, a relief of what I have done up to now. And it is this relief that is exactly expressed by my title for this year, the one that you have been able to read, I hope, on the notice and which is written:

*Les non-dupes errent*: The unduped wander/are mistaken. That has a funny sound, huh? It is my kind of little air. Or to put things better, a little *erre* – *e*, double *r*, *e*. You know perhaps what is meant by an *erre*? It is something like the initial impetus. The impetus of something when what is propelling it stops and it still continues to move on. It nevertheless remains that this sounds strictly the same as *les noms du père* (the names of the father). Namely, what I promised to never speak about again. There you are. This because of certain people that I no longer need to describe, who, in the name of Freud, precisely, made me suspend what I had planned to state about *the names of the father*. Yeah. Obviously, it is in order not to give them in any way a consolation for the fact that I could have brought them some of these names that they are ignorant of because they repress them. It could have been of use to them. Which is what I would have precisely nothing to do with. In any case, I know that (10) they will not find them all by themselves, that they will not find them, given the way they have started, under Freud's impetus. Namely, under the way psychoanalytic societies are set up. There you are.

So then *les non-dupes errent* and *les noms du père* are so consonant, are all the more consonant that contrary, like that, to a certain leaning that people who believe themselves to be literate have in making liaisons, even when it is a matter of an 's', you do not say *les non-dupes z'errent*, you do not say either *les cerises z'ont bon goût*, you say: *les cerises ont bon goût* and *les non-dupes errent*. They are consonant. That's the richness of the tongue. And I would even go further – it is a richness that not all tongues have, but this indeed is why they are varied. But what I am putting forward, from these encounters that are described as witticisms, perhaps I will manage

before the end of this year to make you sense it – to make you sense a little better what the witticism is.

And I am even right away going to put forward something about it.

In these two terms put into words, *les noms du père* and *les non-dupes qui errent*, it is the same knowledge. In the two. It is the same knowledge in the sense that the unconscious is a knowledge from which the subject can decipher himself. It is the definition of the subject that I am giving here. Of the subject as the unconscious constitutes him. It deciphers him, the one who by being a speaker is in a position to set about this operation, who is even up to a certain point forced until he reaches a meaning. And that is where he stops, because...one has to stop. One even asks for nothing but that! One asks only for that because one does not have the time. So then he stops at a meaning, but the meaning at which one ought to stop, in the two cases, even though it is the same knowledge, is not the same meaning.

Which is curious.

And which allow us to put our finger right away on the fact that it is not the same meaning, simply by reason of the spelling. Which allows us to suspect something. Something whose indication, in fact, you can see in what, in some of my previous seminars, I noted about the relationships of writing to language.

Do not be too astonished, anyway, that here I am leaving the thing as a riddle, since the riddle, is the fullness of meaning. And you should not even believe that on occasion, it remains there, in connection with (11) this rapprochement, of this phonematic identity, of *les noms du père* and *les non-dupes errent*, you must not believe that there is no riddle there for me myself – and this indeed is what is at stake.

This indeed is what is at stake, and also this: that there is no difficulty in the fact that I imagine I comprehend. It illuminates the subject in the sense that I said earlier, and it gives you work. It must indeed be said, that for me, there is nothing more deadly than to give you work...but anyway, it's my role!

Work (*le travail*), everyone knows where that comes from, in the tongue, in the tongue that I am chatting to you in. You have perhaps heard talk of it, it comes from *tripalium*, which is an instrument of torture. And which was made of three stakes. At the Council of Auxerre it was said that it was not appropriate for priests or deacons to be alongside this instrument by means of which *torquentur rei*, the guilty are tortured. It is not fitting that either the priest or the deacon should be there (it would perhaps give them a hard-on).

It is in effect quite clear that work, as we know it through the unconscious, is what makes relationships, relationships to this knowledge by which we are tormented is what makes these relationships to enjoyment.

So then I said: there is no objection to me imagining. I did not say 'I imagine myself'. It is you who imagine that you comprehend. Namely, that in this 'you-you', you imagine that it is you who comprehend, but I did not say that it was me, I said 'I imagine'. As regards what you imagine, I am trying to temper the matter. I am doing everything I can in any case, to prevent you. Because one must not comprehend too quickly, as I have often underlined.

What I put forward, nevertheless, with this 'I imagine', in connection with meaning, is a remark that I will put forward this year. It is that the imaginary, whatever you may have heard about it, because you imagine you comprehend – the fact is that the imaginary, is a *dit-mansion*, as you know I write it, just as important as the others. This can be very clearly seen in mathematical science. I mean in the one

that is teachable because it concerned the real that the symbolic conveys. Which moreover only conveys it because of the fact that what constitutes the symbolic is always enciphered (*chiffré*). The imaginary is what stops the deciphering, it is meaning. As I told you, one must indeed stop somewhere, and even as soon as one can.

(12) The imaginary, is always an intuition of what is to be symbolised. As I have just said, something to chew on, to think, as they say. And, in a word, a vague enjoyment. Human wanking is more varied than is believed, even though it is limited by something that stems from the body, the human body, namely what, in the present state of things – but precisely it has not finished, something else may perhaps arrive – in the present state of things, assures the dominance of the *opsis* [appearance] in the little that we know about it, about this body, namely, anatomy.

This dominance of the *opsis*, is what ensures that...is what ensures that all the same there is always intuition in what the mathematician starts from. I will perhaps this year make you sense the knot (make no mistake), the knot of the affair, in connection with what they call – I am talking about mathematicians, I am not one of them, I regret – of what they call ‘vector space’.

It is very nice to see how this business, which is perhaps anyway, some of you must have heard it vaguely spoken about, I can in any case affirm to them, that it is truly the last great step in mathematics, it starts like that from a philosophical intuition *Ausdehnungslehre*: the maths (*Lehre* is what is taught), the maths of extension, as Grassmann calls it. And then it comes out of that vector space and the calculus of the same name, is that not so, namely, something that is mathematically quite teachable, as I might say, something strictly symbolised, and which, at the limit, anyway, can...can function with a machine, huh?

It does not need to comprehend anything about it.

Why would it be necessary to return to comprehending – we will speak again about vector space, allow me simply to be satisfied today with an announcement – why is it necessary to return to comprehending, namely to imagining, in order to know where to apply the system?

*More geometrico*. Anyway, the most stupid geometry on earth, the one that you were taught at school, the one that proceeds from the cutting up of space with a saw: you saw a space in two, then after that you cut the shadow of the sawing along a line, and after that you mark a point...good. It is all the same amusing that *more geometrico* should have appeared like that throughout the centuries to be the model of logic. I mean that this is what Spinoza wrote at the head of the *Ethics*. Anyway that is how it was before logic, all the same, (13) learned certain lessons, lessons which mean that we have all the same arrived at emptying out intuition, is that not so, and that, at present, it has even gone to the extremes in a book of mathematics, of these modern mathematics that according to some people are execrable, for many chapters one can do without the slightest figure. But all the same – and this is what is strange – one gets there. One always finishes by getting there.

So then I am putting forward, I am putting forward this for you this year: one always gets there, and it is not because geometry is done in space, in the intuitive, is that not so, the geometry of Greeks, anyway, of which one can say that...it was not bad, but in the end it was no great shakes. One gets to it for a different reason. Singularly, I will tell you: the fact is that there are three dimensions of the space inhabited by the speaking being (*le parlant*), and that these three *dit-mansions*, as I write them, are called the Symbolic, the Imaginary and the Real. This is not quite like Cartesian co-ordinates; it is not just because there are three of them, do not be misled. Cartesian co-

ordinates belong to the old geometry. It is because...it is because it is a space of mine, as I define it from these three *dit-mansions*, it is a space whose points are determined quite differently. And this is what I tried – since this went beyond perhaps my capacities, it is perhaps this that gave me the idea of dropping the matter – it is a geometry where the points – for those who were there, I hope, last year – whose points are determined from the squeezing (*coincage*) of what you remember perhaps, what I called my ‘rings of string’.

Because there is perhaps another way of making a point than beginning by sawing space, then afterwards tearing the page, then with the line which, one does not know from where, floats between the two, breaking this line, and saying: that is the point, namely nowhere, namely nothing, it is perhaps by noticing that, simply by taking three of them, of these rings of strings, as I explained it for you, when there are three, even though if you cut one of them, the two others are not linked, they can, simply because they are three (before this three the two remaining separate), simply by being three, they squeeze one another in such a way as to be inseparable. Hence the squeezing. The squeezing is written something like that: namely, if you pull somewhere on any one of these rings of string, you see that there is a point, a point which is somewhere around there where the three are squeezed.

(14) It is a little bit different to everything that has been lucubrated up to now *more geometrico*, because it requires that there should be three rings, three rings of string, something much more consistent than this void with which one operates on space; three of them are required always, in any case to determine a point. I will re-explain that for you still better, namely *per longum et latum*, but I am pointing out to you that it starts, it starts, this notion, from a different way of operating with space, with the space that we really inhabit...if the unconscious exists. I am starting from a different way of considering space; and that in qualifying these three dimensions, in pinpointing them by the

very terms that I appeared up to now to strongly differentiate in terms of Symbolic, Imaginary and Real, and that I am in the process of putting forward, the fact is that one can make them strictly equivalent.

This is a question Freud asks himself at the end of *The interpretation of dreams* on the second last page: he asks the question of how what he calls – and one clearly sees that he does not any longer call it with such certainty, that he no longer pinpoints it by something that would separate it out – what he calls reality, that he describes as *psychical*: what does that have to do with the real?

So here then, he vacillates, he vacillates again a little, and he catches hold of material reality, but what does *material reality* mean in its relationships with *psychical reality*?

We are going then, we are going then to try to distinguish them, to still keep an ounce of distinction between these three categories, while marking what I am putting on the agenda, namely, clearly marking that, as dimensions of our space – our space inhabited *qua* speaking beings – these three categories are strictly equivalent.

We already know the knack for that, huh? They are designated by (15) letters. This is the quite new way that has been opened up by algebra, and you see there the importance of the written. If I write R.I.S. (Real, Imaginary, Symbolic), or better: Real, Symbolic, Imaginary (you will see later why I am correcting it), you write them in capital letters, you cannot do otherwise, and they remain for you like that, sticking, in a way to the thing, simply a question of writing,

it is quite heterogeneous, you continue like that because you have always comprehended – you have always comprehended, but wrongly – that the progress, the forward step was to have marked the overwhelmingly importance of the Symbolic with respect to this misfortunate Imaginary with which I began, I began by firing bullets at it, anyway, under the pretext of narcissism; only you know it is altogether real that the mirror image is inverted. And that even with a knot, especially with a knot, and despite appearances, because you imagine perhaps that there are knots whose mirror image can perhaps be superimposed on the knot itself, that is not at all the case.

Space – I mean, like that, intuitive, geometrical space – is orientable. There is nothing more specular than a knot. And that indeed is why (that indeed is why...) that it is something completely different if you make the choice of writing this same capital RSI – you see where the trick lies – of writing them a, b, c. Here everyone senses that, at the very least that brings them together, huh, an a is worth a b, a b is worth a c, and...and it turns around, like that. It is even on this that the combinatorial was founded. It was on this that the combinatorial was founded and that is why when you put the three letters in a sequence, well then, there are no more than six ways to order them. Namely, according to the factorial law that presides over this business, it is 1 multiplied by 2 multiplied by 3: that gives 6, huh? Once you have 4, there are 24 ways of ordering them.

Only if, if you submit yourself to a conception of space in which the point is defined in the way that I have just showed, by squeezing – excuse me today for not writing all of that in figures on the board, I will do it afterwards – you notice that it is not by reason, like that, of a scansion that goes from the better to the worse, from the Real to the Imaginary, putting the Symbolic in the middle, it is not by reason of some preference or other, that you should notice that, in taking things (16) from the angle of squeezing, in other words by the Borromean knot: one ring of string is the Real, one ring of string is the Symbolic,

one ring of string is the Imaginary, well then, you must not believe that all the ways of making this knot are the same.

There is a laevogyrotory knot and a dextrogyrotory knot.

And even this, even if you have written the three dimensions of space that I define as being the space inhabited by the speaking being, even if you have not defined these dimensions by small letters, even if you define these dimensions by a, b, c, that you do not put here any emphasis on a diversely preferential content, you notice that, if you write a, b, c, there is a first series, and despite yourself, you will qualify it as the right one: the series that I call laevogyrotory, which will be a, b, c, then b, c, a, then c, a, b, namely, that there is the series – the laevogyrotory series which always leaves a certain order, which is precisely the order a, b, c,: it is the same one that is conserved in b, c, a. And that the c comes first is of no importance. It is legitimate for you to imagine, since it was the capital ‘I’ that I pinpointed with a small c, to imagine the reality of the Symbolic.

It is sufficient if the Real remains before it. And you must not believe for all that that this ‘before’ of the Real with respect to the Symbolic, is all by itself some kind of guarantee of anything whatsoever!

Because if you re-transcribe the a, b, c, of the first formula you will have R. S. I., namely: what produces (*réalise*) the Symbolic from the Imaginary.

Well then, what produces the Symbolic from the Imaginary, what else is it except religion...for me? What produces in proper terms the Symbolic from the Imaginary, is indeed what ensures that religion is not about to end. And that puts us, us analysts, on the same side, on the laevogyrotory side, by means of which imagining what has to be done, imagining the Real from the Symbolic, our first step taken a long time ago, is mathematics, and the final one, is what the consideration of the unconscious leads us to, in so far as it is from that

that there is opened up – I have always professed it – it is from there that linguistics is opened up.

Namely, that it is by spreading the mathematical procedure which consists in noticing the fact that there is some Real in the Symbolic, that it is by this that a new passage is outlined for us.

The Imaginary does not need then to be placed at any rank (17) whatsoever. It is the order that is important, and in the other dextrogyratory order, curiously, you have the formula a, c, b, as a result of which it is in the second phase that c comes first, but b is before a, and in the third phase, it is b, a, c, namely, three terms which we will see are of no little importance in discourse, it is from there no less that there emerged some distinct structures, which are precisely all those by which other discourses are supported, only those that the laevogyratory discourses permit to demonstrate by the space that they determine – certainly not as having had at one time their efficaciousness, but as properly speaking put in question by the other discourses. And here I am not showing any partiality, since I am putting us on the same side as where religion functions.

I will say no more about it today. But what I am putting forward is this: if in the tongue, the structure, it must be imagined, is this not what I am putting forward by the formula: *les non-dupes errent?* Since this is not immediately accessible, I am going to try to show it to you.

There is something in the idea of dupery, which is that it has a support: it is the dupe. There is something absolutely magnificent in this business of the dupe. It is that the dupe, if you will allow me, the dupe is considered to be stupid. One must really ask why. If the dupe is truly what we are told – I am speaking etymologically, this has no importance – if the dupe is this bird called the hoopoe (*huppe*) the hoopoe because it is smart (*huppée*), naturally nothing justifies that

smart should be called hoopoe, it nevertheless remains that that is how it is summed up in the dictionary, the dupe, it appears, is the bird one can trap, precisely because it is stupid. We can absolutely not see why a hoopoe should be more stupid than any other bird, but the remarkable thing for me, is the accent the dictionary puts on specifying that it is feminine. Dupe is *la*.

There is somewhere a thing that I picked out, that I picked out in Littré: that it was a mistake for La Fontaine to make the dupe masculine. He dared write somewhere:

*Du fil et du soufflet pourtant embarrassé,  
Un des dupe un jour alla trouver un sage*  
Embarrassed by the thread and the snub,  
One of the dupes went one day to find a wise man.

(18) ‘This is quite wrong’, Littré says clearly, ‘one does not say, *un dupe*, anymore that one can say *un linnotte* (a linnet, a featherbrain) to describe *un étourdi* (a scatterbrain).’ That’s a powerful reason.

The interesting thing is to know what gender the (*le*) *non-dupe* is. You see? I say right away: *le non-dupe*. Is it because what is highlighted by a *non* is neutral? I am not going to decide this: but there is one thing that in any case is clear, it is that the plural, by not being marked, makes this reference to the feminine completely uncertain. And there is something, anyway, which is still funnier that I – I cannot say that I found it in Chamfort – I found it also in the dictionary, in another one, this quotation of Chamfort, but it’s not bad all the same, anyway, that it should be at the word *dupe* that I picked out this: ‘One of the best reasons’, writes Chamfort, ‘that one can have for never marrying’ (ah!) ‘is that one is not completely *la dupe* of a woman as long as she is not your own’. *La vôtre!* Your wife or your dupe. Now there’s something, all the same, that appears, anyway... illuminating, huh?

Marriage as reciprocal dupery.

This indeed is why I think marriage is love: feelings are always reciprocal, I have said. So then...if marriage is such at this point...it's not sure, huh! Anyway, if I let myself go with the flow a little, I would say that – this is what Chamfort means – also no doubt – a woman never makes a mistake. Not in marriage in any case. This is why the function of spouse has nothing human about it.

We will explore that another time.

I spoke about the *non-dupe*. And I seemed to have marked him, in short, by an irremediable weakness in saying that...he *errs*. Only we must clearly see what is meant by: *ça erre*.

I pointed out to you earlier that *errer* (anyway you are going all the same to consult the dictionary of Bloch et von Wartburg, because I am not going to spend my time doing etymology with you, which means simply highlighting the usage throughout the ages, that etymology makes perfectly obvious, does it not?) the fact is that exactly as in my title *les Non-dupes errent* and *les Noms du père*, huh, it is exactly the same thing for the word *erre*, or more exactly for the word *errer*.

*Errer* results from the convergence of 'error', *erreur*, with something (19) that has strictly speaking nothing to do with it, and which is akin to this *erre* of which I spoke to you earlier, which is strictly the relationship with the verb *iterare*. *Iterare*, what's more (because if it were only that, it would be nothing) is there uniquely for *iter* which means a journey. This indeed is why the knight errant is simply an itinerant knight.

Only, all the same, *errer* comes from *iterare*, which has nothing to do with a journey, since it means to repeat, from *iterum* (re!).

Nevertheless, this *iterare* is only used for what it does not mean, namely *itinerare*, as is proved by the developments that have been

given to this very *errer* in the sense of wandering, namely, by making of the knight errant an itinerant knight.

Well then, that is the point of what I have to say to you, considering the difference, the difference that is...pinpointed from the fact that there are non-dupes. If the non-dupes are those (*ceux ou celles*) that refuse to be captured by the space of the speaking being, if they are those who keep their hands free of it, as I might say, there is something that we must know how to imagine, which is the absolute necessity that results from it, not wandering but error.

Namely, that as regards everything that is involved in life and at the same time in death, there is an invention (*imagination*) that cannot but support all those who want to be non-dupes in structure. It is this: that their life is only a journey.

Life is that of the *viator*. Those who in this lower world – as they say – are in a foreign land.

The only thing that they do not notice, is that simply by bringing out this function of foreigner, they give rise at the same time to the third term, the third dimension, the one thanks to which they will never get out of the relationships of this life, unless it is to be then still more duped than the others, by this locus of the other that with their Imaginary they nevertheless constitute as such.

The idea of *genesis*, of development, as they say, of what is supposed to be some norm or other, thanks to which a being which is only specified by being speaking, in everything that is involved about its effects, precisely, will be commanded by something or other that no one is capable of defining, which is called development. And that is why, by wanting to reduce analysis, one fails, one makes the complete error, the radical error as regards what is involved in what the unconscious uncovers.



This indeed is why it is only by...by no longer wishing to be a dupe of the structure, that one imagines in the maddest way, that life is woven from some contraries or other of life drives and death drives, is already all the same to float a little bit higher, anyway, than the notion – the age old notion of a journey.

(21) Those who are not dupes of the unconscious, namely, who do not spend their whole effort sticking to it, is that not so, who only see life from the point of view of the *viator* – this indeed is how moreover, that there arose...anyway...a whole stage of logic, the one from which subsequently, of course, and with I do not know what consequences, there appeared these things which one does not even see the degree to which they are paradoxes, is that not so: all men are mortal. Namely, what I said, travellers, huh.

Socrates is a man – and he is a man, he is a man, if he wishes, huh, he is a man if he throws himself into it, is that not so, this indeed moreover is what he does, and this indeed is why moreover, the fact that he should have asked for death, there is all the same quite a little difference; but this difference did not prevent what followed being absolutely fascinating. Nor was it any worse because of that....with his hysteria, he allowed a certain shadow of science, the one that precisely is founded on this categorical logic. It was a very bad example.

But this must [spread], huh. In any case this essentially imaginary function of the *viator*, ought to put us on our guard against any metaphor that comes from the way. I know well that the way, the way that is at stake, the Tao, imagines itself as being in the structure. But is it quite sure that there is only one Way? Or even that the notion of the way, of the method, is worth anything at all? Might it not be in forging for ourselves a quite different ethic, an ethic that would be founded on the refusal of being *unduped*, on the way of being always

more strongly the dupe of this knowledge, of this unconscious which, when all is said and done, is our only lot in terms of knowledge.

I know well that there is this blessed question of the truth, huh. We are not going like that, after what I have said to you about it, returning to it and turning around it, set about sticking to it without knowing that it is a choice, since it can only be half-said. And after all, behind what we choose to say about it, behind there is always a desire, an intention, as they say.

It is on this that there was founded, in any case, all phenomenology, I am talking about that of Husserl. According, like that, as you vary the 'bits to say' of the truth, of course, to see the sort of things it produces: there are some very funny things. I do not want to compromise God too much in this business, everyone knows that I consider that...he is rather of the order of the super cherished; so then (22) why would he always tell the truth, when it works out just as well if he is totally deceptive, huh? Admitting that he made the Real, he is all the more subject to it in that precisely, if it is he who made it, so then, why not? I believe that, when all is said and done, this is how there must be interpreted the famous business of Descartes, is that not so, the evil genius (*le malin génie*). Well then, he is the evil genius and things work out like that. The smarter (*malin*) he is, the better things will go. That is even why it is necessary to be a dupe.

It is necessary to be a dupe, namely to stick, to stick to the structure.

Good, well listen, I've had my bellyful of this!.

**Seminar 2: Tuesday 20 November 1973**

There is a little book, there that.....I am going to begin like that in a confidential way, huh, because, obviously I ask myself, I ask myself in starting up again, is that not so: am I enough of a dupe – am I enough of a dupe, huh – not to make a mistake (*errer*)?

To make a mistake in the sense that I specified for you the last time, which means: am I sticking enough to...to the analytic discourse, which does not all the same fail to comprise a certain sort of cold horror. Am I sticking to it enough not to...to be distracted from it, namely, not to truly follow it along its thread, or even, to employ a term that I will use later, there where I am expected, onto vector spaces, I am saying this to you right away; anyway, I will not tackle that today, but spaces introduces a notion, like that, another space in space. That is called fibred space (*espace fibré*).

But anyway, this analytic discourse, this must not all the same be forgotten, to excuse myself if I do not completely stick to it, the fact is that I founded it. I founded it in a written elaboration, the one that writes the small **o** and the  $S_2$  superimposed on the left, and then the  $\$$  and the  $S_1$  on the right.

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathbf{o} & \longrightarrow & \$ \\ \hline S_2 & & S_1 \end{array}$$

When what is at stake is being dupe, is that not so, it is not a matter on this occasion of being the dupe of my ideas, because these four little letters are not ideas. They are not even ideas at all, the proof, is that it (24) is very, very difficult to give them a meaning. Which does not mean that...one cannot make something of them. This is what is inscribed from a certain elaboration of what I will call, it is the same thing to say that it is inscribed as to say what I am going to say now

namely, the mathematics of Freud, what is locatable in the logic of his discourse, in his own wandering. Namely, the way he tried to render this analytic discourse adequate to the scientific discourse. That was his *erre*. This is what – I cannot say prevented him in a word – to construct the mathematics of it; since the mathematics that he did like that, needed a second step in order to be able to be inscribed subsequently.

So then, while I was speaking to you the last time, there came back to me, like that, blasts of memories, of something which of course did not happen to me here, which had worried me that morning in preparing what I had to say to you.

There you are, it is called – let us say it right away – it is called *die Grenzen der Deutbarkeit*. It is something which has a close relationship, in fact, with the inscription of the analytic discourse; the fact is if this inscription is indeed what I am saying about it, namely, the beginning, the key kernel of its mathematics, there is every chance that it can be used for the same thing as mathematics. Namely, that it carries in itself its own limit. I knew that I had read that, because I had it in an old yoke that I had bought like that, second hand, in the debris of what survived from the story of Freud, after the Nazi business, so then I had this debris...and I said to myself that all the same that must have been collected somewhere, given the date. It's true. It had been collected in volume III of the *Gesammelte Schriften*. But! But nowhere else, namely, where it ought to have appeared, being already edited in 1925, in fact, and even already appeared, in fact, the first time, if I remember correctly, in... Well then, it had not appeared at all before...before that, before what I had then.

So then it was then – it came out in the *Gesammelte Schriften* but it did not appear where it should have appeared at the time it came out, namely, in the 8<sup>th</sup> edition of the *Traumdeutung*. And it did not appear because, in the additional notes in question, there is a third chapter –

the first being constituted by these *Grenzen der Deutbarkeit*, the second I will skip over, I will talk to you about it again – and the third signifies *Die okkulte Bedeutung des Traumes*. Namely, *the occult significance*. That is why it did not appear.

(25) What remained in my mind, what worried me, was *die Grenzen*. But because of the fact that these *Grenzen* were associated to the occult significance, it did not come out. Jones says that somewhere: there is an objection in fact to the occult. There is an objection from the side of scientific discourse. And in effect, as it is presented now, the occult, is defined very precisely, anyway, as what scientific discourse cannot stand. This is even one might say its definition. So then, it is not astonishing that it should object to it. This objection came, like that, conveyed by Jones, and this may appear a quite simple explanation of the fact that it did not appear where it should have appeared, namely, in the 8<sup>th</sup> edition.

Freud, as you know, there was nothing new, in fact, in that he worried about the occult. He did so, like that, by...by an *erre*. By an *erre* concerning scientific discourse. Yes, because he imagined that scientific discourse ought to take all the facts into account. It was a pure *erre*. And a still more serious *erre*: an *erre* that was pushed to the point of being an error. Scientific discourse does not take into account the facts that do not stick to its structure, namely, where it began to advance its relationship with its own mathematics. But for it not to stick to it, it is still necessary that it should come within reach of this mathematical structure.

So that it takes into account all the facts which create a hole in its, let us say, I am going quickly, here, because it is not a valid word...but which create a hole because it is more tangible, right away, to say it like that, which make a hole in its system! But it wants to know nothing about what does not belong at all to its system. So then, in worrying himself like that, about occult phenomena – ones described

as occult, that does not at all mean that they are occult, that they are hidden, because, what is hidden is what is hidden by the form of the discourse itself, but what has absolutely nothing to do with the form of the discourse is not hidden, it is elsewhere.

You there, such as you are, like that – I am appealing to your feeling, in fact – there is nothing in common between the unconscious and the occult. In any case at the level that you are at here to hear me, I think that all the same you have been sufficiently broken to the idea that the unconscious... belongs fundamentally to language, huh. And if you were able the other day to look at what I had begun to do like that, (26) vaguely on the board with the line described as a journey, and then that you have simply been able to admit what I have been drumming into you for 20 years – indeed even more – namely, what closes, what finishes the *Traumdeutung*: what I recalled the other day, namely, this famous indestructible desire which travels along, which, on the line of the journey, once the entry into the field of language has occurred, accompanies from one end to the other and, *Ebenbild* always the same, without variation, accompanies the subject structuring his desire.

As Freud says, *Ebenbild*, (it is translated as *in the image* [SE: perfect likeness], but it is not in the image, it is *Ebenbild*, it is a fixed image, always the same!) in the image *der Vergangenheit*, namely, what in the image of this *Ebenbild* cannot even be called the past: it is always the same thing, there is no past once what is at stake is spatial function, the crossing of the line with this network of the structure which is displaced, for its part, according to the line, but of which one can say at the same time is not displaced since the line does not vary. It is with respect to life as journey that one can say that there is a part that is past and another which remains, like that, to be consumed, which is called the future. These inscriptions of the indestructible desire go with the flow. But in going with the flow, at the same time they stop it, they fix it, is that no so, since all movement is relative, is

that not so. And the flow within it is only a flow, it does not constitute a point of reference, huh. There you are.

So then the symbolic structure, is that not so, is at the end of this *Traumdeutung* perhaps still to be discovered, but it is on this that Freud concludes his notion in this title, in this conclusion that comes here like the very point of everything he had ever stated about the dream in the *Traumdeutung*: his notion is there. This indeed is why that what retroacts in it, is that – this is what he explained about the dream, is that not so – is that there is something of the unconscious, and that the unconscious is that: that he was able to say on occasion that the unconscious is the irrational, but that simply means that its rationality is to be constructed, that even if the principle of contradiction, the yes or the no, do not play the role that is believed in classical logic, is that not so – since classical logic has been superseded for a long time, at that very moment, well, it is necessary to construct another one... Yeah...

And I, I suspect, that if the *die Grenzen der deutbarkeit, the limits of interpretation*, (that's what that means) did not come out in the (27) following edition of *The interpretation of dreams*, it is not simply because it was in the shadow of the occult, it is because all the same here, that...that relied on it (*en remettait*). This went a little beyond the business about the affirmation that *desire is indestructible*, it showed in this structuring of desire itself something which precisely would have allowed its nature to be mathematicised differently. That is why it is worth the trouble, all the same, for me to give you like that – it is obvious that before such an audience it is not possible for me to give a commentary on the 25 pages of Freud, there are no more, there are even fewer – but I could all the same tackle the first paragraph, that will encourage you to go to find it because all the same it finished up by being published, as was pointed out to me by my dear friend Nicole Sels, whom after the last session I got into this business, I said to her: 'But where the devil in fact is this thing?', this thing which

nevertheless in the *Gesammelte Schriften*, is indicated immediately after this point on which I terminated about the indestructible and invariable desire, because this is what was at stake.

So then as she commented to me – that is worth the trouble, is it not, commenting to me - as my dear Nicole who knows something about what is involved in searching for the edition of a text (who knows a bit about it and who can really do something about it, in fact, it is unimaginable how I make her run around, I mean, that she runs around, and that she brings it back to me within two hours; here she spent longer: she spent at least three days), yes, this supplementary chapter does not figure, because I had said to her: “All the same, it would be curious if I were not to find it in the *Gesammelte Werke*. And I can’t find it!” She replied to me that it is not in any logical place in this work, nor in the volume that corresponds – about the *Traumdeutung*, I had of course noticed, this is even what had enraged me - nor in volume XIV which corresponds to the year 1925. It appeared *in extremis* and – she added – sneakily in volume I, for this volume was the last one to appear: in 1952. Here she is referring me back to the opinion of Strachey, who had translated it himself in the *Standard Edition*, is that not so, but in volume XIX – namely, in its normal year, yes, that’s true – but he thinks that this fate is due to the grimace everyone made before the *okkulte Bedeutung* of dreams. This is what Strachey thinks. I do not know what Nicole Sels thinks about it, but it is, with respect - simply - to the facts that she brought me, secondary.

(28) So then I am not going to read the thing for you right away in German.

This is how it is put: ‘The question of whether one can give a complete and assured translation of dream life’ – *vollständige und gesicherte bersetzung* – already this use of *Übersetzung* is not bad, it is very Lacanian, good – *in die Ausdruckweise des Wachtlebens*: ‘into

the mode of expression of waking life', and here he puts in brackets: *Deutung*, namely meaning; *Deutbarkeit* means interpretation but *deutung*, means meaning, *Traumdeutung*, means the meaning of dreams – 'cannot be treated in the abstract but in the *Beziehung* to *Verhältnisse*' – this is another term to express relations – 'with the relations' – designated then by another word, namely, posited differently: *Beziehung* is something, like that approximate; *Verhältnisse*, can be taken in the sense of relations that are written, I mean of what is constituted properly speaking in an articulation proper to the sense of the term, is that not so, as something that may happen to be posited there – 'the relations, *unter denen*', under whose influence one works at interpreting dreams: *man an der Traumdeutung arbeitet*. [cf. *SE XIX* 127 – I have translated from Lacan's French & *GW I* 561.]

And this is where we go a little further in it.

'Our *geistige* activities' – those of the spirit, that is how it is put: *unsere geistigen Tätigkeiten*. For Freud, that means 'what one thinks.' The activities of the spirit are what are generally designated as thoughts.

*Streben*. *Streben*, is a word which has different resonances, is that not so, than what it is translated by in English, namely, – on this occasion, is that not so, it is precisely Strachey's translation – *pursue*. It does not pursue anything at all. It pursues nothing at all, *streben* when one follows carefully what it is, when one sees the stuff of the word, which is done obviously with its previous usages, is something which is, to be inscribed, something like this: you understand if you have a vaulted arch, like that, something in wood: it is the tie-beams (*tirants*). They appear to support it like that; if you have the slightest notion about architecture, you will know that the tie-beams, in a vaulted arch, well then, they pull. I mean that they pull towards the outside. The tie-beams are not supports. Anyway, it does not matter for the *streben*

what they pull: what they may hold together, is ‘either *ein nützliches Ziel*’ and you rediscover the essentially Lacanian functions of the (29) useful and of enjoying (*jouir*), they are specified as such, it is on this that at the start I made entirely pivot what I said about the ethics of psychoanalysis – ‘a useful goal’, is, or what they *anstreben*, what they pull, ‘or indeed, *oder unmittelbaren Lustgewinn*’, namely, quite simply my surplus enjoying (*plus-de-jouir*).

**Die Frage ob man von jedem Produkt des Traumlebens eine vollständige und gesichert Übersetzung in die Ausdrucksweise des Wachlebens (Deutung) geben kann, soll nicht abstrakt behandelt werden, sondern unter Beziehung auf die Verhältnisse unter denen man an der Traumdeutung arbeitet.**

**Unsere geistigen Tätigkeiten streben entweder ein nützliches Ziel an oder unmittelbaren Lustgewinn. (GW, idem.)**

For what is meant by a *Lustgewinn*? A gain of *Lust*. If the ambiguity of this term in German, is that not so, does not allow there to be introduced into the *Lustprinzip*, translated as the pleasure principle, precisely this formidable divergence that there is between the notion of pleasure as it is commented on by Freud himself according to the ancient tradition, the only outcome of Epicurean wisdom, which meant to enjoy the least possible, because what really fucks us up is enjoyment! This is precisely why they were described as swine, because in effect, swine, good God, do not enjoy as much as is imagined, is that not so, they stay in their little pig house, nice and quiet, anyway, they enjoy the minimum possible...

That is why they are described as swine, because all the others, in fact, were seriously worried by enjoyment. Anyway they had to work at it, in fact: they were slaves of enjoyment. That is even why, listen...I am

going to let myself be carried along, huh, that is even why there were slaves, huh. The only civilisation that was really bitten by enjoyment, had to have slaves. Because the ones who enjoyed were them! Without slaves, no enjoyment, huh. You for your part you are all employees. Anyway you do what you can to be employees. You haven't quite arrived at it, but believe me you will get there.

Good, I let myself be carried away a little, there like that. Reflect all the same a little on that, in fact, is that not so, that only slaves enjoy. (30) It is their function. And that is why they are isolated, that people have not even the slightest scruple in transforming free men into slaves, because in making them slaves, one allows them to devote themselves only to enjoying. Free men only aspire to that. And since they are altruistic, they make slaves. It happened like that in history, in our own history. Obviously there were places where it was more civilised: there was no slavery in China. But the result was that, despite what was said, they never managed to do science, huh. Now, they have been touched a little by Marx, so they are waking up. As Napoleon said: Above all, do not wake them up! Now they are awake. They will not have needed to go by way of this affair of slaves. Which proves, all the same that there are grafts, is that not so, that it is not the worst thing to avoid. One may avoid the best. And get there all the same.

Good, anyway, *unmittelbaren Lustgewinn*, means 'a surplus enjoying, there, immediate'. 'In the first case, huh, that with the goal of usefulness, it is, (these *geistigen Tätigkeiten*, the spiritual operations) they are intellectual decisions, preparations for the manipulation, huh, *Handlung*, or communications *an andere*, to others', namely, that one talks in order – as I have just said – to manipulate them, as you say.

'In the other case, we call that – *nemmen wir sie* (*sie*, namely, the *geistigen Tätigkeiten*) *Spielen und Phantasieren*, we call that games

and the fact of phantasising. Naturally as he says, *bekanntlich*, is that not so, the useful, is simply also all the same a detour, *ein Umweg*, for a satisfaction of enjoyment'. But it is not in itself that it is aimed at, is that not so.

'Dreaming' – he did not say the dream – 'the fact of dreaming is then an activity of the second kind', namely, what he had defined by *unmittelbaren Lustgewinn*. 'It is an error, *irreführend*, to say that dreaming strives towards these pressing needs of daily life that are always imminent and tries to bring to a proper end the day's work, *Tagesarbeit*. That is what concerns preconscious thinking: *das vorbewusste Denken*. For the dream, this utilisation, this useful intention, is that not so, is just as foreign as the bringing into play, into operation, the preparation, the niggling, is that not so, of a communication *einer Mitteilung* to another, *an einen anderen*'. This (31) is why our dear Freud has something Lacanian about him is that not so, since everything that he has just told us about the dream, is uniquely a construction, an enciphering (*un chiffrage*), this enciphering which is a dimension of language has nothing to do with communication.

The relationship of man to language, which can only be... simply be tackled on the basis of the following: that the signifier is a sign, that is only addressed to another sign; that the signifier, is what makes a sign to a sign, and that that is why it is the signifier. That has nothing to do with communication to someone other, it determines a subject, it has as an effect a subject. And the subject, it is quite enough that he should be determined by that, qua subject, namely, that he should emerge from something which can only have its justification elsewhere. Except for the fact that in the dream, as we see, namely, that the operation of enciphering is done for enjoyment. Namely, that things are done in order that in the enciphering one wins this something which is the essential of the primary process, namely, a *Lustgewinn*. That is what is said there.

And then it continues. And it does not simply continue, it stresses. And this clearly shows how, why the dream function, namely, that it is only constructed and is in no way constructed, and that is why it functions, for that: it is made for nothing – ‘except to protect sleep, *den Schlaf verhüten*’. It protects sleep. What Freud only said, like that, incidentally in different points, here he insists. I mean that the question that he introduces, this is why precisely what is involved in the dream depends on the unconscious, namely, on the structure, on the structure of desire – what in the dream might well discommode sleep.

As regards sleep, it is clear that we do not know very much. We do not know very much precisely because, because those who study it, like that, as facts, with two little encephalographs, encephalopodes, encephalo-whatever-you’re-having-yourself, well, they link things together, but finally...it is all the same curious, is it not, that something so widespread in life, here, as they say, as sleep – in fact I am not putting anything forward here I am simply noting: the question has never been put about what it had to do with enjoyment. All that because enjoyment, anyway, is, it must be clearly said that it has not been made an altogether major mainspring of the conception of the world as it is put.

What is sleep? It is perhaps here that Freud’s formula could (32) obviously take on its meaning and rejoin the idea of pleasure: if I spoke about swine earlier, it is because they often take a snooze, yes. They have the least possible enjoyment in the measure that the more they sleep the better it is. In any case that would agree with – if my hypothesis is right, namely, that enjoyment is in the enciphering; one can also see, one can see by that, in any case, something, which is that the enciphering of the dream, after all, is not pushed all that far, as far as people say anyway! It is... I already explained condensation, displacement, it is ... it is metaphor, it is metonymy, and then it is all

sorts of little manipulations, like that, which expand the thing in the Imaginary.

It is in that direction, huh, that enjoyment must be seen. So then one could perhaps raise oneself up, is that not so, to a structure, like that in conformity, in conformity to the history of enciphering, the fact is that if it is in the direction of that something which happens...to what? *Die Grenzen*, the limits. That's the error. The limits *der Deutbarkeit*, if you read these four pages carefully, because there are no more than that, you will notice that, that what signals this limit, is exactly the same moment when it reaches meaning. Namely, that meaning is, in sum rather bitty. You do not discover ninety-nine meanings at the *bi-du-bout* of the unconscious: it is the sexual meaning. It is very precisely non-sense meaning. The meaning where the *Verhältnis* is in a mess. The *Beziehung*, for its part, takes place with the following: that there is no sexual *Verhältnisse* except that the *Verhältnis* qua written, in so far as it can be inscribed or that it is a matheme, always funks it.

And this indeed is why there is a moment when the dream collapses namely, that one stops dreaming and sleep remains protected from enjoyment. It is because when all is said and done one can see the end of it (*le bout*).

But the important thing, the important thing for us, if it is true that this sexual meaning can only be defined by not being able to be written, is to see precisely what in this enciphering – not in the deciphering – that which in the enciphering necessitates *die Grenzen*, the same word, here employed in the title, the same word serves for what in mathematics, is designated as *limit*. As limit of a function, as limit of a real number. The variable can increase as much as it likes – the function will not go beyond certain limits. And language is made like that. It is something which, however far you push its enciphering, will (33) never manage to let go what is involved in meaning, because it is

there in the place of meaning; because it is there at that place. And what ensures that the sexual relationship cannot be written, is precisely that hole there, that all language as such fills, the access, the access of the speaking being to something which indeed presents itself, as touching the Real at a certain point, there, at that point here; at that point there, is justified the fact that I define the real by the impossible, because here precisely, it does not manage ever – it is the nature of language – it never arrives, ever at the point where the sexual relationship can be inscribed. Yeah... Yeah...

So then there remains our business with Freud and his *occult*.

The business of the occult, is very curious, is it not? I spoke to you about the 8<sup>th</sup> edition, but not the 7<sup>th</sup>. It is impossible to get one's hands on the 7<sup>th</sup>, not because of the Nazis, this time, but because it probably appeared in very few copies, anyway, it came out in 1919, can you imagine! The fabulous thing, is that all the same, thanks to another friend (you see that I have nothing but friends) Nanie Bridgman, Nanie Bridgman who is in the *B.N.* got her hands on the 7<sup>th</sup>. Well then that relieved me, huh. Because the way in which Freud is translated – it is true that that began especially with Marie Bonaparte, good....but before that there was Isaac Meyerson; I had got to the point, I beg his pardon for this, of thinking that for him it was the same thing, namely, that he wrote in any old way; I had got to that point, and why? Because (I didn't bring it here, like that, it's unfortunate, I forgot it, that's the truth) there is a little sentence, there is a little sentence at the moment when Freud asks the question, this is what culminates in this final paragraph that I spoke to you about, at the moment when Freud asks the question of what is involved, what is the order of reality of this dream – he is forced to call it psychical, but at the same time it worries him to call it psychical, because he clearly feels that the soul, in fact, this business does not hold up, anyway that the soul is all the same no different to the body, good.

There then he evokes material reality, he had not very clearly seen at that time that he had the material there; it was his whole book, very simply namely, the way in which he had dealt with the dream, dealing with it by the manipulation of deciphering, namely, after all simply with what language involves in terms of a dimension, of enciphering.

(34) So there, he gets involved in what is involved, when all is said and done, in this reality, and he is struck – he is struck only there, it is the only edition in which there is a sentence like that, a sentence where all of a sudden, he repudiates this fact: a savant, a modest savant certainly, he describes him like that, there are all the same two things that in any case – anyway here he puts a barrier, he cannot take it on board – it is the subsistence of what is dead.

This, this is directed at the immortality of the soul.

And secondly that all the elements of the future can be calculated. Which obviously here, rejoins is that not so, rejoins the solid ground of Aristotle, huh. The soul in Aristotle is so defined that it in no way implies its immortality, and it is moreover thanks to that that there can be progress in science, it is starting from the moment when in effect people interest themselves in the body – and then secondly, secondly the following: the maintenance of the contingent as essential. And after all why the contingent, namely, that we cannot predict what is going to happen tomorrow? In many things we can predict it. What does Aristotle use in his definition of the contingent? Knowing who is going to be victorious tomorrow, knowing if from today, in the name of this, tomorrow something will be called “the victory of Mantitheus” can we from today write: the victory of Mantitheus. It is this alone that is involved in the arguments of Aristotle about the contingent. It is all the same a nice opportunity for us to question ourselves about why events which are moreover not just any old events, which are let us say human events – I do not see why I would refuse here to state it like that – why is it that this is the contingent?

Because after all, there are all the same human events that are all the more predictable because they are constants. For example: I was sure that you would be just as numerous today as the last time – for reasons moreover that are just as obscure – but anyway it can be calculated.

Why can a victory not be calculated?

Who is going to answer me? [*To Gloria Gonzales, his secretary: Give me a cigar*].

Listen: a victory cannot be calculated.....

[*Someone in the audience*]: Because there must be two...!

(35) There is something in that idea...

There is something in the idea, it is obvious, anyway, it is true, as you say, there must be two, and sometimes even a little more... But by going in that direction, is this not so, you clearly see that, despite everything, you slide gently to the side, to the side where these two, where these two funk it: namely, to the side of the sexual relationship. It is a whole business, huh, to be two. Yes. When I think that I will not have the time today to tell you all the beautiful things that I had prepared for you about love, well then, this disappoints me a little but it was because I dragged things out, and then I dragged things out like that because...because I wanted all the same to make a careful enciphering, namely, not to wander too much, huh, so that for the rest, anyway, you can perhaps wait a little bit.

But to refer to something that I already put forward – I said it in a thousand ways, very often, but one day I said it quite crudely, like that, clearly, I said that the effect of interpretation – to limit myself to what, is that not so, I must remain stuck to, I must remain the dupe of, and still more a dupe without forcing myself, because if I am a dupe by forcing myself, well then I will write the *Discourse on the passions of love* precisely what Pascal wrote, and you can really see that he is forcing himself, huh.

After that naturally it slackened, it died, he was never able to come back to it, but anyway, it is probable enough (I am not sure) that he forced himself, all the same when he wrote that. The results are absolutely stupefying, are they not. It is absolutely magnificent in fact: by forcing oneself one manages to say...one manages, one truly manages not to go astray. Read that, anyway it works, that is how love happens. Absolutely disconcerting, but that is how it happens. Good.

What is meant by saying that interpretation is incalculable in its effects? That means that its only meaning is enjoyment; it is enjoyment, moreover, that creates a complete obstacle to the sexual relationship being able to be written in any way whatsoever, and that in short, this allows there to be extended to enjoyment this formula that the effect of interpretation is incalculable. If you carefully reflect, in effect, on what is happening at the encounter of these two herds that are called armies, is that not so, and which moreover are discourses, walking discourses, I mean that each of them only holds together because people believe that the captain is  $S_1$ . Good...it is all the same quite clear that if the victory of one army over another is strictly (36) unforeseeable, it is because one cannot calculate the enjoyment of a combatant. That this is what it's all about, in short: if there are some who enjoy being killed, they have the advantage. There you are. This is a little glimpse concerning what is involved in the contingent, namely, of what is only defined by the incalculable... Yeah.

So then now, all the same, I am not all the same going to leave you without telling you, anyway some few little words about what is completely opposite to the line, like that, with which we are in fact exercised – or indeed I am exercising myself before you – but where all the same – anyway there is some chance, like that – followed a little, at least followed by your silence, is that not so...

The occult, cannot all the same simply be defined by the fact anyway that it is rejected by science. Because, as I have just told you, it is crazy how much it rejects, I mean science, huh! In principle, everything that we have just said, and which nevertheless exists all the same. Namely, war. There they all are, the savants scratching their heads; *warum Krieg?* Ah! Ah! Why war? They cannot manage to understand that, the unfortunates...yeah...They tackle it in twos, huh, Freud and Einstein. It is no credit to them...

But anyway, the occult, the occult is well and truly surely that: this absence of relationship. And I would even tell you a little bit more about it, in fact, if I did not have all the same to specify clearly how it presented itself in Freud's time. Because there it is quite clear. Everything that he wrote, is that not so, *Psychoanalyse und Telepathie, Traum und Telepathie*, and God knows we know the bad use that has been made of this by people who have isolated it under the name of psy-phenomena, they are fraudsters, are they not. It must all the same be clearly seen that Freud, then – read the texts, is that not so, those whose title I have just given, all the same, those, they can be found. Contrary to *Grenzen der Deutbarkeit*, it is quite clear: he says that the dream and telepathy, for example, have strictly nothing to do with one another. It even gets to the point that he goes as far as to say that telepathy, is something of the same order, anyway, I admit it, why not, it is of the order of communication. And in the dream, it is treated like any other, namely, the first part of what I stated for you earlier, namely, *etwas nützliches*, is that not so, something that is of use for the day's scheming. And it is taken up in the same way in the (37) dream, not only does he prefer to admit, but very specifically he demonstrates that in every case where there was so-called *dreamt* telepathy, there are cases where one can admit the direct fact that there was a message, namely, announced along a special wire if I can express myself like that, because that is what telepathy is, is that not so, it is a special wire. One can, you only have to treat the case, you only have to envisage it, to operate with it, in thinking that, like any

other day's residue, there was a telepathic warning. In other words he doesn't give a damn whether it is telepathic or not, the only thing that interests him is that it is taken up in the dream, this (I don't want to be reading it for you because it is too late, is it not) this is stated in Freud: one must consider, to conceive something about the relationships of telepathy to the dream, that the telepathy is produced as a remainder, a residue of the preceding day. He prefers to admit that, even though of course naturally...he prefers to admit the telepathic phenomenon – this is the meaning of his position – than to bring it into the dream. And he underlines, he underlines, namely, he says why: because the dream is made – and he gives the whole list – with a whole series of encipherings and that these encipherings can only be brought to bear on a material which is constituted by the day's residues. He prefers to put telepathy, to range it with current events: in no way to attach it to the mechanisms of the unconscious. It is easy to confirm, it is enough for you to consult it – of course naturally in French it was never translated but all the same, there are some of you who read English, even a lot I hope, and on the other hand a certain number who read German – consult the texts of Freud on the unconscious and telepathy: there is never any ambiguity, he prefers to know everything, in short, not simply what he doubts, but about that...about what he washes his hands of, about which he says: I have no competence in that matter. But he prefers to admit that telepathy exists to simply bringing it close to what is involved in the unconscious. In other words everything that he emits, everything that he advances as remarkable, considering certain dreams, everything that he advances as remarkable, consists always in saying: nothing else happened except the relationship to the dream as an enciphering. Or again only the relationship of the unconscious of the occultist or the fortune teller with the unconscious of the subject. In other words he denies any telepathic phenomenon in (38) connection with this – he denies it with regard to the following: that there was nothing else except a mapping out of desire. This mapping out of desire, he considers as always possible, which means – which means as compared to my inscription of the other day about

life as a journey and the structure which is displaced at the same time as the journey is outlined, outlined linearly.

The question can be raised, and how would it not be raised, whether the structure is truly punctuated by the desire of the Other, as such, if already the subject is born included in language, included in language and already determined in his unconscious by the desire of the Other, why would there not be between all of that a certain solidarity? The unconscious does not exclude – if the unconscious is this structure, this structure of language – the unconscious does not exclude, it is only too obvious, the unconscious does not exclude the recognition of the desire of the Other as such, in other words the network, the network of structure of which the subject is specially determined, and it is conceivable that it communicates with the other structures: the structures of parents certainly, and why not on occasion with these structures which are those of an unknown, provided, provided, Freud underlines, his attention is, like that, a little elsewhere.

And the best part, what he underlines, is that not so, is that this diverting of attention, is precisely obtained by the way in which the fortune teller worries himself with all sorts of mythical objects. That sufficiently diverts his attention for him to be able to apprehend something which allows him to make the following prediction to a certain young woman who had taken off her wedding ring to make him believe that...anyway to remain anonymous; he tells her that she is going to get married and that she will have two children when she is 32. There is no explanation for this prediction – which moreover does absolutely not happen, but which despite the fact that it does not happen, leaves the subject for whom it was destined, absolutely enchanted. Each time that Freud underlines a telepathic fact, it is always a fact of this order, namely, where the prediction is in no way realised; is in no way realised, but which on the contrary leaves the subject in an absolutely expansive state of satisfaction. She could not have been told anything better. And in effect, this figure of 32 years

on this occasion, was inscribed in her desire. If the unconscious is what Freud tells us, if these figures chosen by chance, is that not so, are in reality never chosen by chance, it is precisely by a certain (39) relationship with the desire of the subject; this is what is displayed right throughout *The psychopathology of everyday life*.

The interest. The interest is something that Freud knows very well how to underline eventually, is that not so, which is, the only remarkable point of these facts that are described as occultism, is that they always concern a person that is important for us, in whom one has an interest. That one loves. But there is nothing more conceivable than that one should have some unconscious relationships with a person that one loves. But it is not, it is not in so far as one loves him, because in so far as one loves him, it is well known, is that not so, one misses him. One does not manage it. So then what is at stake all the same are two things, in this so-called telepathic news (*information*). There is the content of the news. And then there is the fact of the news. The fact of the news, is very properly speaking what Freud rejects. He is quite willing to admit it as possible, but in a world with which he has strictly nothing to do. As regards the content of the news, it has nothing to do with the person that it is a matter of having news about. It is uniquely concerned with the desire of the subject, in so far as love includes only too much this part of desire. It would desire to be possible.

So then, what I would like simply to accentuate in leaving you, is that there is all the same something that is conveyed from the deepest past, and which is called initiation. Initiation is what we have the debris of under the heading of occultism. This proves simply that it is the only thing that, when all is said and done, still interests us in initiation. I do not see why I should not give to initiation, as it was known in Antiquity, in fact, a certain status. Everything that we can glimpse about the famous Mysteries – and everything that still remains of it in countries that can be situated ethnologically, as regards something of

the order of initiation – is linked to what somewhere, someone like Mauss, is that not so, called *techniques of the body* – I mean that, what we have and what concerns us in this discourse, the analytic as much as the scientific, indeed the university, indeed that of the Master and whatever else you wish ... is that, is that initiation presents itself, when one looks at the thing closely, always as this: an approach, an approach that does not happen without all sorts of detours, of deliberation, an approach of something where what is opened, revealed, is something which strictly concerns enjoyment. I mean (40) that it is not unthinkable that the body, the body in so far as we believe it to be living, is something that is much more clever than what the anatomical physiologists know. There is perhaps a science of enjoyment, if one can express it thus. Initiation in any case cannot be defined otherwise. There is only one misfortune, which is that in our day, there is no longer a trace, absolutely anywhere of initiation.

*Voilà.*

### **Seminar 3: Tuesday 11 December 1973**

You can say that it is indeed because you are there that I am speaking. Don't tire me, huh, because otherwise I'm off, huh! Here is a little thing that I took the trouble to construct, to show it to you. It is a Borromean knot. Namely – take that one away for me, the blue – you see here the blue, it is taken away, huh. The result is that the two others are free. You have seen that I did not need to dismantle them for them to be free. There you are. There, Gloria can do it again for

you. But anyway, I think that it is already sufficiently demonstrative. That is done with cubes, on occasion, it is done with cubes and one can see that there must be three in width and five in length for the minimal Borromean knot. Good.

The idea, is obviously to make something which...which corresponds to three planes. Namely, which are fabricated like the Cartesian coordinates. When you want to fabricate that, you will notice, well then, that you have all the same...some difficulties. You have some difficulties, that are not at all real: you have difficulties in taking into account right away what that is going to lead to, how much of it you have to put into one direction and then into the other. Try yourselves, won't you. Try above all – there was another thing that I did not bring for you, there was another thing which, which for its part corresponded not to the Borromean knot, which has the characteristic of...that each of the two rings (*ronde*) that this constitutes, they are not round (*ronde*), it is just as if, the two rings that it constitutes are freed if you wish, if you cut one of them. You also have the well (42) known arrangement that I am not going to reproduce for you on the board because, anyway I have it here but I am tired, you only have to think again of the three circles that serve as an emblem for the Olympics. There you can note that it is done differently, namely, that not only are two of these rings knotted, but the third is fastened (*se boucle*), not to one of the two, that does not make three which would make a chain, but to the two. Well then try. Try to make a montage, a montage of cubes so that it is like that, namely, that the continuity of the montage that you will have made, like that, you will make the yellow, the red and the blue, that this is done, that it is possible that you set up on three planes – the assurance that what is at stake are planes is given by the cubic form precisely, you are forced to, to make them on three planes – try it.

You will certainly not see right away that in this case, it is necessary that, that the side, as I might say, the side that is going to show itself,

should be at a minimum four cubes. But that these four cubes are also found in the other dimension. Namely, instead of having twice  $5 + 2$ , as in this case, which gives 12, you have twice  $4 + 2 \times 2$ , which also gives 12 - which is curious. But look, the very difficulty that you will have in making this little construction, will be a good experience of something that I am going to begin with: it is that you will notice here the degree to which we do not sense (*nous ne sentons pas*) volume. Because you will be very hesitant. You will be very hesitant as I was myself. Because, starting for example from three simple series of 4, when you have fitted them together in such a way that this gives these famous three axes that are used in the Cartesian construction, when you only see four of them, you have moreover for an instant the feeling that it could be fastened, that it could be fastened, for example, like here, as if there were only four of them, and then, only three in width. You will have that feeling.

This is a way to make you experience the fact that we do not have the sense of volume, whatever we may have succeeded in imagining as three dimensions of space. The sense of...of depth, of thickness, is something we lack, much more than we believe. This to put forward what I want to tell you at the start: that we are beings, you as well as me, of two dimensions, despite appearances. We inhabit 'Flatland' [in English] as the authors who have produced a little volume on this (43) subject express it, and they seem to have a lot of difficulty, in fact, in imagining two dimensional beings. There is no need to look far. It is all of us.

At least this is how, truly, things present themselves.

The best thing that we can manage to do is in fact what we limit ourselves to - it would all the same be astonishing that in an assembly, here where people are in the process of...of scribbling, that I, that I might not be able to make myself understood: that is what scribbling is, it is the best we can do. And this is what was very well articulated

by the fact that, people were found, in fact, to proclaim in a different area than ours, that *the ink of the learned is very superior to the blood of martyrs*. There are people who have dared say that! They have dared to say this obvious thing. It must indeed be said, this last one, the blood of martyrs, huh, what do we have of it? The subjects of paintings. This with the obsessional structure that Freud was able to recognise in what is a single thing: religion and art. I apologise to the artists, there are perhaps some here, who have wandered into this audience, even though I find it hard to believe. I apologise to the artists if they hear about this: they are worth no more than religion. It is...it is not saying much.

The stupid thing (*connerie*), and it is not the first time that I evoke it here, so that, I hope, you are not going to think it is directed at you – the stupid thing is our essence, a part of which is the fact that your demand – I have racked my brain for a long time to know why you are so immoderately numerous – anyway through racking my brain, finally, a flash emerged from it. Precisely, your demand, the one that herds you in here, is how to have a chance to get out of this stupidity. This is even what you are counting on me for. Except for the fact that this demand forms part of the stupidity.

So then, this demand, to which I am yielding for one more day, you should know that it is not because your number is so great that – precisely, I am not going to try to pretend. It is because, not that it is great, but that it is number. And this is why I dedicate myself to the abjection, I must say, with which, in this place I am merged. There is a thing that I called *la passe*, which is practised in my school, uniquely because I wanted to try to have the testimony of it. It is necessary that I should be or that I am part of it, namely, today, in order to see clearly for myself what it is: to devote oneself to (44) responding to anyone whatsoever, to anything whatsoever – but respond what? What analytic discourse responds is this. What you are doing; everything that you are doing. And of its nature, as one might

say, by its structure, more exactly, contrary to everything that was thought up to the present, among the specialists, ‘philosophers’ they are called, not ignorance – natural ignorance, as Pascal puts it, and I thank someone who, while I was working last Sunday in fact, took the trouble to call me, moreover because I had explicitly charged him to do so...but, it was like that, I will tell you again a little later, in the form of a little suggestion that had come to me from him about Pascal – well then, I had charged him with looking in Pascal at all the stages which go from natural ignorance to true science, with between the what he designates, like that, in his scribbling, the semi-skilled (*semi-habiles*). It is the person who rendered me this service, in fact, who...who wiped Pascal clean, like that, to avoid me having to do it, because I was wrecked – he thought he could identify these semi-skilled with the non-dupes. I hope I will manage, anyway in this effort, to make you sense that...it is not at all, at all, at all, what I mean. Not that the semi-skilled are not perhaps in effect non-dupes, I believe for my part that they are just as much dupes as the others but, contrary to what you may imagine, it is not enough to be a dupe in order not to err!

I said: *the non-dupes errent*, again you must not simply be a dupe of just anything. And even one must be a dupe especially of something that I am going to try, to try, that I would like to try today to get you to reach.

So then, what analytic discourse responds is this: what you do, far from being a matter of ignorance, is always determined. Determined already by something which is knowledge, and that we call the unconscious. What you do, knows (*sait*), knows what you are, knows you. What...you...do not sufficiently sense – anyway I cannot believe it in such a numerous assembly – is to what point this statement, is new. Never did anyone among the Grand Guignols who busied themselves with the question of knowledge, and God knows it is not without some unease that I rank Pascal there also, since he is the

greatest of all these Grand Guignols! No one has ever dared to pronounce this verdict that I am pointing out to you here: the response of the unconscious, is that it implies, that it implies no pardon (*le sans-pardon*), and even in attenuating circumstances. What you do is (45) knowledge, completely determined. Which is why, which is why the fact that it is determined by an articulation supported by the preceding generation in no way excuses you, since this only makes the saying, the saying of this knowledge, more hardened knowledge, as I might say. At the limit, a knowledge that was always there. I separated out this meaning from Freud, because he says it. He says it by his whole work. But I beg you not to comprehend me, you see that there is a reason for it! But for my part I can do nothing but hear it in what Freud says, because there is nothing, nothing to do than to let the consequences flow. Once it is stated, it founds a new discourse. Namely, an articulation of structure which is confirmed to be all that exists in terms of a bond between speaking beings. There are no other bonds between them than the bond of discourse. That does not mean, naturally, that one does not imagine something else.

I told you earlier that...if we do not have volume, we are all the same two dimensional, huh. So then there is the profile, the projection, the silhouette, in fact everything that one adores in a beloved being. One never adores anything more. And since I started from that, huh, in connection with this famous story of the mirror, people imagined that I disparaged it. I did not disparage it at all, huh, because, like everyone else, I am very satisfied with it! As regards volume, thickness, the simple handling of what I advised you earlier, will inform you of the degree to which we are absent. But there is all the same something different huh, that we take for volume. And precisely it is the knot, huh? People have made of it metaphors – not unfounded – the knots of friendship, the knots of love. Well then, that comes from the fact, anyway: it is our only way of approaching volume. When we squeeze, like that, someone against us – that happens to me too, yeah, but...are we in short so sure of these knots? For adoration

we will remain, will we not, at what I called earlier two dimensions the two dimensions (pretty, pretty) – there is a recent author, like that (I apologise to him if he is there, I have not yet had the time to read him) he calls it the *Singe d'or*. Since he paid me the homage of his book, I think that it perhaps all the same because he had some echoes of what I talk about, and perhaps even, who knows, he read me – and that...and in order to talk in this way anyway about the *Golden monkey*, he must have had indeed some echo of what I have just been (46) pushing forward, about what attaches us to the image, to the image in two dimensions. I am far from having disparaged it. Not only am I far from having disparaged it, but it would be completely absurd to say so, because the signifiers themselves, we are forced to pass by the same image, the image of 'Flatland', the image in two dimensions, huh, to demonstrate that they are articulated..

I first showed you the Borromean knot flattened out. Naturally, thanks to artifices, there are places where you see the break appearing, what can only be represented as a break, even though it is a knot, a knot precisely that I tried to put into volume for you, so that you would clearly see that it is not only flattened out that one can tackle it, besides the fact that when you have yourself handled this volume, you will notice that...the volume, here, produced in volume, this does not at all allow there to be distinguished, as I might say, this knot from its specular image. It is no more laevogyatory than dextrogyatory, it is not simply perfectly symmetrical but it is so on three axes, which makes it strictly impossible for its specular image to be different from it.

Writing, for its part, is done in a space that is no less specular than the others. This is even the principle of this very pretty exercise that is called the palindrome. It nevertheless remains that this hotch potch that I have just made between the Imaginary and the Symbolic, does not swamp anything. It does not swamp in particular the difference there is between the Imaginary and the Symbolic, it is well and truly

the same thing, once imagined, it is our common notion of space that...that we imagine does not have an end. You should read on this the juicy remarks of Leibniz discussing with Newton: the so-called supposition, in fact, of a limit of space, would become unthinkable, Leibniz says, because if there was a limit, then outside of this limit, then, one could...one could make a little hole in the limit with a nail...It is absolutely extraordinary what one can read, what one can read about imagination. And notably about this fact that in order to imagine space – because it would be no less an imagination, but perhaps an imagination that would have opened up to something quite different; people did not start from the fact that in space there are knots. There surely would be an advantage in our seeing, as I might say, that the Imaginary and the Symbolic are only modes of approaching it.

(47) I am taking them from the angle of space. Why are these two modes still not enough? But anyway I underline in passing that the word mode, is to be taken in the sense that this term has in the couple of words *modal logic*, namely, that there is meaning only in the symbolic, in other words in its grammatical articulation. When you approach certain tongues – I have the feeling that it is not wrong to say it about the Chinese tongue – you will notice that less imaginary than ours, the Indo-European tongues, they play on the knot. It is not a terrain onto which I am going to venture today, because I have enough to say like that, but perhaps...perhaps I would ask, I would suggest to a Chinese to take things from this angle, and to come to tell you what...what he thinks about it, if perchance what I tell him opens up his thinking about it, because it is not enough even to inhabit a tongue to have an idea of its structure, especially if as is necessarily the case, since I can only address the supposed Chinese in question, if I speak to him in my tongue, namely, that, if he understands me, it is because already with regard to his own, he is in a mess.

What is terrible is that when we distinguish an order, we make a *being* of it. The word *mode* on this occasion is supposed to be illuminated if we gave its true import to the expression *mode of being*. Now, there is no other being than one of mode, precisely. And the imaginary mode has proved itself, with respect to what is involved in the being of the symbolic. It proved itself so well that one might well risk...trying to see if the symbolic mode might not illuminate...the being of the Imaginary. This indeed is what I tried to do, whether you are aware of it or not. I would like to say in this third session in the year of this seminar, the place it has at the seminar and in its programme. And that is why I stated it in speaking to you right away, at first, about the Borromean knot. The Borromean knot which, like that, I saw emerging, in fact, I mean that in a kind of a way it invaded me, the Borromean knot has no kind of being. It does not at all have the consistency of geometrical space of which we know that there is no limit to it being cut into slices, is that not so, to its projection, to whatever you wish...and even that this goes further. That...it invades. And this indeed is why it is instructive: it invades the other order. We are so captured by this imaginary mode, that, when we try to (48) manipulate the symbolic order, we arrive, in fact – remember the way in which sets are tackled, we are told about bijection, surjection, injection...all of that does not happen without images, in any case it is with images that you support these modes which nevertheless are designed to free you from the Imaginary. It is with little points that you will notice that between a domain and a co-domain there is an injection, or a bijection, or a surjection.

But by supporting it with points, you are carrying out nothing but an imaginary lucubration. Why has the flattening out of the Borromean knot not succeeded, did it not first come to evoke for us another start concerning the point...concerning the point, here incarnated, as I might say, because of the fact that at the heart of this little construction you have, whatever you do, an empty cell. Which is no less true than the other knot, not Borromean, huh, the knot that I called

earlier Olympic. Except for the fact that there are...more complicated consequences. But let us leave that.

Why did the Borromean knot not evoke another start concerning the point? The point, the point that we are, huh, because even in the best case, this is what we are. Up to the present I am only talking to you about the Imaginary and the Symbolic, but precisely, my discourse tends to show you that these two dimensions must be completed by that of the Real. In other words, there must be three of them. Three for there to be this point, which could all the same perhaps, anyway, if...if one was not what is absurdly called a geometrician, because, think about it, what does our geometry really have to do with the earth, anyway? Is the earth not something which is not at all flat? If we did not have a vocation for mapping, for the cadastral in what way would the earth suggest to us something flat? Why would we not have started from this point, on condition of starting from the knot, from the idea that a point sets out. It departs at the start, in its definition, from the tugging point, for example. That means nothing to you? Between your Symbolic, your Imaginary and your Real, given all the times that I have been sifting them for you, do you not sense that your time, your time is spent being pulled in different directions? What is more it has an advantage, huh, it suggests that...that space implies time, and that time is perhaps nothing other, precisely, than a succession of instants of being pulled about. This would in any case express rather well the relationship between time (49) and this swindle...that is designated by the name of eternity.

Time is, it is perhaps that, finally, the trinities of space...what emerges there from a squeezing without remedy. Yeah.

The Borromean knot is definitely not at all something negligible. If you flatten it out, here, you will see everything that can be drawn from it. For example, here I am going to give you one of them like that, like that as a way of manipulating it for you. It is like that, like that as

a way of manipulating it for you. It is like that. You can see a little what can be thought about it from the fact that in short to transform it – when it is flat – from a dextrogyratory into a laevogyratory, it is enough in the first position that you have seen here, to do that to any one of them. If you do this subsequently to the other, huh, this is how it must be done, and if you do it subsequently to a third – that is how it must be done – each time you invert it. Namely, that from the laevogyratory first of all you make it dextrogyratory, and when you have tipped over the third, it is laevogyratory again. It is...it is not without interest. This illuminates the question of this famous business, like that, that the universe is supposed to be ambidextrous, in any case it allows us to throw a little bit of light on it. It is worth the trouble dwelling on it. It gives a different idea of spatialising. It is in any case a structure which...which completely changes the import of the word space in the sense that it is used in *The transcendental aesthetics*. Namely, that we can only perceive things from the angle of a space, which in Kant is simply imaginary. If there are three dimensions of space and if we begin to enumerate these three dimensions by the Symbolic and the Imaginary, the test must be carried about what that means for the third, namely, for the Real. There is only one thing to say about it for the moment. There. I cannot say that it is the date of the baptism of this Real: ‘I baptise you Real, huh, *qua* third dimension...’ I did that a long time ago. It is even by this that I began my teaching. Except for the fact that I added in my inner forum: ‘I baptise you Real because if you did not exist, you would have to be invented.’ That indeed is why I invented it. Not at all of course that it had not been denominated for a long time – because this is what is remarkable in the tongue, huh, it is that ‘naming’ (luckily we have English, huh, to distinguish naming from nomination, ‘naming’ means ‘to name’ which means to give a proper name, yes) – it is not for nothing, naturally, that I said: ‘I baptise you’. I am not afraid of words which have a savour of religion, I do not sense any taboo for anything that smells of priestlings nor even for anything that they propagate.

‘Naming’ *qua* proper name precedes, in fact, the necessity by which it is no longer going to cease to be written. As long as you do not take – this is the meaning of what I put forward in a mode of apparent underestimation for the Imaginary – as long as you do not take on the Symbolic in a hand to hand struggle, you will not get to the end of it. Nor at the same time of what, my God, what I call in my notes the Church, but...but which is Christianity. Because that is where Christianity fucks you up. It is the true religion. This is what should make you look twice at it. It is the true in religion. It is all the same worth the trouble being interested in it (perhaps) if for nothing other than to see what it offers. But nothing of what I say will ensure it (*n’y fera*). I say – I deafen you with it – *the truth can only be half said*. That means confirming that there is no truth unless it is mathematicised, namely, written, namely, it can only be suspended, as truth, from axioms. Namely, that there is no truth except about what has no meaning. Namely, of that from which there are no other consequences to be drawn than in its register, the register of mathematical deduction, in this case – and how after that can psychoanalysis imagine that it proceeds from the truth?

This is only an effect – a necessary effect, even though of course this necessity does not manifest itself anywhere outside my office, the office that I am in the process of serving, is that not so – this is only an effect, this kind...of odour of truth in analysis. Only an effect of the fact that it uses no means other than the word. Strictly none. Do not start telling me, huh, that it uses transference. Because transference, for its part, is not a means. It is a result, that stems from the fact that the words, by its means, the means of the word, reveals something that has nothing to do with it, and very precisely the knowledge that exists in language. There again, I never said that it is language that is knowledge. Language, if you do not mind remembering some of the things that I drew on the board when I had the energy for it, language is an effect of the fact that there is something of the signifier *one*.

(51) But knowledge is not the same thing. Knowledge is the consequence of the fact that there is another. And so in appearance that gives two. For this second holds its status precisely from the fact that it has no relationship with the first, that they do not form a chain even if I said, somewhere, in my scribblings, the very first ones, huh, *Function and field* was not all that stupid. In *Function and field*, I perhaps slipped in that they formed a chain. This is an error. Because to decipher, I had to make some attempts, hence this stupidity. It is what is proper to deciphering. When one deciphers, one confuses things. And this is even how I did indeed manage, all the same, when all is said and done, to know what I was doing. Namely, what it was to decipher. It is to substitute the signifier I for the other signifier. The one that only makes two because you add the deciphering to it. Which allows you right away to count three. This does not prevent it being written – as I did – S index 2, because that is how it should be read, the formula of the link between  $S_1$  to  $S_2$ . It is pure forcing, but it is not the forcing of a notion. This is what puts us under the yoke of knowledge. Since I am in the process of speaking to you about psychoanalysis, I add: the yoke of knowledge, at the very place of truth. At the place moreover of religion, of which I have just told you that it, for its part, is true.

This is one of the pillars of psychoanalytic discourse.

Even this discourse, like all the others, I described as quadripetal. Perhaps I described it as I have just told you, huh, I described it, precisely – I consider that quadripetal is a qualification and not a quantification, huh, because the further I go the more I am convinced that we only count up to three. And even if it is only because we count *three* that we can manage to count *two* – again the true religion, huh, since it is indeed of Christianity that I am speaking looked twice at it. The Orthodox, in particular, which wants nothing to do with the *filioque*. This is not by chance, huh, it does not want it to be two

because a third proceeds from it. Because on the contrary it is from the third that the two emerges. So that it is not for nothing that it calls itself *Orthodox*, huh, it is right. That does not mean at all that it is successful in it. To succeed, as I have endlessly pointed out to you: is the sign of nothing. But that precisely it fails...I can indeed say that for us analysts this is rather in its favour, huh, which does not prevent it having to be eliminated, huh. Ecumenism is not there for nothing. (52) Good! Anyway I am spreading myself, and I am chatting, I have enough of my old refrains, because, they only amuse you, but again, it is the old refrains (*des bateaux*) that float, huh. All that is directed, is directed at the fact that...that I am made sweat a little by being always answered by an eternal *two*. Even though I never produced it except as an index, namely, as a symptom. The word moreover even admits it. What falls together, that is what it means. It does not mean it explicitly, but it means it all the same. The two can be nothing other than what falls together from the three. And that is why this year, I am taking as subject, that is what this means – that means it in any case today when I am insisting on it: the Borromean knot.

It is obvious that it is a pedagogical effort. It is because all the same of something of the order of this debility that is called love, in which one can scarcely do better than to get on as best you can, it is because of this that, my God, that Kant's text on pedagogy... - which I opened because I had acquired an original edition, I have to have my little pleasures, huh – but you can find it, it was edited, anyway I believe re-edited by the *Presses Universitaires*, anyway someone here made me a present of it, and it is...thrilling in fact. It is thrilling. On the subject of...as regards what is involved in debility, nothing better has ever been written, not even what Maude Mannoni wrote. Yeah.

The child is designed to learn something. Here is what Freud states, here is what Kant states – it is all the same, all the same something – anyway, something extraordinary! It is something extraordinary that he had in short the presentiment of it: because how could he justify it?

He is designed to learn something, namely, for the knot to be properly made. Because there is nothing easier than for it to fail, especially if you put it in this form namely, the same as this. Look! Here is the green circle and here is the red circle – anyway, the ring – suppose for the third, to construct it, I start from the inside of this one, the red, which is the outer one. In order to construct it, I have to plait it and that it goes somewhere, either under or over the green. But if I have started from under the red – you see the red is there, bigger than the green – if I have started from underneath the red, whether I make it pass over or under the green, the result is the same: namely, that there (53) would be no knot. In other words, if I do not start from above the red, together with having to go underneath the green, there would be no Borromean knot. Kant cannot know – because that is not where he started from – in short why the child must learn something. He must learn something so that the knot is properly made. In order that he should not be, as I might say, non-dupe, namely, a dupe of the possible, huh. Dupe, dupe is a little bit too much. The non-dupes are two times dupes. They are precisely dupes because they are two. And it is in short the only objection that... from which I believed I should start like that, because I was dealing with ears, that had not precisely in fact been awakened – it is the objection, the only one, the only objection that I made to the moiety (*moi-ité*). This is an expression, like that that was attributed to me, rightly or wrongly, because I perhaps said it on one occasion, by one of my analysands, recently, and who has attended my seminar for a long while. The *moi-ité* as he expresses it, is obviously right away to fall into the two: since the *moi-ité* is necessarily made of two moieties. And if I said that religion is, is the truest thing that one can do, in religion – I will point out to you something about which I chattered on for a good while, huh: that thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, huh, does that mean that you will be three, yes or no? Yeah...

The Borromean knot can only be made from three. The Imaginary, the Symbolic, that is not enough, the third element is necessary, and I designate it by the Real.

There must be this determining solidarity of which there is a subject – spoken subject in any case; the loss of any one at all of these three dimensions, the condition for the knot to hold up, is that the loss of any one of these three dimensions must render the two others mad, namely, free from one another.

These three dimensions, how do I represent them for you? With rings of string, as someone decided and very rightly, in a relevant way to entitle my second last seminar of last year. What is a ring of string in terms of dimension huh? I point out to you that a ring of string is not even a knot, huh, because a knot, can be seen, huh, can be made, can be written on the board...on condition of making the necessary little interruptions and God knows that they must be put in, people have such little imagination, huh. There you are, there you see I must correct it again, a knot is that. In other words, a knot can be (54) unknotted. If you unknot it, you are finished, because you cannot do anything else than make another, and because you will never manage to distinguish one knot from another knot. Because they are not all alike, these knots. And that indeed is why a ring of string is necessary. Not that it is a knot, but it is necessary for the theory of knots.

For in effect, in order to be able to distinguish one knot from another, it must in no case be unknotted, or then when you make another knot you will have the feeling that it is the same one. That is why there are only two things: either to extend the cord that makes the knot to

infinity – and so then you cannot unknot, huh – or indeed join the two ends, which is exactly the same thing. And this is what justifies the ring of string. The ring of string is something that allows you to have a theory of the knot. That is what requires it to be cut in order to break it. Cutpability (*coulpabilite*). This is what is distinguished – but totally, this has perhaps not yet come to your mind but I hope all the same for some – is that it is a topology. A ring of string is a torus. And it is this alone that allows a knot to be elaborated.

You do not knot two spheres together. But the interesting is that you do not knot two rings of string, in this affair, you knot three of them, but in such a way that only the third knots the two others. There is somewhere, in an article called *La causalité psychique*, a place, a place around which a certain number of people have sparred like that, where I knot – because this is what is at stake, liberty and madness, where I say that the one cannot be conceived of without the other, which, of course disturbs people, because all the same, they think immediately, anyway that I am saying freedom is madness, huh...since in order to make myself comprehended why not, I (55) understand myself in it; only, what I would like to point out to you, is that the interest of joining in this way in the Borromean knot the Symbolic, the Imaginary and the Real, is that what results from it, not only results from it, but it must result from it, namely, in the best case (*si le cas est bon*) – you will allow me this abbreviation given the time that we are getting to – in the best case it is enough, it is enough to cut any one of the rings of string for the two others to be free of one another. In other words, in the best case, allow me to imply that it is the result of good pedagogy, namely, that one has not failed in one's primal knotting; in the best case, when one of these rings of string is missing, you should go mad. And this is why, this is why the best case consists, namely, that if there is something normal, it is because, when one of the dimensions fails you for some reason or other, you should go, you should really go mad.

And it is on this that I would like to finish, to show you its importance. Imagine the case of another knot, the knot that I called earlier Olympic, if one of your rings of string... fails you, fails you I might say, because of something that does not concern you, you do not for all that go mad. This because, whether you know it or not, the two other knots hold together, and that is what means that you are neurotic. This is why, always, I affirmed something that is not sufficiently known: neurotics are indefatigable. The only people that I saw behaving in an admirable way... during the last war, to recall it, God knows this does not give me any special pleasure, were my neurotics, those that I had not yet cured. They were absolutely sublime. Nothing disturbed them. Whether it was the Real, the Imaginary or the Symbolic that they lacked, they held up.

I do not know whether some of you, anyway remember, I did something, at one time, about the phobia of Little Hans. It is very curious. I never saw anyone highlighting this, this thing that I not only wrote but repeated, resifted, is that not so, I never saw anything else in trying to find out, anyway, what was, in fact, this blessed story of a horse, because, of course, I asked myself the question, like everyone else: why the horse, is that not so? Why did that make him so afraid... The explanation that I found – because I gave it, I worked on it, I insisted did I not; it was that the horse was the representative – (56) I can all the same say it: of three circuits. I did not underline the truth that they were three, these circuits. But the horse represented a certain number of circuits, that I even went looking for in a map of Vienna, to mark them out clearly, because first of all it is in Freud's text, how would I have found it otherwise? It is in the measure that the phobia, the phobia of little Hans, is very precisely in this triple knot whose three rings hold together, it is because of this that he is neurotic: the fact is that if you cut one, the two others always hold together.

It is not the case certainly, that we attend to this, which is why precisely there are other couples in neurosis which are simpler than that of phobia, we will come back to them. The importance, the importance is not even in this, which makes such a pretty image, huh, you were able to say in short that I defined the normal in this sense that it is constructed in such a way that it cannot but drive you mad, when one of these three rings fails. But the important thing is not that at all.

The important thing is that even though they are coloured with different colours with respect to one another, these three rings, these rings of string, are strictly equivalent. I mean that the important thing is that the Real just as much as the Imaginary or the Symbolic can play exactly the same function with respect to the two others. This is not self-evident. If I present you the knot like that: namely, the red above the green and squeezing it, and the black – I am calling this one the black provisionally because there are black points (*points noirs*), and the black in a good position – it is not self-evident that I can easily put the two others into a different position, namely, ensure that the green should be above the red, the Borromean knot being just as correct. Namely, not having to be cut at any moment. One may believe that there is an obstacle to me putting the green in the place of the red, starting from a fixed position of the black, it is nevertheless the case. It is nevertheless the case and it is also what must be said concerning the three dimensions of our Real.

The Real of which there is question at the end of *The interpretation of dreams* – and what must be said, what must be said is the following: it is that if I bored you the last time with this business of the occult, it is precisely because of something that for Freud is in a way the manifest avowal: the fact is that in three of these dimensions, two of which he (57) exposes so well for us, what is the Real for Freud? Well then, I am going to tell you today: it is precisely the occult. And it is precisely for this reason that he considers it impossible. Because this

business of occultism and telepathy, he warns us, he insists, that he in no way believes in it.

How was it that someone like Freud was able to pursue in fact with such obstinacy, this shadow of the occult, that he considered properly speaking as cogitated by imbeciles? Read him carefully and you will see.

Well then, the importance of what I wanted to put forward for you the last time, and that I did not say, except by the sentence at the end, that there is no initiation, which those who have ears were well able to pick out as the only interesting sentence, is precisely that Freud – this is indeed something which deserves us looking at it twice – he was a dupe of the Real.

He was a dupe of the Real even if he did not believe in it. And this indeed is what is at stake. The good dupe, the one who does not err, must have somewhere a Real of which she is the dupe.

#### **Seminar 4: Tuesday 18 December 1973**

There you are. It is certain that...it is certain that in making me raise my voice to no purpose there by wanting to piss me off, to tease me, to excite me before I begin my thing today, things will not have been improved. Anyway, it will not have been improved, at least I suppose. There you are, because all the same, the last time...I made an effort, and today I would only have wished, anyway, to spread out from these

margins, as I might say anyway to say things *mezza voce* as they say. Perhaps in order to try to illuminate for you, in fact, I mean for yourselves, its resonance. I presume this resonance after all, because what I said was designed to obtain it. I had echoes of it, but I do not see why moreover I would not say what I was trying to obtain.

What I said (*mon dit*) was about this knot that I did not introduce today or yesterday and whose import deserved my insisting on it. That means it could not appear immediately. It is not so much this knot that is important, it is its saying (*son dire*).

Its saying that in short, the last time, I tried to, to support sufficiently, like that. What is good about this knot, is that not so, is that it precisely makes quite clear that this saying, in so far as it is mine, is implicated in it. That means that, from this quarter where, you should note, I did not say *the word*, I said *the saying*. Not every word is a saying, otherwise, otherwise every word would be a happening (*un événement*), which is not the case, otherwise people would not speak about *empty words*!

(60) A saying is of the order of a happening. It is not a happening that overflies, it is not a moment of knowing. In a word, it is not philosophy. It is something that is right up with what is going on. Right up with what determines us in so far as it is not quite what people believe. It is not every kind of local condition, like that, of this, or that, of what makes you yawn, of the Real, this is not what determines us speaking beings. And this stems precisely from this pedicle of knowledge, short certainly, but always perfectly knotted, which is called our unconscious, in so far as for each of us this knot has quite particular supports.

It is thus with bits and pieces, as I was able...that I constructed this topology by means of which I dare to split differently what Freud supported by these terms: *psychical reality*. For in fact my topology is

not the same. Someone, someone, who like that, among the people who come to chat with me, like that, put my knot, there, the Borromean one, like that, at the same stage, as I might say, is that not so as this famous egg [*SE XIX 24?*] made up of something which – you know that it is Freud in fact who made that – obviously, one could make a metaphor about nutritional reserves with what it...with what it is supposed to nourish, with enjoyment on the one hand and whatever you want on the other, the...the embryology of the soul. Good.

I would like to make a remark about what is called *love*. Because it is that, that is what I called earlier the resonance, the resonance among you, whether you know it or not, of what I supported the last time with my Borromean knot.

Love, in everything that, what people have allowed themselves to smear on top of it up to now, is all the same something which comes up against the objection that one cannot conceive how being – if of course you have already heard speak of that, anyway, it is dinned into your ears in metaphysics and...even elsewhere, in fact, in sermons, they speak of nothing but that – how being is supposed to be manipulated starting from any individual (*étant*). This presents a great logical difficulty. Since being, when people speak to you about it, is not nothing, and it ends up in this aspiration which is supposed to be made starting from God, of love. I know well that you are not believers, is that not so? But you are even more stupid, as I already had occasion to tell you the last time, because even if you are not (61) believers, in this aspiration, I will show it to you right throughout what I am going to tell you today, in this aspiration you do believe. I will not say that you suppose it: it supposes you.

People try, in short, to empty out all that – or to fill it, what matter – by schematising it in the old metaphor of knowing. One knows whom one is dealing with – the one that one is dealing with, one knows in love...Only I object: what is being, if not the aseptic business of the

imaginary perfections of which one dreams, of which you yourselves, I have just told you, whatever you may know about it, you dream, you dream of its ladder. The ladder whose final rung will or not be this God that I spoke about earlier...but if it is not that one, it is another. This is what is called daydreaming. Only what is demonstrated, precisely by the study of the dream, the true one, the one that you have when you are asleep and that strongly reproves you, has, whatever one says about it absolutely nothing to do with your dream, whether waking or not. This is even what distinguishes you as speaking beings: that there is a knowledge that you hear in the dream, that has nothing to do with what remains to you of it when you are supposedly awake. This indeed is why it is so important to decipher this dream – this dream that you only have at a certain time. Up to then, you are, you are, this has lasted for a time but you are not still so far from it, believe me, the time of the *signatura rerum*, from the reading of the daydream, from the readability of the world; you should not believe at all that because it is no longer the priests that dictate it to you, that you are not at the same point!

Love: if it is indeed here the metaphor of something, it is a matter of knowing what it refers to. We must start from what I said earlier about the happening. It refers, nothing more – in any case this is what I will limit myself to today, simply...to shift, anyway, is that not so, what I have just traced out about the tradition, about the metaphor of knowing – let us say that it refers first of all to the happening. To the things that happen, let us say when a man meets a woman. And why not? Because it is in general the fish that people try to play to death; when I say: ‘when a man meets a woman’, huh, it is because I am modest, I mean by that that I do not claim to go as far as speaking about what happens when a woman meets a man...because my experience is limited, huh.

(62) I would like to suggest the following to you, anyway, since we have started from two extreme points, I propose to you, in connection

with the commandment of divine love, that I evoked for you the last time in challenging you to say yes or no, huh, does it make two or three? You remember perhaps, anyway those who were there. So then, I modify it slightly: what effect does it have on you if I state ‘thou shalt love thy neighbour (*ta prochaine*) as thyself’? That makes you sense something all the same, huh, which is that this precept founds the abolition of the difference between the sexes. When I tell you that there is no sexual relationship, I did not say that the sexes are confused, far from it! Without that all the same, how could I even say that there is no sexual relationship, what would that mean? It is important to situate – you certainly have not done it yet – like that, to situate it in an exact fashion, I am making a little remark since today I am giving a commentary on myself, there is no sexual relationship, well it is of the same order, huh, as what I concluded my second lecture with, the one that was not all that understood: I spoke a lot about the *occult* – and believe me, I am putting myself in the same place, huh – I spoke a lot about the occult but the important point, there were one or two people who remarked it, is that I said that there is no initiation. It is the same thing as to say that there is no sexual relationship. Which does not mean that initiation is the sexual relationship, because it is not enough for two things not to exist for them to be the same! Yeah...

It is clear that, that love, in short, that here is the problem with which what I said the last time reverberates, it is all the same a fact, that is how there is described the complex relationship – it is the least that can be said – between a man and a woman.

So then here, perhaps I can hang the following, anyway, which is at the heart of my title, in fact, a first lineament of which I put forward in my first seminar, huh. Are we going to attribute what is rightly described as the complex relationship between a man and a woman simply to the fact of having made together what I called, I remark, not an error but a wandering, *viator*, as I articulated it, the journey on this

earth, the category, the category comically which precisely excludes us from the world, is this what love is: to have done a bit of the path together?

(63) You see where that takes us, huh?

We would have helped one another. Yeah, there will always be, on the horizon, in fact, this promise. And then...and then it is true that there is something true in it, huh? Because we are man and woman (*bonhomme, bonne femme*), as the existentialists used to say, I am talking about *la bonne femme*, the idea never came to them of talking about *bonhomme*, God knows why, even though it is better. A man and a woman who would have done a bit of the path together. On the horizon of love there would be the grandfather and the grandmother. There is that in the unconscious. There is also that.

I would like all the same to suggest that this is perhaps not all. The question that I am asking: along what path does one love a woman...if I ask the question, that is an old Lacanian refrain, it is no doubt because I have the answer. But there are many of them. There is even no question that has more answers. Naturally, you don't know any of them, because you let yourselves be led by the thing – by the whirlwind. If one has first of all answers, the first thing to do is to count them, huh. And there is one that I find very good.

How does a man love a woman? By chance.

Yeah, that one I already gave you, huh, it is the luck (*l'heur*) of which I have been speaking like that for not all that long, when I say that the lucky chance (*bon-heur*), that it trickles down, that there is some of it everywhere, that you know nothing but that, even! It is simply a matter of having the feeling a little more that you are surrendered to this happiness (*bonheur*). Because anyway, it has to be said, to take my earlier reference the circumstances are not always of mutual help,

when love happens between a man and a woman, and then, since I heard just now a little voice, down there singing its little song there, I would like all the same to point out in the margin that the fellow traveller, huh, ought to awaken more echoes than you believe in your dear little souls, huh, it forms part of a certain vocabulary, the vocabulary of the quarter where people speak about *imagination in power*. I should tell you, the left, appears to me to be all that is most traditional. And the metaphor, is that not so, of fellow traveller, does not appear to me to be enough, if it is not precisely in the Christian register of the *viator*.

As regards imagination in power, I am not the one who made them say it! No more than I make anyone at all say anything whatsoever. (64) My function is rather to listen. Naturally, anyway, here I re-launch things, but it is rather because what I listen to comes out my ears. Good.

What am I doing now, huh? I am giving you a snapshot, like that, of another answer. Of another answer which is the one that justifies my question. It is obvious that...I mean, like that, anyway, to look twice at it. Because if saying is a happening, God knows the consequences that it can have! Bah, I am going all the same to give it to you.

Love is nothing more than a saying, *qua* happening. A happening without any smudges. And that love has nothing to do – with the truth, is to say a lot, since all the same what it shows, is that it cannot all be said. This saying, this saying of love is addressed to knowledge in so far as it is there, in what must indeed be called the unconscious. Let us say in this...this knot of being, if you wish, but in a quite different sense, than what first of all started from confusion, this knot, I said: it is the word knot that is important, it is not being, the being of this knot, that I drew the last time, and which is only justified by the unconscious. That implies then, everything it comprises, precisely this saying from the last time, in so far as it takes account of the place

of this knowledge. What constitutes this saying is not knowledge, this knot is not in any way, it is not a knowledge of anything whatsoever. It implies my saying as a happening in what it is. With its three faces that it is imaginable since I made an effective image of it; that it is symbolic because I can define it as knot; and that it is altogether real by the very happening of this saying, which happening consists in that, in any case, every one of you can give it the meaning that it has.

And that is why, as always, I beg you not to comprehend too quickly. Because obviously, I must ward off, as they say, any kind of precipitation. This is what accounts on occasion for my slowness. I am here Master Jacques from the fact that one must ward off all precipitous interpretations, it is in nothing but this that there is constituted the exploit that there may be in this saying. That is why I have to decide, and that means that I am abbreviating.

The import of this Borromean knot is that from each one of the three rings of string its rupture as a set follows. While in a simple chain, I am going to put it on the board for you – Gloria please draw a chain, a (65) chain simply with three rings, and make them correctly, huh? Good...like that. Huh, yes, but then you have to stop there, like that, after that, huh, and there also, you have to stop to do it that way. A simple chain of three huh it is only from the ring in the middle that you can break the extremes. Otherwise, if you take first of all one of the two extremities, the two others remain knotted. It is precisely in this that there consists the difference to the Borromean knot and of the Borromean knot on the other hand with the Olympic knot. The fact is that the Olympic knot, however paradoxical that may appear, this time it is by taking away anyone whatsoever of the three that the two others remain knotted. But it is simply symmetrical from what happens in this one here for the ring in the middle.

The consistency of all of that, of course, is only imaginary, huh, except that we reduplicate it with the Symbolic, simply by imagining it as a knot, and what is it, to imagine it on the one hand, but to formulate it as a knot, that pushes us towards mathematical formulae. Those of what is only barely sketched out, namely, the theory of knots, except for the fact that all the same this is indeed the representative (*representant*), of language and that *lalangue*, written in my way, reflects it in its very formation, that the more, in a word, we plough ahead in talking about it, the more we confirm what is self-evident, that we are moreover in the Symbolic, and after this why not admit the Real, real from the fact that in this business we pay with our hide? Namely, what may be most efficacious, and however far one goes, of our real presence. This real presence, let us say, nothing more, in fact, that after all, there is no need for hash to reveal it to you by its transformation into a light substance. We are deep enough in this business for us to be able to say that the important thing in what makes a knot here is that it is this ring of string, this is what gives consistency in each one of these terms that I distinguish in three (66) categories, what gives consistency is strictly equivalent. Since – give me my little instruments, I am going to give you a present, while I’m at it, huh, ah! [*Lacan throws rings of string into the audience*] – if I say that, as I showed you the last time – not without, as was pointed out to me by someone who was good enough to write a little note on these subjects which showed that the person had not understood very much, but who all the same pointed out to me incidentally that it was not without awkwardness that I had manipulated these instruments for you, good – if what I am saying is true, namely, that the Borromean knot has this curious property, huh, that...that one can in this construction put each one in strictly the same place as any one of the two others, even though that is not immediately self-evident, first of all, well, if each one can, in this function be qualified for its consistency of being strictly equivalent whether it is considered as

Real or as Imaginary or as Symbolic, well then with this ring, which consists precisely in a Borromean knot, I can make a Borromean knot by simply, if I had the time, linking these three Borromean knots. I would like all the same for you to look at them a little bit closely, like that, and that you would do something with them. Yeah.

What is important, namely, that they are distinct, it is only important precisely that they are distinct, in so far as it is necessary that they make up three. They consist first and foremost in their difference. Like that, if something got into me, anyway, I would write like that something on the board to which I am not so inclined, given my mood today, to give a special status to, namely, to give you that in... with a significance that is more than... outlined. There you are.

2

I am not going to put around it something, like that, something that isolates it, that aseptifies it as a precaution, I am putting it quite crudely:

2

The figure (*chiffre*) of love, huh – *ils sont hors deux* [they are outside two, they are beside themselves] – as I told you, it is *lalangue*, anyway which mathematics is expressing, huh.

$$2 = 1 \text{ or } 3$$

$$2 = 1 \vee 3$$

(67) Ah! That is simply idiotic, but it is not idiotic if one puts – here I must put down some signs used in logic, namely, brackets, and which will serve me here as a sign of equivalent implication, which is precisely as you know what grounds equivalence, huh. What is it equivalent to? It is equivalent to the fact that 2 or 1 is equal to 2 or 3.

$$(2 = 1 \vee 3) \longleftrightarrow (2 \vee 1) = (2 \vee 3).$$

Which is a formula on which you... anyway that you will try to situate, like that, in what is given in the premises of propositional logic. You can make whatever you like of it, huh, I am letting you look after it.

I am letting you look after it because I must advance, I must advance into the...the properties, the properties of the triple, of the triple that we have to deal with. Yes. In these properties of the triple, there is the following: that since each one of the terms of these three of the Borromean knot frees the other two, I know well that there is a relationship, a real relationship – in any case that can be symbolised – with this middle, this middle which, for its part, leaves the two extremes well emptied of omnipotence. But in the case of the Borromean knot, the two extremes have the same. So then, we can consider them from the angle, from the angle of making each one of them the middle.

[Someone in the audience]: *What is meant by the v, Monsieur, is it a v or a multiplied?*

What is he saying? It is a *vel*, it is an *or*, or, one or the other! It is used in logic, in written logic, like that, one puts a little v to say or. This is read:  $2 = 1 \text{ or } 3$ , *this implies the equality of 2 or 1 with 2 or 3...*

To show you the importance of it, namely, the importance of this: by taking in the Borromean knot that I am going to draw for you all the same since there are people who seem to be interested in what I am saying, good, that I am going to draw for you like that, I do not know if you remember, that's it, and there you are. The interest of taking each one as a middle – since today I am talking about meaning – is to push them forward for you, like that, interpreted. There you are. I am (68) rather easy, rather easy about the fact that I am taking care that you will not give too much meaning too quickly to what I am saying, there is also a good way, anyway, to obtain the same result, it is...to give you so much of it that you will vomit it out, huh. Namely, that I am not going to do it with the back of the spoon. I am going to tell you things to make you vomit, and then after all, huh, you will have

the time to swallow them again, like the dog in Scripture. There is even here something that shows why one should not retreat. If I want to give to this exactly its import, anyway, we must have a go at it.

Let us take this as the Symbolic, that one as the Real, that one as the Imaginary. If we take the Symbolic [*clean the board for me if you don't mind, the thing*] as playing the role of middle [*thanks, you are too kind*] as playing the role of middle between the Real and the

Imaginary...here we are at the heart of what this love is that I spoke about earlier under the name of divine love. It is enough for this that this Symbolic taken *qua* love, divine love – that suits it – is there in the form of this commandment which puts at the pinnacle *being and love*. For it to conjoin something *qua* being and *qua* love, these two things cannot be said except by supporting the Real on one hand, the Imaginary on the other, respectively, beginning with the last, of the body and the other, the Real, of death. It is indeed here that there is situated the core of religion in so far as it preaches divine love. It is indeed here also that there is realised this crazy thing, from this emptying out of what is involved in sexual love on the journey. This perversion of the Other as such, establishes in the sadistic story of Original Sin, and in everything that follows from it, by having adopted, naturally, this pre-Christian myth, why not, it is perhaps just as good as any other, establishes in the Imaginary, in this body precisely, this sort of levitation, of insensibility about what concerns (69) it, which is after all, I do not need to insist any more on it, the whole history of what is called Arianism, indeed of Marcionism.

Here is where the dimension of *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself* acquires its imperative.

Be a dupe of it, you will not err, I must say. Because one cannot say that such religion is nothing. Since as I told you the last time, it is the true one, it is the true one since it invented this thing – this sublime thing – of the Trinity. It saw that there had to be three of them. That there had to be three rings of string of strictly equal consistency for *nothing* to function. It is all the same quite curious that for every end, it should produce that with regard to love. But read *Works of love* by Kierkegaard – it has just been published by Aubier. There are a lot of you, you are all going to rush into Aubier when you leave, huh, because usually, when I say a book should be read, it has effects! I have a copy, already, so then you can put it out of print, but read it! Read it because there is no more implacable logic, nothing better has ever been articulated on love, I mean divine love. There is not the slightest wandering, everything is traced out logically. Love is charity, woman – a curious slip – is charity, faith and hope and thanks to that charity is, as you see in art, anyway, rather lamentably symbolised by this woman with innumerable breasts, is that not so, on which are hung innumerable kids. But it is all the same something, to do that, precisely it is at the origin of my slip, to make that from the image of the woman. The finality, the finality in so far as there are two extremes and a middle, I am pointing it out to you, the whole specification of ends – and moreover ends that can always be articulated from rec...I do not dare to say the word reciprocity, it is not correct on this occasion. But I mean that moreover what is the start becomes the end, when the end plays the function of start. The relationship of the body and of death is articulated by divine love in such a way that it ensures that on the one hand the body becomes dead, that death becomes the body on the other hand, and that it is by means of love.

But it is quite general that the very idea of finality should be something that is attached to the intermediary of desire. The love of God is the supposition that he desires what is accomplished for all

ends, as I might say. It is the definition of teleology in itself. It is a transformation of the term *desire* into the term *end*. But in this articulation, what creates the end is the means/middle (*moyen*) [*In the following pages it is often hard to know how moyen should be taken*]; in the (70) articulation (of the Borromean knot, there is a confusion between the *moyen* and the end. Every end can serve as a *moyen*. Let us here, precisely make this simply parenthesis: this simple parenthesis that, in taking this place, in taking this place divine love has chased away what I have just defined as desire. With this gain of a truth, the truth of the three who, as I might say, pays the thing and compensates: it can be properly speaking situated at this place, at the place of the Symbolic in so far as it only becomes a *moyen*, is desire. I am pointing it out to you in passing, Christian love has not extinguished, far from it, desire. This relationship of the body to death, has as I might say, baptised love. But I am not insisting any more for the moment, I am taking another connection.

Very exactly what can result from taking, this time no longer the Symbolic, but the Imaginary as middle. If like earlier, and it is in this that there is pinpointed what I articulated for you as something to make you vomit, I always give this summary meaning of death to the Real, as constituting its kernel, and to the Symbolic, because up to now I did not have to put it forward, to the Symbolic what it reveals to us by its use in the word, and especially in the word of love, to support what in effect all analysis makes us sense – to support enjoyment.

So then, what does the ring of string of the Imaginary taken as middles demonstrate to us? It is that what it supports is nothing less than what must indeed be called love. Love, as I might say, at its place, that that it has always had. And if once, in my *Ethics*, I gave an account of courtly love, of courtly love in what it imagines about enjoyment and about death, this is something that it is – I was going to say miraculous – very surprising and well designed to hold our attention, that it should have been feudalism that produced this order of courtly

love. Not that I believe that what is testified to in it is something like a rectification, a counter-theory about divine love, a compensation, but much more rather of an ancient order through which there is testified precisely how much there remained, more than is believed of this ancient order in feudalism. For the ancient order has nothing to do with the one that we know. It is – I do not see moreover why some economist would contradict me since beyond the feudal age, he no longer wants to know anything – it is what was conserved in the feudal era. And in a word, I would ask you to verify it, I do not see any distinction as regards the emphasis, as regards the meaning of (71) love, between what remains to us of it; the very elegant theories of courtly love and the whole romance that is deployed around it, I do not see any difference between that and what the literature of Catullus bears witness to us and the homage to Lesbia, however much of a prostitute she was. I think that here, namely, the Imaginary taken as middle, here is the foundation of the true place of love.

How did there occur this displacement, after all very fruitful, which in Christian love situates love at the place – you will see at the end why – at the place that seems to me to be that of desire? The thing was only possible – and that is why I am talking about something about which I have thought a bit, huh – from what Christ taught. I am not talking about his Passion, which is the passion of the signifier, I am speaking about his saying (*son dire*). I am speaking about his saying! *Imitate the lilies of the fields*, he proposes. *They do not weave or sew*, he says. And this is the important point: this failure to recognise the presence in nature of what knowledge took some time to discover, namely, that, who has woven or sewn more than the lilies of the field? To utter, to articulate this as a model, is here, properly, to add denegation to misrecognition, and the denegation of what? Since it is only a metaphor? The denegation of the unconscious. Namely, of what it weaves and sews, this knowledge without which there is no proper situating of love if what love consists in, is very precisely this saying, this saying that starts, you should note, from the Imaginary

taken as middle. What there is in courtly love, is that what still remained in Plato suspended on the Imaginary of the beautiful, it is this that is crystallised, which, in love as middle takes on a body, as opposed as I might say, for all of this can be done, be articulated by a series of triple oppositions to the Imaginary of love as it is articulated in the *Symposium*, is opposed to taking it as means of what is involved in courtly love.

This is something that deserves to be put forward. You must not believe that, if I said that divine love took the place of desire, that means that it is quite simple, that they should be put back in their place, namely, that each should take up its own again; this is not at all what happened. If courtly love was, as I might say, ousted from its place, in order to preside in place of desire at the ascension of a Christian love, that does not mean that desire is exchanged: it was pushed elsewhere. It was pushed elsewhere, namely, there where the Real itself is a middle between the Symbolic and the Imaginary. And (72) if this Real, this is what is audacious, in fact, in my interpretation today, anyway this evening – if this Real is indeed death, this is a crude figuration but if this Real is indeed death, there where desire was chased, if you will allow me to speak in terms of a happening – where desire was chased to, what we have is masochism. Certainly not, of course, in so far as it is supposed to be, in any way at all, the vehicle of death – it is only psychoanalysts who believe that, the poor little things, huh! Life instinct, death instinct, that is all they occupy themselves with in their interpretation; they are completely off the mark – but there is no doubt that it is masochism that stirred them up, the connection, the use as a middle, as a middle to unify, to unify enjoyment and the body, the use of this perversion as middle, is certainly what rivets them. What rivets them, as I might say, for a time, anyway irremediably, to what a part of their theory is constructed on. It nevertheless remains that love is the relationship of the Real to knowledge. And psychoanalysis must correct itself by this displacing, by this displacing which stems from the fact that after all,

it only followed the out-of-place turnaround of desire, it must indeed come to know that if psychoanalysis is a means, it holds itself at the place of love. It is the imaginary of the beautiful that it has to affront, and it is to open up a path of a re-flowering of love in so far as  $l'(a)mur$ , as I said one day, writing the little  $a$  object in brackets plus the word  $mur$ , since  $l'(a)mur$  is what limits it.

Love is the specific imaginary of each one, which unites it to only a certain number of people not at all chosen by chance. There is the mainspring of the surplus enjoying. There is the relationship of the real of a certain knowledge and love fills the hole. As you see, huh, it is a little difficult.

It is a little difficult, but all the same, what I must say to you to end – because after all, all these things do not end – what I must show you to end is something that is going to answer to what I told you the last time about the structure of this knot, of the Borromean knot that you now have in your hands, namely, that starting from a certain badly chosen point, there is no means of getting out. All of this means that everyone weaves his own knot. There is something that I want to show you, to show you how this failure happens. Because there is all (73) the same an inverse! I seem to be singing the *los* of love to you, yes there is an inverse: the fact is that you are going to see how, if love becomes really the middle by which death is united to enjoyment, the man and the woman, being to knowledge, if it really becomes the middle, love no longer defines itself as a failure. Because there is nothing more than truly the middle that can unknot the one from the other. And this happens in a way that I am going to show you which is the following.

The Borromean knot – there is a charming person listening to me, who sent me a whole document on this – the Borromean knot, was tackled along mathematical paths, as you know, I told you, the theory of knots

is still at the abc stage; the amusing thing is that it comes to light, not by taking things at the level of knots, but at that of the plait.

Ah! What is a plait?

First of all, it has relationships with three, otherwise it would not be called a plait (*une tresse*)...one, two, three...How can I make a plait with that? Anyone at all who has taken care of a woman's hair will all the same know it, but you naturally do not know it because now women have short hair. So then a plait is made like that, no? Namely, huh, you change the place of the two into the place of the one and the three being in its own little corner. Good, one must truly mark the place of the result because otherwise you will understand nothing about it. If I knot it again too quickly you will not be able to see where the cuts are made. I had myself, of course, to run into this trouble and I am avoiding it for you, so then now, change the place of the three with the place of the two. You had there (since this is 1, 2, 3) you had there 2, 1, 3. After that then you will have 2, 3, 1 and if you continue the thing once more, you will have from one end to the (74) other 3, 2, 1. Good. Imagine they are in the order, the starting order: between 1, 2, 3 and 3, 2, 1 it is the inverse order, there is nothing easier than to join them up, it is enough in short to adopt the procedure, as was very well seen by the charming person who wrote to me about this thing, it is a matter of procedures as in the Moebius strip. The funny thing is that when you look, there, what circulates, at least I hope, namely, my Borromean knots from earlier, fiddle around with it: you will see that between the places where this appears to form a knot and the places where it can be flattened out, it is a

question, of course, of choice, it can vary infinitely but it puts itself, naturally in...in three phases, as I might say. You might imagine for yourselves that the Borromean knot is made up of three of these exchanges, and only of three. Well then not at all, not at all, if you only make three of them, namely, if you proceed by re-sticking together the 1, 2, 3 to the 3, 2, 1, namely, without waiting to see whether if it does six phases, you have the 1, 2, 3 in the proper direction, and that it is like that, nicely, that one obtains the Borromean knot – try it out. Try this out, namely, by only making three phases of the plait, what you will obtain is not the Borromean knot, it is that. This to tell you how easy it is to fall into the middle. (75) And that the face, the equivalent face of what I situated of love as being the essential bond between the Real and the Symbolic, is that taken as a middle, it has every chance of being what it also is at the level of finality, namely, what is called a pure failure.

**Seminar 5: Tuesday 8 January 1974**

I wish you a Happy New Year, huh, even though naturally several people here, I imagine, have begun it badly. In fact I am one. I am one of them. So that after all, my inclination was to excuse myself because of the fact that the Tuesday with which the year began was not because of that fact a true Tuesday and to put you off to the next one. It would have been a good way of getting rid of my duty today... I still remain, it must be said very tempted by it, there is only one thing that holds me back, I must tell you, it is that today, you are less numerous. I am so grateful to you for this that it is perhaps what is going to push me, like that, as best I can, to state some of the things that, necessarily, I continue to cogitate, like that, by habit. The fact also that this morning, my secretary was disturbed a lot, with people asking if I was going to do it, effectively, and since I had not confided in her, she had answered yes. Among them, my God, were some of the best, if I am to believe certain names that were reported to me. So then since they also put themselves out, these, the better ones, I am going to try to have a go at it.

So then let us start from this, let us start from something that I do not hold to particularly: namely, that words have a meaning, and that it is a fact, whatever the problem may be, starting from this fact, of knowing where to lodge them. This indeed is what I have done, lodge these words of course, I must all the same chew things for you, this indeed is the effort that I made, that I made the last time, starting from (78) love. It is a fact that I started from the fact that the word exists. And this is why the thing, the thing is to be conceived as possible. Which is expressed in my saying (*mon dire*) by the fact that the thing, the love thing, is founded, that it is only founded – since it is simply a matter of its possibility – it is founded as I said by ceasing to be

written. Namely, on what remains from the fact that it ceases to be written. What remains of it, I articulated since the time, since this almost infinite time for me, that I have been repeating myself, namely, the letter *d'(a)mur*. The letter *d'(a)mur* in so far as, in fact, it constitutes nothing other than a pile (*tas*). A little pile, a *petit a* of habits, not much more. At least this is how I read, translated into Italian, my famous object with which this *petit a* of the letters *d'(a)mur* has only of course the slightest of relationships.

All this does not prevent me saying things which take their air of seriousness from the fact that I am expressing something of the serial. It is a fact, also, that I change the order of the series that is repeated, in other words that is called ordinary. Is that all that is involved in my saying, changing the ordinary order? It is to this that I would like today to contribute an argument. An argument to give meaning to functions that are more purely cardinal. This is what I am trying to do with my Borromean knot. As you know, this distinction between cardinal and ordinal, it... – the step was taken only thanks to set theory, namely, thanks to Cantor. How can this be of use to us as regards the exploration of a new discourse, as you know, this is how I designate the analytic discourse. This discourse announced itself from a decanting of meaning.

What does decanting (*décantage*) mean on this occasion? It is properly – and this is why the metaphor of decanting can be sustained here – it is properly about the condensation of what, in terms of meaning, is concentrated by this discourse from the fact that meaning – the meaning of words – are only a garb (*appareil*) for what we will call if you don't mind nothing more than sexual coitus. This is what is new in analytic discourse. And this indeed is what must be said, if indeed it is what, from this discourse is necessary, it is only necessary in this – and that is why I inflect in this way the meaning of *necessary* – that its characteristic, in this discourse, is that this discourse does not cease to write it.

Is it true for all that? It is true with the sort of truth that establishes this discourse, namely, a truth of the middle (*moyen, cf previous seminar*), if in fact some of you remember the way in which the last (79) time, and precisely concerning love, I distinguished through what is involved in the Borromean knot, the function of the middle as such. The middle precisely, is what only makes a knot because there is an order. Namely, that, to take these ‘ones’ that the rings of string constitute, let us say quite simply, there is only one of the three which, when cut liberates the two others. This is what you see in a chain of three, with three ordinary links, there is only one of the three that frees the two others. The distinction between this chain, this chain which tangibly, it seems, is of the order of the Symbolic: a subject, a verb and whatever you wish, a complement; a 2, 3, can, having this order, this order that there is something which acts as middle, and this is the very thing that is called, with the ambiguity of this word, the verb – one could begin with the complement and finish with the subject – but it is the verb that acts as middle.

And in this way it can be glimpsed, at the limit, that language for its part is not made of words; for it is the link by which the middle establishes this unity between the first and the last which only has to be broken for the meaning to disappear; this indeed is what shows that language is not made of words, and how what is called – for it is this and nothing more that is called a proposition – a proposition is at least a relative effacing – I am saying that: ‘at least relative’, to facilitate your access to things – it is the effacing of the meaning of words. Which is not true of the tongue, *lalangue* as a jingle, you know that I write it in one word, *lalangue* if it, is made up of meaning, namely, how, through the ambiguity of each word, it lends itself, it lends itself to this function that meaning trickles down in it. It does not trickle down in your sayings. Certainly not. Nor in mine either. This indeed is why, this indeed is why meaning is not reached so easily. And this trickling down of which I speak, how imagine it? Make no mistake.

How imagine it if it is a trickling that little cups finally bring to a halt? For the tongue is that. And this is even the meaning to give to what ceases to be written. It would be the very meaning of words, which in this case is suspended. This is how the mode of the possible emerges from it. That when all is said and done, something which has been said ceases to be written, this indeed is what shows that at the limit everything is possible with words, precisely on this condition that they no longer have a meaning.

And the very thing that I am aiming at this year, is that you should not (80) confuse words with letters, since it is only letters that found the necessary, as impossible, in an articulation which is that of logic. If my way of situating the modes is correct, namely, that what does not cease to be written, the necessary – what does not cease to be written, the necessary – is the very thing that necessitates the encounter with the impossible, namely, what does not cease not to be written, which can only be tackled by letters. This indeed is what only allows us to tackle by some saying the structure that I designated as the Borromean knot; that is why, the last time, love was a good test for the precariousness of these modes. This love is brought into existence which is indeed the result of its very meaning, by the impossible of the sexual bond with the object, the object whatever may be its origin, the object of this impossibility. It requires as I might say, this root of the impossible. And this is what I said by articulating this principle: that love is courtly love.

It is obvious that the *(a)musant* in it, if I may express myself thus, is the love of the neighbour in so far as it is sustained by emptying love of its sexual meaning. It is in ceasing to write the sexual meaning of the thing, that one makes it, as is tangible, that one makes it possible. Namely, in so far, it must indeed be said, as one ceases to write it. Once the thing, love, has happened it is obvious that it is starting from there that it imagines itself necessary. This indeed is the meaning of

the love letter, which does not cease to be written but only in so far as it preserves its meaning, namely, not for long.

This is how there intervenes the function of the Real. Love thus proves to be contingent in its origin, and at the same time there is proved the contingency of the truth with regard to the Real. For these modes are veritable and even definable in fact by our pinpointing of writing. They quarter, as I might say, the verification of love, and in a way that by one of its faces, it is certain, founds what is called wisdom. Except for the fact that wisdom cannot in any way be what results from these considerations on love. Wisdom only exists from elsewhere. For in love it is of no use.

For my knot, described as Borromean, and the fact that I strive to make my saying equal to what it comprises, if what it knots together as I state, is properly the Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real, this only stems from the fact that it commands what I state only by the fact (81) that I tie them with the Borromean knot, that each one of the three is only produced from a consistency which is the same for the three. Namely, that from the angle that I take them this year in my saying, it is only writing that distinguishes them. Which here is tautology, if all three are not written, I have just said that they are the same, it is only writing that makes them three. What must be clearly articulated, is that in this writing of the very knot – because reflect carefully, this knot is only some strokes written on a board – it is in this writing itself that there resides the happening of my saying. My saying in so far as this year I could pinpoint it by carrying out what we could call *édupation*, if in fact it is by putting the stress on the fact that the non dupes err, which does not prevent this from not meaning that any old dupery does not err, but that it is by yielding to this dupery of a writing in so far as it is correct, that there can be correctly situated the different themes of what emerges, emerges as meaning, precisely from analytic discourse.

At this point I should right away get on with it right away, if something did not tell me that you are already so... groggy, I would say, groggy from this saying, that I must first of all make a filter, which is a mode of writing specified by mathematics at the very source of topology, a filter from which words rediscover their meaning, I mean the way in which they function in the sexual order, which order, it is patent, is only the source of an ordinary. In other words to justify, not them, the terms of this order, but this order of them (*d'eux*) except for the fact that you are going to see it – because this is what today I have to say not knowing who will follow me – this knot has a quite different function, quite different than founding this order, whatever order in which you could enchain the Symbolic, the Imaginary and the Real. What we must find, is not the diversity of their consistency, it is this consistency itself, namely, what one cannot say, this consistency itself in so far as it no longer diversifies them but only that it knots them. To emancipate you then, since I presume not unreasonably that I have stunned (*sonné*) you, I must *raie-sonne* with you. Namely, I must try again.

The Imaginary is distinguished, is distinguished in meaning from the fact that it is imagined, as someone might say – if in fact they say it among you – you must all the same look at it more closely, to say then that it is not self-evident, and for this reason which perhaps you may (82) be lacking: that it is not the privilege of the Imaginary. For the Symbolic, what else am I doing except trying to get you to imagine it? Allow me to believe that I am getting there. As regards the Real, well, that's ok, that is what is at stake this year, it is a matter of seeing what Real there is, precisely, in this Borromean knot. And this is why I began, began in my second articulation before you, in my second seminar as this is called, I began by saying that there is no initiation. There is no initiation. I mean that there is only the veil of meaning, there is only meaning in what is operculated, as I might say, by a cloud: *nuptiae* is only articulated when all is said and done from

*nubes*. This is what veils the light which is all there is in the way *nuptiae*, the rites of marriage, sustain their metaphor.

There is nothing other behind except what one must hold onto, with the support of the semblance, certainly, in so far as this semblance is similar (*semblable*) to the articulation of what can only be said in the form of a stated truth.

Namely, as necessary, that is to say incessant, unveiling. The articulation is the knot in so far as the light does not illuminate it, that there is no enlightenment, much more: that it rejects all light into the Imaginary. And what I state, what I am aiming at this year, is precisely to tell you that the Imaginary, because it is itself of the order of the veil, is not for all that darkened by it. Consistency is of a different order to the obvious. It is constructed from something of which I think that by supporting it with rings of string, there will get across something of what I am telling you: that it is much more a hollowing out.

The circle, for its part, lends to intuition, it radiates. It is not a matter of obscuring it. It is what makes *the One*. It is a matter of receiving the effect of the knot. To receive the effect as from its Real, namely, that it is not *One*. The Real of the Borromean knot, is to hold together only by, I do not dare to say 'being', it is not three: it forms a plait. It forms a plait, and it is here that there must be seen how what I put forward earlier, namely, that the order is not essential in it, is here the important point.

You must clearly sense that it is by ranking them in threes, *qua* cardinal number – I beg your pardon for the aridity of what I have to say to you today – this, which is proper to the three, implies no ordination. No matter how it seems to you, namely, that 1, 2, 3, begins with 1 – no matter how it appears to you, it is not possible to (83) properly order 1, 2, 3 on this simple condition that it is repeated,

and this is what happens in the Borromean knot. But it is not simply because of the Borromean knot, it is because of the cardinal numbers 1, 2, 3 whether they are knotted or not.

What does that mean, what I have just said?

It is that in threes, cardinal, one can only – on this single condition that there are not two of the same in succession – one can only manage to write them by finding all the orders such that they can, can be cogitated by a combinatorial.

Write on the board 1, 2, 3, - 1, 2, 3, nothing prevents you from reading them, on the single condition of taking it in the palindromic order, namely, back to front, from left to right, instead of from right to left, instead of from left to right: 1, 3, 2. This means, starting from the knot, from the Borromean knot, something that I am going to try to put on the board for you – give me a piece of chalk – here is how I simplify the Borromean knot. It will be enough for you, to see that this indeed is what is at stake, to complete it in this way, namely, what is summarised by three central strokes in so far as these are what mark how the knot holds together.

I turn this knot over. What is that going to give us? What is proper to a knot, when it is flattened out, an essential dimension, because the Borromean knot, I think I pointed it out to you when I showed you a little construction in cubes that I brought I no longer know what time, the last time or perhaps the second last time – is made like that: and to avoid the headache of making these little interruptions it should be

noted that it is completed by this, this is what constitutes it, it has in, let us say, the three planes on which my little construction was situated, it has on the three planes, complete symmetry, you see

(84) clearly that here this one is to be put, to make clearly sensed as being underneath the one that cuts it, it is from a flattening out that there comes from the other writing that I gave of the Borromean knot. What is to be said of it from the moment when, having flattened it out, I turn it over? There must be by the simple fact linked to the fact that the writing implies that the ‘over-crossing’ [English], the *croisement supérieur* should be written in this way, namely, that it cuts what is the ‘under-crossing’ the *croisement par en dessous*, what is that going to give if we turn it over? What was not underneath comes on top. Well then, I think that it will not be necessary for me to complete, to complete these three strokes, for you to clearly see that, by turning over the knot, the Borromean knot, what you are going to find when all is said and done, is something which is distinguished by the fact that it is not its mirror image, that you are going to find, of course, as it would be, for example, for the orientation of each of these circles, if you orientate them, I am not going to go into it yet, if you orientate ...any circle whatsoever, if you turn it over, what you have is its mirror image. Far from it, when you turn over the Borromean knot,

(83) you have a...a completely different aspect which in no case represents the mirror image of the first aspect. Far from the direction, the orientation as it is defined, for example very simply, by a watch, make no mistake, the clockwise direction, if you turn over the watch, becomes the inverse direction, namely, the mirror image. On the contrary, Borromean knot remains what it is when it has been turned

over, namely, that the second image, the turned-over image, is exactly in the same direction as the first, namely, laevogyratory. You clearly count on the fact that there can be another direction, namely, this one, which would be *dextro*, namely, the clockwise direction.

Given what I pointed out to you earlier, namely, that the order in the three – and by the fact that precisely, it is enough to invert the direction of 1, 2, 3, to go in the palindromic direction to find in it any order whatsoever, you find here a distinction between the effect of order with what you will allow me to call the effect of the knot, or in other words the effect of nodality. This is why it is appropriate, that it is appropriate for you to remember what I stated first, namely, that it is the pure and simple ternarity of the knot, namely, that the import of this ternarity is only sustained by the fact that we only made them first ...that we only took them from the angle of what does not distinguish (86) them among themselves by any quality that there is no

diversification of the Imaginary with respect to the Symbolic and the Real, that their substance is not diverse, that we do not make qualities of them, that we will simply consider them under the species of this consistency which makes each of them one.

Since I use the word *quality* which is a feminine noun, should I say that their quality is *une*, it would be a good opportunity to set out here around this one what is involved in terms of *one* if we take it as *qualificative*. Does *lalangue*, *lalangue* in so far as it has a meaning, does *lalangue* allow *un* and *une* to be considered equal? Is *une* not a different mode of *un*? It must be said that this would be a rather comic angle to make duality re-enter at the level of the one. *Yad'lun*, I said, but also when I said it that it is that with which there is founded what? Uniquely – it was the meaning of what I put forward at the end of my seminar last year – uniquely the numerable, namely, , and nothing more, namely, what says it is a One, but in so far as saying ‘it is a One’, is to cut it off from any ordination. It is to take it – and this is what only Cantor permits – under its purely cardinal aspect.

Certainly, you will tell me, it can only do it – if in fact you were to say something to me – it can only be done by alienating its unity in the set, as a result of which the elements preserve nothing more of this unity, except that of being open to the fact that one can count them, namely, subjective computation; which does not prevent the objectivity of the one, I will say, only giving rise to a question by the fact that it is surely not without an answer. And this answer is precisely why I state that it is in the three.

What does the 3 make of the 1, if there is no 2? Is it simply because there are 3 of them, is already there? It is certain that if I state that there is no 2, because this would be to inscribe at the same time in the Real the possibility of the relationship as it is founded from the sexual relationship, is it not only through the three and as I wrote it the other time on the board by the difference between one and three that there

proceeds this 2, is it – all of this brings us to asking the question – it was required, for us to take this step, that ceased not to be written? In other words that it is contingency, the happening, of Cantor's saying that alone allows us to have a glimpse of what is involved, not (87) in number, but of what constitutes in its ternarity the relationship of the Symbolic, the Imaginary and the Real. Must we then from the contingency of this saying of Cantor go to the necessary of the fact that this no longer ceases to be written, that it no longer ceases henceforth to be written in order that there should subsist what? Nothing other than a notion of truth.

The truth in effect, up to the present in logic, could only ever consist in contradicting. It is in the dualism of the true and the false. The true only being supposed by knowledge, in so far as knowledge imagines itself – this is its meaning – as the connection between two elements. And it is precisely why it is imaginary if the One, if a One, a third One, does not come to connect it at the cost of making an addition to it. An addition not of the same categorical circle, not of the same order, as I was saying earlier, but coming from nodality.

Well then, since, today, I had to force myself to lead you to there, you will allow me to stay with it, and after all, if there are some people that it discouraged, I do not see for my part any disadvantage, since the only reason that I spoke to you today, was because you were less numerous.

**Seminar 6: Tuesday 15 January 1974**

*Voilà.* Ah! You saw me the last time a little bit overcome by your number. Since it is...that leaves me with some hope that it will reduce. So then I continue.

The trouble with this number is that – I thought about it earlier – I am...I am led, anyway, every time to...to be inclined, anyway, towards the fact that if I am speaking to you, this can only be for the first time. Namely, that it is a notion of order. This notion of order obviously embarrasses me and it is what I try to get out of by showing you something else, namely, that there is nodality.

In order to say it, is that not so, the question is to know what unconscious knowledge – there, inevitably, I see clearly that...I see clearly that I am making a link, namely, that I posit unconscious knowledge. I posit it as what works. And what works can work – there is no kind of grip on work except in a discourse. It is a matter of grounding what is working in the analytic discourse. If there were not this social bond and this social bond in so far as it is founded by a discourse, the work would be ungraspable. Let us say, with the irony that it involves, that in nature, work is not done. So then, it seems indeed, anyway – this moreover is what grounds nature – that the idea we have of it, is that it is the place, it is the place where work is not done. Knowledge, knowledge *qua* unconscious, in so far as it works in us, seems then to imply a supposition. It is a supposition, you will tell me, for which we have no need to force ourselves, since in short, (90) we ourselves are the subject, the *hupokeimenon*, all that means exactly the same thing, namely, that it is supposed that something exists, which is called – that I in fact designated as – the speaking being. Which is a pleonasm, because there is no being except from speaking; if there were not the verb to be, there would be no being at all. Nevertheless, nevertheless, we know well that the word *to exist* has taken on a certain weight. A weight in particular through the quantifier, the quantifier of existence. The quantifier of existence, in

reality, has completely displaced the meaning of this word *ex-sist*, and if I even can write as I have written it: ex hyphen sist, it is precisely there how...how...how there is marked the originality of this quantifier.

Only there you are. The originality only displaces the order, namely, that what ex-sists, is what is supposed to be original. It is starting from existence that we find ourselves questioning again what is involved, what is involved in supposition. A simple displacement, in short. And what I am trying, what I am trying to, what I am trying to do, this year, huh, with my non-dupes, is to see what one must, in short, be a dupe of for all of that to hold together, and for it to hold together in a consistency. And that is why I am introducing this ternary, or more exactly that I notice that by starting, because of having started from this ternary, of the Symbolic the Imaginary and the Real, I ask a question, or more exactly, since for every question, for every question it is from the answer that it started...from the answer which, in maintaining, in maintaining as distinct, the Real, makes us ask the question: where is this knowledge situated, this unconscious knowledge that...which we are worked over by in the analytic discourse. It is quite certain that it is the discourse that makes us stick, the psychoanalytic discourse, that makes us stick to this knowledge in a way that has no precedent, has no precedent in History.

Why after all could we not consider this discourse itself as contingent since it starts from a saying (*un dire*), from a saying that constitutes a happening, the one that I am trying to...that I am trying to prolong before you, and the question of the contingency of this saying, is indeed what we are turning around. If this saying is only contingent, and moreover this is what we have to account for, where is the Real situated? Is the Real never anything but supposed?

(91) In this knot, this knot that I put forward, in this knot, this knot made up of the Symbolic and of the Imaginary in so far as it is simply something that makes three of them, which knots them, it is the Real that is at stake. The Real stems from the fact that they are three. Why is the Real three? It is a question that I ground, that I justify from the fact that there is no sexual relationship. In other words, that I specify, that I specify from something that can be written, as a result of which, as a result of which what is written, is that, for example, there does not exist an  $f$ , an  $f$  such that between  $x$  and  $y$  which here signify the foundation of such and such speaking beings, to be chosen from the male part or the female, this, function which would constitute the relationship, this function of the man with respect to the woman, this function of the woman with respect to the man, there does not exist one that can be written.

This is the thing, the thing that I am putting forward before you, this is what, somewhere – because I repeat myself like everyone else, you are not the only ones who notice it – this is what I already stated under the name of the Freudian thing; it is there in all its length and breadth and of course, it passed completely unnoticed for a simple reason, which is that we remain in this Imaginary. In this Imaginary which is precisely what is put in question by the slightest experience of the analytic discourse, it is that there is nothing more fuzzy than belonging, than belonging to one of two sides: the one that I designate by  $x$  and the other by  $y$ , precisely by the fact, that at the same time I must note that there is no function that links them. So then, it is a matter of knowing how, all the same, it functions, namely, that all the same people fuck within it.

In stating that, I must all the same take off from something which is a... a supposition, a supposition that, there is a subject male or female. This is a supposition that experience quite obviously renders untenable, and which implies that what I am putting forward, that

what I am putting forward as a statement by my stating, by the stating of which I am only the subject inasmuch as I myself am working in the analytic discourse, that I must not put the subject under this  $x$  and under this  $y$ . It must be then that the statement – and already simply by writing it on the board – it must be then that my statement does not imply a subject. If there is something, if there is something that is found written there, it is that there is no question of a subject except in (92) the function, and precisely that what I am writing is that under this function, precisely because it is denied, there is no existence. The *there does not exist*, means that: there is no function. What is at stake, what is at stake, is to prove that if this function has no existence, this is not simply a contingent matter it is a matter of the impossible.

It is a matter of the impossible, and to prove it is no small matter. It is no small matter because the fact is by simply writing, by simply stating, even only in writing, the thing only holds up until there is proof of the contrary, namely, until the moment, until the moment where something contingent denies this saying, and by good luck – as I might say - good luck (*bon heur*), the two words separate, are written  $f(x,y)$ , there is a function which knots the  $x$  and the  $y$ , and that it has ceased not to be written.

For it to have ceased not to be written, it must be possible, and up to a certain point it remains so, since what I am putting forward, is that it has ceased to be written. Why would that not begin again? Not only is it possible, it is possible that one might write  $f(x,y)$  but it is clear that people have not deprived themselves of it. To demonstrate the impossible then, one must take one's foundation elsewhere.

Elsewhere than in these precarious writings since after all, they have ceased, and that from the moment they have ceased, one might believe that it can start up again. This indeed is the relationship between the possible and the contingent.

By basing myself on the knot so that something of the impossible can be demonstrated, what am I doing? I am basing myself – perhaps the question deserves to be raised – on a topology.

Since as regards what is involved in order, well then one can say that it is indeed what, up to the present, has not been lacking, namely, that it is in order to establish order that people support everything that has been able to be put forward about the relationship described as sexual. It is true that as regards this order, people have got their paws in a bit of a tangle in it, and that it is certain that it is not the same, it is not the same order, in any case, that is established, that is established by what analytic discourse puts forward, or appears to put forward, about what concerns the sexual relationship. The order 1, 2, 3, well, there is a 1 that comes first, and it is not by chance – we do not know moreover which comes first – it is not by chance that it is the 1, since the second (93) seconds it and that the third simply results from their addition. This gives a sequence that has been qualified as natural. Which leaves us something to ponder on. Which leaves us something to ponder on all the more because the last time I remarked to you that in writing them in a sequence, the privilege of these first three, in fact it is enough to take them in reverse for every order to be possible. It is enough in effect that there should be 1, 2, 3, or 1, 3, 2, this is what I mean by taking them in reverse, for the six other ways of arranging the 1, 2, 3, to be possible.

The idea of a successor, is that not so, and that, in terms of successor there is only one, only one in the natural sequence of numbers, this is an idea that was only separated out rather late, which is rather curious, because it really seemed it was the most tangible, the most real thing there is about the natural sequence. Why should there not be a multitude of successors? It is not self evident. We have a crowd of examples, that of the tree in particular, of the tree that we encounter everywhere, towards our descendants as towards our predecessors, why should the idea of a successor be inherent to a privileged

sequence of successors being founded on the fact that there is only one of them?

That there are three of them in a particular case, a particular privileged case, is certainly related to the fact that there is something of the *One*. *Yad'lun*, that is how I expressed myself. But it is quite imaginable that the three should not be taken in order. That is not new, huh, the famous triangle that the Greeks profited from – the profit that you know – rests on that, and with, and with that, all the geometry that they extracted from it, and through which for a long time the clear idea took priority over the distinct. The clear and distinct idea, as they say! As a result it was *more geometrico*, that things were proved for centuries and that this was an ideal and still remains one. The link between measure and the phenomenon of the shadow (I underline phenomenon), namely, with the Imaginary, in so far as it presupposes light, established this order that is called harmonic, established, founded, everything that is involved in proportion, a proportion which was the only foundation of measure, and established an order, an order which served to construct a Physics.

It is from there that there started this idea of supposition. Because, by founding things on this Imaginary, there had to be something else behind: a sub-stance, it is the same thing, it is the same word as supposition, subject and everything that follows from it. This whole (94) business was far, as I might say, far too phenomenal. When I testify, when I say that the knot, is what cogitates me, and that my discourse - in so far as it is the analytic discourse – that my discourse testifies to it, it happens that, because I have taken a few more steps than you, that this knot is Borromean, on this occasion, this knot, but it could be a different one. Even if it were a different one, my question, my question of knowing, of knowing how this is related to what distinguishes topology, to what distinguishes topology from the space founded by the Greeks, space in so far as it gave a prime matter to be disengaged from supposition.

What does topology presuppose? Topology only presupposes, only presupposes, as regards what is involved in space a consistency – you know that or you do not know it, in any case, I cannot give you a course in topology, but it is not ruled out that you might consult a mathematical text in which this notion is elaborated, starting from the abandonment of measure as such, namely, whatever may be the relativity of this measure, since moreover it is only produced from homothety, in order to know the time and the height of the sun, we have nothing except the relationship of the shadow with the stick that projects it, and that it is on a triangle that there rests everything about measure. Topology for its part, elaborates a space which only starts from the following, from the definition of neighbourhood, of proximity, it has the same meaning, it is a definition of the neighbour (*proche*), which starts...from an axiom, namely, that everything that forms part of a topological space, if it is to be put in a neighbourhood, implies that there is something else that is in the same neighbourhood. The pure notion of neighbourhood already implies then triplicity, and is not founded, is not founded on anything that unites each of these triple elements, if not that they belong to the same neighbourhood. It is a space that is only supported from the continuity that is deduced from it, because in topology there are no other relationships described as continuous except those founded on the neighbourhood and at the same time imply what I will call – which is not said, stated, formulated as such in topology – what I will call malleability. This is what the mathematicians for their part call continuous distortion. You see that the reference to the continuous is in the word, and joined, stuck, to the word distortion, which, to be more correct is stated as: continuous transformation.

These are also images. But it must be said, they are less well grasped. The fact that I talk about grasping, *Begriff*, *begrifflich* implies a (95) reference to what is well grasped, namely, solid. The supple is less well grasped, if you take it in your hand. The idea, the idea that

grounds topology, mathematically defined, is to tackle what is involved from the fact that it supports, it is topology which, here, supports, it is not a subject that is supposed to it; what topology supports, the idea, is to tackle it without an image, not to suppose to them, not to suppose to these letters, as they ground topology, not to suppose to them anything but the Real. The Real in so far as it does not add... - do you notice that this term is still excessive, since it evokes addition – as it does not add, to what we are able to distinguish as the Imaginary, this suppleness linked to the body, or as Symbolic, the fact of denominating the neighbourhood, the continuity, that it only adds something, the Real, and not from the fact that it is third, but from the fact that all of them make up three. And that this is all the Real they have, nothing more. I mean each and every one. It is the only Real they have. This does not seem much, but it is not nothing.

It is not nothing since, as has been clearly felt from all time, it is precisely on this that the Real was supposed. It is a matter of ousting it from this position of supposition which when all is said and done subordinates it, subordinates it to what one imagines or to what one symbolises. The only Real they have, is that they make up three. Here, three is not a supposition thanks to the fact that we have, thanks to the theory of sets, elaborated the cardinal number as such. What must be seen, what you must support, is the following: it is to put in question, to put in question that it is not a model, which would be of the order of the Imaginary. It is not a model because, because with respect to this three, you are not its subject imagining or symbolising it you are, you are squeezed (*coincés*): you are only – *qua* subjects – you are only the patients of this triplicity.

You are the patients, first of all, because, it is already in the tongue. There is no tongue in which the three is not stated. It is in the tongue, and it is also in the functioning that is called language, namely, the logical structure such that, quite naively, in fact, the first one who

began in that, for example – the first as far as we know, of course – the first as far as we know, namely, Aristotle, in fact, the one whose writings we have precisely, he had to manipulate the thing with little letters, and it cannot be manipulated without there being three of (96) them. Apart from the following, of course, apart from the fact of course that there remained something of the supposition of the Real, and that he did not believe he could support this Real by any other thing than the particular, the particular which he imagines is the individual, while precisely, in situating it in logic as particular, he clearly shows that of the individual, he only had... a quite imaginary notion. The particular is a logical function and that he gave it the individual body as support is very precisely, in short, the sign that he needed a supposition. A saying that supposes nothing, except that the triple is the Real, I said triple, namely, three, not third, it is in this that there consists the saying that I am constrained to put forward through the question of non-relationship, of non-relationship in so far as it specifically touches what is involved in the subjectifying of the sexual. My saying consists in this Real, in this Real which is what the three insists on, insists to the point of being marked in the tongue.

It is not a matter here of a thought, since *qua* thought it is, as I might say, still virginal; and moreover thought, with respect to what is supported by this advancing of the three, of the three as knot, and as nothing else, thought is only what I earlier called what is cogitated, namely, a black dream, the one in which, commonly, you dwell. For if there is something that analytic experience initiates you into, it is that what is closest to lived experience, to lived experience as such, is the nightmare. There is nothing that is more of an obstacle to thought, even to thought that claims to be clear and distinct: learn to read Descartes as a nightmare, that will make you progress a little. How can you even not notice that this guy who says to himself: *I think therefore I am*, is a bad dream?

The happening for its part, the happening is only produced in the order of the Symbolic. There is no happening except the saying. I think that, in the century in which you live, you should all the same be able to see that every day. This flood of information, as I might say, in the midst of which you may be astonished that you still subsist, that you preserve your common sense, namely, that in the last analysis you do not make too much, huh, of what the paper announces every morning. Well, thank God, it runs off you, as they say, like the water off a duck's back... Otherwise, where would you end up? There must indeed all the same be something fallacious, in which alas, the (97) misunderstanding of my saying – I mean the very one that I am giving you here, in so far as I am myself its victim – to which it must then be that a certain saying, the saying about the said, has contributed, for you to be able to believe that in what holds your body together, it is a circulation of information starting from some places or other, first of all from the DNA, as we are told, or from the DN something or other, that it is on this that you are supported, that everything is only, in short ... only a piece of information about which luckily we are warned in fact, that this information only holds up by violating one of the very foundations of that which moreover is built up as energetics, is not all of this also of the order of cogitation? Are we in other words obliged to take account of it when what we have to deal with in politics what we have to deal with, is a type of information whose meaning has no other import than to be imperative, namely, the signifier *One*. It is in order to command us, in other words, so that our noses will follow, that all information, in our epoch, is poured out as such.

In what I state to you then about a certain saying, the important thing is nothing other than the consequences that it may have. Again, in order that it may have its consequences, I must take trouble over it. This saying is only veritable – here I am putting it forward in the more than probable case that you have not noticed it - it is only veritable in so far as it constitutes a limit to the import, to the import of what

interests us in the very first place, in analytic discourse, in that it puts a limit to the import of the truth.

There was formerly like that an... an office boy who cried out after each one of my seminars, cries which were resumed in: "Why does he not tell us the true about the true?"

This character is well known, there was even confided in him the care of a *Vocabulaire*...I did not say the true about the true, for the reason that I can only say this about it: it is that the true is what contradicts the false. But on the contrary I can say, I can say but again I had to spend some time on it, for there is a time for everything, I can tell the truth about the truth.

The truth is that it cannot be said, since it can only be half-said. The truth is only founded, as I have just said, on the supposition of the false: it is contradiction. It is only grounded on the no. Its statement is only the denouncing of non-truth. It says nothing except by the half-. Let us say the word it is *mi-métique* [mimetic?]; it is from the (98) Imaginary. And this indeed is why we are forced in my opinion to take this path. It is from the Imaginary in so far as the Imaginary, is the false second, with respect to the Real, in so far as the male, in the speaking being, is not the female, and that he has no other angle from which to posit himself. Only, these are not angles with which we can be satisfied. It has got to the point that one can say that the unconscious is defined by this and by nothing but this: that it knows more than this truth, and that the man is not the woman.

Even Aristotle did not object to that! First of all how could he, huh? To say *no man is a woman* would have been really cheeky, especially in his time! So then he didn't do it...if he had said *every man is not a woman*...Huh? Well then you see, huh, you see the meaning that takes on: that of an exception; there are some of them who are not. It

is as all that he is not a woman. Here, the of the quantifier, huh, the quantifier of  $x$ , full stop, and  $y$  barred:

Only the annoying thing is that it is not at all true and that it is obvious that it is not true. The only thing that one could write, is that there does not exist an  $x$  of which one can say that it is not true that to be a man is not to be a woman:

All of this, of course, it must be noted in passing, presupposes that the *One* is triple. Namely, that, there is the *One* of which we make the all, namely, what is unified as such, there is the *One* which means any one whatsoever, namely, what I will tell you later, and then there is the unique *One*, which alone grounds the all.

To deny the unique *One*, is the meaning of the bar over the quantifier of existence. As regards any one whatsoever, it must be considered as a pure void. That unconscious knowledge is topological, namely, that it only holds up from the proximity of neighbourhood, not of order, is why I am trying to say, to ground on it that it is nodal. Which is to be expressed by the fact that it is written or is not written. It is written when I write it, when I make the Borromean knot, and when you try at that instant to see how it holds together, namely, that you make of it...that you break one, two others wander off. It is no longer written. And it is here that it is seen that the convergence of the nodal and the modal is initiated.

(99) So then this unconscious knowledge is not supported by the fact that it insists, but by the traces that this insistence leaves. Not of the truth, but of its repetition in so far as it is *qua* truth that it is modulated. Here I must introduce what grounds neighbourhood as such. Neighbourhood as such is founded on the notion of open. Topology immediately plays this card. It is on sets as open that it is founded. And this indeed is why it tackles, it tackles from the correct

angle the fact that the class does not close. Namely, that it accepts the paradox, the paradox which is only a paradox because of predicative logic, namely, that if logic simply renounced being, namely, if propositional logic were purely and simply crossed out, there would be no problem, the problem, if there is one, the problem designated as paradox, being simply this: that the class Man is not a man. All the paradoxes come down to that.

What does that mean, except that at the limit what we can designate as Man is an open set, which is obvious?

So then let us clearly see that the truth has a limit on one side, and that is why it is half saying. But on the other side it is limitless, it is open. And that indeed is why unconscious knowledge can inhabit it, because unconscious knowledge is an open set.

You see, you see, I am flaunting it, huh, that love plagues me. You too, of course. But not like me! Yeah...that is even why, a parenthesis, your number makes me uncomfortable: for some time, I can no longer identify you to a woman. That pisses me off.

Good love, I will say then since – you will excuse me, that this plagues me – love is the truth, but only in so far as it is starting from it, starting from a cut, that there begins a different knowledge than propositional knowledge, namely, unconscious knowledge. It is the truth in so far as it cannot be said about the subject, in so far as what is supposed, as what is supposed to be able to be known about the sexual partner. Love is two half-sayings that do not overlap. And this is what gives it its fatal character. It is the irremediable division. I mean why it cannot be remedied (*remédier*), which implies, which implies that the '*médier*' might already be possible. And precisely, it is not only irremediable, but without any mediation. It is the connectiveness between two knowledges in so far as they are irremediably distinct. (100) When that happens, it creates something ...quite privileged.

When the two unconscious knowledges overlap that makes an awful hotchpotch.

And here, I am going to put forward, at the end of this lay (*laius*) this indeed is the proper word – I am going to put forward something which...is like that, anyway, that settles things: masculine knowledge, in the speaking being, is irremediably a track (*une erre*); it is a cut, initiating a closing, precisely, that of the start, this is not its privilege; but it starts in order to close; and it is because it does not get there that it ends up by closing without noticing it. This masculine knowledge, in the speaking being, is the ring of string. It goes around in circles. In it there is something of the *One* at the start, as a stroke that is repeated moreover without being counted, and by turning round in circles it closes, without even knowing there are three of these rings. How can it, how can we suppose that it gets there, to know some little thing about this elementary distinction. Well then, luckily, for that, there is a woman. I already told you that the woman – naturally this is what results from what I already wrote on the board, that the woman does not exist – but a woman ... can happen, when there is a knot, or rather a plait.

It is a curious thing, the plait, is only produced from the fact that it imitates the male speaking being, because it can imagine him, it sees him strangled by these three categories that suffocate him. He is the only one who does not know it up to then. She sees him imaginarily, but it is an imagination of his unity, namely, of what the man identifies himself with. Not of his unity as unconscious knowledge, because unconscious knowledge remains rather open. So then, with this unity, she completes a plait. To make a Borromean knot, as I told you, six gestures are necessary and six gestures thanks to which, thanks to which they are in the same order, except for the fact that precisely, nothing allows them to be recognised. That indeed is why one must make six of them, namely, exhaust the order of permutations two by two, and know in advance that one must not make more,

otherwise one makes mistakes. This indeed is why, in fact, a woman is not at all necessarily trained (*dressée*), so that it is not at all necessarily with the same element that she completes the round when all is said and done. That is even why she remains a woman, among others, because she is defined by the plait that she is capable of, well then, this plait, it is not at all inevitable that she knows that it is at the end of six that it holds together to make a Borromean knot. It is not at all sure that...she knows either that the three has a relationship to the (101) Real, she may lack the distinction, so that it makes a knot, as I might say that is still more knotted, from a unit still more one. In the best case, huh, in the best case, it may be that...it only makes one, of cord, of ring of string when all is said and done. It is enough for you to imagine, is that not so, that the 1, 2, 3 joins up with 2, 3, 1. This will make a still more beautiful (*beau*) knot, if I can express myself thus, is that not so. I mean that everything is continued in everything, and after all, it nonetheless remains a knot, because if you have made a plait, that inevitably gives something, something which knots inevitably at least two, and if two of the strands join up, well then, that will make something that will be knotted or not knotted to the third. That is not where the question lies. The failure, as I might say, of this affair, namely, that by which *the* woman does not exist, is indeed how, the very thing by which she manages to succeed the sexual union. Only this union is the union of one with two, or of each one with each one, each one of these three strands. Sexual union, as I might say, is internal to its threading (*filage*). And this is where she plays her role, by clearly showing what a knot is, it is that by which man for his part succeeds in being three. Namely, because the Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real are only distinguished by being three, quite crudely. Namely, that...without her subject discovering itself, it is starting from this triplicity by which a woman, sometimes, reaches her success by failing it, namely, by which she is satisfied as realising in herself sexual union, it is starting from there that the man begins to grasp, by a little common sense, the idea that a knot is of some use.

I told you that the hysteric makes the man. But it is as formed by the hysteric that man starts from the idea, the first idea, the right one, the one that leaves him a little chance, starts from the idea that he knows nothing. Which is moreover her own case, because she makes the man. She does not know that sexual union only exists in her and by chance. She knows nothing, but the man finds himself due to the backlash noticing this knot. And that gives in him a second result which is quite different in short: it is that by refusing his open knowledge, at the same time, he closes it. He constitutes the correct Borromean knot. He accedes to the fact that the only Real is the 3, he knows, he knows that, he knows that when he speaks to say nothing, but to obtain effects, that he imagines with all his force that these effects are effective, even though they go round in circles, and that he supposes the Real, as is appropriate, since supposing it involves (102) nothing, nothing except preserving his mental health. Namely, to be in conformity with the norm of man, with the norm of man which consists in the fact that he knows that there is something impossible and that, as was said by this charming woman, in fact, that I quoted for you already: 'Nothing is impossible for man, what he cannot do he leaves'. This is what is called mental health. In particular never to write the sexual relationship in itself, except in the lack of his desire, which is nothing but its squeezing in the Borromean knot. This is why I expressed for the first time, some time ago, but there are people that have only noticed it now, I was able to affirm – it is true that it is someone who, who only had notes, anyway to inform himself: 'I ask you to refuse what I offer you because it is not that'. Not what I desire you to accept, nor to arrive at anything whatsoever of this kind, because I am only dealing with this knot itself.

**Seminar 7: Tuesday 12 February 1974**

Good, well then I was hoping...I learned late that we were on what are called the *Mardi gras* holidays, precisely because it is not *Mardi gras*. So then I kept to my...my something or other, my seminar, did I not, I kept to it today because I was hoping that thanks to that I...could perhaps walk among you because you would be less numerous, and in short talk a little with the people who are supposed to be listening to me. True you are a little less numerous which allows me moreover to do so, but anyway, I regret not having had this opportunity to express myself in a more familiar and direct way. There you are.

On this point...on this point I announce to you, a sort of a little booklet like that has just come out (Lacan tosses the booklet into the audience) that I am sending you, there is an inset in it, the inset is as interesting as the booklet, so that it works just as well if it is not the same people who received it. There you are. In principle – in principle, this is supposed to be shown on television – give the inset to someone else...there you are. It is the questions that Jacques-Alain Miller was good enough to ask me in the hope of making...*Télévision*. Naturally, naturally it is a completely unwarranted hope: he asked me the questions he is capable of asking me, starting from the idea that he is doing television. He asked me Kantian questions in particular, as if (104) everyone was a Kantian, but up to a certain point it is true, everyone is Kantian, so that the questions that he asked me simply gave me an opportunity to...an opportunity to answer at what is presumed to be a television level by Jacques-Alain Miller. The result seemed to me all the same worth being remembered since I had it published. There you are.

So now, I am going to talk to you a little, today, trying to remain on the note of what I was hoping, what I was hoping to tell you, was in

short, it was something, let us say, in general, like that, whose aim, anyway, you can give it the title that you wish – whose aim was to tell you, to tell you the difference (this is what appeared to me, this is what appeared to me important in what I am trying to bring you this year) to tell you the difference between the true and the Real.

As you have perhaps noticed, is that not so, I advanced this year with you, I advanced this year with you, as in Courteline's *La paix chez soi*, is that not so, 'the whatsit on one side and the thingamajig on the other', this is all she succeeded in obtaining, the little woman, buying some chandelier or other, anyway which precisely is in two pieces... anyway, contrary to her, my three pieces, namely, the three, the three consistent rings with which the Borromean knot is set up, this is what I am holding in my hand in order to speak to you about the *non-dupes err*. This does not seem to have a direct relationship, an immediate one at least, it is not self-evident. But you know perhaps that one of these... one of these three rings, I denominate, I denominate as Real, the two others being the Imaginary and the Symbolic, and that it is around that that I am trying to get you to sense something.

To get you to sense this, first of all what I already put forward, but this does not inevitably leap to your eye, is that not so, is that, is that precisely I take them simply from this angle that they are three, that they are three and equally consistent. This is a first way of tackling, of tackling what is involved in the Real. It is quite certain that the Real, is what makes them three, without for all that the third being what makes them three. If they are added to one another, it is only to make three. And precisely they are not added together. Because each one of the three is added on just as much, without for all that, without for all that being the third. It is only there because the two others do not constitute a knot without three, if I can express myself thus.

And this is what I would like to say to you: that logic can only be defined by being the science of the Real. The annoying thing, is that it (105) only talks and it only starts from the true. It did not immediately begin like that. There was perhaps, as all the same on the whole, anyway you know, there was someone called Aristotle who opened up the question. Obviously the word true, *to alethes*, is found a lot in this thing that he calls the *Organon* from which logic has since been constructed. He opened up the path, he worked things out as best he could, and the trouble, currently in our business with the *Organon*, is that it cannot appear without half the page being taken up by, let us say, commentaries on the *Organon*, which are not at all properly speaking what one can call commentaries, but a certain way of organifying about the *Organon*, namely, making it edible.

This begins with a certain Alexander, another who was called Simplicius, and then later someone called Pacius, and then after that anything you like, a Peter of Spain, a St Thomas Aquinas, anyway, thanks to that, the thing was, anyway, completely diverted. It has got to the point that it is not at all easy, because despite everything we have a kind of scumble, we have a smattering of these different authors, and we hear them, we hear Aristotle, despite everything, through them.

It would be good if someone, if someone managed to make the effort, in short to read, to read for example, just this, which is the second volume of this *Organon*, to read what is called – what is called, it is because it has been entitled that, it is also a title that came later, it is called *Prior analytics* – managed to read, not of course in a first impression, because someone who might read it in a first impression, simply, will not understand it any more than on the whole, anyway you understand what I am talking about, namely, not a lot... The thing that someone must absolutely manage to do some day, is precisely to get to know well enough the difference between what Aristotle said and what has been transmitted. In fact, those who have sifted out the

thing to see well enough in it the difference by seeing the degree to which Aristotle opened things up and how he opened things up and why not, even the places where he slipped up, where he twisted his ankle, where...it's a whole world! Yeah...

It is quite clear that I am not adding anything on here. Or rather what I am adding on, is designed to propose, anyway at least a task, namely, up to what point, and in Aristotle, it seems to me, one can (106) grasp, the degree to which it is a clearing of the ground (*unfrayage*) and a clearing of the ground that is only illuminated starting from the fact that I stated just now: that logic is properly the science of the Real.

In Aristotle we are not all that encumbered by the true. He does not talk about the true in connection with the predicate. He is stumbling, of course, and because of that people believed that they were obliged to do the same, they speak about man, about animal, about living being (*vivant*), on occasion, and again, here I am saying things that immediately have a vague sense. Man, animal, living being, all dovetail; every animal is living, every man is an animal, as a result of which man is living...yeah...It is quite clear from this start, as what followed moreover clearly showed, that all of that means nothing. In other words, that the true, in the affair, is altogether out of season, displaced.

And what renders it tangible, what renders it tangible, is that it is...these compartments, is that not so, these...that he fills as he can with these, for example these three words that I have just said: man, animal, and living being, is that not so, he can moreover put anything whatsoever, is that not so, the swan, blackness...in fact anything else, the white...the white is found everywhere, we do not know what to do with it; it is made manifest in what I called his clearing of the ground, that these terms, his whole effort, is precisely to be able to do without them. Namely, that he empties them of meaning, and he empties them

of meaning in this way that he replaces them by letters, namely,  $\alpha$ ,  $\beta$ ,  $\gamma$ , for example, instead of my first three terms there that I extracted for you, which are in Aristotle...he says is that not so, it only begins to take shape starting from the moment when he will announce that all  $\beta$ ...all  $\alpha$  is  $\beta$ , all  $\gamma$  is  $\beta$ ...no, all  $\beta$  is  $\gamma$ , as a result of which everything will be  $\gamma$ . In other words, he proceeds by way of being able to qualify two of these terms, those that make the connection, of middle, as a result of which he will be able to establish a relation between these two extremes. That is why at the start, from the start, it can be felt that it is not the true that is at stake. Because it matters little that such an animal should be white or not, everyone knows that there are black swans – *des cygnes c-y-g-n-e-s* - the important thing is that something should be articulated thanks to which there is introduced the Real as such.

It is not for nothing that in the syllogism, there are three terms: the two extremes and the middle. The fact is when all is said and done – I say ‘when all is said and done’ because it is only a first attempt – everything happens as if there was something like a presentiment of (107) the Borromean knot. Namely, that right away he puts his finger from the moment that he tackles the Real, on the fact that there must be three. Obviously these three, he handles completely wrongly, namely, he imagines that they hold together two by two. This is an error. He imagines that they hold together two by two, and even, up to a certain point, one can express the thing by saying that he makes them concentric. Namely, that there is the sphere of the living, for example, then inside the sphere of animals – the sphere or the ring – and then more inside again the sphere of men. This is what is called ‘translating in extension’. Naturally, people have worked on it, because they are just as perplexed by it as by a term that I use a lot, but it is not without a *raison d’être*: people are perplexed by it like a fish with an apple.

To allow you to relax, I am making here a clear parenthesis. It has nothing to do with Aristotle, because Aristotle, had not the slightest idea of it... Me, for example, I am perplexed by your number, exactly like a fish with an apple. And nevertheless there are other moments when I say to you that the relationships of my saying with, in short, this audience precisely that I do not know what to do with, are of the order of the relationships of a man with a woman. I will point out this to you like that, something I found this morning, that leaped to my eyes, that... well then, that it is already in *Genesis*. What *Genesis* indicates to us by Eve's offer, is nothing other than this: that man – here there is a vacillation at that moment, it is the woman, but as I told you, the woman does not exist, is that not so, but just like Aristotle, hesitates a little, I do not see why *Genesis*, even though inspired, should have done any less, and that this offer of the apple is very exactly what I am saying, namely, that there is no relationship between the man and the woman, which is incarnated very manifestly by the fact that, as I underlined, the woman does not exist, the woman is not not-all, and from that the result is that man with a woman is as perplexed about her as a fish with an apple, which normalises our relationships, and which allows me to assimilate them to something of which it would be a lot to say to say that it is love, because in truth, I do not experience the slightest feeling of love for you. And no doubt it is reciprocal, as I stated: in what is involved in love, feelings are always reciprocal. That's a parenthesis, let us come back to Aristotle.

(108) Aristotle what? Shows clearly that the true, is not at all what is in operation. Thanks to the fact that he clears the ground, that he opens up the business of his science that I am calling the Real, of the Real, namely, of the three, at the same time he demonstrates that he only gets to the three by opening things up by means of writing, namely, that from the first steps in the syllogism, it is because he empties these terms of all meaning by transforming them, by transforming them into letters, namely, into things which of

themselves mean nothing, this is how he takes the first steps in what I called the science of the Real.

What is logic thus conceived, caught hold of by that end, what is logic doing in analytic discourse?

The reason why you are, in short, as I complain, so numerous hearing me, is in the measure that what I am conveying is what is emitted by analytic discourse. In analytic discourse things proceed in a different way and that is why – and that is why you are there – in so far as here I am drawing it out; what constitutes the body of what I am saying, is something quite different to what, up to the present, logic has been founded on, namely, the said (*des dits*). The said that is manipulated. Aristotle does it, but as I have just told you, the characteristic of his step forward is to empty this said of its meaning. And it is in this way that he gives us an idea of the dimension of the Real. There is no way to trace the paths of logic, except by passing through writing. This is what Aristotle demonstrates from his first steps, and this is the way the written shows itself to be of a different dimension to the saying.

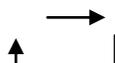
On the contrary what holds you, what excites you, and what will no doubt excite you more and more, is that the true saying is something quite different. The true saying, is as I might say the groove, this is what defines it, the groove along which there passes what... what it must indeed supply for the absence, for the impossibility of writing, of writing as such the sexual relationship. If the Real is indeed what I am saying, namely, what is only opened up by writing it, it is indeed what justifies my putting forward that the hole, the hole that will ensure, that ensure forever the impossibility of writing the sexual relationship as such, this is what we are reduced to, as regards what it is, this sexual relationship, to realise it all the same.

There are little channels, there are things that weave in and out, there are things that one gets lost in, but where one gets lost in such a way

that this is properly what constitutes what is described as the metaphor of the labyrinth. One never gets to the end of it, but the important (109) thing is not that, it is to show why one never gets to the end of it, namely, to tightly circumscribe what is happening when what is at stake, everything by which we touch the Real, of that which no doubt ensures that the Real. We have, like that, a proper and distinct idea of the Real, the Real is what is determined by the fact that there cannot in any way be written in it the sexual relationship. And it is from this that there results what is involved in the true saying, at least what the practice of the analytic discourse demonstrates, it is that by saying true – namely, stupidities, those that come to us, those that drip out of us like that – one manages to open the path towards something as regards which it is not altogether contingent that sometimes and by error, it ceases not to be written, as I define the contingent, namely, that this leads to establishing between two subjects something which has the air of being written like that: hence the importance I give to what I said about the letter *d'amur*.

This distinction that specifies analytic discourse, which allowed me to discern it among four others that were there because...they really seem, like that, to live, and not only do they seem, but they are infinitely more robust than the analytic discourse which still has everything to do as regards clearing its path. Analytic discourse not only reserves the place of the truth, but it is properly speaking what allows to be said what, as regards the sexual relationship, flows in it, fills the groove. It is very important. It is very important because this completely changes the meaning of this saying true that I have just posited at first as distinct from any science of the Real. It completely changes the meaning because, as I have just said, for once, this groove is not empty: something passes along it.

If some of you remember what I put forward, structured, as the discourse of the master, they can read in it, if they are capable of reading something, they can read in it that the truth of the master, is



nothing other than the subject. For the deaf I recall that the discourse of the master is this: with here two arrows and here two arrows like that, and here nothing at all:  $S_1$        $S_2$

\$      o

(110) What the discourse of the master is based on, is what I have called  $S_1, S$  *index 1*. In other words: the commandment, the imperative. The discourse of the master is there. And for quite a while. Simply because, because the signifier exists. Because  $S_1$  namely, the signifier 1, is nothing other than the fact that the signifier, there are piles of them, but they are all some one or other. And this is all the existence of the One is based on: it is that there is something of the signifier, and that each is not unique, but all alone, which is not quite the same thing.

It is precisely because there are not two...two what? Two speaking beings that can be conjoined, make two, it is precisely for that reason that there are signifiers, namely, that they speak. And what analytic discourse demonstrates, is that what happened as regards the place of those who could be subjects, subjects of something, of the sexual relationship, when at their place there are two signifiers, well then it is that, and it is nothing else, that flows in what I called the groove of the true saying.

For that, it must be that the  $S_2$  has nothing to do with the true saying. In other words: that  $S_2$  is Real. And if you are following me in what I tried to open up, in my first stammerings in this seminar, you will conceive that  $S_2$ , this is what I wrote in my schema of the analytic discourse, that  $S_2$ , namely, knowledge *qua* unconscious, is what flows in the groove of the true saying. What I am in the process of telling you does not mean nothing! It means that it is a Real, there is some knowledge that even if there is no subject who knows it, remains being of the Real. It is a depot. It is a sediment that occurs in

everyone when he begins to tackle this sexual relationship to which of course he will never get, whatever education he is given, because if there is indeed something which will in no way improve the situation, the situation of the relationship, it is indeed everything that you can bullshit them with on the subject of what this relationship might supposedly be.

It will nonetheless remain that it is from quite incidental angles that there will enter for him what makes the three, namely, the Real. Because, of course, thank God, when the speaking being begins, he has not the slightest idea that he is a subject. He counts one and two, whatever you want, but not himself, and as three, he will put into it anything you wish, even what fakes (*maquille*) the two others, namely, himself, the child, as you might say. It is a good pretext for making the Real enter while completely veiling it: the Real is only a (111) child; if it is not the child itself it will be any third whatsoever, it will be Aunt Yvonne, in fact, is that not so, or anybody else... Grandfather whatshisname: once it makes up three, anything is acceptable in order not to notice that what is at stake is only the three as Real. As a result of which there are things which, through Aunt Yvonne or Grandfather whatshisname or by the child himself, namely, his pathos, namely, that he is relegated, nobody understands anything about it, and for good reason. There is nothing to understand.

There will all the same be something that will be imprinted, namely, not three, because the three is always veiled from some side, the three steals away, the three is the support, there will be  $S_2, S$  index 2, 2 S's, two signifiers S which will be imprinted, and which will give along the path of pure chance, namely, of that which, above all, was missing in the relationships with those who were there to preside over what is called his education, his formation, he will form this knowledge, this indelible and at the same time absolutely not subjectivised knowledge, he will form for himself this Real knowledge, imprinted there somewhere, imprinted just like in Aristotle, the  $\alpha$ , the  $\beta$  and the  $\gamma$ , and

this is what will be the unconscious and there will be nothing else, huh, as was said by the character going through customs: “That’s food for my goat”. To which the customs man says: “Listen, that’s amazing, because they are braces (*bretelles*), no?” The other answers: him: “Anyway, that’s how it is, and if she didn’t have that, she would have nothing else...” It is the same for unconscious knowledge: as truth, there will be nothing other than these braces.

Unconscious knowledge, this is what must be connected up for the true saying to succeed in some way, namely, to succeed in being understood somewhere to supply for the absence of any relationship between the man and a woman (some, not all). Here is the distance, the difference between the true saying and the science of the Real. That is why that as regards dealing with the unconscious, we are much closer to it by manipulating logic than anything else, because it is of the same order. It is of the order of the written, as I pointed out to you; moreover the great opener up of analytic discourse, Freud himself, was not able to eliminate it, or when he gives his little schemas, is that not so, in his projects, those by which he tried to understand what the knowledge of the hysteric might well be, well (112) what does he do? He does exactly nothing other than that, namely, these little points and these little arrows, these modes of writing thanks to which he accounts – he believes he accounts – for something which was as old as the world, namely, anamnesis. It is obvious that for a long time anamnesis was considered as a mark, as an impression, it must moreover also be said that this is quite vacillating and insufficient. Here our dear Freud confirms in a way that this indeed is what is at stake, when it is the Real that is at stake, that what is at stake is something that is written, something that is written and that it is a matter of reading, of reading by deciphering it, and what does that mean? That means nothing except this something which, in – as I might say – in reanimating it in the sense of this something, of this something which creates a barrier to every attempt to debouch onto the relationship properly so-called, by reanimating

thanks to this something which is this kind of parasite, of movable part of the body, that analytic discourse designates by the phallus, ensures that what acted as a stopper, which is properly speaking enjoyment, and phallic enjoyment as such, what acted as a stopper thanks to something that discourse manages to obtain, is that not so, namely, to separate it in the Imaginary, to accomplish Symbolic castration, allows something to succeed or to fail, most often to fail, which establishes at least between two subject something which resembles a relationship, something that ceases not to be written for some rare and privileged cases.

I am speaking of course here about what is obtained along the proper path, through analytic discourse, because, it must indeed be said that this concern for the truth is only necessitated in extremely rare cases, those for whom the aid of the analytic discourse which I said is required in the other discourses, is much easier to obtain. In the discourse of the master, indeed why not in the university discourse, huh... In the discourse of the hysteric, huh, a knot becomes a dream... But in the two other good old discourses, the king and the queen, listen, it happens automatically! It is enough to be a king and to be a queen to understand one another. It is even unthinkable that they should not understand one another. Of course, this has nothing to do with the truth of the sexual relationship, but the important thing is not that, huh, it is that it supplies for it.

So then, because in some cases unconscious knowledge is lame – not only is it lame, but it clearly creates an obstacle for the sexual (113) relationship being established. So then, in those cases, one is dealing with the necessity of going by way of the analytic discourse, namely, one has the need to speak true, and especially to suspect a little what bad company speaking true keeps. Namely, that everything that comes to muddy, disturb, good God, the calm and tranquil discourse that we usually have to deal with, which grounds the normal, namely, that what comes to muddy these perfectly well

established discourses, never brings out anything except cases, cases where there is a need, in short of a psychoanalysis, namely, the cases of truth.

This does not make me reduce them to being unworthy, which is what I am telling you: the fact that they are not normal – is because they have with the truth a kind of... a kind, like that, of kinship, which stems from the fact that they are in the connection where it does not work for a single Real, namely, what is involved in the relationship described as sexual.

Let it be well understood then – I am making here, like that, some remarks which seem useful to make to you so that you do not make errors – let it be well understood then that the analytic discourse does not at all consist in making what is not working out, what is not working out re-enter normal discourse, huh, two of which I have designated for you. This is not at all what is involved. It is not at all a matter of making them enter into it. It is simply to note that the discourse which only proceeds by the true saying, is precisely what, what does not work. As has always been demonstrated, it is enough for someone to make an effort, to say true, for it to upset everyone. I am simply restoring things here to their context.

What I simply want to point out to you is that in constituting this break, this break between the true saying and the science of the Real, in reconstituting it for what its worth, in reconstituting it at the very place where it is situated, I am not fixing here, very far from it, any *system of the world*. On the contrary. For a system of the world to exist, there is only one means, is that not so, it is to make suppositions in it. The fact is that ... a discourse like that of Aristotle (who was surely not an idiot, nor even a sod) is full of hard edges, I mean stimulation. What is stupefying is that there is no text where what is called supposition is clearer.

This distinction that I have articulated for you today, between the true saying and the science of the Real, I called it that, I called it as best I could: the true saying, is there, this is what I am trying to do, the (114) science of the Real, is this something which is logic, and which, also holds up, is that not so, which holds up for those who know, of course, how to locate themselves in it. The distinction is somewhere, I could show you where, somewhere in the *Prior analytics*, huh: 1–37, there, yeah...37...no it's at...if you take your reference from the manuscripts, is that not so, it is towards the 7<sup>th</sup> line of the page of the manuscripts of what is numbered as 49a. Good, the 37 is the division of translation. It is a matter of different kinds of attribution, of expressions...No that's not it, it's further on...Ah!

*There must also be brought into operation the exchange of...it's further on, is it not, it's at 49b, there must also be brought into operation the exchange of terms of an identical value, words for words, expressions for expressions, word and expression one for the other, and always prefer a word to an expression in order to facilitate in this way the presentation of terms*

He seems to be only talking about his own little affair. But it is when he gives an example...

*For example, there is no difference between saying...*

And then in connection with this he says something true: but, if I may say so it is indeed a risk, you are going to see what he says about the true,

*...the object of supposition is not the genus of the object of opinion and to say the object of opinion is not identical with a certain object of supposition (for the meaning is the same in the two judgements), instead of the expression that has been stated, it would be better to posit as terms...*

By blocking them...and this is what he calls *hupolepton*, the object of the supposition and the object of opinion *doxaston*, *dokaston*.

(I beg your pardon, I'm tired...)

What is the object of opinion?

Well then the object of opinion is what works. Opinion is just as true as something else. True opinion, it is precisely about this that Plato racks his brain in *Meno*. The object of opinion is what ensures that one does not notice that...(until it falls on your head, naturally), that there is no sexual relationship. The object of supposition is not identical, he says on this occasion. Namely, that everything that he talks about in the *Prior analytics*, is something which makes us understand how much, when one is in the order of the Real, one must make suppositions.

In the order of the Real we are all the time forced to suppose. We are forced to suppose, in fact those crazy things: spirit, matter too, sometimes, and even some other things of the same kind, is that not so, which are luckily a little bit closer to us, but which are nonetheless suppositional. Here I am trying to proceed along a path where I am not making suppositions, where I do not suspect anything of being suspect. Since supposition, has that aspect. Yes.....in Aristotle, he called that *hupokeimenon* sometimes, but there, in that case it is something that can only be translated into Latin by *suspicabile*, it is *to hupolepton*, it is the suspect (*la soupçonnable*).

Of course, the suspect is very respectable, like the rest, is that not so, this is what we must suspect as being Real, and that takes us very far, that leads to all sorts of constructions. The important thing would perhaps be to remain with simply what the science of the Real allows there to be affirmed, namely, that the kernel of all of that is above all logic, namely, what has never succeeded in advancing by a step, by a quarter of a step, by the tip of its nose, huh, except by writing. Which is already something.

Good, I told you that, and then I made you my Borromean knot, you must really try to imagine that this Borromean knot here, is as I might say the only one which... which is presented decently, as I might say.

It is presented decently because it has the place to be deployed but that does not prevent it easily being the object of all sorts of deviations. You will note in it for example, that it is very easy to find in it, for example the three planes of reference of Cartesian co-ordinates. And this indeed is what is fallacious about it. Because the Cartesian co-ordinates, are all the same something quite different, they are something which by the very fact that they imply the surface as existent, is that not so, are at the source of all sorts, of all sorts of fallacious images: the *more geometrico* which sufficed throughout the centuries to guarantee many things a supposedly demonstrative character, comes entirely from that.

(116) The fact that, the fact that the fallacious character of the surface, is that not so, is demonstrated by the fact that when you try to join it

up with this apparatus here, you obtain, what constitutes the – for some time, anyway, I think for you – the siglum of what is involved in the Borromean knot, namely, the joining at which the three rings are knotted together. And where they are knotted, in short, in a way which is properly speaking concise, namely, the one, the way, which allows it for example to be seen that that is how it is squeezed, in fact, huh. And there you are: that is how you must conceive that the... that the knots are connected up to define this something which is a

completely different definition of the point: namely, the point where the three rings are squeezed together.

Yes, this is not quite what I had foreseen, in fact, telling you today, but since after all I felt like improvising, I allowed myself to be led, like that, to tell you other things. This has a sequel, of course, it will have a sequel the next time, I would like all the same to point out to you that there are points in the *Prior analytics*, for example, among others – there are others, there are points of logic, there are points of the *Organon* – where we see all of a sudden that Aristotle himself, (117) who knew bloody well what he was doing, does not fail to stumble. I mean without letting out what, when all is said and done worries him [me?] like everyone else.

There is a thing somewhere, I must find that for you, I am going to find it for you right away, at...at page 68 still the page number of the manuscript... There is something unbelievable. I note – I spoke to you earlier about...about ‘all A is B’, ‘all B is  $\gamma$ ’ and about what is deduced from it that ‘all A is  $\gamma$ ’. He questions himself apparently about what results from that, by inverting the conclusion, namely, for example to say that ‘all  $\gamma$  is  $\alpha$ ’. He shows its overwhelming consequences, namely, that the conclusion must be put at a different place, namely, at the place of a major or of a minor in order for it to culminate properly speaking at a conclusion that is the one that inverts one of the premises. Good. All that seems to be unimportant and nevertheless it certainly is not unimportant, because it is on this occasion that there begins to emerge something else, namely, the qualifications that are applied to every kind of being.

I must tell you that I spared you something which is the degree to which, the degree to which the use of the term *huparchein*, ‘to belong to’, creates a problem. Because in his definition of the universal, it is completely beyond question to give a univocal sense to this ‘to belong to’. It is impossible to know in a univocal fashion if the subject belongs to the predicate or if the predicate belongs to the subject. It depends on the passages. It cannot be, of course, that someone as vigilant as Aristotle must have been, did not notice that.

In any case in this chapter, this small little chapter which is extremely instructive, one sees by progression – and by this progression which consists in that, from well defined universal beings, it passes on to all beings – it is very singular that it is in connection with that, that there emerges, that there emerges like an irruption, the following passage:

*If then (textually) every lover, in virtue of his love, prefers A (it is not prefers to, huh, it is the written A), to know that the beloved is disposed to grant him his favours (that is described as *suneinai*, to go together) without for all that granting them to him (which we image by the  $\gamma$ , it is then non-*suneinai*, to call it by its name: he does not sleep with him) rather than see the beloved accord him his favours (which is imaged by  $\Delta$ )...*

(118) It's marvellous.

So then,  $\Delta$  what have we said, that, that the...what?...ah! yes!

*It is then  $\gamma$  not to grant them to him, rather than to see...etc. Good.*

Good, so then it is obvious that  $\alpha$  namely, to be disposed, which stands in Aristotle for loving him, is that not so – it is obvious that the object of love A, is to be loved, is to be disposed to grant his favours to him, this is what, in Aristotle, is perfectly well designated in this

text (I would ask you to consult it), is described as *phileisthai*. Good, to love, is then *philein*.

What is at stake for him is to demonstrate the following: after this passage concerning the whole conversion, and quite especially the conversion of predicates which concerns every being – what is at stake is that if one starts from that, is that not so, that the conjunction of this A with this B, namely, to be loved by the partner – a partner who does not grant you his favours – if one posits that this is preferable to the contrary combination, is that not so, namely, that he grants his favours without for all that loving you, he demonstrates that, if one posits this – it is the object of his demonstration – there results from that at the end love, A, is something, if one posits it here, is that not so, the result is, what seems in effect inevitable to be admitted, that the *suneinai* is worth less than the *kharixesthai* namely, this good disposition which testifies to being loved. The emergence, in this place, and in a way that is all the more problematic in that it is absolutely characteristic of love as homosexual, is a quite striking thing, concerning, as I might say the eruption in the middle of what I defined as being articulated as the science of the Real, as the eruption (119) at a certain point, a point which, I repeat is at 68b to which I would ask you to refer in the *Prior analytics*, a thing which is truly the irruption of the true, and of the true which is precisely a true to which there is only, when all is said and done, the approach, since the problem we are dealing with is precisely that of a love which, when all is said and done, is of concern only by the mediation of enjoyment, of the *suneinai* that is at stake, namely, a perfectly localised homologous, homogeneous, enjoyment, in fact, the one that ensures that when all is said and done, if there is, in effect, something that allows the non-existence of the sexual relationship as such, it is very precisely that the

*homoios* is assuredly something like a step in it no doubt, but a step, in a way, that confirms, that supports the non-existence of the relationship [or: that the non-existence of the relationship confirms, supports].

And what I would like to conclude on is the following, is this not so, that in so far as it is around this *x* which is called the phallus that there continues to turn – to turn only because it is at the same time its cause and its mask – the non-existence of the sexual relationship, I am announcing, if I can say the theme of my next seminar; as regards man – and first of all when I say man, I write it with a capital L (*L'homme*) namely, that there is an all-man – for man, love, I mean, what is hooked onto, what is situated in the category of the Imaginary, for man, love goes without saying. Love goes without saying because his enjoyment is enough for him, and that is moreover very exactly why he understands nothing about it.

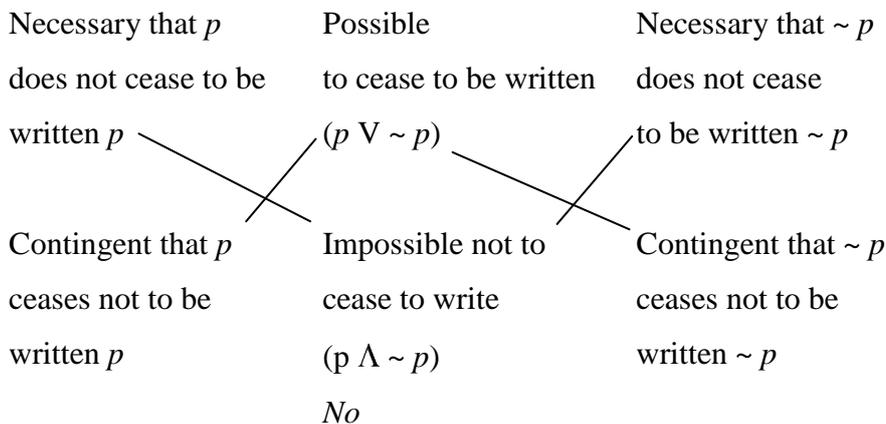
But for *a* woman, things must be taken from a different angle, is that not so. If for a man it goes without saying because enjoyment covers everything, including precisely that there is no problem concerning what is involved in love, the enjoyment of the woman – and it is on this that I will end today – the enjoyment of the woman for her part, does not go without saying, namely, without the saying of the truth.

**Seminar 8: Wednesday 19 February 1974**

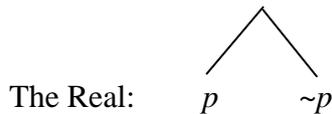
So, my dear Rondepierre, I pinched it from you, huh? I pinched it from you. You had ordered it, but I took it. There you are.

So, what I pinched from Rondepierre, is a book by Hintikka called *Models for modalities*. It is a very good read. It is a very good read that is well designed to demonstrate what should not be done. In this respect, it is useful. Good. There you are. Yeah...what time is it?

This Hintikka is a Finn, a logician, it is not because he did what should not be done, that as I have just told you it is not very, very, very, very useful. It is precisely particularly demonstrative. If you read what I have just written on the board:



Does not cease not to be written



Both are logically unverifiable

(122) You see perhaps where that can be placed, you see perhaps what must not be done. Anyway, you will see it better when I will have said a little more about it. Yeah...

On the other hand – since I still have a minute – on the other hand there is a good example, a good example of what one can do. It is another book. It is another book by the same Jaakko, Jacques, that is

how it is pronounced, it appears – Jaakko Hintikka, so then he is called Jacques. Jaakko Hintikka produced another book called *Time and necessity*, subtitled: *A study of the theory of Aristotle's modalities*. It is not bad. It is not bad and...it implies – I have only had it two days – it implies that someone, the Hintikka in question, had anticipated me, had anticipated me long ago, since his book has not simply been written but has been published... – anticipated me long ago in what I was pointing out to you the last time, that Aristotle's *Organon*, is worth reading. Because the least that can be said, is that, is that it, is that it will make you rack your brains, and that what is difficult is indeed to know, with somebody who opens things up (*un frayeur*), as I called it, like Aristotle, is indeed to know why, why...why he chose these terms and not others. There you are. He chose these and not others because...it is not possible when all is said and done; it is not possible, it is not possible to say why if, if I do not begin by articulating what I have to say to you today.

What I did the last time, naturally, is no small thing. Make no mistake about it! Naturally it went unnoticed, I imagine, by more than one of you, but anyway there were some who realised how important it was. Good. So then, if I am not going astray, and I do not seem to, how does the game that guides me, play out (*joue le jeu*)?

That makes a verb, huh: *jouljeu*, you *jouljeux*, that continues, that holds up to *il jouljeut* and then afterwards it becomes uncertain. We *jouljouons*, or the verb *jouljouer* does not hold up. That proves that one only *jouljeut*'s in the singular. In the plural, it is doubtful, the *jouljeu* cannot be 'conjugated' in the plural. And the fact that there is no plural does not prevent there being several people all the same in the singular. There are precisely three of them. This is how there is recognised the three of the Real, as I have already...tried to get you to sense: it is three (*trois*), huh, and even *étroit* like *La porte*... So then, what I did the last time shifted something. What? What I am claiming, precisely, is that it does not shift the not-all (*pas-tout*).

(123) This not-all is something else. This is even why I am lucky to be serious...lucky to be serious, because the serious does not squeeze (*serre*) all. It squeezes the series closely. What I put forward, is the fact that there is already a logic. And this is even something that may surprise you. If Aristotle had not begun it, it would not have been there already.

So then, I get that far and I say: it is the knowledge of the Real. I demonstrated this on every occasion, make no mistake. I recognise the three in it. But the three as knot. My beloved structure, huh, my nutty structure proves to be a Borromean knot. Naturally, it is not enough to name it, to call it that; because it is not enough for you to know that it is called a Borromean knot for you to be able to make something of it. Make no mistake, is that not so: it must be made (*faut l'faire*). Here there emerges a little light about what I am doing, because that is what I started from, I am going to tell the truth. That already proves that it is not enough to say it to be in it, in the true. And I put forward right away, is that not so, one of the pivotal points of what I intend to advance into today, in what I am doing here, as an analyst, since that is where I am speaking from: I do not discover the truth, I invent it. To which I add that it is that, knowledge.

Because the funny thing, huh, it is really amusing: no one has ever asked what knowledge was! Ah! Me neither. Except the first day when like that, held by the arm, in fact, in this thesis, in this thesis that between ourselves, huh – where is François Wahl? I don't know but anyway what matter, he is there perhaps, he is perhaps not there, but anyway, if he is there I point out that I promised one day publicly, like that, yielding to a, a tender pressure, that I would re-publish this thesis. I said it, this was enough for them, for *Seuil*. In order to publish it...naturally they never stopped snapping at my heels at the start, when I brought out the *Ecrits*, so that I would re-publish, this thesis. I said at that time that I did not want to, I have changed my mind, but now they are not in a hurry. In short, after all, what matter,

I promised, but if it does not happen, huh, it is obviously not my fault. Anyway, that is all the same how I was nibbled by something, by something which made me slide like that gently...towards Freud. It was something which had here and now, the closest relationship with the question, indeed, that I am formulating today.

It is curious – it may appear striking, is that not so, that it was like (124) that, in connection with psychosis, is that not so, that I had, that I had slid towards the question of...that it required Freud in fact, for me to truly ask it, it is: what is...what is knowledge?

Knowledge seems to discover, to reveal as they say, *aletheia*, my beloved. I show you to the world. Completely naked. I unveil you. The world is not able for it (*n'en peut*), but of course! Because it is what is at stake: when I show her, this truth, my beloved, it is what I am showing. If I said that logic is the science of the Real, this has obviously a relationship, a very close relationship with the fact that science can be conscience-less. Because precisely, this is hardly ever said, huh, that logic is the science of the Real. That this is hardly ever said, is already a sign, huh, it is a sign that it is not taken to be true...What is curious is that, for want of saying it, people are not in a position to say anything worthwhile whatsoever about what logic is. It is demonstrated in class, but when it is announced, there, at the start, open any book whatsoever of logic, you will see the hesitations. It is even quite curious. It is certainly moreover why...why Aristotle did not at all call his *Organon*, 'Logic', and he got into the thing...The astonishing thing is that he called it *Organon*.

In any case, conscience-less science then, there is someone who said one day – he was called Rabelais, like that he was someone particularly astute, and it is enough to read what he wrote to perceive it. To write what Rabelais wrote, that is why I say: it must be made/done (*il faut le faire*). 'Science without conscience', he said, 'is but the ruin of the soul'. Well then, it is true. Only it is to be taken

not as the priests take it, namely, that it works havoc in this soul which as everyone knows does not exist, but that it brings the soul down to earth (*ça fout l'âme par terre*)! No doubt you do not see that, that I am saying that it brings the soul down to earth, namely, that it renders it completely useless, is exactly the same thing as I have just said to you in saying to you that to reveal the truth to the world, is to reveal the world to itself. That means that there is no more a world than there is a soul. And that consequently, in fact, every time you start from...from the state of the world, as they say, to highlight the truth in it, you put your foot in it! Because the world, well then, if it is already enough to affirm it, is a hypothesis that sweeps away all the rest. (125) Including the soul. And that is clearly seen in reading Aristotle; *On the soul*. Just like Hintikka, I strongly advise you to read it.

If there is knowledge, if the question can be asked of what knowledge is, well it is quite natural, of course, that I was held, because the patient in my thesis, *le cas Aimée*, well she knew, simply she confirms, she confirms what you will comprehend I started from. She was inventing, of course that is not enough to assure, to confirm that knowledge is invented, because as they say, she was talking nonsense...Only, that is how the suspicion about it came to me. Of course, I did not know it! This indeed is why a further step is required in logic, and one must note that knowledge, contrary to what epistemic logic puts forward, which starts from the following: about the hypothesis, it is even on this that there rests the clean sweep that it constitutes, it is to see what this will give if you write it, that is how they write it, there, the knowledge of  $a$ , small  $a$  – it is not so badly chosen, this little  $a$ , anyway, it is by chance if it is the same as mine – the knowledge of small  $a$ , this must obviously be commented on. Here it designates the subject; naturally they do not know that the subject is what the small  $a$  is the cause of, but anyway it is a fact that they write it like that:

$$S(a, \alpha)$$

Epistemic logic starts from the fact that knowledge is inevitably to know the true. You cannot imagine where that leads. To madness....even if it were only this, in fact, which unconscious knowledge disputes, that it is impossible to know anything whatsoever that is supposed to be true as such, without knowing it. I mean knowing that one knows.

From which it results that it is altogether impossible, it is not very difficult to obtain, but anyway there is a very nice mathematician, who breaks with Hintikka, and who in effect gives a very pretty proof – the notes have been communicated to me – that the knowledge which is supposed to be supported by the fact that one does not know that one knows is strictly inconsistent, in fact impossible to state in epistemic logic. Yeah.

You can put your finger here on the fact that knowledge is invented, since this logic is a knowledge. A knowledge like another – and here I would like to get your feet back on the ground a little again, like that – this is simply to remind you, what unconscious knowledge is. It (126) fully deserves the title of knowledge, huh! It must indeed be said, that Freud is uneasy about its relationship to the truth, it, even to the point that it gives him quite a turn when one of his...– they were called patients at that time, the term analysands had not yet been found – when one of his patients brings him a dream that deliberately lies.

The fact is that this is where the break (*faillie*) lies.

There is something in Freud that lends itself to this confusion that was created, when all is said and done, by translating *Trieb* as ‘instinct’. Everyone knows that instinct is...is a knowledge, like that, that is supposedly natural. But there is something all the same which takes a trick, in Freud’s case, which is the death instinct. Naturally, I took a little step further than him. But it is in the wrong direction. He turns

around it. He, he for his part is well aware of it. For that you have to read the famous *Beyond*, yes, *Beyond the pleasure principle*, as it happens. In this *Beyond*, in short...he worries himself about, how something whose module is to remain at a certain threshold; the least possible tension, that is what suits life, as he says. Only he notices in practice that this does not work. So then he thinks that it goes lower than the threshold. Namely, that this life that maintains tension at a certain threshold, starts to slacken all of a sudden, and that beneath the threshold, we see it succumbing, succumbing to the point of rejoining death. That is how when all is said and done, he makes this thing acceptable. Life is, it is something that arose one day God knows why, make no mistake, and then which only asks to go back like all the rest. He confuses the inanimate world with death. It is inanimate, that means that it is supposed to know nothing. That means nothing more for whoever gives to the soul its sensible equivalent. But this fact that it knows nothing, does not prove that it is dead. Why should the inanimate world be, why should it be a dead world? That certainly does not mean very much, but to ask the question has in any case a meaning...

In any case, correlatively to this question of the *Beyond of the pleasure principle*, Freud is at sea in something which is much closer to the question of death, namely, of what it is; he starts, he starts and then he lets the thing drop, and it is very annoying. He starts from the question of the germen and the soma. He attributes it to Weismann. I cannot develop this. This is not quite what Weismann said. The person who started from the separation between the germen and the (127) soma, is a chap who lived a little earlier, called Nussbaum. Moreover, for what you make of it, let us stay with that, it does not have any great importance. What is important, and what Freud touched on, on this occasion, is that there is death only where there is reproduction of the sexual type. That's all.

If we employ Aristotle's term, the *huparkhein* in question, the 'belonging to', and if we employ it in the right way, in the way Aristotle uses it, namely, without knowing from what end to tackle it, we see that sex *huparkhei*, 'belongs to' death, unless it is death that belongs to sex, and we remain there, precisely, with the sleeve by which we caught the thing in our hands, yeah.

Where the break is shown by its consequences, is that it is in this connection that Freud, under the pretext that there is something in the world which shows that life sometimes goes towards death, he marries, he marries to it something that is all the same difficult to, to eliminate from sex, which is enjoyment; and that, making the slip that he would not have made if he had firmly held in his hands the Borromean knot, he designates as masochism the supposed conjunction of this enjoyment, sexual enjoyment, and death. It is a collapse. Yeah.

If there is a place where the clinic, practice, clearly shows us something – and that is why I congratulated, like that, in passing, someone who has since taken the wrong road – if there is something that is quite obvious it is that masochism is a sham (*du chiqué*). It is a knowledge, certainly, a know-how even! But if there is then a knowledge in which we can put our finger on the fact that it is invented, that it is not within everyone's reach, it is indeed there! It must be said that the person in question there that I congratulated in passing, was not a clinician, but he had simply read Sacher-Masoch. If it is here that it can be seen, in short, that masochism is invented, and that it is not within everyone's reach, that it is a way of establishing a relationship where there is not the least one involved, between enjoyment and death, it is quite clearly manifested by the fact that, all the same, huh, one only puts the tip of one's little finger into it, huh, one does not let oneself be sucked like that into the machine. Good.

So then this is what all the same, allows there to be envisaged the import of what I am stating. The fact is that knowledge, knowledge where we grasp it for the first time, like that, in a way that can be handled; can be handled because, because it is not we who know – it (128) is not we who know, as one of my pupils says, and calling it non-knowledge, poor chap! He fancies that he does not know! What a funny business...But we all know, because all of us invent something to fill up the hole in the Real. Where there is no sexual relationship this gives a '*troumatisme*'. One invents. Naturally one invents what one can. When one is not very smart, one invents masochism. Sacher-Masoch was a sod. You should see the fire tongs, anyway is that not so, the person who wanted to play the game, like that, to answer him, the fire tongs with which she dealt with him, this Sacher-Masoch! She did not know what to make of him. Only *Le Figaro* expressed itself, huh, which says it all! Anyway let us leave Sacher-Masoch! There are knowledges that are more intelligently invented. And this indeed is why I say that the Real, not simply where there is a hole, is invented, but that it is not unthinkable that it is through this hole that we might advance into everything that we invent about the Real, which is not nothing because it is clear that there is a place where the Real works. It is when we bring it in as three, this bastard thing, because it is sure that this connotation '3' for the Real is difficult to manipulate logically..

All that we know is that 'one' connotes enjoyment very well, and that 'zero' means there is none, what is missing, and that if zero and one make two, this does not render any less hypothetical the conjunction between the enjoyment of one side with the enjoyment of the other. Yeah.

Not only does it not make it more sure, but it spoils it. In a world that is neither made nor to be made, a totally enigmatic world, once one tries to bring in this something which is supposed to be modelled on logic, and on which there is supposed to be grounded that in the

species described as human *one is either man or woman*. This is very especially what experience rises up against – and I do not need to go far, someone reported to me, no later than a few hours ago, her encounter with a taxi driver – they're all over the place, huh, make no mistake – as regards whom not only was it impossible for the person who was speaking to say whether it was a man or a woman, but that she had even asked and he was not able to answer her. When I say that you find that everywhere, huh, all the same, it is no small thing! And it is even from there that Freud starts.

(129) He starts, like that, as a commentary. Experience is not enough for him because he has to hook on more or less everywhere, to science, huh, from the moment that there is nothing, that there is nothing that more resembles a masculine body than a feminine body, if one is able to look at a certain level, at the level of tissue, huh. That does not prevent an egg from not being a spermatozoon, that it is here that the sex thing is to be found. It is quite superfluous, huh, to point out that as regards the body, in short, it can be ambiguous as in the case of the taxi driver earlier. It is quite superfluous. Because you see clearly that what determines it is not a knowledge, it is a saying (*undire*). It is only a knowledge because it is a logically inscribable saying. It is the one that I wrote for you, in clear letters, make no mistake with my:

Namely, the exception around which there pivots the fact that it is in the measure that this exception carries a consequence for all of those who believe that they have, that they have what? What we do not even dare to call the prick, we call it the phallus, and this is what remains to be determined.

While on the other side it is about the saying, the formal saying, even though the saying of a non-existent person x. Namely, that it is only for every other that the function is denied, that negation, let us say, to illustrate, is left, I am not all the same going to say to God,

because that pisses us off, this business, this sticking of the Other onto God. But all the same, for anyone who realises this sort of universality that there is no negation of the function  $\forall$ , and it is the only form of universality of the saying of a woman, whoever she may be. It nevertheless remains – I think that you remember all the same what I wrote on the board, and that I am not going to be required to rewrite here – it nevertheless remains that in this set, it is not every saying that formulates the function  $\forall$ . In other words, that what must be substituted for my little bar that I put over the inverted A, the sign of the universal quantifier, the little bar by which I inscribe the not-all, what must be substituted, is the sign of the denumerable, namely,  $\aleph_0$ , aleph zero.

What opposes the one of the all of man – and there is only one of them, as everyone knows, the proof is that it is designated by the definite article – what opposes the ‘all’ of man, here, is, is, it must be said, ‘the’ women, in so far as there is no way to get to the end of them, except by enumerating them. I cannot say all (*toutes*) because what is proper to the denumerable, is precisely that one never gets to the end of it. And if I give you this reference point, it is because this – this must be of use to you for something, it must illustrate what I said the last time about the true saying. The true saying is what comes to grief, is what comes to grief on this: that for, in an untenable *either-or* which would be that everything that is not man is woman and inversely, what decides, what clears the way, is nothing other than this saying, this saying which is engulfed in what is involved in the hole by which there is lacking to the Real what could be inscribed about the sexual relationship. So then, so then, what is involved in knowledge?

Naturally, I have not managed at this time, namely, 1.20, or something like that...24, I have not managed at this hour, to tell you even a quarter of what I should get into your guts, because that is the function of the saying. If I do not say it to you it is not enough for me to write

it, but I am all the same going to give you a little sample of what can be written. Because without this reflection on writing, without what ensures that the saying comes to be written, there is no way for me to make you sense the dimension in which unconscious knowledge subsists. And what you must do as a supplementary step, is to notice that if I make you sensitive to it by telling you that the unconscious does not discover anything, because there is nothing to discover, there is nothing to discover in the Real, since here there is a hole. If the unconscious, here, invents, it is all the more precious for you to notice that in logic it is the same thing, namely, that if Aristotle had not invented it, the first clearing of the way, namely, to make the saying go into this grinder of being thanks to which he makes syllogisms – naturally syllogisms were made before him, simply people did not know that they were syllogisms. In order to notice it, it must be invented: to see where the hole is, the edge of the Real must be seen.

And since we are already far gone, and I have not managed to say a quarter of it for you – it will have to be ‘too bad’, it will ornament, (131) in short, what will come subsequently – I must all the same make you sense the import of a certain way in which I open up modal logic.

The best part about it, huh, is that naturally, that as regards constructing, as regards inventing – and you can see there all the intuitionist echoes you wish, if indeed you know what that is. One day I translated the necessary for you, huh, by *what does not cease to be written*. Good. You should know, there is a trace in Aristotle, that propositional logic, namely, that something is true or false, what is marked as zero or one, according to the case, there is a little trace, there is a spot where Aristotle goes astray – I will show you that whenever you like – into the *peri hermeneias*, as it happens, *On interpretation*, for those who do not hinder it: there is a spot where it is fused, that propositional logic is just as modal as the others. It is true that, if it is true that this is only situated where I am telling you,

namely, where contradiction is only when all is said and done an artifice, a deputising artifice, but which for all that remains no less true, the true playing here the role of something from which one starts in order to invent the other modes. Namely, that ‘necessary that:  $p$ ’ whatever truth it may be, can only be expressed by this ‘does not cease to be written’. Everyone sees between this fact, this fact that something does not cease to be written – you should understand by this that it is repeated, that it is always the same symptom, what always falls into the same fold. You see clearly that between the ‘does not cease to be written:  $p$ ’ and the ‘does not cease to be written:  $non-p$ ’ we are here in the artefact that is testified to precisely, and which bears witness at the same time to this gap concerning the truth and that the order of the possible is as Aristotle indicates, connected to the necessary. What ceases to be written is  $p$  or  $non-p$ . In this sense the possible bears witness to the break of the truth. Except for the fact that there is nothing to be drawn from it. There is nothing to be drawn from it and Aristotle himself testifies to it. He testifies there to his confusion at every instant between the possible and the contingent. What is written here my V towards the bottom:  $\Lambda$  - because after all, what ceases to be written can in short cease not to be written, namely, come to light as the truth of the business... It can happen that I love a woman like any one of you – these are the sort of adventures into which you may slip – this however does not give any assurance about the sexual identity of the person that I love any more than of mine. Only there is something that, among all these contingencies, may well testify to the presence of the Real. And this is indeed what only (132) advances from the saying inasmuch as it is supported by the principle of contradiction. Which of course, naturally, is not the usual everyday saying. Not only do you ceaselessly contradict yourselves in the current everyday saying, namely, that you do not pay any attention to this principle of contradiction, but it is truly only logic that raises it to the dignity of a principle, and allows you, not at all of course to

assure any Real, but to find your bearings in what it might be when you have invented it.

And this indeed is why what I marked about the impossible, namely, what separates, but otherwise than is done by the possible, it is not an *either-or*, it is a *both-and*. In other words, that it should be at the same time  $p$  and  $non-p$  is impossible, it is very precisely what you reject in the principle of contradiction. It is nevertheless the Real since it is from there that I am starting, namely, that for every knowledge there must be invention, that this is what happens in every encounter, in every first encounter with the sexual relationship.

The condition for logic to pass into the Real, and this is why it is invented, and that logic is the most beautiful recourse of what is involved in unconscious knowledge. Namely, of that by which we steer ourselves into the doldrums. What logic has managed to lucubrate, is not to remain with this: that one must choose between  $p$  and  $non-p$ , and that by travelling along the vein of the principle of contradiction, we will manage to get out of it as regards knowledge. What is important, what constitutes the Real, is that through logic, something happens, which demonstrates not that  $p$  and  $non-p$  are both false, but that neither one nor the other can be in any way be logically verified. This is the point, the point of re-departure, the point on which I will take things up again the next time: this impossible on one side and the other, is the Real as logic allows us to define it, and logic allows us to define it only if we are capable of inventing the refutation of both the one and the other.

**Seminar 9: Tuesday 12 March 1974**

[Dr. Lacan arranges four sketches on the board].

Good, so then I am entering into the core of the subject, even though I would of course prefer to talk about something else. To say for example that...that I have no reason to complain, that...that I am giving, in a word, at the same time, I am giving you – I apologise - I am giving you hay to eat. All of that is hay. These are things that cross over one another, and, well, which do not get across. So that I have no reason to complain in this sense that, it is either one thing or the other: either I am given back my hay right away, this is what (134) happens, like that, my hay as such, in short, it is not at all something that cannot be tolerated, it is served up to me again just as, just as I have propounded it. This is what happens with some people. And then there are people, for example that this hay tickles so much as it goes down their throat, that they vomit Claudel, at me, for example. It is because they already had him there...I am annoyed, I am annoyed because the person that I made vomit Claudel telephoned – Gloria naturally – at the moment...to ask her where my seminar was held. Anyway, I am terribly sorry, I hope that she has ended up by finding out. She is perhaps here, in any case if she is not here let her be brought my apologies, because Gloria sent her packing, and it is not at

all what... what I would have wanted: why would she not come to eat hay like everyone else... Good, good, well then the hay in question, anyway, is what you know is on the agenda, is that not so, because of me: the Borromean knot.

I can say that I am spoiled, because I have just been brought an African one. It is the Borromean knot in person is it not. It is... I certify its authenticity for you, because ever since I have been handling it, I have begun to know a bit about it... and I like it a lot, because if there is one thing about which I rack my brain – I even asked about it, in short, it is... it is to know where it comes from. It is called Borromean, it is not at all because there was a chap who one day discovered it. It was of course discovered a long time ago, and what astonishes me is that, is that it has not been used more, indeed, because it was truly, it was truly a way of tackling what I call the three dimensions. They were taken up differently and there must be reasons for that. There must be reasons for that, because I cannot at all see why – anyway, I do not see this at a first approach – I do not see why people would not have tried to squeeze the point, to make the point, if you wish, with it, rather than with things that cut themselves. It is a fact that it did not happen like that. What a fate it would have had if it had happened like that, it is probable that it would have trained us quite differently.

It is not at all that those who are called philosophers, namely, good God, those who try to say something about our... our condition, in a word, to respond to it, it is not at all the case that there is no trace of the fact that this business of knots, precisely, did not interest them, because: for truly, for truly a very long period of time there have been (135) people who find themselves curiously having, as far as we know – by being classed for a long time as far as we know, among the women, anyway, what I call ‘the women’ – and it is in the plural since as you know, in fact, there have been some of them there for a long time – that women reached an understanding of that, by making

tissues, fabrics. And this might have put people on the track. It is very curious that quite the contrary, this rather inspired intimidation. Aristotle indeed talks about it, and it is very curious that he did not take it as an object. Because that would have been a start no worse than any other. What is it, what is it that ensures that knots, knots, are so poorly imagined? This one like that, because it is made in a certain way, holds up. [*Lacan is talking here about the African knot in his hand*]. But it is only when it is flattened out that it is not easy to handle, and it is probably not for nothing indeed, that with these knots it is always things that make a fabric, namely, that form a surface, that people tried to fabricate. It is probably because the flattened out thing, the surface, is very much linked, in fact, to all sorts of uses. Yes. I am going to give you right away a proof of the fact that knots are poorly imagined. Good.

You make a plait. A plait of two. You do not have to do very much with it, it is enough for you to cross over once, then a second time, after two you find your two in order. Knot them now end to end, namely, the same with the same. Well then it is knotted. One could even say it is knotted twice. That makes a double buckle. It holds together, the... what you have joined together, namely, as my faithful Achates put as a title of my [second-] last seminar of last year, he called that 'rings of string (*les ronds de ficelle*). I don't know whether in the text I had called it that or something else, it is probable that I had called it that, but he put it into the title. Good.

Good. Now make a plait of three. Before you rediscover, in the plait of three, the three strands – let us call them strands (*des brins*), today, for example – the three strands in order, you have to perform 6 times the gesture of crossing over the strands, as a result of which, after you have performed this gesture 6 times, you rediscover the three strands in order. And then again you join them. Well then, it is all the same something that is not self-evident, that is not immediately imagined: the fact is if once this knot that I quite simply told you was a

(136) Borromean knot, namely, such as it is in the most simple form, the one there on the left, it is not self-evident that having plaited as in the first case, you can see when all is said and done that this stems from a double knot, it is not self-evident that it is enough for you to break one of these strands for the two others to be free. Because at first sight, they seem to be very well twisted around one another, and one might presume that they hold together just as well as in the plait of two. Well then not at all: you see right away that they separate. It is enough to cut one of the three for the two others to prove not to be knotted. And this remains true no matter what the multiple of six with which you pursue the plait. It is quite certain in effect that, since you have found your three strands in order at the end of six gestures of plaiting, you are also going to find them in order when you make a further six. When you make a further six of them this will give you this Borromean knot here (sketch 3). Namely, that what you see here passing once, inside the two other knots, which you can see are – and that is why I presented them like that – free from one another, you do that, in reality here you see it, twice. And it is still a knot described as Borromean, in that whatever may be the one that you break, the two others will be free. With a tiny little bit of imagination, you can see why. It is because, let us take these two here for example, they are such that, let us say to say things simply, that they do not cut one another, that they are one above the other. You can note that this is true for each couple of two. Good. Here are two ways of making a Borromean knot, but which in reality are only one, namely, that to plait them an indefinite number of times multiple of six, it will still be just as authentic a Borromean knot.

(137) I apologise to those that this may weary, what I am telling you here all the same has an end. I would like simply to point out to you that the count is not complete for all that. You can plait for as long as you like, provided you stick to a multiple of six, as long as you like, the plait in question will always be a Borromean knot. Already just by itself, this seems to open the door to an infinity of Borromean knots.

Well then this infinity, already realised virtually since you can conceive of it, this infinity is not limited to this. Such and such an example of it that I give you on the board in the shape of this way (one cannot say that the instruments are suitable, good...) in the shape of this way of inscribing it, namely, that you see that here [sketch 2], the buckle, as I might say, is double, and that if the Borromean knot is realised in a way that I had first traced out in such a way that it can be clearly seen, by pulling from here that this makes two. You can for that matter draw it by making come back here the buckle which you see has passed under one of the levels of my rings of string, and for each of the two to come back, it will do the circuit, of one of these rings, and will come back here to inscribe itself by crossing underneath the two buckles that are found here to be parallel because of the arrangement, and to give the shape in short of a cross. If you arrange the Borromean knot in this way – I hope I was...I made you imagine what this drawing could be, if you want me to trace it out, I will trace it out for you – it becomes entirely symmetrical, and it has the interest of presenting for us in a different form the materialisation that it can give in this shape of symmetry, precisely (the symmetry, in two words, is it not: the symmetry from another side). Namely, to show us that there is a way of presenting the Borromean knot which, in its very tracing out, imposes on us the emergence of symmetry, namely, of the two.

(138) There was no need for us to go so far to notice it. Namely, that by simply, I would say ‘pulling’ on this part of the ring of string, you can easily imagine for yourself the result that it will give, namely, to fold in two this ring on the right [sketch 1]. Namely, to obtain this result which is presented as follows:

As a result of which, you see that what results from it is the following: namely, that one of these rings pulls the knot folded in two, the buckle folded in two in this direction  $\longrightarrow$  while the other that you have there is presented in a manifest way, perhaps moreover less salient to your eyes, the particular thing which ensures that you cannot unknot these knots of three but it is enough for one of them, any one at all of them to be missing for the two others to be free. It is even one of the clearest ways to image the fact that you can, if you pass your ring inside the knot that I am calling...of the buckle that I am calling ‘the folded buckle’, if you put through another buckle folded in the same way, you can knot an indefinite number of these rings of string, and it is enough for one to be broken, for one to be lacking, for one to be missing, for all the others to be free. As a result of which, as a result of which, what cannot but come to mind, is that, since you have added an indefinite number of times, they are folded knots taken up one into the other, you are not forced to end because you see here functioning, namely, a simple ring of string. You can buckle this complete circle in a way that makes...the thing to be closed by a folded circle.

Namely, that if you had more than three of them, it would be quite easy for you to imagine that to close, it is with one of these folded (130) circles that you would bring about the closure. If you bring about the closure with three, what you obtain is in fact very precisely this result [sketch 2]. Namely, that starting from there you can produce this buckle, namely, that from the handling in threes of the Borromean knot – which as you see can function on a much greater number, from the handling in threes you give rise to this figure of which I told you that it presented the symmetry in the Borromean knot itself. Namely, that it inscribes the two in it.

What must be underlined, before closing what we might call this ‘depicted’ demonstration, that we can describe as depicted, what should be underlined is the following. It is that to each of these rings of string – to call them such in the way that gives the best image – to each of these rings of string, you can give, by a sufficiently regular

manipulation (you must not be surprised at the patience you will require) to each of these three, namely, as much to this ring of string here as to this ring of string there also, you can give exactly the same place which is the one that you see depicted here as the third.

What use do I make of this Borromean knot of three? It is of use to me, as I might say for inventing the rule of a game, in such a way that there can be figured by it the relationship of the Real very properly to what is involved in the Imaginary and the Symbolic. Namely, that the Real, like the Imaginary and the Symbolic, is what makes three of it. That makes three of it, and nothing more.

It is striking that up to now there is no example that there was ever a saying that posited the Real, not as that which is third, because that would be to say too much, but as that which, with the Imaginary and the Symbolic, makes three. That is not all... 'with the Imaginary and the Symbolic makes three'...that is not all! By this presentation what (140) I am trying to hook onto, is a structure such that the Real, by defining it in this way, in other words the Real of before the order, that nodality gives us this something which, by saying that it is before order in no way supposes a first, a second, a third. And as I have just underlined for you, not even a middle with two extremes. For even in the first form of the Borromean knot, the one that I...that I showed you allows there to be depicted as middle term knotting two extremes, this folded circle, that I am showing you here, even in this case any one at all of the three circles can play this role. Namely, that it is in

no way linked, except to make you imagine it, the figure on the left only being there in order to make accessible to you the fact, is that not so that there is a middle in the folded circle; but any one at all of the two others can fulfil the same function, the others then taking the position of extremes.

Where does this get us?

It is to be noted that if we interest ourselves in the 'two' – which is indeed the problem presented by something which is truly, one can say, insistent in what the experience of the analytic discourse brings us, it is not for nothing that it introduces this two par excellence which is the love of one's own image, it is indeed the essence of symmetry

itself. Does this not introduce us, because of this knot, to this consideration that the Imaginary is not what is to be most recommended for finding the rule of the game of love. What experience tells us about it, if it is specifically marked by imaginary representation, since we have come, from the experience itself, to impose it on ourselves, we imagine that love is two. Is it all that (141) proved, other than by imaginary experience? Why would it not be this middle – as moreover is indicated by the fact that it is at the level of this middle that there is produced, this time, two times two, why should it not be this middle – which I have just underlined for you is moreover *gyrovague* (*gyrovague*) namely, vagabond, that it can just as well be fulfilled by any one of the three – why would it not be this middle which, by providing itself in a suspect way with this form, with this form of the image of itself – this middle which would give correctly thought out, namely, through the Real of these connections, the mainspring of these knots?

In other words, is the Borromean knot not the mode in which there is delivered to us the One of the ring of string as such, the fact on the other hand that there are three of these Ones, and that it is by being knotted, only by being knotted, that we get the two. There are many considerations into which I could go astray, as I might say, because they would not yet circumscribe any more closely what I might call the first character of the three.

It is first, not in the sense that it would be the first to be first, because as everyone knows there is another which is described as such, but if the two is so described, it is in a quite singular way, since it is not in any way said, that one can accede to it starting from the One. If only because of the fact that – as has been noted for a long time – to say that one and one gives two, comes from the simple fact of the mark of addition, supposedly a reunion, namely, already the two.

In this sense the two is as one might say something of a vicious order, since it reposes only on its own supposition. To join two ones by a plus is already to install the two.

But for the moment let us stick simply to the following, which is that what the Borromean knot illustrates for us, is that the two is only produced from the junction of the one to the three. Or more exactly, let us say that if you say that – as has been humorously done, that ‘the number two rejoices at being odd’, it is certainly not without reason that it rejoices – it would be wrong to rejoice at being odd, because if it were to rejoice for that reason, it would be a pity for it, it certainly is not so, but that it is engendered by the two odds one and three, is in short what the Borromean knot brings out for us, as I might say.

You should all the same clearly sense the relationship that this (142) lucubration has with our analytic experience. Freud is certainly a genius. He is a genius in that what analytic discourse brought out by his pen, is what I will call primitive terms (*des termes sauvages*). Read *Group psychology and the analysis of the ego* and very specifically the chapter on *Identification*, to grasp the quality of genius there is in the distinction that he formulates between three sorts of identification, namely, those that I denoted, when I highlighted them by the unary trait, by the *Einzigiger Zug*, and the way in which he distinguishes them from love in so far as carried to a term which, undoubtedly, is indeed the one that we must reach, namely, this function of the Other, in so far as it is given by the Father, and on the other hand, the other form, that of the identification described as hysterical, namely, from desire to desire, in so far as he distinguishes all three forms of this identification.

That presented in this way, it is only a knot of riddles, I will say: a further reason to work, namely, to try to give to this a shape that involves a more rigorous algorithm. This algorithm is precisely the one that I am trying to give in the three itself, in so far as this three, as

such, makes a knot. This is obviously the reason, as I might say, the reason to work. But a reason which, as I might say does not fail to damage us, not because the ring of string is already a toric, or indeed a twisted figure, it is much more still from this very singular fact even mathematics has not yet managed to find the algorithm, the most simple algorithm, namely, the one that would allow us, in the presence, certainly of other forms of knot than that of the Borromean knot, to find this something that would deliver to us for the knots in so far as they involve more than one ring of string – because for a single ring of string, being knotted to itself, it has, this algorithm. I could easily, I already did it, put on the board for you the figure of something which would have more or less the same aspect as the central figure, and which would nevertheless only be a single ring of string (I say ‘more or less’ because obviously it would not be the same) – for a single ring of string, it may know what is homomorphous; for several rings of string the algorithm has not been found. This is not nevertheless a reason to abandon a task which engages nothing other than this two which is what is most involved in this figure of love as I have just reminded you.

(143) Love – I hope that already you feel more at ease – love is thrilling (*passionant*). To say that, is to say simply the truth of experience, but to say it like that, seems to be nothing, but is all the same it is all the same to take a step. Because, for whoever has his ears a little open, it is not at all the same thing as to say that it is a passion. First of all there are many cases where love is not a passion. I would even say more. I doubt whether it is ever a passion. I doubt it, my God, because of my experience. Because of my experience – it does not stem only from mine – I mean that my experience in the analytic discourse gives me enough material – for what? For me to be able to allow myself in short to make what I defined the last time as knowledge, namely, to invent it. Which in no way protects you, especially if you are in analysis with me, from supposing that I have this knowledge, as something that I am not supposed to invent. But if

knowledge, even unconscious, is precisely what is invented to supply for something which is only perhaps the mystery of the two, one can see that there is all the same a step taken, in daring to say that if love is thrilling, it is not because it is passive. It is a saying which, as such, implies in itself a rule. Since to say that something is thrilling, well, is to speak about it, as a game, where one is only in short active starting from rules.

There are all the same some people who have noticed that for a long time. As regards everything that is said, there is someone called Wittgenstein, in particular, who distinguished himself at that.

So then, what I am putting forward, is that my formula there, 'love is thrilling', if I put it forward, it is as strictly true. Yes. Strictly true: it is all the same a long time since I since I emitted some reservations about this, namely, that strictly true is never more than half-true, that one can only ever half-say the truth. We will all the same have to manage, have to manage before the end of the year to formulate what that involves, and that I explain it for you later. It is the true – there is here all the same something that analytic experience can put us in contact with - yeah...the true has no other way of being able to be defined than that which in short brings it about that the body goes towards enjoyment, and that in this, what it is forced by, is nothing other than the principle, the principle by which sex is very specifically (144) linked to the death of the body. It is only among sexed beings that the body dies. And this forcing of reproduction, is indeed where the little bit of the true that we can state is of use.

I will even say more. Since it is death that is at stake – that is even why we never have more than the verisimilitude, since this death, the principle of the true, this death in the speaking being in so far as he speaks, is never anything more than a sham – death, truly, even though it confronts us, is not within reach of the true. Death pushes it.

Even though it confronts us, even though we have to deal with death, it only happens with the Beautiful, and there it keeps its rendezvous.

I already demonstrated that at a time, at the time when I was doing the *Ethics of psychoanalysis*, and why does that keep its rendezvous? Because things being in a certain rotating order, it keeps its rendezvous in so far as it glorifies the body. There the principle of enjoyment, which is forced, is the fact of death, and everyone knows...that it is 'in the name of the body' that all of that happens. This indeed is what I formerly illustrated by the tragedy of *Antigone* and which curiously passed into Christian myth – because I do not know whether you have clearly perceived why there took place, this whole story, this story of Christ who speaks of nothing but enjoyment: the lilies of the fields which neither weave nor sew – who traverses, for his part, the myth affirms, traverses death. All of that when all is said and done has no goal, what we see, in a word, being spread out over kilometres of canvas, has no end than the production of glorious bodies about which one may ask what they are going to do throughout eternity, even if they are put in a ring in a circle of a theatre, what indeed they are going to be able to in contemplating something or other. It is all the same curious that it is along this path, this path not of the true, but of the beautiful, that it is along this path that there was manifested for the first time the dogma of the divine Trinity. It must be said that it is a mystery! It is a mystery that... which has been approached, but, but not without a certain number of slippages. If in Aristotle's logic, the other day, I demonstrated for you the irruption of, of some theories or other of love – of some theories or other of love where there are very clearly distinguished love and enjoyment, this is already not bad, huh?

It is already not bad, but that only gives two, it does not at all give a trinity. But what is amusing to read in a treatise *On the Trinity* by a certain Richard de Saint Victor, the same unbelievable irruption, in fact, of the return of, of the return of love, of the Holy Spirit

(145) considered as 'a little friend'. It is something that I would ask you to go to see in the text, in fact – I will get it out for you one day, I did not bring it along here this morning because, because I have enough to say today, but it is worthwhile, it is worthwhile touching that. How is it that it is by the Beautiful, that something which is there...the very truth, and what is more, what is true in the Real, namely, what I am trying to, to articulate this morning, like that, limping along: it is all the same quite curious. Yes.

In what way are the Symbolic, the Imaginary and the Real something which at least have the pretension, in short of going a little further than...than this going round in a circle of enjoyment, of the body and of death. Is there here something from which we might reach, reach better than what only...that what only appears to us as a signal, as a trace, I have just spoken of the True, of the Beautiful, in a way which in a word makes them function for us as middles (*moyens*) – I must deal with what is involved, what is involved in the Good.

In this business of the Borromean knot can the Good be situated somewhere? I tell you right away, there is very little chance, huh: if the True and the Beautiful did not hold up, I do not see how the Good would do any better. The only virtue that...that I see coming out of this questioning – and I am indicating it to you here while, while there is time, because it will no longer be seen – the only virtue, if...if there is no sexual relationship, as I state, is shame (*pudeur*). There you are, this indeed is why I ...I think it was a stroke of genius by the person who put a certain *atterrita* on the cover of my *Télévision*. It is a...it forms part of a theme in which the central personage, the one who gives its meaning to the whole picture, is, is a demon, in a word, who...was perfectly well recognised by the Ancients as being the demon of shame. It is not particularly funny, that is even why that the person, the *atterrita*, opens her arms in a kind of panic. Yes.

So then, the non-dupes err, is perhaps the unashamed (*non-pudes*) err. Which as a result is promising, huh, it is promising because since on the other hand I think that, in fact, we should expect nothing, absolutely no progress from anything...I said that like that, to someone who spat out this hay, very kindly, because it is a person who spat out, truly, strictly only the hay that I had put into her mouth. It is no worse than anything else. It is...it is my hay, is it not...So (146) then, this does not all the same mean that there are not things that change. I am in the process of questioning love. And I begin to read things, like that, which are a little approach, simply, I do not know how it can happen...I will perhaps say more about it...if the result of an extension of the psychoanalytic discourse, since after all I am doing no less than considering it, but as a canker! I mean that it can explode a lot of things, if being well spoken is only governed by shame, well then, obligatorily, it shocks. It shocks but it does not violate shame...

So then let us try to question ourselves about what might happen if one made serious ground from the angle that...love is thrilling, but that this implies that one follows the rule of the game in it. Naturally, for that, it must be known. That is perhaps what is lacking: it is that people have always been here in the most profound ignorance, namely, that they play a game whose rules they do not know. So then if this knowledge must be invented in order for there to be knowledge, it is perhaps for that that analytic discourse may be of use.

Only if it is true that what you win on the one hand you lose on the other, there is surely something that is going to suffer. It is not hard to find: what is going to suffer is enjoyment. Because, in short, enjoyment is not lacking to this thing that is pursued blindly under the name of love! It is there by the shovelful! What is marvellous is that nothing is known about it: but it is probably what is proper to enjoyment, precisely, that nothing can ever be known about it...What is all the same surprising, is that, that there has not been a discourse on

enjoyment. People have spoken about whatever you want, about extended substance, about thinking substance, but the first idea which might come, namely, that if there is something by which the body can be defined, it is not life, since we only see life in bodies which are, after all, what? Things of the order of bacterias, of things which flourish like that, in fact, you quickly get three kilos when you start with a milligram...the fact is ...it is not easy to see what relationship there is between that and our body... But that the very definition of a body is that it is an enjoying substance, how is it that this has never yet been stated by anyone? It is the only thing outside a myth which is really accessible to experience. A body enjoys itself, it enjoys itself (147) well or badly, but it is clear that this enjoyment introduces it into a dialectic in which incontestably there must be other terms for it to hold up, namely, nothing less than this knot which I, which I am serving up to you in a sandwich.

That enjoyment may suffer when love becomes something a little civilised, namely, when people know that it is to be played as a game - in fact it is not sure that this will happen. It is not sure that it will happen, but it might all the same occur to you, as I might say. It might occur to you all the more in that there are little traces, like that. There is all the same a remark that I would really like to make to you, concerning the pertinence of this knot: it is that in love, what bodies tend towards - and there is something piquant that I am going to say to you afterwards - what bodies tend towards, is to knot themselves together. They do not manage to do so, naturally, because...you clearly see...what is extraordinary is that a body never manages to be knotted. There is not even a trace of a knot in the body! If there is something that struck me when I was doing anatomy it was indeed that: I was always expecting to see at least, like that, in a corner, an artery, or a nerve, which...which hoopla, would do that...Nothing! I never saw anything like it, and that is even why anatomy, I should tell you thrilled me (*m'a passioné*) for two years. That really pisses off people who do their medicine as forced labour, like that. Not me.

Naturally, I did not notice right away, that that was why it thrilled me, I noticed it afterwards; you never know until afterwards. And it is absolutely certain that what I was looking for in dissecting, was to find a knot. Yeah.

Which is why this Borromean knot rejoins all the same the why of the fact that, that love, in fact, is not designed to be tackled by the Imaginary. Because the simple fact that when it is working out badly, is that not so, for want of knowing the rule of the game, it articulates the knots of love, huh... It is funny all the same that this remains as a metaphor, that it does not illuminate things, that it does not give the idea that, on the side of this thing whose strange consistency I have, I hope, like that, made you sense a little, and the fact that... that it is surprising in fact that the Real, when all is said and done, is only that, a matter of knots; in short all the rest can be dreamt about. God knows, the dream in fact has a place in the activity of the speaking being.

I am letting myself go a little bit, like that, like that by putting in parentheses – you will pardon me, because you usually pardon me – but it is all the same, it is all the same unbelievable that the power of the dream should have gone so far as to make a desire out of a corporal function, sleep. No one has yet, has ever highlighted that something which is a rhythm – well, manifestly, because it exists among many other beings than speaking beings - the speaking being manages to make into a desire. He manages to pursue his dream as such, and because of that, to desire not to wake up. Naturally there is a moment where it lets go. But that Freud should have been able to go that far is something whose autonomy, originality, no one has really highlighted. Good.

So let us come back to our metaphorical knots. Do you not sense that what I am trying to do, by having recourse to them, is to do something which would not involve any supposition. Because people have spend

their time positing, but never being able to posit except by supposing. Namely, that people posited the body – that was required – and people supposed the soul in it. It would be all the same necessary - this is a thing, there, like that, that I brewed up, because of the level I was at in this *Télévision*, huh, to speak about the soul and the unconscious...the unconscious, might be something quite different to a ‘supposed’, since knowledge (if what I advanced about it the last time is true), it is not at all required, it is not at all required to suppose it: it is a knowledge in the course of construction.

If it happened, if it happened that love were to become a game whose...whose rules one knew, this would perhaps, have many disadvantages with regard to enjoyment. But this would reject it, as I might say, towards its conjoined term. And if this conjoined term is indeed what I am putting forward about the Real, for which, as you see, I am satisfied with this slender little support of the number (I did not say the figure (*chiffre*)), of the number three. If love, becoming a game of which one knows the rules, were to be found one day, since that its function, at the end of the fact that it is one of the One of these threes – if it functioned to conjoin the enjoyment of the Real with the Real of enjoyment, would that not be something to make the game worthwhile?

The enjoyment of the Real has a meaning, huh. If there is somewhere an enjoyment of the Real as such, and if the Real is what I am saying, namely, to begin with the number three – and you know that it is not to the three that I hold huh: adding 1416 to it would still give the same (149) number, huh, for what I use it for, and you could also write 2718, it is a particular Napierian logarithm, that plays the same role – the only people who enjoy this Real, are the mathematicians. So then it would be necessary for the mathematicians to pass under the yoke of the game of love, that they should state something about it to us, that they should do a little more work on the Borromean knot – because I should admit to you, in fact, I am really embarrassed, more than you

can believe; I spend my days making Borromean knots, while it is...there, like that, I knit.

Only there you are, the enjoyment of the Real does not work without the Real of enjoyment. Because for one to be knotted to the other, the other must be knotted to the one. And the Real of enjoyment, is stated. But what meaning can be given to this term: the Real of enjoyment?

This is where I am leaving you for today, with a question mark.

#### **Seminar 10: Tuesday 19 March 1974**

Whatever I may say – I say ‘I’, in quotes, because I sup-pose myself in this saying (*ce dire*), of which nevertheless there is the fact that it is in my voice – whatever I may say is going to give rise to two aspects: a good and a bad. This is precisely because people attribute it to me wanting the Imaginary to be excrement, muck, a bad thing, and that what is supposed to be good is the Symbolic. Here I am again then formulating an ethics. It is the misunderstanding of this that I want to dissipate because this year I am taking you forward from this structure of the knot, in which I put the emphasis on the following: that it is from the three that the Real is introduced into it.

All of this does not stop this knot itself being singular, if what I put forward the last time is true (inform yourselves among mathematicians), namely, that this so simple knot, the algorithm of

this knot of three, namely, what would allow there to be brought to it what the Symbolic culminates in, namely, the demonstration, the articulation in terms of truth, we are reduced to affirming our failure with regard to this algorithm, our failure to establish it, to handle it. Hence the result that at least until further notice, these knots – these knots whose writing I was able to produce, I did it for you the last time, in more than one form – you are reduced, on the basis of this writing, to imagine it in space. It has even got to the point that if what I can make in the simplest form, these projected knots as I am going to show you, stem from the fact that here what I am drawing for you, is something that you can imagine. Namely, how this third buckle, by (152) establishing itself from a trajectory [that of?] these two independent knots, as you see, namely, imagine from these two independent knots, made by this triple knot, that I call the Borromean knot, this thing which thus represented can be imagined by you in space, you can see, just as well as any other way in which I might have written this knot – you can note that it also is a writing: namely, that by effacing one, I can calculate that the two others are free, I mean any one whatsoever. That what constitutes the Imaginary, in the way in which you can sense here that in the space they are held, that this itself is writing, because it is enough for you to efface one of them to be able to spot that the two others are free, on the simple condition that they cut one another in a particular way which for its part is nameable from the following: namely, that the above and the below form two couples, two matching couples from the fact that the two above follow one another, and that the two beneath are not on the same line. I mean that they succeed one another with respect to the two above, that there is a trick (*tour*) which means that, to demonstrate that two of these circles are free, it is enough that there should be two above which follow one another, then two below which come afterwards – I said: on the same line – I probably made an error earlier in saying that they are not on the same line. That was a slip.

The enigma of writing, of writing *qua* flattened out, is there: it is that moreover, by tracing out what is essentially of the order of the imaginable, namely, this projection into space, it is still a writing that I (153) am producing, namely, what can be stated, stated from the simplest algorithm here, namely, a succession.

This squeezing, namely, that by imagining it, you rediscover the idea of the norm, that the norm is imaginable once there is the support of an image, and that here we are always led to privilege one of them, an imagination of what makes a good shape; a curious relapse, why is the shape described as 'good'? Because after all why should it not have been called simply what it is, namely, beautiful? We slip again, with the ancient *kalos kagathos* into this ambiguity, which for its part, proves at this date, at the date when that was how the Greeks expressed themselves, and that when all is said and done, we still find the title of nobility, the antiquity of the family, which, as you know, can always be found by the genealogist, for any imbecile whatsoever and also then for any imbecility whatsoever.

I do not see why I would prevent myself from imagining anything whatsoever, if this imagining is the right one, and what I am putting forward, is that the right one can only be certified by being able to be demonstrated, be demonstrated in the Symbolic, which means entitling it Symbolic, by a certain dislocation of *lalangue*, in so far as it gives access to what? To the unconscious.

The Imaginary remains nonetheless what it is, namely, precious (*d'or*), and this is to be understood as, it sleeps (*il dort*). It sleeps, as I might say, *au naturel*. This in the measure that I do not especially awaken it, on the point of previous ethics. Too careful as I am of this, of this ethics, specifically, from which I would like to break, that precisely of the Good. But how can this be done if to wake up, is, on this occasion, to fall asleep again, if in the Imaginary, there is something that requires the subject to sleep?

Dreaming (*rêver*) does not simply have, in *lalangue*, the *lalangue* that I make use of, this astonishing property of structuring the awakening (*réveil*). It also structures the revolution, and the revolution, if we understand it carefully, is stronger than the dream. Sometimes, it is falling asleep again, but in a cataleptic way. I have to manage to promote, to make there enter for you into your cogitations the fact that the Imaginary is the prevalence given to a need of the body, which is to sleep. It is not that the body, the body of the speaking being, needs more sleep than other animals - without our still being able to know moreover how to give a sign of it - than other animals, who, for their (154) part, function with sleep. The function of sleep, of hypnosis, in the speaking being, only takes on this prevalence of which I spoke to identify it to the Imaginary itself, only takes on this prevalence from the effects of this nodality, of this nodality which only knots, only knots the Symbolic to the Imaginary – but in fact you could put here any other couple of the three – only knots them from the agency, the agency of the three in so far as I make it that of the Real.

If then I wake you up to that whose formula all the same our ancient *kalos kagathos* allows us to date in Aristotle's Sovereign Good; when I did the *Ethics of psychoanalysis*, it was to the *Nicomachean Ethics* that I referred, referred to as a starting point. But I was careful on this point not to wake up, because if I wake people up to the manifest Imaginary of this Sovereign Good, what are they not going to

imagine? Not that there is no Good, which would take them a little bit too far for their own well-being, but that there is no sovereign, as a result of which, the effective sovereign, the one who knows how to use the knot, finds his satisfaction because it is by this, because it is by this that sleep makes itself desired by those, enough by those, for it to encounter among them the complicity of the dream, namely, the desire that it will continue to sleep well. It is appropriate then that every statement should take care precisely in that it *rêve*-olutionises by maintaining the reign of what he wakes up to.

A little parenthesis, since moreover this is not easy to comprehend as a motive of this discourse in which I find myself caught up, due to the fact of being its subject by my experience, the experience described as analytic.

Naturally, there are those who, in order that this experience should not put them up against it, do not expose themselves to it as such, but have all the same a suspicion of something that makes them itch. Those simply afflicted by the itch have not much imagination. When they smell something about the consequences of my discourse, they dig up some biographical feature, for example, the fact that I frequented the Surrealists and that my discourse bears the trace of it. It is all the same curious that I never collaborated with these aforesaid Surrealists. If I had said what I was thinking, namely, that with language, I mean, by making use of it, what they demolished, was the Imaginary, what would have happened! I would perhaps have woken them up. Woken them up with a start to the fact that I would have been found to have well and truly said, the fact is that between the one and the other of the (155) Imaginary and the Symbolic whose existence precisely they did not suspect, they re-established order.

Can I get you to understand that the fate of the speaking being, is that he cannot say, that he cannot even say: 'I slept well', namely, a deep sleep, 'I slept well between this and that time', for the simple reason that he knows nothing about it, his dreams framing this deep sleep

having consisted in the desire to sleep. It is only on the outside, namely, when he is submitted to the observation of an electroencephalogram, for example, that it can be said, that effectively between such and such a time, the sleep was deep, namely, not inhabited by dreams, these dreams that I say are the tissue of the Imaginary, that they are the tissue of the Imaginary in so far as it is by being caught up in the knot, this Real, that his need, his principal need becomes this elective function: the function of sleeping.

Is this passage of the Imaginary through the sieve of the Symbolic enough to give, to state the first, that of the Imaginary, the stamp of 'Good', fit to serve. To serve what? I do not believe I am forcing things in asking this question, because it must indeed be said, no one has ever approached this question without giving rise from some angle to an idea of sovereignty, namely, of subordination. It is true that the Good can only be called sovereign. Do you not sense that here is where there is exposed something like an infirmity – I am appealing to those who, have a wide awake Imaginary, on condition that this does not support among them any hope, because it is altogether understood that I am not saying, for my part, anything of the kind, but that I am not saying the contrary either: namely, that the Good is sovereign. So that in our day my saying operates in the aforesaid Imaginary, certainly, but it is not how it attacks it. It simply says that the Imaginary, is that by which the body ceases to say anything worthwhile by being written differently than: 'I slept from such a time to such a time.'

All this changes nothing in the fact that it makes us itch. The truth makes us itch, even those - without believing in it too much – that I call the rabblement, because, when all is said and done, it is enough for the truth to itch for it to touch the true from some angle. Say anything at all, it will always touch the true. If it does not touch yours, why would it not touch mine? Here is the principle of the analytic discourse, and that is why I said somewhere – and to someone

(156) who, faith, produced a very nice little book on transference, someone called Michel Neyraut – I told him that by beginning as he did by what he called ‘counter-transference’, if by this he means the way in which the truth touches the analyst himself, he is surely on the right path, since after all, this is where the true takes on its primary importance, and that, as I have pointed out for a long time, there is only one transference, that of the analyst, since after all he is the subject supposed to knowledge. He should clearly know what to stick to in this regard, in his relationship to knowledge, the point to which he is ruled by the unconscious structure that separates him, from this knowledge, which separates him from it even though he knows something about it, and I underline, as much by the test that he made of it in his own analysis as by what my saying can convey to him about it.

Does this mean, does this mean that transference is the entry of the truth? It is the entry of something which is the truth, but the truth of which precisely transference is the discovery, the truth of love.

This is worth noting. The knowledge of the unconscious, the knowledge of the unconscious was revealed, was constructed, this indeed is the value of this little book, it is its only value moreover, but this makes it worth buying, the truth of the unconscious, namely, the revelation of the unconscious as knowledge, this revelation of the unconscious was made in such a way that the truth of love, namely, the transference, only irrupted into it. It came secondarily. And people have never clearly known how to bring it back in, except in the form of misunderstanding, of the unexpected thing, the thing we do not know what to do with, except to say that it must be reduced, indeed even liquidated. This remark just by itself justifies a little book knowing how to highlight it, because moreover one must be penetrated by the fact that from experience, from analytic experience, the transference is what it expels, it is what it cannot tolerate without getting very bad stomach pains from it.

If love passes here along this narrow defile of what causes it, and by that fact reveals what is involved in its veritable nature, here there is, is there not here something which makes it worthwhile repeating the question about it? Because it is difficult not to admit that love holds a place, even if up to now we have been reduced, as they say, to paying our respects to it. We discharge our obligations with regard to love, we pay our contribution to it, anyway, we try by every means, to allow it to distance itself, to hold itself satisfied.

How then tackle it? I promised at Rome, to give a lecture some day or other on love and logic. It was indeed in preparing it that I became (157) aware of the enormity, in short, of what my discourse supports. For it appeared to me that there was almost nothing in the past to account for it in the slightest way. That is how I notice that when all is said and done, it is not for nothing that Freud, in what I quoted the last time, namely, what is entitled the *psychology* that is described precisely as being that of *the group* and the *analysis of the ego*, while signalling that there he contrasts (*confronte*) identification and love, and this without the slightest success, to try to make it acceptable that love participates in any way whatsoever in identification.

Simply, it is indicated there that love is concerned with what I isolate under the title of the Name of the Father. It is quite strange. The name of the father to which I made the ironic allusion that you know earlier, namely, that it is supposed to be related to the antiquity of the family, what does that mean? On this what does Oedipus, the aforesaid Oedipus teach us?

Well then, I do not think that this can be tackled head on. That is why, in what I proposed to say to you today, this no doubt in terms of an experience that had tired me out, I would like to show you how this name is minted, this name, this name that, that in few cases, we do not see in the least repressed. It is not enough to bear this name, for the one in whom the Other is incarnated, the Other as such, the Other with a capital O, the one I am saying, by whom the Other is incarnated, is

only incarnated moreover, incarnates the voice, namely, the mother. The mother speaks, the mother through whom the word is transmitted, the mother, it must be clearly said, is reduced, to expressing this name by a no, precisely, the no the father says, which introduces us to the foundation of negation – is it the same negation which creates a circle in a world, which by defining some essence, an essence of a universal nature, in other words what is supported by the all – precisely rejects, rejects what? – outside the all, led by this fact to the fiction of a complement to the all, and makes all men respond: by this fact [...] what is non-man, do you not feel that there is a gap from this non-logic to the nay-saying (*dire-non*)? To the propositional nay-saying, I would say, in order to support it. Namely, what I make function, in my schemas of sexual identification, namely, that not all men can acknowledge themselves in their essence, namely in their phallic enjoyment, to call it by its name, that not all men manage to ground themselves on this exception of something, the father, in so far as propositionally, he says no to this essence. The defile, the defile of (158) the signifier through which there passes this exercise of this something which is love, is very specifically this name of the father, this name of the father which is only no at the level of saying, and which is cashed in on by the voice of the mother in the nay-saying of a certain number of interdictions. This in the case, the fortunate case, the one in which the mother is willing indeed to make some nods of her little head.

There is something whose incidence I would like to designate. Because it is an angle on the moment that we are living through in history. There is a history, even though it is not inevitably the one that we believed. What we are living through is very precisely the following: that curiously, the loss, the loss of what might be supported by the dimension of love, if it is indeed the one not that I am saying, I cannot say it, I cannot say it, for this name of the father, there is substituted a function which is none other than that of naming-to (*nommer-à*). To be named to something is what is highlighted in an

order which is effectively being substituted for the name of the father. Except for the fact that here, the mother all by herself is generally enough to designate its project, to trace it out, to indicate its path.

If I defined the desire of man as being the desire of the Other, it is indeed here that this is designated in experience. And even in the cases where, like that, by chance, in fact, it happens that by an accident she is no longer there, it is all the same she, she, her desire, that designates to her kid this project that is expressed by the naming-to. To be named-to something, is what, for us, at this point of history we are at, is found to be preferred – I mean effectively preferred, to go before – to what is involved in the name of the father.

It is quite strange that here, the social should take on the prevalence of a knot, and which literally makes up the fabric of so many existences, the fact is that it holds this power of naming-to to the point that after all, there is restored an order, an order which is an iron one. What is this trace, this trace designated, as return of the name of the father in the Real, in so far precisely as the name of the father is *verworfen*, foreclosed, rejected, and in this capacity it designates whether this foreclosure which I said is the principle of madness itself, is this naming-to not, is this naming-to not the sign of a catastrophic degeneration?

To explain it, I must give its full meaning to what I designated by the term that I write as ‘ek-sistence’. If something ek-sists with respect to something, it is very precisely because of not being coupled to it, of (159) being thirded (*troisé*), if you will allow me this neologism. The form of the knot, since moreover the knot is nothing other than this form, namely, imaginable, is it not here that the imaginable is designated as not being able to be thought? Thought, namely, put in order, rooted not simply in the impossible, but in the impossible in so far as it is demonstrated as such; nothing is demonstrated by this knot, but simply shown. To show what is meant by ek-sistence, of a ring of string to make myself understood, a ring of string in so far as it is only

on it that there reposes the knot of what otherwise remains mad.  
Explanation having no grip on the inexplicable.

Is it not here that we ought to search in what possesses us, possesses us as subjects, which is nothing other than a desire, and what is more the desire of the Other, a desire by which we are alienated from the start, is it not here that there ought to be brought to bear - namely, in this phenomenon, this apparition to our experience, that as subjects, it is not simply not having any essence, except to be squeezed, *squeezés* in a certain knot, but moreover as subject, supposed subject of what squeezes this knot – as subject it is not simply essence that we lack, namely, being, it is besides that there ek-sists for us everything that constitutes a knot. But to say that all of this ek-sists us does not mean for all that that we exist in it in any way. It is in the knot itself that there resides everything that for us is only when all is said and done pathetic, which Kant rejected as if anticipating our ethics, namely, by the fact that nothing of what we suffer can in any way direct us towards our good. This indeed is something that must be understood some way or other as a prodrome, as a prodrome I dare say, and that is why I once wrote *Kant with Sade*, as a prodrome of what effectively constitutes our passion, namely, that we no longer have any kind, any kind of idea of what might trace out for us the path of the Good.

At the moment that that path peters out, at the moment when Kant made the gesture of this slender recourse, of this tiny link with what Aristotle had established as the order of the world, what are the arguments that he puts forward? To make the dimension of duty sensed, what does he put forward? What he puts forward is supposedly that a lover close to obtaining success in his enjoyment would look twice at it if, in front of the hall door, a gibbet was already erected from which he was going to be hanged; and to oppose to this (160) that of course no one would ever risk such a thing - while it is on the contrary quite obvious that anyone at all is capable of doing it, simply if he wants to. So then what does he oppose to that? It is that

– as if this were a sign of superiority – it is that summoned by the tyrant to defame another subject, anyone would look twice at it before bearing false witness.

To which in my text, *Kant with Sade* – because I wrote very good things, things that no one understood anything about, of course, but that is simply because they are deaf – to which I opposed: but what if to put into the tyrant's hand the one the tyrant wants to get at, not a false but a true testimony sufficed! Which is enough of course to demolish all the systems because the truth, the truth is always for the tyrant. It is always true that one cannot tolerate the tyrant, and as a consequence, the tyrant always has reasons to get at the person he wants. What he needs is a semblance of truth. The angle, the angle from which Kant here makes the split, this angle is not the right one. Hence there results the formula which is separated out simply from these two terms between which Kant brings about the re-entry of practical reason, namely, moral duty, which is that the essence, the essence of what is at stake in the Good, is that the body forces its enjoyment, namely, curbs it and this simply in the name of death, of one's own death or the death of someone else, on this occasion, the one that he will imagine sparing. But once this formula is circumscribed, does not this reduce the Good to its correct import, is it not the case that outside these terms, these terms of which there are made the three, the three of the Real, in so far as the Real itself is three, namely, enjoyment, the body, death, in so far as they are knotted, as they are knotted only, of course, by this unverifiable impasse of sex, it is there indeed that there is conveyed the import (*la porte*) of this newly arrived discourse as regards which it is not for nothing that something should have necessitated it, the analytic discourse whose relay you will allow me to take up again on the 9<sup>th</sup> May, the 9<sup>th</sup> May the second Tuesday and not after that the third, but the fourth, which will not be then the one after Easter, the 16<sup>th</sup> April but that of the 23<sup>rd</sup> .....

The 9<sup>th</sup> April, not May, April!

**Seminar 11: Tuesday 9 April 1974**

Good, today...- what's happening? – today for reasons, like that, of personal choice, I am going to start from a question, a question of course that I ask myself, believing at least that the answer is there – that's an old refrain, as you know – and this question is: what, what has Lacan here present, invented? You know that I put forward this word 'invented', I made it recognised by you, as I might say, apparently at least, by linking it to what necessitates it, namely, knowledge. Knowledge is invented, I said, which the history of science seems to me to testify to rather well. So then, what did I for my part, invent? This does not at all mean that, that I form part of the history of science, since my starting point is different, being that of analytic experience.

What? I will answer, because it is understood that I already have the answer – I will answer, like that, to get things going: the little **o**-object. It is obvious that I cannot add, the little **o**-object, for example. It, it can be touched immediately. It is not among others that I invented the **o**-object, among other things, as some people

imagine. Because the  $\mathbf{o}$ -object is solidary, is solidary at least at the (162) start, with the graph. You know perhaps what it is, I am not even sure, but anyway it is something which has a shape like that, with two things that go across, there, and then in addition, that: I say that, because at the point that we are at it is necessary. From the graph, then, of which it is a determination and specifically at the point at which the question is asked: what is desire, if desire is the desire of the Other? Anyway, that is where it emerged. That does not mean of course, that it is not elsewhere. It is also elsewhere, it is also in the schema called the *schema L* and then it is also in the quadripodes of the discourses to which I believed I should give a place, in fact, some years ago. And then, who knows, perhaps there is a question of it being put at the place of the  $x$  in these already celebrated quantifying formulae that today I will call like that because when I woke up this morning I wrote some notes, that I will call of sexuation. And while I was at it, in taking these notes, the following came to me, something which, of which it is curious anyway that I never hear echoes, is that not so. I obviously, even, even in Rome where I made a little trip, I heard tell of these quantifying formulae, which proves already rather widely diffused. And I was asked questions, namely, whether these quantifying formulae, because there are four of them, might well be situated somewhere in a way that, that would correspond with the formulae of the four discourses. This is...this is not necessarily unfruitful, because what I am evoking, anyway, is that the small  $\mathbf{o}$  comes at the place of the  $x$  in the formulae that I call 'quantifying formulae of sexuation'. Do I need to write them again, it would surely not be useless. I recall that it is those marked by  $\square$  on the left, and that are continued by four other formulae which are like that in a square, good.

Something might have come back to me about it if, of course, it did not require a little bit of trouble; but if there is something that I would like to point out to you, it is that these formulae described as quantifiers of sexuation could be expressed differently, and this would (163) perhaps allow progress to be made. I am going to tell you what is implied by it. It could be put like this: ‘the sexed being is only authorised by him/herself’. It is in this sense that, that there is a choice, I mean that what one limits oneself to, in short, to classify them as male or female, to be officially registered, in short, this, this does not prevent there being a choice. This is something, of course, that everyone knows. He is only authorised by himself – and I would add: ‘and by some others’.

What is the status of these others, on this occasion, if not that it is somewhere, I am not saying in the locus of the Other, it is somewhere that must be clearly situated, known, where my quantifying formulae of sexuation are written. Because I would even say that I am going rather far: if I had not written them, would it be just as true that the sexed being is only authorised by himself?

This appears difficult to dispute, given that people had not waited for me to write these formulae, these quantifying formulae of sexuation in order for there to be, in short, a serious handful of people who are labelled ... as is done, in short, who are labelled with homosexuality. Neither on one side nor on the other. It would then be undeniably true, except for the fact that, a curious thing, in fact, it seems, that even though this has been widespread from all time, that people have spent some time precisely in labelling with these terms that, as chance would have it are wrong, by this term of ‘homosexual’, for example. It is curious that, that I can say they are wrong. In fact, it is altogether wrong as a nomination. Well before, in short, people did not have these terms, in short, this was called, for example - anyway for one side - and the fact that they were distinguished in a serious fashion

even to the extent of giving them a different place on the geographical map is already sufficiently indicative. These were called, for one side, sodomites: *Sumus enim sodomitae*, wrote a prince who, I believe, was himself from the Condé family: *Sumus enim sodomitae igne tantum perituri*. He said that to reassure his companions when they were crossing a river: nothing can happen to us, we are not going to be drowned since we are *igne tantum perituri*, we must perish only in fire, so we are safe. Good.

In the meantime, might it not have come into someone's head in my School that this balances my saying that the analyst is only authorised by himself? That does not mean for all that that he is all alone in (164) deciding it, as I have just pointed out to you, pointed out to you as regards what is involved in the sexed being. I will even say more, indeed, what I wrote in these formulae implies at least that, to make a man, there must at least be written somewhere the quantifying formula that I have just written there, and that there exists – it is a writing – that there exists, this x which says that it is not true, that it is not true, as a foundation for an exception (*comme fondement d'exception*), that it is not true that – namely, that what supports in writing the propositional function in which we can write what is involved in this choice of the sexed being, that it is not true that it holds up, that it always holds up, that even the condition for the choice to be made in a positive way, namely, that there should be something of the man, is that castration should be somewhere.

I am saying then that the analyst is authorised only by himself, which is something, in a word, so crushing, in a word, to think about, that if the analyst is something in the mode of...being named-to, to analysis, as I might say, to analysis in this form which means, well, an associate member, a titular member, some member or Other; everything that I tried like that with which I tried to make people laugh in a little article by marking the stages of what I called the Sufficiencies, the little Slippers, indeed the Blessed, to be named Blessed, is this not

something that in itself might make you laugh a little? This made people laugh, but, but not very much, because at that time I wrote that, it only interested specialists, who for their part, scarcely laughed, of course, because they were in the system.

But this would imply all the same that this formula that I produced in an altogether pivotal *Proposal*, that this formula should receive the few complements, the few complements implied by the fact that if, assuredly one cannot be named to psychoanalysis, that does not mean that just anyone can enter into it like a rhinoceros into a china shop, namely, without taking account of the following. Which is that it must indeed be inscribed, that there must be inscribed what I expect from it being inscribed, because it is not like when I invent, like when I invent what presides over the choice of the sexed being. There, I cannot invent, I cannot invent for a reason that, that a group, that a group is Real. And even if it is a Real that I cannot invent because of this fact that it is a Real that has newly emerged. Because as long as (165) there was not this analytic discourse, there was nothing of the psychoanalyst (*du psychanalyste*). This is why I announced that there is something of the psychoanalyst, of which for example, I, I was the testimony, but that does not mean for all that that there is a psychoanalyst. It is a properly hysterical perspective to say that there is at least one, for example; I am not at all on this slope, not being by nature in the position of the hysteric. I am not Socrates, for example. Where I situate myself in fact, we will eventually see, well, why not, but for today I do not need to say any more about it.

So there are things, there are things at the level of what emerges in terms of Real, in the form of a different functioning, of what? Of what is involved when all is said and done about letters, because letters, what is at stake is letters, this is what I wanted to put forward in my quadripodes. There can be a certain way in which a certain bond is established in a group, there can be something new and which only consists in a certain redistribution of letters. That I can invent.

But the way of pursuing this new arrangement of letters in order to pinpoint in it a discourse, pre-supposes, pre-supposes a sequence, precisely, and why not, as I was asked, asked in Rome, when I was asked the question about what was the link between the four quantifying formulae of sexuation, what was their link with the formula – this is what was at stake – the formula of analytic discourse as I thought I should put it forward at first. To connect them up, this would be to give this development which would be made in a school, in mine, why not, with a little bit of luck, that in a school there would be articulated this function from which the choice of the analyst, the choice of being so, can only depend. Because while only being authorised by himself, he cannot but be authorised also by others. I am reducing myself to this minimum because, precisely, I am waiting for something to be invented, to be invented in the group without slipping into the old rut, the one from which it results that by reason of old habits, against which after all we are so little protected that these are the very ones that form the basis of the discourse described as university, that one is named-to, to a title.

This pushes us, pushes us because I chose to be pushed there – but pushes you at the same time since you listen to me – to try to specify the link there is between the invention of knowledge and what is (166) written. It is quite clear that there is a link. It is a matter, of specifying this link. In other words, to notice, to ask the question about what one can put one's finger on: where is there situated, where is writing situated? This indeed is what I have been trying to give you an indication of for a long time, by substituting, which I did very early, in sub-slipping as I might say, into the statement that I attempted to give about ...the *Function and field of speech and language*. I did not all the same entitle a certain article, like that, a pivotal writing, I did not entitle it *The agency of the signifier in the unconscious*, I entitiled it *The agency of the letter* and it is around letters, as you remember perhaps a bit, in short, like that, in the mist,

that S, S<sub>1</sub>, S<sub>2</sub>, etc. over s, over small s. Anyway, it is all that, all this implying a certain relation that I pinpointed as being that of metaphor, another one of metonymy, it is around that that I made turn a certain number of proposals that can be considered as a forcing, I mean as giving a certain agency not of the letter, but of linguistics. But I would point out to you that linguistics does not proceed any differently than the other sciences, namely, that it only proceeds from the agency of the letter, hence the agency of linguistics, passing by the letter, in short, to propose some remarks to those who practice analysis.

This does not prevent of course, because I believe that with time, well, is that not so, there are those Surrealists, is that not so, that I am pestered with. Anyway, when people want to write articles about me, these Surrealists, I knew one who still survived at that time, Tristan Tzara. I gave the *Agency of the letter* to him and of course, it meant nothing to him. Why? Because this indeed shows what I pointed out to you – you perhaps heard it – at my last seminar. What I pointed out to you, namely, that when all is said and done, with all this row, is that not so, they did not really know what they were at.

But that, that stemmed from the fact that, in short, they were poets, and as Plato pointed out a long time ago, it is not at all inevitable, it is even preferable that the poet does not know what he is doing. This is even, this is even what gives, this is what gives to what he does its primordial value. And before which one can truly, one can truly only bow one's head. I mean that if one can make a certain analogy, anyway a certain homology, let us say – but with for the word homo (167) the approximate meaning that I underlined for you earlier – a certain homology between, between what one has in terms of works, works of art, and what we pick up in analytic experience.

Interpreting art is something that Freud always ruled out, always rejected. What is called, what is called the psychoanalysis of art, well,

is still more to be ruled out than the famous psychology of art which is a delusional notion. With art, we have to learn a lesson (*prendre de la graine*). Learn a lesson, learn a lesson for something else, namely,, for us, to make of it this third which is not yet classified, to make of it this something which, which leans on science on the one hand, which learns a lesson from art on the other. And I will even go further, it can only be done in the expectation of having at the end to fail to find the answer.

What analytic experience testifies for us, is that we are dealing, I would say with untameable truths, with untameable truths that we...that we nevertheless have to bear witness to, as such. Are these the only ones that can allow us to define how, in science, what is involved in knowledge, in unconscious knowledge, how, in science, this may constitute what I will call an edge, namely, that by which science itself, as such, is, for want of a better word, I will say structured. If what I am putting forward to you corresponds to something, I mean that you waited long enough on me before I stated that there was no sexual relationship, that is what this means.

There again I underline that this does not go so far as to say that the little Real that we know, which is reduced to number, that the little Real that we know, if it is so little, this stems from the famous hole, to the fact that in the centre there is this *topos*, that one can only plug; that one can only plug with what? With the Imaginary. But that does not mean for all that that the little **o**-object, belongs to the Imaginary. It is a fact that it can be imagined, it can be imagined in whatever way one can, namely, with what is sucked, with what is shitted, with what constitutes the look, what tames the look, and then, and then the voice. It is I who have added to the list the two last in number, in any case certainly the last one in so far as it is imagined.

But the fact that it is imagined removes nothing from the import of the little **o**-object as *topos*, I mean, as what is *squeezed* to give an image

of it. I have done nothing more to give an image of it which has only one advantage, which is that it is a written image, the one that I gave (168) in the Borromean knot. It is here that the little **o**-object is knotted. There are therefore two faces, here, to the little **o**-object, a face that is as Real as possible, simply by the fact that it is written. You see what I am trying to do, there, I am trying to situate writing for you, and it goes a long way to put it forward, as this edge of the Real, situated on this edge.

In order, because I must, in fact give you different fodder than this abstraction, as you would say, because precisely what is tangible here, is that this is not an abstraction. It is as hard as iron. It is not because a thing is not succulent that it is abstract. It is obviously amusing that I experience here the need, for you, the desire of man being the desire of the Other, that I experience here the need for you to have a little funny interlude, to point out to you that it is amusing, in fact, a thing, a little anecdotal sample that I am going to give you, is that not so. It is rather curious, for example, that knowledge, in so far as it is invented, happens like that, as I am going to tell you. When Galileo noticed, in short, some of his inventions, in fact, which completely upset knowledge about the celestial Real, he took care to note it, in the following form. He sent to some people a certain number of Latin couplets, no more, two lines, in which, through which he could in a way fix the date, and by taking a certain number of letters from three to three, for example, demonstrate that he had invented the thing that was impossible to swallow at his time, that he had already invented at such a date. I mean that it was indisputably inscribed by the very way in which he had made these couplets, whose content moreover does not matter, given that of course, one can in fact write anything whatsoever in this style, this does not matter to anyone, all that interests someone, when one receives a letter from a personage like Galileo, it is not what he wanted to say, it is that one has an autograph. And the way under what, in a way, we will call the apparent stupidity of these two lines, there was inscribed, in short, the date, the date of a

particular thing, the thing that was at stake, namely, about the sky and the principle of the journeyings that it offers to our sight, is this not something that illustrates in a way that is certainly only amusing, but you have many other illustrations of it, since as I did it, I insisted with leaden feet, it is obvious that if logic is what I am saying, the science of the Real, and not something else, if precisely what is proper to logic, and *qua* science of the Real, is precisely to make of the truth (169) only an empty value, namely, exactly nothing at all, something about which you simply write that non-T is F, namely, that it is false, namely, that it is a way of treating the truth that has no kind of relationship with what we commonly call truth. This science of the Real, logic, cleared its way, could only clear its way from the moment when people had been able to sufficiently empty words of their meaning to substitute letters purely and simply for them. The letter is in a way inherent to this passage to the Real. Here it is amusing to be able to say that the writing was there to prove, to prove what, to prove the date of the invention. But in proving the date of the invention, it proves also the invention itself, the invention, is the written, and what we require in a mathematical logic, is very precisely the fact that nothing in the demonstration reposes on anything but a certain way of imposing on oneself a combinatorial perfectly determined by an interplay of letters.

Here I ask the question: is the anagram then, since this is what is at stake in the verses of Galileo, the anagram about which our dear Saussure racked his brains in private, is the anagram not simply here to prove that this is the nature of writing, even when people have not yet the idea of there being anything to prove. Is the anagram at the level that Saussure questioned himself about it, namely, at the level where in verses described as Saturnian, one can rediscover precisely the number of letters required to designate a god without there being anything in the heavens to help us to know whether it was the intention of the poet, to have riddled what he had to write, since the

writing, already functioned, to have riddled it with a certain number of letters that ground the name of a god.

Can we not sense here that even when it is not supported by anything, by nothing to which we can bear witness, we must admit that it is the writing that supports it, that we have here, that we have here a sort of entity of the written. How will we express entity (*entité*), are we going to push it towards the side of being or towards the side of a particular being (*l'étant*), is it *ousia* or is it *on*? I think it would be better to abandon this direction.

And I am proposing something to you which is of interest because it goes in the same direction as what I have previously traced out; as was remarked, like that, by an old sage, at the time when people knew all the same already how to write what was required by language, is that not so, a road that ascends is the same as the one that descends, so (170) then, I could propose to you as a formula of writing, the knowledge supposed subject (*le savoir supposé sujet*). That there is something which attests that such a formula may have its function, it is in any case the best that I can find today to situate for you the function of writing, for this reason and that...to what our question about the entity of writing *ousia* or *on*, introduced us to, to situate the fact that it is defined above all by a certain function, by the place of the edge (*bord*).

There you are. It is quite evident is it not, that as – I underlined it like that, incidentally because I spend my time having it out with philosophers – it is quite evident that it is my kind of materialism. Yeah. I scarcely say it, I scarcely say it because I don't give a damn about materialism. This certain materialism, like that, which is always there, which consists in kissing the ass of matter in the name of the fact that it is supposed to be something more Real than the form, in short, that, of course, has already been cursed. It has been cursed starting from historical materialism which is strictly nothing other

than a resurgence of Bossuet's Providence. Yeah. In any case, this material of the written, in short, of the supposed written, like that, because it is the little new, in short, would deserve to have its dugs pulled a little, in order to come back to our fundamental little **o**-object. Let it be exploited a little, at least for a while, huh.

For this exploitation to become possible is that not so, it is...that means precisely, if you translate modality as I have taught you, that means that it ceases to be written, and not at all the contrary. This must cease to be written for it to prove something. Namely, that it does not cease starting up again. But precisely here is this scansion of which I am trying, of which I am trying to give you an idea. It is a scansion which is curious. Because the pulsation that it implies, namely, what everyone knows, only the possible can be necessary, namely, what I situate by the 'ceasing to be written', is precisely something which does not cease to be repeated, which is here something that we have been clearly able to touch, is that not so, in this function of repetition produced with such genius by Freud.

This is a fundamental thing and I am trying to approach it here for you, to approach it in this sense that this establishes a time two (*un temps deux*). Far from making time linear, this establishes a time two as altogether fundamental. And I would even go as far as to ask the (171) question of those who might be able to say a little bit about it to me, and I would be very amused if someone were to reply to me, on this point. The fact is that in taking a set of dimensions, set not supposing anything cardinal, but let us say a finite set – how determine on this set of dimensions, why not imagine the dimension as I define it, namely, there where the saying is situated, how arrive at formulating the fact that if we start from the idea that the function of two, two dimensions are situated there on one side of the surface, but from 'to cease' and 'to not-cess' as I have just said to you, is there not here something which gives very exactly the import of writing? In Other words, on a set of dimensions, that we will not determine in

advance, how find what acts as surface-function and which at the same time according to my saying would make a time-function? Which is in any case very close, very close to the knot that I am suggesting to you.

I formerly risked producing something called *Logical time*. And it is curious that I put a second time in it, the time to comprehend, the time to comprehend what is there to be comprehended. It is the only thing in this form that I made as refined as possible, it was the only thing that had to be comprehended. The fact is that the time to comprehend does not work if there are not three. Namely, what I called the instant of seeing, then the thing to comprehend, and then the moment to conclude. To conclude, as I believe I sufficiently suggested in this article, to conclude wrongly. Otherwise, if there are not these three, there is nothing to justify what manifests with clarity the two, namely, this scansion that I described, which is that of an arrest, of a ceasing and of a re-departure. Thanks to which it is obvious that these are the only convincing movements, which are valid as proof, is that not so, when the three characters for whom as you know it is a matter of them getting out of prison, as it happens, it is only subsequent to these scansions that they can make them function as proof, namely, do what they are asked, not simply that they should have got out, which is a quite natural movement, but what they are identical to, namely, each one strictly to the two Others. They have the same, the same black or white ring on their backs. They cannot, which is what is asked of them, give an explanation for it unless from the fact that they have all performed the same ballet to get out. That is the only explanation.

It is a way which is altogether, well, altogether charming, is that not so, to explain something which is furthermore quite obvious. The fact is that this does not involve any kind of identity of nature among them, that the illustration, the commentary in the margin that I give of it, namely, that it is like that that people imagine some universality or other. There is no trace of it in this apologue – since we are dealing

with an apologue – there is no trace in this apologue of the slightest relationship between the prisoners since precisely this is what is prohibited to them: namely, to communicate among themselves. They are simply, identifying themselves or distinguishing themselves by having or not having a white disk or a black disc on their backs. I apologise for being so long for people who have never opened the *Ecrits*, there must be many here in this situation, of course. To define then what in a set of dimensions constitutes at once surface and time, this is what I am proposing to you as a follow up, good God, as a follow-up, to what I propose to you about *logical time* in my *Ecrits*. Good. Yeah.

Am I, am I a bad judge when I answer that the little **o**-object was perhaps what I had invented...Perhaps, it is surely, in any case...no one invented it apart from me. Good. But I may be all the same be a bad judge. And that is why it is not unrelated to *ousia* like that, which I used like a rag earlier. The fact is that if my schema of analytic discourse is true, I must become this little **o**-object, this is what I have to make come to pass. It is not the 'I', in my case, namely, when I am in front of you. It is the small **o**. Yes, this place of no one (*personne*) is of course, as the name of person indicates, a place of rank to be held as semblance, is that not so. It is a matter of holding the role of the analyst. And this indeed is why I put forward a certain something, that is what is asked by the question which is always the same: 'Can I be it?' To authorise myself, might just about pass, huh, but to be it is a different matter. It is here that obviously, there is forged what I stated with the verb *désêtre*. I 'un-am' the analyst; the little **o**-object has no being.

I insisted sufficiently, is that not so, I insisted sufficiently at one time on something that psychoanalysts exult in, is that not so, namely, this face, this support, this pathetic aspect of the little **o**-object when it takes on the form of a waste scrap. I insisted a lot on it, one day, I turned up like that at Bordeaux, and I explained to them that

civilisation was a sewer, that there is strictly no other kind of trace of (173) it, and that it is all the same something quite strange, that we should turn our minds to it. Because as far as we know all the other animals that exist do not encumber the earth with their waste, while it is altogether singular that, that everything that man makes, always ends up as waste, is that not so. A single thing which preserves a little dignity, are the ruins, but get out of your shells, all the same, a little bit and you will notice the number of broken-down automobiles that are piled up in places, and you will notice that wherever you put your foot, you put your foot on something that – where people have tried in every possible way to recompress old rubbish in order not to be submerged by it, literally.

Yes...it is a whole business that! It is a whole business of organisation, is that not so. Of imaginary organisation, as one might say. To simulate, to simulate with the crowd, because it is the other face of what I earlier called the choice, the group, simulate with the crowd – and you always have to deal with that when you are assembling a group – to simulate with the crowd something that functions like a body. Yeah. Good. But anyway, this little **o**-object, all the same what is that...or what is the face of what interests you, not when I write it – because I write it as little as I can, I have too much of a sense of my responsibilities for me not to leave this writing its chance, its chance of ceasing, in order that, if it does not cease, it proves itself. But there, there when I am chatting, what interests you, about this little **o** of which I speak? There is something that may indeed come into my head, because it is like all the rest, huh, I invent as regards what is involved in knowledge, but as regards what is involved in the truth, I do not invent: the truth is brought to me, I have whole buckets of it.

And then, there is a chap who came to see me, I cannot say how long ago, and then I would not want him to recognise himself, he came to tell me that what he needed, was my voice! It was not for a vote

(*voix*), huh, it was the voice (*voix*). No, but it is a very serious question, for me, is it the voice – because it is quite obvious that there is something here. It is not a question of timbre, if the little o-object is what I am saying, we must not confuse the phonetic and the phoneme. The voice is defined by something Other than what is inscribed on a disc, and on a magnetic tape the way so many people entertain themselves, it is nothing to do with that. The voice can be strictly the scansion with which I tell you all of that. I am persuaded that there is (174) here a source of your gathering in this enclosure, a gathering that today is decent. There is something, like that, that is linked to...to the time that I spend in saying things, since the little o-object is linked to this dimension of time. It is completely distinct to what is involved in the saying.

The saying, is not the voice. And to be loved, since you love me, of course, to be loved for the one or for the other, is not at all the same, huh. The saying that the little o-object involves, in short, is all sorts of things that I even set down in writing, huh, *Subversion of the subject and dialectic of desire*, and so on and so forth. That is on a completely different path, is that not so, than the exhibition of the voice, namely, like that, of a pathetic testimony, make no mistake, is that not so, of it being squeezed in this whole affair.

On the other hand, the saying, the saying is not writing either. Yeah. Saying is not writing either, it is not enough to have something to say to be able, to be able to know a lot about it. It is a distinction, is that not so, that I would very much like for you to get into your little heads. Yes. Even about what is involved in the truth, is that not so, there is a place for knowledge. There is a place for knowledge in so far as there is question, at every instant, of inventing, is that not so, to reply to the tissue of contradictions of the truth, huh. And this indeed is why the first step to be taken, is to follow it in all its affectations. It is not simply a matter of the fact, is that not so, that the lie forms part

of it. I insisted enough on that, is that not so. And it must be seen, in fact, what it is capable of making you do.

The truth, my dear friends, leads to religion. You never understand anything about what I tell you about this thing because I seem to be sneering, is that not so, when I speak about it, about religion. But I am not sneering, I am grinding my teeth! It leads to religion, and to the true, as I already said. And since it is the true, that is precisely why there would be something to be got out of it for knowledge. Namely, to invent. Well then you are not equipped to do it, huh! And it is not tomorrow that you will get to the end of it. Because into all of that you put absolutely no seriousness. It is obvious, is it not, that those who invented the most beautiful things about knowledge – I name them, huh, it is an honours list, huh: Pascal, Leibniz, and Newton! Newton, in fact, do you realise what Newton wrote about the Book of Daniel and about the Apocalypse of St. John! You have never looked at that, of course, because it is not in paperback, but I (175) regret it. I do not reproach you either for not having gone looking for it. There should be a paperback of that and one well translated. He had a cast-iron belief in religion. And the two Others...it seems to me that it is difficult to renounce what is obvious, huh. They talk of nothing but that. It is even the only thing that interests them.

When one...I must...when I think that I have to go looking in the middle of, a mountain of 'addresses to the curé of Paris', what Pascal wrote about the cycloid, for example, anyway which is the very type, is it not, of the step which meant that people invented, nothing less than integral calculus – do you imagine that integral calculus is anything other than writing? The parabola from which it started - the parabola – I am talking about the parabola that is traced out, the parabola and then any other lunule or thingamajig or yoke, whatsoever, in short, these are written things, it is only there that we

touch what is involved in the Real. Good, these three were passionate about the true. The true about the true.

The path to take is to start up again. If you do not question in an appropriate way the true of the Trinity, well you are made, you are made like rats, like the Rat Man. It is obvious, it is obvious all the same that religion, anyway has its limits, all the same! Anyway, I have just come back from Italy, you understand, so I am, so I am swamped by bodies that stream down all the walls, in a word, there is nothing but that. There are enough pictures to stifle you, moreover it is altogether magnificent, but I do not see why I should say *proh pudor!* before this streaming of bodies. But anyway, this gives all the same its limit to the thing, it shows all the same that one is in the truth, and that one remains there, that one does not get out of it. What is required, what would be at stake, is to get out of the truth, there, indeed I do not see any other way except inventing, and to invent in the right way, in the analytic way, is that not so, it is to start up again, to go along entirely in this direction is that not so. Yes. Yes.

There is only one thing which is all the same quite annoying and on which I would like to end if you, if you don't mind. It is not by chance that it is among my pupils, a woman, she is made like that, she, good, well, produced like that a whole lot of chattering about the desire to know; it is certainly not from me that she got it...I never even, even suggested such a thing, huh. Yes. There is no shadow of a desire to know, apart from something about which I question myself (176) and about which I have nothing to tell you because I don't know anything about it, which is that there is mathematics, which cannot proceed, it seems to me, unless it is an effect of the unconscious, which do not produce the slightest desire, but it is all the same curious to see that mathematics continues. People imagine that there are among people of your kind, in short, namely, that the mathematicians, are – I think that there are perhaps not two of them in this room, I am

talking about the true, the really bitten: there is not the slightest desire to know. There is not the slightest desire to *invent* knowledge.

Anyway, there is a desire to know attributed to the Other. One sees that. That is how there arises, anyway, the manifestations of obligingness that the child gives in his 'whys'. Everything that he poses as a question, in fact, is designed to satisfy what he supposes the Other would want him to ask. Not all children, huh! Not all children, because I am going to do a little thing for you, I must from time to time give you a little something to get your teeth into, this thing attributed to the Other, is very often accompanied by a 'very little for me' (*très peu pour moi*). And 'very little for me', a 'very little for me' of which the child gives proof in this form to which I am sure you have not dreamt, but, as you know, I also learn something every day. I educate myself, I educate myself of course along the line of what I like, along the line of what I invent inevitably, but anyway I do not lack food. And if you knew as I know, is that not so, the degree to which what I already illustrated about anorexia nervosa by making this action state, for an action states: 'I eat nothing'.

But why do I eat nothing? That is something you have not asked yourselves, huh, but if you ask the anorexics, or rather if you let them come, I for my part have asked it, I have asked it because I was already in my little vein of invention on this subject, I asked it: so then what did they answer me? It is very clear: she was so preoccupied about knowing whether she was eating, that in order to discourage this knowledge, this knowledge like that, the desire to know, is that not so, just for that the kid would have let herself die of hunger! That is very important. This dimension of knowledge is very important, and also to notice that, that it is not desire that presides over knowledge, it is horror.

(177) Yes. You will tell me that, you will tell me that there are people who work, and who work like that to get the *agrégation*. But that, you

understand, has nothing to do with the desire to know. That is a desire which is, which is as I might say, as always the desire of the Other, and I already explained that it is enough for the Other to desire for, of course, one to fall under its influence. The desire of man is the desire of the Other but the circuit is more or less complicated. There is the desire of the Other, which, which, which is communicated on an equal footing because it is already at sea (*nage*) in the Other, the subject.

There is the hysteric. The hysteric, is another affair, huh, I will have to take up my schema, is that not so, to show you the exact place held by knowledge, is that not so, for the hysteric. It is a knowledge, in short, that is particularly specified, is that not so, it is a knowledge from which, from which she picks up the thing. Yes. It is a knowledge that does not go very far. It is a knowledge which to stick to the origin - it is a knowledge which is very often, not produced by discourse, the desire of the Other, but palmed off, as one might say.

I mean that it can very well be that a person, in short, who, who had not the slightest desire to know anything about anything whatsoever, is that not so, noticed all the same that in society, the university discourse assures for those who know, a good place, and that it is palmed off on the young one, here, to the kid who is going to become hysterical, and precisely for that reason, that it is palmed off to her that it is a means to power. Naturally, she receives the thing, for her part, without knowing that that is why, she receives it when she is very young, and there, it is a rather frequent case of transmission, in fact, is that not so of the desire to, of the desire to know, but it is something that is acquired altogether secondarily. In other words, what I am trying to get into your head and in connection with this experience, with this experience of the child, who naturally speaks to you about these 'whys', and these 'whys' which concern: Why this, why are children born, how is that done, etc., and all they want is, it is to hear something which, which gives pleasure, which, to show that, who, that they do everything as if they were interested in it. But as

soon as they know it, they repress it, as you know well, and they repress it immediately, in fact, they think no more about it, in fact. You should all the same have an idea that is a little clearer about what (178) is really happening. This desire to know, in so far as it takes on a substance, takes on the substance of the social group.

In truth, I will not go so far as to be satisfied with this answer as regards mathematical invention, is that not so. It is quite clear that there are people bitten by that, is that not so, I mean that solving the problem of the cycloid was not a way of promoting oneself at the Sorbonne. There was, like that, in fact a miraculous time, a time that that I would like to see being reproduced, is that not so in the form of psychoanalysts, I would like to see being reproduced in them this kind of Republic, is that not so, which meant that Pascal corresponded with Fermat, with Roberval, with Carcavi, with a whole pile of people, is that not so who were all interrelated with one another, in fact, in order that something or other should happen. This indeed is what I would want one day to draw out of the story, something or other happened which ensured that there were people who wanted to know more about the most unlikely things, is that not so, who drew for themselves like that the cycloid. You know what it is, is that not so, whether it is a circle, a little wheel that turns around another one, you can see what that can give, that gives, I don't know, something like that which is called cardioid, which you can believe, at that moment, did not confer anything, with any Lord, is that not so, that made their reputation. In fact their thing was strictly among themselves, is that not so, they did not go outside that.

Naturally, from there, there has come your television, this television thanks to which you are definitively stupefied, good, good but anyway, they did not do it for that, they provided for the little *o*-object – of course, but precisely it was without knowing it, but they had all the same, in a word, all the better realised that the object was the little *o*-object, namely, what you are stifled by, is that not so. They realised

it all the more in that without knowing where they were going, they passed by the structure, by the structure that I told you about, namely, this edge of the Real.

### **Seminar 12: Tuesday 23 April 1974**

Good, I am going first of all, by beginning three minutes before the time, I am going first of all to fulfil a duty that I did not carry out the last time. I did not do so, because I believed it would happen all by itself, but since even in my School, I saw that no one had taken this step, I am encouraged to urge others to take it. A book has just appeared in the *Champ Freudien*, as they say, huh, it is a collection which, as it happens, I direct. If it has appeared in this collection, I am obviously not uninvolved, I even had to force it into it. This book is called – this is a title – this one is worth as much as any other – is called: *L'Amour du Censeur*. It is by someone called Pierre Legendre, who happens to be a professor in the Law Faculty. There you are. So then, I strongly encourage those who, I do not really know why, indeed, are gathered together here around what I am saying, I strongly encourage them to get to know it, namely, to read it, to read it with a little attention because they will learn something from it.

There you are. With that, I begin.

I begin, or rather I begin again. This is what most astonishes me. Namely, that I have the opportunity each time to notice that if I spoke of hope in certain terms, in connection with a Kantian question that I

was asked: ‘whether I might...’, ‘what might I hope for?’ And I had said that hope, I had retorted that hope was something proper to each (182) one. There is no common hope. It is quite useless to hope for a common hope. So then I, I am going to admit mine to you. It is the one that possesses me all week until the morning when I wake up with you in mind – namely, for example this very morning – until that moment, I, always have the hope that it will be the last time, that I will be able to say to you *n, i, ni*: finished. The fact that I am here, because the day when I say it, it will be before, it will be before beginning, the fact that I am there proves to you that, however special this hope may be for me, it is disappointed.

Good, as a result of which, in waking up, I naturally thought of something quite different than, than what I had fomented to say to you. There arose in me like that, in short, that if there is – I already said it, in short, but I must repeat it – that if there is something which analysis has discovered the truth of, it is the love of knowledge. Since, at least if what I point out to you has some emphasis, an emphasis that moves you, transference reveals the truth of love and precisely in that it is addressed to what I stated as being the subject supposed to know. That may appear to you, after what I stated the last time, with I believe some emphasis, at least I imagine so, anyway I hope you remember it, not only did I put forward that there was no desire to know, but I even spoke about something which...that I effectively articulated about the horror of knowing. There you are.

So then, how connect that up, as I might say? Well precisely it is not connected up. It is the *Marriage of heaven to hell*. There is someone called William Blake, as you know, who at his time, at his epoch, with his, with his own little material – which was not slight – who stirred up that: he even gave it exactly this title. There you are. So then perhaps what I am in the process of saying to you, is that the marriage in question is not quite what is believed, what is believed, in reading William Blake, precisely. Yeah. This only re-emphasises something

that I told you elsewhere, something that our experience implies in any case, the analytic experience that I am only here to situate for you.

What is a truth if not a complaint? At least this is what corresponds to what we charge ourselves with, as analysts, if in short there is something of the psychoanalyst, that we charge ourselves with gathering. We do not gather it all the same without noting that division marks it. Marks the truth. That perhaps not-all of it can be (183) said. There you are. It is our way (*voie*), the way people have been speaking about for a long time, huh. And if it is put first in a statement that, that I hope is finally making your ears ring, if it is put first – it is indeed because this is what is at stake first, even though the solutions that are put forward greatly differ among themselves. It is a matter of having a little idea of our own. And then immediately after, when one states this term, the way, immediately afterwards people talk about the truth which, if it is what I have just said, is something like a rotten plank, and then as a third, people dare, anyway someone, in any case, has dared, like that: someone called Saint John, he spoke about life. These are imprudent utterances. Utterances of what? Of the voice. Of the voice which is to be written quite differently: *v, o, i, x*, for these. They are imprudent utterances of the voice that state these couplings. You can note that this...that the coupling, on this occasion, goes in threes. And what is life on this occasion? It is indeed something which, which in this three, then, makes, makes, makes, makes a hole, huh. I do not know if you know what life is, huh, but it is all the same curious that, that it creates a problem. Life (*lavie*) that on this occasion I would write indeed as I did, as I did with *lalangue* in a single word. This would only be to suggest that, that we do not know much about it except that it needs washing (*elle s'lave*). It is almost the only tangible mark of what enters into life.

Anyway, these couplings, what am I suggesting here, starting from the experience that is defined as analytic, what am I suggesting here? Is it to think out these couplings? Yeah. If that were it, it would be in

short, this kind of tipping over, which would mean falling into University discourse. That is where people think. Namely, where they fuck. Good, I am pointing out to you that in this discourse, I am not – like that, it is a little test, simply, it is not at all that I pride myself on it, I am not accepted, I am rather put up with, yes, tolerated – all that brings us back to the status, to the status of, of what I stated the last time, anyway, linked to our relationship, of you, of me, and that I put in suspense between the voice and the act of saying. I dare hope that the act of saying has a greater weight in it, even though this is what I might doubt, since this doubt is what I expressed the last time as such. If it is the act of saying, this is what I get from a codified experience.

I also stated – you see, I insist on repeating myself – I also stated the (184) following: what is required, in the sense of what is lacking, so that this codified experience is not, should not be within everybody's reach? It is not a question of the division of labour, namely, that everybody cannot spend their time analysing the rest. It is not within everybody's reach, due to a fact of...of structure about which I tried to recall the last time, or at least to indicate what I intended to connect it up with. It cannot be within everybody's reach to fulfil this office that I defined just now as gathering up the truth as a complaint.

What is the status of this marriage that I evoked just afterwards, by putting it under the patronage of William Blake? When I say that it is not within everybody's reach that goes a very far. It implies that there are those for whom it is in short prohibited. And when I state things thus, I intend to set myself apart from what is involved in something, in something that Hegel advances somewhere, about this rejection, inscribed, he says, in what he calls 'the law of the heart', this rejection of the disorder of the world. Hegel shows that if that is done, it is easy. And he is quite right. It is not a matter of producing here the disorder of the world, it is a matter of reading the not-all (*pas-tout*) in it. Is this a substitute for the idea of order? This is very specifically

what, into what I am proposing today to advance, to advance; with this question left just now, of what pushes me. What pushes me to bear witness to it.

What does this not-all consist in? It is obvious that it cannot be referred to what would make an all, to...to a harmonious world. So must the not-all be grasped somewhere in an element? An element which sins precisely by not being harmonised with it? Is it enough that, that everything in it should be won over – allow me here, to put it forward – to bifurcation, to the tree. Yeah. I would point out to you that here, as if nothing was happening, by asking you a question like that, this bifurcation is also indeed what I have just made, a sign, a y, of something which is tangible, in short, with what we are clearing the way for: there is the tree, there is the vegetable, it makes up a branch, it is its mode of presence. And I do not see why I would not wade in there, into something which all the same is recommended to our attention, because it stems from writing, huh: the old *Urszene*, the primal scene, as it is inscribed in the Bible, at the beginning of the aforesaid *Genesis*. The tempter, huh. And then the fathead, is that not so, the one called Eve. And then the asshole of all assholes, is that not so, the first Adam? And then what circulates, there, the thing that gets stuck in his throat, the apple as it is called. And worse, that's not (185) all, huh: there is the granddad who turns up and then let's fly at them.

For my part, when I read that, I am not against it. I am not against it since it is full of meaning. This indeed is precisely what it must be cleansed of. Perhaps if...one scratched away all the meaning huh, one would have a chance of reaching the Real. This is even what I am in the process of teaching you. That it is not the meaning of the complaint that is important for us, it is what one might find beyond, as definable in terms of Real, yeah. Only to clean away the meaning, it must not be forgotten, because otherwise it turns into a shoot, huh, and in all of that there is something that is forgotten. And it is precisely

the tree. What is outrageous is that it is not noticed that it is what was what was forbidden. It was not the snake, it was not the apple, it was not the assholes, him or her: it was the tree that was not to be approached! And nobody thinks any more about it, it is admirable! But for its part, what does the tree think about it? Here I am making a leap, huh, because what does that mean, what does it think about it? That means nothing other than something that is in suspense, and this is very precisely what makes me suspend everything that can be said under the heading of life, of the life that is washed. Because despite the fact that the tree is not washed – that can be seen! – despite that, does the tree enjoy? It is a question that I would call essential. Not that there might be an essence outside the question: the question is the essence, there is no other essence than the question. Since there is no question without an answer, I have been dinning that into you for a long time, this means that the essence also depends on it, on the answer. Only there, it is missing. It is impossible to know whether the tree enjoys, even though it is no less certain that the tree is life. Yeah.

I apologise to you for having, like that, imagined that, imagined presenting that to you, like that, with the help of the Bible. The Bible does not frighten me. And I would even say more, I have a reason for that. It is because there are people like that who are formed by it, huh, they are generally called Jews. One cannot say that they have not thought about this thing, the Bible. I would even say more: everything proves, everything proves in their history [*to Gloria Gonzales: Give me a cigar...*], everything proves in their history that they are not preoccupied by the way that they have Talmudized, as they say, this Bible. Well then I must recognise that it has worked out well for them. And where do I put my finger on that? I put my finger on it from the fact, yes, that they have truly well contributed, when it (186) came within their reach, to this domain that interests me, even though it is not mine – mine in the sense of the domain of analysis – that they have truly contributed, with particular astuteness, to the

domain of science. What does that mean? It is not they who invented it.

The history of science started from a questioning about (put that in inverted commas, I beg you) about 'nature', about *phusis* – in connection with which Mr. Heidegger wriggles in convolutions. What was nature for the Greeks, he asks himself. They had an idea of nature. It must be said that the idea that they had of it - as the same Heidegger suggests – is completely lost. It is lost, lost, lost, lost. I do not see why one would regret it! Since it is lost, huh? Well then, it is not to be mourned all that much because we know even more about what it is. Yeah. We know even more about what it is because it is quite obvious that if science has succeeded, has succeeded in emerging, it does not appear, moreover, that the Jews put much of themselves into it at the beginning. It is subsequently, when the prize had been won, that they came to add their grain of salt, huh, and that it was noticed, that, it is clear, in short, what Einstein, by adding something to the great construction of Newton, that he is the one who takes things from the right angle. And then he is not the only one, there are others – that I will name for you when the occasion arises, but I cannot speak about everything at the same time, because they are to be found in profusion and then they are not all in the same quarter. What is certain is that, it is all the same striking that, that this blessed written thing was enough, the Scriptures par excellence, as they say! – that this was enough for them to enter into the thing the Greeks had prepared and prepared by something which is not to be distinguished from writing, from writing in so far as what specifies it, in short, is that it is possible to read it, that when it is read, it gives a saying (*un dire*) – an extraordinary saying, naturally, as I told you earlier about this scene that would make you collapse (*à la mors-moi le doigt*), a saying that would make you think you are sleepwalking - but a saying! It is quite clear that if the Talmud has a meaning it consists precisely in emptying this saying of its meaning, namely, of only studying the letter. And from this letter to induce absolutely crazy combinations,

in the style of the equivalence of the letter and the number, for example, but it is all the same curious that this is what formed them, and that they find themselves up to date when they have to deal with science... Yeah!

(187) So then, that is what authorises me, I would say to do like them, not to consider as a forbidden field what I will call religious froth (*mousse*) to which I had recourse earlier. What I call 'froth', here, is quite simply the meaning! The meaning in connection with which I was trying precisely to carry out, to carry out a cleansing, by asking the question, the question about the tree: what is the tree? And what is it on a very precise point that I designated, because I do not remain up in the air: does it enjoy? Religious froth can then, in short, be also laboratory material! And why not, and why not make use of it because it comes to us with what I call, with what I call by making it entirely tip over to one side, what I call the truth, because of course, it is not the emptied out truth, huh, it is the truth like that flourishing.

There you are. I can all the same clearly indicate to you that it is not for nothing, in short, that there are Jewish biologists, huh. For my part, I have just read something of which moreover I will give you the title... I will give you the title, anyway, it is the book, there, *On sexuality and bacteria*. There is something that, that struck me, anyway, in reading this book which I read with passion from start to finish, because it was along my line, like that, the fact is that if, the fact is that if the amoeba, em... this little piece of filth, there, that you look at in the microscope, there, huh, and then which obviously wriggles, it eats things on you... it... good. It is certain that it enjoys! Well then as regards bacteria, I am questioning myself! Does bacteria enjoy? Well it's funny, huh, the only thing which can, in short, suggest the idea of it to us, is – I can all the same say that it is in Jacob that I discovered it, we must not exaggerate, I had heard like that a rumour... but in this Jacob, who moreover is on this occasion associated with someone called Wollman, what really fascinated me,

huh, is that what is characteristic of the aforesaid bacteria is that there is nothing in the world like a bacteria for being infected. It is in a word that bacteria would contribute absolutely nothing to us if there were not the bacteriophage. And the link that is made by – that is made by: he does not make it, that emerges – but anyway it is certain that, the fact that, as his name indicates Jacob is a Jew, is certainly not indifferent that his relationship, his relationship of accumulated, minute, swarming experiences in short, that his report about what happens between bacteria and the bacteriophage, that it is here that we may have the ‘feeling’, let us say that from infection, from its (188) infection with the bacteriophage, the bacteria eventually enjoys.

And if one looks at it very closely – anyway, consult the text, I am indicating it to you, it will only take a second for you to look through the paperbacks, only its very difficult to find, this yoke is really exhausted, it appeared in America...It really would piss you off! It would be no bad thing all the same for you to make some photocopies. There is perhaps also one in French around, but I cannot say, for my part... I did not rush out looking for it, since I read it in English, anyway, there is also one in French, but I do not even know whether it can still be found. You see the extent of my benevolence, I am indicating it to you just when you are going to enter into the most appalling rivalry with me if I want to get it. Anyway too bad, there are always photocopies...

When all is said and done, it is from there that you can touch on a connection, a very particular connection. If Jacob makes manifest through this that there is sex at the level of bacteria, he only makes it manifest by the following fact - read this book carefully - that between two mutations of bacteria of the same line of descent, in other words of this famous *escherichia coli* which has served as laboratory material at that level, that between two mutations of bacterias from the same source, what constitutes sex, is that between them, between these mutations, no relationship is possible. This means that one line

of descent of bacteria whose mutation consists in a possibility of a greater multiplication than in the other, while it is at the level of this possibility of multiplying that the other is distinguished:

*foisonnement-plus*, fertility they call that in English, fertility-less.

When the more fertile encounter the less fertile, they make them transfer to the side of fertility. While the less fertile, when they go towards the more fertile, for their part, do not make them transfer towards the side of the less fertile. It is then essentially from the non-relationship between the two branches – here we find our little tree again! – it is then from the non-relationship between the two branches of a same tree, that for the first time there is suggested, at the level of bacteria, the idea that there is a sexual specification.

So then you see the register in which this, this may affect me, because, in finding again this non-relationship at a completely different level of this so called evolution of life which is the one by which I specify the speaking being, is all the same something which, in short, which is well designed to hold my attention, and at the same time to try to give (189) you a little whiff of it... Because in short, what that means, is that in its first apparition – which moreover has strictly nothing to do with its second apparition which is a pure homology – sexuality is not at all the same thing, but that it may be so on occasion at the level of the tree, something linked to infection and to nothing else, is all the same, is all the same worth our dwelling on. Naturally, that does not mean either that we should rush into it, huh, you must not rush, especially, because it is, it is the best way to put your foot in it! But anyway, it is tangible. And that, that the question of enjoyment is suggested from infection, sexuality with a limited import, is also worth remembering. Good. When I say: not to rush, huh, that also means: not to let yourself be led by the nose.

Is there – I am making a break here, I am taking things from the other end – is there knowledge in the Real? It is essential that here I should break, since otherwise I, at least you, you have let yourselves up to

now be led by the nose, namely, that you stop there where I stop myself, in order not to let myself be led by the same end. To ask the second question, the one that I am putting forward now, after having allowed myself to be led into religious froth, of what interest is it that now I start over again? It is all the same – it is not difficult to, to sense, is that not so, enjoyment, it erupts (*sic*) into the Real. And that there will be a moment - which will be later, because things must be carefully put into a series, huh - when the question turns back on itself. What does the Real answer if enjoyment questions it? And that is why I begin – here you see the link – why I begin to ask the question: knowledge is not the same as enjoyment. I will even say more, if there is a point to which I have led you, anyway, in starting from this knowledge that is inscribed in the unconscious, it is indeed because it is not inevitable that knowledge should enjoy itself.

And that indeed is why, now - a break - I am taking up again a thread from a different end, no term of which is encountered in what I first put forward. I am taking up the thread from another end, and I am putting the question about knowledge in the Real. It is quite clear that this question, like all the others, is only asked from the answer. I would even say more: from the answer such as I have already emphasised it. The unconscious in Freud's sense, is that in whose name I asked the question about knowledge in the Real. But I do not ask it in giving to Freud's unconscious all its import. I am simply saying that the unconscious is at first only conceived of from the (190) following: that it is a knowledge. But I am limiting myself to that. It is in the name of this that the question about knowledge in the Real takes on its meaning.

There is some. And there is no need for Freud's unconscious for it to be so. There is some to all appearances. Otherwise the Real would not work. Here is where I am starting from, which as you see is a quite different aspect. This one, precisely, has a Greek aspect. The Real, is like the discourse of the master: it is the Greek discourse. The

Real must work. And we cannot see how it would work without there being some knowledge in the Real. So then there also, huh, no rushing. Here it is no longer a matter of being led by the nose, there, it is to get limed in this step. One must cut through its casing. If I take this step in the Real, I must cut away...all the glue around, in order not to remain stuck in it, huh. And that in the Real, may I dare say, means nothing outside a meaning.

That means in the Real: which does not depend on the idea that I have of it. A further step with the same paste on one's feet: as regards which, what I think of it does not matter. The Real does not give a damn whether I think of it like that. And this indeed is why the first time that I tried to make this category vibrate, in short, in the ears of my listeners, those of Sainte-Anne, I cannot say that I was not kind, huh, I said to them: the Real is, is what always returns to the same place. Which is precisely to put it in its place. The notion of place, arises from that.

So then, in saying that, I put the Real – I situate it precisely, I put it in its place, with a meaning, let us not forget, with a meaning *qua* known: the meaning knows itself. So much so that it is astonishing, huh, that people should have become entangled in it: the sensible, the tangible, anything you wish, but that it did not end up by being crystallised: the known meaning (*le sensu*). It must be believed that it had echoes we did not like.

What I am in the process of saying by that, in any case putting forward to you about the Real, is first of all that, it is that the knowledge at stake in the question, is there knowledge in the Real, is to be completely separated from the use of known in the known meaning. It is from meaning, starting from there that I detach the Real, but it is not from the same knowledge that I question to know whether there is a knowledge in the Real. The knowledge at stake in

the question is not the order of knowledge which conveys meaning or more exactly, which is conveyed by meaning.

(191) And I am going to illustrate it right away. To illustrate it from Aristotle. It is quite striking that in his *Physics*, Aristotle for a good long while, in short, made the leap, the leap by which, it is demonstrated that his *Physics* has strictly nothing to do with the *phusis* whose ghost Heidegger tries to make re-emerge for us. It is because what he is tackling, he is tackling to answer the question which is the one that I am asking now: is there knowledge in the Real? He tackles it by way of the knowledge of the artisan. The fact is that the Greeks did not have the same relationship to writing. The flower of what they produced, is drawings, it is the making of plans. That is their idea of intelligence. It is not enough to have an idea of intelligence to be intelligent. This recommendation is especially addressed to you. And it is surprising that it should be Aristotle who proves it to us.

This artisan, God knows what he imputes to him, make no mistake. He imputes to him, first of all, knowing what he wants: which all the same is a bit thick! Where have we ever seen anyone struggling along as an artisan, knowing what he wants? It is Aristotle who lays that on his back. Thanks to Aristotle, the artisan is the ‘final cause’. And then also, while he is at it, I really do not see what stops him, is that not so, he is also the ‘formal cause’, he has ideas, as they say. And then after that, he, he, he causes ‘cause’ (*il cause ‘cause’*), he even causes ‘means’, he causes ‘efficient’ in a word, and it is a lucky thing that Aristotle leaves some bit of the role to matter. There it is: it is the ‘material cause’! It causes, it causes, it causes even without rhyme or reason [*causer* = to cause, or to chat, to blather on].

Because, to take things, like that, at the level from which they come, namely, the pot – that is how it came out, not at all of course that they only knew how to make that, the Greeks, they knew how to make

much more complicated things, but all of that, all of that comes from the pot. When I ask a question of whether there is knowledge in the Real, it is precisely to exclude from this Real what is involved in the knowledge of the artisan. Not only does the knowledge of the artisan not cause, but it is exactly this order of knowledge that the artisan makes use of because another artisan taught him to do it like that.

And far from the pot having an end, a form, an efficacy and even some matter or other, the pot, is a mode of enjoying. He was taught to enjoy making pots! And if someone did not buy his pot – and that depends on the good sense of the client – if his pot is not bought, well then he has the reward of his enjoyment, namely, that he is left with it, (192) and that this does not go very far. It is a mode that is essential to detach from what is at stake when I ask the question: is there knowledge in the Real?

There must all the same simply be some people here who have been, who have been, I don't know, to the exposition of Chinese archaeological excavations, as it is called, Chinese excavations which were the best thing that they found to send us from the land of Mao. There you can see – at that level because there are reasons why, in this zone, in short, one can still see the pots at the moment that they emerge. It is quite clear that these pots are absolutely gripping, admirable, is that not so, these pots from the time of the apparition of words, when for the first time, people made pots – three legs are stuck onto them, as it happens, but they are legs which are not legs, legs that are screwed on, you understand, they are legs, legs which are there in continuity with the pot. These are pots which have spouts of which one can say in advance that any mouth is unworthy. They are pots which are in themselves, with their advent, in short things before which one prostrates oneself.

Do you believe that this emergence here, is something...is something that has anything whatsoever to do with Aristotelian decomposition?

It is enough to look at these pots to see that in short they are of no use for anything. But there is one thing certain, which is that this grew, is that not so, this grew, in short, like a flower. That Aristotle, finally, decomposes them, in short, is that not so, con-causes them with at least four different causes, is something that just by itself, in short, demonstrates that the pots are from elsewhere.

But why am I talking to you about them since precisely I put them elsewhere? I am talking to you about them because if it is the client who finally has to judge the pot, in the absence of which the potter, in short will have to tighten his belt, this demonstrates something to us, which is that it is the client who not only buys the pot, but who, ‘potters’ the artisan, if I can express myself thus. And it is enough to see what follows from this link between the fact that the pot, in short, is so well made that people imagine that God is a potter, exactly like the artisan. The God in question is, is...at one time, anyway, my old friend André Breton believed that he was pronouncing a blasphemy in saying that, in saying that God is a pig (*un porc*). It is not for nothing that the last time I told you that I never encouraged the Surrealists. Not at all that I for my part would abbreviate and I would say that God is a pot. God is clumsy (*un empoté*)! True, God is the potter, but the potter also is awkward. He is the subject, in short, of the knowledge supposed to his art.

But this is not what is at stake when I ask you the question: is there knowledge in the Real? Because this, this is what was encountered the day when from the Real someone succeeded in tearing out a strand, namely, at the time of Newton, when all the same, it happened, and that there in order that the Real should function, at least the Real of gravity, namely, not nothing, all the same, because we are all screwed to this gravity and by nothing less than our bodies, until we hear differently, not that it is a property of it, as what followed clearly demonstrated – but one is screwed onto this Real. And there, what is it, in short, that worried people in Newton’s time? It was nothing less

than this question which I would say, in short, concerned what was at stake, namely, masses – make no mistake. Masses. How these masses could know the distance at which they were at from other masses so that they would be able to observe Newton's law? It is absolutely clear that God is required here. One cannot, all the same, claim that the masses, the masses as such, namely, defined by their simple inertia, where would the notion come to them of the distance that they are from other masses? And what is more, as regards what is involved in these masses themselves in order to behave correctly? At the time of freshness when this Newtonian lucubration came out, this escaped no one! It was the only notion in short, that – the only notion that could be opposed to him, were Descartes' vortices; unfortunately Descartes' vortices did not exist and everyone could see that quite clearly... So then, God was required to inform, is that not so, at every instant, in short it has even got to the point that not only was he required to be there to inform the masses at every instant about what was happening to the others, but... it was even supposed that he had perhaps no other means than to push the masses himself with his finger... Which, of course was exaggerated, in short, was exaggerated because it was clear that once acceleration is already inscribed in the formula, time was also there, so then there was no need for the finger of God! But as regards informing all the same, it was difficult to exclude him. And what I am talking to you about, for my part, here, is the knowledge in the Real.

(194) You must not imagine that because Einstein came afterwards and put something else into it, huh, you must not imagine that things are any better, huh, because there is all the same a funny story, is that not so, which is that this relativity of space, which is henceforth de-absolutised, because indeed it is some time, in short since people have been able to say that in short, that after all God was absolute space – indeed that is, that is only banter. But the relativisation of this space with respect to light, this has a funny feel for you of *fiat lux*, and that, that has every appearance of starting to put its ass once again into the

religious froth. So then, let us exaggerate nothing. It is perhaps here, you understand, that – this is how, in any case for today, I will limit myself, indeed to what made the analyst emerge. You have clearly sensed, *sentu*, huh, that all of this comes from this fact indeed that we have only spoken up to now about what comes from Heaven. Everything that we have of the Real however little sure it is, including our monsters, huh, has uniquely, uniquely come down from heaven. If it were not from there that we had started in order to always return to the same place, the definition that I give of the Real, we would not have today either watches nor televisions nor all these charming things thanks to which you are not only minuted but I would dare to say ‘seconded’. You are so well seconded that you no longer even have living space.

Luckily there is something of the analyst, huh. The analyst – I am going to end on a metaphor: the analyst is the will-o’-the-wisp. It is a metaphor which, for its part, does not amount to *fiat lux*. It is all that I have to say to excuse him. I mean that it opposes to the stars from which everything has descended in terms of what encumbers you and organises you so well here, indeed, to listen to my discourse, is that not so. Namely, that this has absolutely nothing to do with what you will come in to complain about to me in a moment.

The only advantage that I find in this will-o’-the-wisp, is that this does not amount to *fiat lux*. The will-o’-the-wisp does not illuminate anything, it emerges even ordinarily from some pestilence. That is its strength. This is what can be said, starting from the will-o’-the-wisp, whose thread I will try to take up, the wisp of thread, the next time.

**Seminar 13: Tuesday 14 May 1974**

The non-dupes-err... That does not mean that the dupes do not err. If we start from what is proposed as an affirmation – can you hear? Can you hear like that, if I am in front of this thing? Would the person who said that he can hear nothing answer: can he hear? Let us say that there is introduced by this affirmation that the non-non-dupes, may well, no more, not err. But already, this introduces us to the question that is posed by double negation. To be...not to be a non dupe, does that come back to being a dupe? This supposes, and supposes nothing less, than that there is a universe; that one can put forward that the universe, is divided by every statement; that one can say ‘the man’, and that if one says it – I mean to say it – all the rest becomes non-man.

A logician – because I am putting forward that logic is the science of the real – a logician took a step a long time after Aristotle. We had to wait for Boole to publish in 1853 *An investigation of thought*, which, has already this advantage over Aristotle of being a step, an attempt to stick to what he claims to observe, to found in short *a posteriori* as constituting the laws of thought. What does he do? He writes very precisely what I have just told you, namely that starting from anything whatsoever that is said and that is stated, and things are such for him that he cannot but put forward the idea of the universe, he symbolises it by a number (*un chiffre*), a number which is appropriate for it, it is the number 1. He will write then, about anything that is proposed as (196) notable, notable in this universe, he will then write  $x$ , he leaves this  $x$  empty, because this is the principle of the use of this letter, it is whatever may be notable in the universe [*to Gloria Gonzales: if you would carry that away from me, it would help me to go to the board*]. Yes,  $x$ , he writes, multiplied by  $1-x$ , this cannot but equal zero:

$$x(1-x) = 0$$

This cannot but, provided one gives this meaning to multiplication, note the intersection. That is where he starts from. It is in so far as x is notable in the universe that something is sustained simply by no, to men there being opposed non-men as such, everything that subsists as notable being here considered as subsisting as such. Now, it is clear that what is notable is not as such individual; that already in this way of positing logical ek-sistence, there is something which, from the start, appears to be awkward.

How does it happen that there should be posited without criticism, the theme, the theme of the universe that is posited? If I believe this year to be able to support by the Borromean knot something, something which, certainly, is not, is not a definition of the subject, of the subject as such of a universe, it is in that, I will remark once again, my attempt has nothing metaphysical about it. I mean, I mean in this connection that metaphysics is what is distinguished by supposing, by supposing as such the subject, the subject of a knowing (*connaissance*). It is in so far as it supposes a subject, that metaphysics is distinguished from what I am trying to articulate the elements of, namely, those of a practice, and this along the line of having defined it as distinguishing itself, distinguishing itself from something which is pure place, pure topology, and which means that there be generated from there the definition situated only from the place of this practice, from what is announced, from then on is advanced as being three other discourses. This is a fact, a fact of discourse, a fact by which I try to give to analytic discourse its place of ek-sistence.

What is it, that properly speaking, ek-sists? There only ek-sists as the spelling by which I modified this term stresses, there only ek-sists in any practice something that acts as a foundation of the saying (*du dire*), I mean what the saying contributes as an agency in this practice. It is under this heading that I try to situate under these three terms, the Symbolic, the Imaginary and the Real, the triple category which

makes a knot, and by this gives its meaning to this practice. For this (197) practice has not simply a meaning, but gives rise to a type of meaning that illuminates the other meanings to the point of putting them in question again, I mean by suspending them. With that, as an articulation, an articulation which at the end of a progress made to stimulate among those who sustain this practice, the idea of what for them this Real is, I say: the Real, is writing. The writing of nothing other than this knot as it is written to say it, as it is written when it is according to the law of flattened out writing. And I submit what I am stating to this test of putting in suspense the distinction, the precisely subjective distinction of the Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real, in so far as they might in a way already carry with them a meaning, a meaning which would hierarchise them, would make a 1,2,3 of them. Naturally, this would not avoid us falling again into another meaning – as already it may have appeared to you by the fact of what I emphasise about the association of the Real with a three, of the Imaginary with a two, and of the Real precisely – [a slip by Lacan] – and of the Symbolic precisely with the *One*.

Something in, at the level, in terms of the Symbolic, is posited as *One*. Is it a *One* sustainable from any individuation in the universe? That is the question that I ask, and from now on, I will put it forward under this form, namely, to ask the question in connection with Boole's writing. If the *One* that Boole advances as sufficient to divide up the truth, if there is an  $x$ , it is only true if, if the  $x$  subtracted from the *One* is something different to all the rest, than all the rest of the nameable. It is nothing less than gripping to note that Boole himself, by writing what results, what results from the writing of these terms in a mathematical formula, should be led to found on it that the proper of any  $x$ , of any  $x$  *qua* stated, is that  $x$  minus  $x^2$  equals 0, which is written:

$$x - x^2 = 0$$

$$x = x^2$$

I mean to be supported by a mathematical formula.

It is strange that here a note in his book, a book whose date I gave you earlier, the major date in this sense that it is starting from there that a new... a new start is taken by logical speculation, and that someone Charles Sanders Peirce of whom I already spoke to you, can for example ameliorate, according to him, Boole's formulation by showing in it that at certain points the result of it can be that it goes (198) astray, let us say. This to highlight what results from functions of two variables, namely, not simply  $x$  but  $x$  and  $y$ , and showing in it that which... that where I myself believed I ought to take up that the function described as relationship, can here serve to show us that, as regards what is involved in the sexual, this relationship cannot be written.

Why, Boole asks himself, rather than writing  $x = x^2$  and the inverse, cannot one write  $x = x^3$ ? It is striking that Boole – and this starting from the notion of truth as radically separating what is involved between the One and the zero, because it is by zero that he connotes error – it is striking that this universe, from then on solidary as such with the function of truth appears to him to limit the writing, the writing of what is involved in the logical function, to the second power of  $x$  while he refuses the third power. He refuses it because of the fact that mathematically, it would only be supposable in writing by adding to it a new term of the product, which he certainly does not refuse when what is at stake is to make the operation of multiplication work, he writes on this occasion:

$$x y z$$

and he can, according to the case, mark that  $x y z$  such that the variables were situated by a certain function, that  $x y z$  for example also equals 0. But since he limits himself to the values zero and one, it can just as well take on the function, the function taking its value from a certain... from a certain ciphering of zero and one for each of the three – he can, by making  $x$ ,  $y$  and  $z$  each equal to one, notice that zero is not the fruit of it.

So then, what can prevent him from adding to his  $(I - x)$  a  $(I + x)$  and to add it not as addition, to add it as a term of multiplication? He sees then very clearly that  $(I - x)$  multiplied by  $(I + x)$  giving  $I - x^2$ , he will end up, I do not need to underline it for you, with this: the fact is that  $x - x^3$  will be equal to zero and from this fact  $x$  will be equal to  $x^3$ :

$$\begin{aligned}x(I - x)(I + x) &= 0 \\x - x^3 &= 0 \\x &= x^3\end{aligned}$$

Why does he stop, stop at what? In the interpretation of what this  $x$  might be precisely as added to the universe. Is it not proper to what (199) ek-sists the universe, to be added to it? This is properly what we do every day, and precisely what I designate by a plus in supporting it by the small  $\circ$ -object. But then this suggests to us, this suggests the following: namely, to ask ourselves whether the *One* in question, is well and truly the universe, to be considered as a set or collection of everything that can be individualised in it.

I suggest – there is suggested to me, let us say in connection with this writing of Boole – founding what he establishes in terms of universe – because it is as such that he articulates it, that he gives it its meaning – to suppose that this *One*, far from arising from the universe, arises from enjoyment. From enjoyment and not just from any enjoyment, from the enjoyment called phallic, and this in so far as analytic experience demonstrates its importance. That from this sequence of what is posited as logical, as signifier, but literal, I mean inscribable, in so far as the inscription is where there arises in our experience the function of the Real, at least if you follow me, that something like an  $x$  can be added to this enjoyment, and constitute what I already defined as grounding surplus enjoying (*plus-de-jouir*).

It remains that Boole is far from not indicating that it is not simply the relationship of enjoyment to surplus enjoying, in so far as surplus

enjoying is supposed to be precisely what ek-sists, ek-sists with respect to what? Precisely the knot whose use and function I am trying for the moment to illuminate for you. He sees very clearly that in order to end up with the function  $x = x^3$  and no longer simply  $x^2$ , he sees very clearly that the third term, the term  $(1 + x)$  can be written differently and specifically  $(-1 -x)$ . I mean  $(-1 -x)$  taken in brackets, which is equivalent mathematically – I mean in so far as writing is what is mathematical – what can be inscribed here by minus before the brackets and by  $(1 + x)$ , put on the inside:

$$-(1 + x)$$

I write  $-(1 + x)$  and I say that it is the equivalent to the addition here of  $(-1 -x)$  and that Boole adds them in order to reject them, to reject them in so far as logic is supposed to be designed to assure the status of the truth.

But for the moment, what we are aiming at, is not to give its status to the truth, since the truth, we say, is never stated except from a half-saying, that it is properly speaking unthinkable, except at the locus of the saying, to mark that a proposition is not true, and to mark it with a bar, with an upper bar that excludes it, and marks it with the sign of false.

(200) In the order of things, in so far as the symbol is designed to ek-sist it in this order of things, it is properly, whatever may be said, whatever Boole may say studying or claiming to establish the status of thought, it is unthinkable, precisely, it is unthinkable to split anything whatsoever nameable, to split by a pure not, to designate what is not named. Does this mean that we ought to put to the test, put to the test what results from  $x^3 = x$ , assuredly it is already something to see functioning in it this three by which I mark as such the Real, and this is where we are going to take up again our Borromean knot.

I would like once more to give the example of the fact that even if the statement of the Borromean knot ek-sists with respect to analytic

practice, it is what permits it to be supported in this space of ours. And this without our knowing, at the present time, despite Aristotle's quotations, what the number of the dimensions of this space is, I mean even the one where we name things. Look, this is the same thing as what I first drew on the board, namely, that we have here a ring, a ring of string as I precisely called it the first time that I introduced this function.

Here is the ring of string, the three rings of string. You see that they hold together. They hold together in so far as there is here one which I put on the horizontal, the two others being vertical and the verticals crossing over one another. It is obvious that this cannot be unknotted. The Borromean knot as such has made a lot of people here work, and they have even sent me the testimony of this. This is the simplest form.

(201) It is striking that in the works – it is veritable works that have been sent to me on this point – works which do their share in all sorts of other ways, they are innumerable, to knot these three in such a way that they allow, with the unknotting of a single one of the three rings, exactly to free all the others, and as I told you, whatever may be the number of them. But to limit ourselves to three, since this three goes with our three functions of the Imaginary the Symbolic and the Real, this very precisely not to distinguish them, to see up to what point the fact that they are three, and by this fact to construct from them the very logic of the Real. Namely, to see at what moment we are going to be able to see arising, simply from these three, strictly equivalent, as

you can immediately see – from these three to give rise to the beginning of what would be differentiation in it. Differentiation is initiated, is initiated from the fact, and I am astonished that in the works that I have received, no one has pointed it out to me, here you are: through these three as they are arranged here, there are determined let us say eight quadrants, *1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8*. I take one of them, any one whatsoever, and from this quadrant I pull the flattened out one, the one that you are going to see – you are going to see from where you are, but by being where I am, it is certainly exactly the same, namely, that you see that something is already found there, because of this flattening out, is found to be already oriented. I mean that you certainly see the same inscription of the knot which is the one that I see, namely, on this occasion, for what I have shown you, by having taken my knot in the way it has been depicted, the fact is that by the flattening out something is outlined that is inscribed in following out its shape, which is inscribed as dextrogyratory.

Once it is flattened out as it is and turned over, I know in advance that it is the same dextrogyratory. It is enough to do this small job, indeed to imagine the turning over – and this also can be written – you will

see that it is not the mirror image, that in turning over the Borromean knot you do not see something which is its mirror image.

(202) Does this not render all the more striking this fact: it is that in taking up again my quadrants – let's say that I chose earlier – I do not know if it is effectively what I did – that one for you on the top right – if I take this one, that not only as I said on the top and at the right but

I also say, in front, if I take the one no longer on the top right and in front, but below on the left behind, the one that is strictly opposite it and if it is from there that I start to flatten it out in the same way that I previously did, it is quite notable – and you can verify it – that what will result from this flattening out will be a way in which the knot is squeezed, in which the knot is tightened in the exactly inverse way, namely, laevogyratory.

There comes out then from the simple handling already of the Borromean knot, there arises a distinction which is of the order of orientation. If one is in the clockwise direction, the other is in the inverse direction. We must certainly not be astonished, be astonished that something of this order can happen, because it is in the nature of things that space should be oriented. It is even from there that there proceeds the function described as that of mirror image, and of all symmetry.

I apologise for the asperity of what my discourse today implies. Simply, I note for you that this fact of orientation for the opposite

quadrants is something that already indicates to us that it is in (203) conformity with the structure, from the simple fact that the orientation arises from the single support from the single nodal support for which here I take up arms. It is conceivable from these rings themselves to mark a direction in them, namely, an orientation. In other words, to take the last, the one that is written here (1), to ask ourselves the question about what results from making use of an orientation in conformity with the one that we have abstained from of two species [?] and of two species alone which are different, namely,

to realise that there will result from it a figure, a figure such that its periphery will mark by that fact the same orientation. What is required for one of these figures to be transformed into the other, namely, this one equally completed (2)? You have seen from my hesitation the very mark of the difficulty that is encountered in the handling of the aforesaid rings of string. This is the mirror image of the other. But what is enough to transform the one into the other? Something which is definable in the following very simple way: namely, that, as you see the Borromean knot itself displayed, you see that any one of them is manifested by cutting each of the two others in such a way that the one being freed, the one being sectioned, the two others are free. Which means that one of these rings can turn around one of the two others, and that this all by itself will give us a new Borromean knot. The law of what is happening on this occasion is the following: here you only have to – I apologise for not having coloured chalk, it would be better, I am drawing it in chalk – what happens if we fold back one of these knots, one of these rings, around another?

This is exactly what we get – from this we get a new figure which – I'm going to rub out the old one so that you can see it better – we get a new figure which has as a property to be of this kind. Namely, that, (204) you see – this one is rubbed out – namely, that you see it, the figure is presented in this way, we have this which has remained invariable, and two others...two other elements. There you are: the two other elements present the sort of orientation which is the one defined here...namely, that, as compared, is that not so, to this...this being marked by *a* for example you will subsequently have a presentation like this, namely, if this is *b*, you will have an inversion

of direction from the  $b$  and of the  $c$  and an inversion of orientation of their curves, things being completed in the following way. There you are.

What matters is the following: it is to see that, by inverting the  $a$  what results from it, is a totally different orientation of the tightening of the knot. Namely, that from the simple fact that we have turned over one of the rings, the two other elements, those that we have not inverted, the two other elements change direction. I mean that, as is conceivable, the segment, the segment that I section in this mess, the segment that is found to be sectioned by the turning over of this ring which was first of all there, the segment has changed direction.

Namely, that to one, to this one here, this other segment and this one has fitted here in a way that we will call if you wish, centripetal, while previously the three were centrifugal. This indeed is why, when we turn over a further ring of string, this ring of string will remain in its primal orientation for the segment itself that we are going to have to turn over. Namely, that if now, after having turned over  $a$  we turn over  $b$ ,  $b$  will find itself keeping this centripetal direction, but then it is these two others, namely, one centrifugal and the other centripetal, that will be inverted so that the result of this will be that the centripetal becomes centrifugal and the centrifugal becomes centripetal, we will have here anew one centrifugal and two centripetal. But the one that will be centrifugal will be one of the turned over centripetals.

Do I have to do all of that again, or has someone followed it?

I exposed myself to, to not even looking at notes, for this simple reason, which is that the very difficulty of handling, the so small imaginable, as one might say, of this Borromean knot from which we are trying to draw some profit, is the very thing that that I am not unhappy, in short, to highlight, is that not so, to highlight a way...of ...there you are, after the second circuit, is that not so, a laevogyratory that has been reproduced like the preceding one, is that not so, and it is

(205) in so far as we have turned over the  $b$  after having turned over the  $a$  that we obtain the following: that we have a centripetal in place of a centrifugal which is here, and a centrifugal at the place of the centripetal which is here, is that not so. As a consequence, we have here  $c$ ,  $a$ , and  $b$ .

I was asked the question, I was asked the question in a place where people were working, I was asked the question as to what relationship this Borromean knot had with what I have stated about the four – I would say – options, described as sexed identification. In other words, what relationship this might have with the

I am now going to try to tell you. Suppose that we give to this position in a quadrant that we designate according to the mark in Cartesian co-ordinates, the eight quadrants in question. You should be

able to see, to notice that, let us take the top right quadrant in front, it is by folding over – ah, finally...good there you are! – it is by the folding back of the ring of string marked here, I mean in so far as this ring of string, this one then, is held – there you are – in so far as this ring of string is held by this one, namely, the one that I will call the ‘in depth’, we will call this one here ‘the top’, and this one here ‘the flat’.

Good, so then the flat comes here...and it is the one that comes there [*Lacan demonstrates with a knot that he has in his hand*], so then, green, blue, red. This is how things will present themselves. Good. (206) It is a little bit...a little bit different. There you are. You will have to take a bit of trouble, yourselves, to make the things, because after all, I note that it doesn't work out all that easily. Good.

The important thing is the following: it is, it is to indicate that it is by folding back this one, namely, the vertical towards the in depth; by folding back this one, is that not so, namely, the one that was first of all well marked at its place here, it is by folding it back in this way that we are going to get the ring, the Borromean knot as it is situated in this quadrant on the left of whatever quadrant we started from. In this quadrant, then, with inversion, inversion of the laevogyratory, is that not so, namely, a passage to the dextrogyratory, because the one that I did at the bottom was a laevogyratory. I took it that way because in the way that the knots are arranged – the way that the rings of string are arranged, this is how it is knotted. So then here we have an inversion. Which means that, to take things by placing them like

here for example, in this quadrant there, is that not so, we have to pass into this one, we have a first inversion. By passing into this one, we have a second inversion, as in some direction – on condition that it is a direction of symmetry with respect to one of the planes of intersection we have, at the three extremities, a change in the Borromean knot, we have an inversion. Good, if we pass along here, namely, that we go through it from the top to the bottom we have a new inversion, namely, a return of what was here, of the laevogyratory. These

operations are commutative, namely, that by passing in this way, we arrive at the same return.

(207) In others words, it is at the four opposite points, namely, on the eight quadrants of four definable quadrants by as I might say the inscription in the cube of a tetrahedron, it is with that that we are going to see appearing four homogenous figures, all three, on this occasion, laevogyratory, since we have started from a laevogyratory. Good. What results from this? How consider this multiplication, as I might say, by four, from what results from simply the flattening out, or the writing of the Borromean knot. I propose simply something that, given the time, I will only be able to give a commentary on the next time, it is this. If, as you have just seen, what is at stake is a tetrahedral figure, a tetrahedral figure in so far as it is produced by the tipping over of two of the rings of string, and one can say two, whatever they are. Whatever they are, we come back to the laevogyratory figure, to specify it. We come back to it whatever the one of the two that has been folded over. There will remain one which has not been folded over. The one that remains is obviously the third, I mean the one that remains after the two others have been folded over. That for example, if we make of these rings of string, the Symbolic, the Imaginary and the Real, what will remain in short, and what will remain in a centrifugal position, this again I would have to verify for you, I mean that you should be able to see that it is by tipping over the S and the I that at the end the R remains centrifugal. There is a good reason for that. If you have clearly seen the last figure, it is the R, namely, let us say the Real, that must be tipped over to obtain the last figure, which itself will be dextrogyratory and will be entirely centrifugal. It is a convenient way for you to remember what is involved in the second phase of what happens after two tipping overs, since you ought as I showed you, you ought shortly find in the strictly opposite quadrant, the one about which I spoke to you when I made this remark to you, this remark that was not found, namely, that in passing from one quadrant to the strictly opposite quadrant, to the

contradictory quadrant, to the diagonal quadrant, we obtain a knot, a knot no more if we start from the laevogyratory – we obtain a dextrogyratory knot. Good.

So then, verify all of this when you have a chance, in short, by making small manipulations like the ones that I made such a mess of before you and you will see in short the following: that by staying with the laevogyratory knot, we obtain what I qualified or specified as a tetrahedron, because you see how things happen. You can make, reconstitute: here for example you have to take one of the faces of the (208) square, you pull it, you reconstitute the cube, you reconstitute the cube starting from this, the fact is that it is always in a diagonal arrangement with respect to one of the faces of the cube that there are found the quadrants which are of the same kind of orientation and specifically on this occasion, of the laevogyratory kind.

I am simply going to suggest the following to you: this is what comes out of it starting from the function of enjoyment, what comes out is the following: it is that somewhere in one of these extremities of the tetrahedron somewhere there is situated the

*there is no  $x$  to say no to of  $x$*

somewhere, and we are going to put it,

*there is something which says no to*

somewhere, there is

*namely, that: all (tous) are a function of it*

And that somewhere, you have:

*not all (pas-toutes)*

It is not for nothing that I put it in this form, namely, a basic form.

We will have in a way to put the following in question: the not (*pas*), not the exclusive not like the earlier one, the step of what exists by saying no to the phallic function. We will on the other hand have what says yes to it, but which is reduplicated, namely, that there is the all, on the one hand, and on the other hand the not-all (*pas-tous*) in other words what I qualified as not-all (*pas-toutes*). Does it not appear to you that we have here a programme, namely, to take in what is a subject to be examined, to take the criticism of what is involved in the not, of what is implied by the saying no, namely, the interdiction, (209) and very specifically, when all is said and done, that which, specifying itself by the saying no to the      function, says no to the phallic function.

Saying no to the phallic function, is what we call, in the analytic discourse:

*the function of castration*

There is what says yes to the phallic function, and says it as all, namely, very specifically a certain type which is altogether necessitated by the definition of what we call man. You know that the not-all very essentially served to mark that there is no *the woman*, namely, that there are only as I might say the diverse and in a way one by one, and that all of this finds itself in a way dominated by the privileged function of the following, that there is nevertheless not-one to represent the saying that prohibits, namely, the absolutely-no. *Voilà.* .

So then because there is an exam now, I simply began the thing today. I beg your pardon for having spent so long on it, we will take it up the next time.

**Seminar 14: Tuesday 21 May 1974**

I apologise for being late and I want to thank you for waiting. You see that I am persevering, as regards the foundation that I am giving this year to my discourse in the Borromean knot. The Borromean knot is here justified by materialising, by presenting this reference to writing. The Borromean knot is only on this occasion a mode of writing. It finds itself in short presentifying the register of the Real.

When, at the start, I questioned myself about what the unconscious was, I only intended to take it at the level of what analytic experience effectively constitutes. At that time, I had in no way elaborated discourse as such; the notion, the function of discourse was only to come later. And it is in so far as discourse is where there is situated a social bond and then, it must be said, a political one, it is inasmuch as this discourse situates it, that I spoke about discourse. But I started from experience alone, and in this experience, it is clear that language, that something which undisputedly is required by the practice of analysis, that the practice of analysis is founded on a pathos, on a pathos that must be situated, and it is a matter of situating how one intervenes in it.

To intervene gives rise to the notion of act. It is also essential to think out, this notion of act, and to demonstrate how it can come to consist in a saying. At one time, as they say, I thought I should point out that the analyst, not only operates by the word alone, but is specified by only operating with that. Refusing this intervention on the body, for example, which passes by the absorption, in any form whatsoever, of (212) substances that then enter into the chemical dynamics of the

body, for example medications, as they are called, good. The point that I am at in it, is simply something, the circuit, is that not so, it is the circle that you see drawn here. The fact is that there is a link – but it is a matter of knowing which one, between sex and the word. It is clear that sex involves the duality of corporal structure. A duality which is reflected in a cascade, as one might say, about the duality for example of the soma and the germen, on the opposition between the living and the inanimate world, etc.

Is the notion of duality enough to homogenise everything that is two? You see right away that this is not true. The simple enumeration that I carried out, is that not so, of the duality of corporal structure, of the duality of the soma and the germen, of the opposition between the living and the inanimate world, ought to be enough for you to see that this polarity, to call it by its name, in no way homogenises the series of poles that are at stake, is that not so. It does not in any way suffice to ensure that the notion of world, or universe, is correlated to this unthinkable thing which is the subject, in so far as it is supposed to be what? The reflection, the consciousness of the aforesaid world. And this by reason of what I will call the pathos of meanings. There is no need to marvel at the fact that there is a being to know what? The rest, is that not so, and it is obviously from all time that the metaphor of the sexual relationship has been cherished for this patent duality. Patent, but specified, local, distinct from other dualities. Hence the accent given to the word 'knowing' (*connaître*), hence also the idea of active and passive, without one being able to know, moreover, in this polarity described as the subject and the world, where is the active, where is the passive. There is no need for an active for the pathos to

subsist and attest itself in our lived experience, as they say, is that not so. We suffer. That is what is at stake when we are dealing with (213) analysis. We act also in order to get out of it, of this suffering, and on occasion, we put a lot into it. It is a matter of knowing what our two persons, as they say, namely, two animals situated by a very specified political organisation that I called a discourse, it is a matter of knowing what is the saying of an exchange ritualised in words, and what is called, what is supposed to be at stake in this exercise, namely, the unconscious.

There I am trying to tell you: there is some knowledge in the Real, which functions without our being able to know how the articulation is made in what we are used to see being realised. Is this what is at stake and what we would indeed have to admit, is that not so, as stemming from an organising thought? This is the option that religion and metaphysics take, and in this respect they are on the same side; they join hands in the suppositions that they ordain for being.

So then what I want to say, is that unconscious knowledge, the one Freud supposes, is distinguished from this knowledge in the Real in such a way, that whatever of it there is, even science manages to make this knowledge providential, namely, something, a subject, guarantees it as harmonic. What Freud puts forward – but I note in passing that it is not all – is that it is not providential, that it is dramatic. Arising from something which starts from a default in being, a disharmony between thought and the world, and that this knowledge is at the heart of this something that we name ek-sistence, because it insists from outside and it is disturbing. It is in this sense that the sexual relationship shows itself in the individual – whom I am not the only one to characterise as a speaking being, is that not so – shows itself to be disturbed. This in contrast with everything that seems to happen among other beings. It is even from this that there has come the distinction between nature and culture. And very specifically this nature, as I might say, we must indeed characterise as not being as

natural as all that. Because from where we are living, nature is not indispensable (*ne s'impose pas*). For us what is indispensable, is a different mode, a different mode of knowledge, a knowledge which is in no way attributable to a subject who is supposed to preside over its order, who is supposed to preside over its harmony, and it is in this that, first of all, in my first statements, to characterise Freud's unconscious, there was a formula that I find... – that I came back to on several occasions – that I find I put forward at Sainte-Anne, which is the following: that God does not believe in God.

(214) To say: 'God does not believe in God', is exactly the same thing as to say 'there is something of the unconscious'. Of course, given the level of the audience, is that not so, that I had then, namely, psychoanalysts as they were able to present themselves at that time, that had no effect. It had no effect except for the fact that they asked me the question whether, whether I in short believed in him. There is someone since, in short, is that not so, who defined me by saying that I was someone who believed he was Lacan, is that not so, it was the way in which I had myself defined Napoleon, but... about the end of his life, in short, when in sum, my God, he was mad, is that not so, because to believe in one's own name, in short, is... is the very definition of it. Good. Contrary to what someone called Gabriel Marcel imagined, in short, I do not believe in Lacan. But I ask the question of whether there is not a strict consistency between what Freud puts forward as being the unconscious, and the fact that there is no one to believe in God, especially not himself, because it is in this that the knowledge of the unconscious consists.

The knowledge of the unconscious is completely contrary to instinct, namely, to what presides, in short, not simply over the idea of nature, but over every idea of harmony. It is inasmuch as, somewhere, there is this break which ensures that the most natural thing, as one might say, the one that appears from our point of view, when we look, indeed animals, are completely different, objects in the world: we construct

on this all the extrapolations that we can. What we note is something which seems to produce something between two bodies which indisputably is completely different, moreover, among most species, than the relationship of the body described as masculine to the one that is acknowledged as feminine. Namely, that there is in sum between these two bodies, I would say very little resemblance, while among animals, what is striking is the degree to which male and female – let us say the word to go quickly and to indicate my thought – are narcissistic.

So then, I would like to put forward today, because I must all the same put forward something, something which is important, is that not so. It is that if I put the accent on the fact that what creates an obstacle to the sexual relationship, is nothing other than this function that I found myself the last time rewriting on the board in the form of and it is not for nothing that I wrote it thus, mathematically. It is inasmuch as what can be written, I trust to be in the right direction to (215) reach the Real. What does that mean? Is it because here I sometimes happen – in the whole measure that you allow me because of this microphone – to write things on the board, is it this that supports my relation with you as it is established in this discourse? I do not believe so, I ceaselessly question it: what I want to highlight here, is something which implies, which is that I say, I always say the truth, and that this is inscribed in the Symbolic, I always say the truth not simply because I repeat it, I open up the path that makes a saying exist, and that your relationship with me in this situation, is that this makes you enjoy. I have more than once asked the question, in short, I turn around it, but what is certain, is that here there is to be found the accent, in short, of this proper saying that I am trying to state inasmuch as elsewhere no doubt, I take support on writing, but that it is on the side of writing that there is concentrated what I try to question about the unconscious when I say that the unconscious, is something in the Real.

I said 'knowledge' (*savoir*), on the one hand, but I also underlined the following: that if this dimension of knowledge touches the edges of the Real, that it is by grasping, by playing with what I would call, in short, the folds, the edges of the Real, it is inasmuch as I have faith in the fact that writing alone supports this Real as such, that I can say something that is simply orientated, orientated simply. Because to say the truth is, as I might say, within everybody's reach, and in a certain way, for us in the analytic experience the truth is our material (*éttoffe*). In what way is it our material? In the fact that it is the truth about this pathos, about this suffering that I designated as such, which leads to this circumscribing of an experience structured like a discourse. And I tried to give the articulation of these discourses, but a written articulation: it is only by this that something can bear witness to the Real in it.

So then what is at stake when the last time, I recalled to you the four terms, the four punctuations, the written punctuations of the identification that I would call on this occasion not 'sexual' but 'sexed', when I recalled that the Borromean knot allowed there to be situated each of these writings in which something can be mapped out starting from the primal knot. This knot that I showed you as best I could with these rings, the rings of string that I held in my hand, in the four quadrants that they determine, that they determine starting from a (216) first flattening out, and from a first flattening out in that two of these rings must – and I said two and not the same ones, not the same since moreover, if it were the same it would come back to the same place. Namely, that there must be two of them, two different ones for us to be able to reach a quadrant that is homologous to the first that was flattened out. I thought I was able, able at that moment to show you on the board in a way that was obviously risky, since, as you were able to see – and to my great exasperation – I became entangled in it, is that not so. I became entangled in it because, a curious thing, there is in sum, this is what this experience signifies, there is something of the...of the still not mastered in – you know it, I pointed it out to you,

I remind you – of the still not mastered in what is of the order of knots. It is strange, it is singular, even though already something was able to be put forward about it, that the Borromean knot had been identified to the plait of six movements, six, and not three, as it might seem to be able to appear there. It is already something, and today what I am showing you...to put...to refer to what I already marked for you, already wrote, already wrote as being the simplest form, the simplest form of the Borromean knot which is very exactly the following. Namely, the one where there is nowhere a third ring, the third ring here being represented only by a straight line that you will allow me to suppose to be infinite. It is an altogether capital and even illuminating supposition in itself, I would say. Illuminating in that it is very well known, it is the first remark that any elaboration of knots, that of Artin, for example, whose volume you know perhaps – some of you in any case have surely got hold of it – that of someone like Artin who says the following: the fact is that there is only a single way on a simple line to affirm that the knot (217) cannot be unknotted, it is either one thing or the other: either the two ends in effect stretch to infinity, which makes it impossible not to recognise anything whatsoever that is formed in a knot, or the two ends are connected, in which case it can be checked out whether or not it is indeed a knot.

What kind of remark does this suggest to us? The fact is that if this

straight line, this straight line of which the knot consists, the Borromean one on this occasion, and which is specified by the fact of crossing the knots, I would say, in a way that cuts the first inasmuch as the first cuts the second, which at the same time requires alternation, namely, that it will cut the first and will be cut by the

second that it encounters in so far as it is itself within the first ring and that it will then cut the blue ring twice just as it will be cut twice by the green ring, the blue ring and the green ring being distinguished by the fact that it is the blue ring that cuts the green ring.

It is then from a triadic relationship that what makes the knot is situated on this occasion: and you can see that the infinite straight line requires, requires that it cannot be given any orientation. For where does it start? It must be known whether there is a start in order that with respect to this start an orientation can be taken.

On the other hand, it is enough for this infinite straight line to be joined end to end in a ring, to express ourselves in a way that does not imply any geometrical shape but simply a consistency, for us the very fact that we give it the consistency of a ring, there appears something which is of the order of orientation, not on what I called just now this straight line that all of a sudden I turned into a ring, but in the knot itself, for you see – marked it for you each time by a correspondence – (218) that it is by the fact that the individual specified here as being orange or yellow, it is by the fact that it is flattened out in the form of

a ring, it is by this fact and by none other, that there appears here this orientation that I can call laevogyratory. If I force myself to follow the direction that each of the three indicates to me, outside of a knot that they make, while from the other side, the rings appear quite differently, namely here, dextrogyratory. It is in so far as here we have the things under this form that we can say that what, in the other,

is presented under a certain mode is precisely, in the other form, inverted.

It is clear that it is inasmuch as we take things in this form that we have here a dextrogyratory form, just as it is inasmuch as we take the things here under the edge, under the opposite side to the point where we have folded back the orange line, that we have here a laevogyratory form. That means that what appears here, is something of that order. At the same time we note the following: that as compared to what is inverted, namely, the orange line, there is inversion of the side: here the blue line is on the right, here it is on the left, and it is in a relationship of extremity with respect to the orange line that the green line finds itself. Namely, that it is easy to understand, this is what I tried to show you the last time, namely, that in folding back one of these rings of string with respect to the two others, what we find of course is that it is elsewhere, elsewhere on one of these circles, namely, [*a slip*] the one here, the green, that it is the one that is here, the blue, that it is elsewhere we find that we cut it, in other words, that the yellow line [*previously called orange*] inasmuch as it is the one that we have folded back, is continued and cuts.

There is then every time something that changes, that changes in the orientation of the knot. Each time we pass from one quadrant, from one quadrant into another, there is something that changes in the orientation of the knot. And that is why the knot, the knots are specified four by four, that they have this relationship among one another that I qualified the other day as tetrahedral, and where I wanted to recognise what is involved in the mode of four places reserved for the modes of identification, the identification called sexed. It is obviously striking that you see that today again, is that not so, I found myself, even in this ultra-simple form, in difficulty. Is this not enough to make you sense, in the difficulty in demonstrating it (219) myself in writing, what is involved in the effect, the effect of folding back, inasmuch as already what is at stake is one of the terms

chosen as such and in a way previously distinguished from the two others.

It is certain that it is in this that this object of writing presents us with something particularly gripping: it is that here is a writing that in a way, I will say, we master with difficulty; it is striking enough that already in a second phase, namely, after having believed that I would get out of it easily by this artifice, that I found myself anew, perplexed, entangled with this writing. Is there not here the sign of this something that has presided over the aversion, the quite striking aversion in mathematics, an aversion that happened with respect to what the knots are. For after all, it would not have been inconceivable that this something which was drawn in a developed geometry which effectively functioned just like a writing, a writing by which science was initiated, I mean in Greek geometry, it is quite striking to see that this might also have been able to be in an effort concerning the squeezing for example that is produced when we set aside here this knot with respect to the line which serves to constitute it properly speaking as knot, just as in folding it here, we see quite manifestly that we squeeze something, we squeeze, what can we say except what is at stake, namely, something squeezed, there is nothing more to be said about it. And it is this squeezed that is in question, that is in question in this function through which, in order to say the relationship of the Symbolic, of the Imaginary and of the Real, I say that it is here that there is taken up something, something which, on this occasion, is indeed in effect the subject. Again I must try to illuminate this something, try to illuminate it in a way by individualising what indeed each one of these rings indeed is, namely, how the Symbolic differs from the Imaginary and differs from the Real.

To illuminate very quickly, as best I can, no more, this lantern, I would say that the Symbolic, I would put forward that the Symbolic is of the order of the One, this One that, the last time, I already put forward to you as constituting in the logical order that our friend

Boole tries to construct as being the universe. I pointed out to you at the same time that there is something disputable in this; for to make (220) the universe something of One is already to posit a hypothesis over against this and along the very line that Boole proceeds in posing the formula:

$$x(1-x) = 0$$

Namely: *everything that is not x, is what is x subtracted from the Universe, and their product, their intersection, their encounter is strictly equal to zero.* It is on this foundation that Boole believes he is able to advance a formalisation of what is involved in logic.

As opposed to this, I propose, I propose to give to the One the value of that in which, through my discourse, there consists, there consists phallic enjoyment in so far as it is what creates an obstacle to the sexual relationship. It is inasmuch as phallic enjoyment – and there, let us say that I make an organ of it, I suppose it to be incarnated by what, in the man, corresponds to it as organ – it is inasmuch as this enjoyment takes on this privileged emphasis, privileged in such a way that it stamps itself on all our experience, our analytic experience. It is around this, because it is only there, around, around the sexed individual himself who supports it, it is inasmuch as this enjoyment is privileged that the whole of analytic experience is organised. And I propose, and I propose that it should be to it that there is referred the function of the One in the logical formalisation as Boole promotes it.

In other words, that if there is signifier – and signifier is not sign. The signifier is distinguished from the sign in the fact that we can make the sign circulate in an objective world. The sign is what goes from the emitter to the receiver and which to the receiver gives a sign of the emitter. But it is quite otherwise in the form of what I called the message received in an inverted form that the signifier is posited as what it is in so far as it has a relationship to another signifier that it gives rise to a subject, namely, in its configuration. What is suggested by this, is that in so far as something which is designated in Boole by

an  $x$ , something is precipitated as signifier, this signifier is in a way stolen, subtracted, borrowed from phallic enjoyment itself. And it is in so far as the signifier is the substitute for it that the signifier itself is found to create an obstacle to there ever being written what I called the sexual relationship, I mean something which was supposed to be able to be written  $xR$  and then  $y$ . Namely, that in no way can there be written in a mathematical way what is involved in what is presented as a function with regard to the phallic function itself. I mean that it is in so far as what is written is:

negation of the phallic function itself and completely opposite that there is no such thing, namely,

that there does not exist an  $x$  to deny the function of  $x$ , to be opposed to it, and that inversely I introduce at the level of the Universal this something which, sticking to the phallic function, is characterised on the one hand by a universal quantifier, an inverted capital — you know that this is how it is written:

but in the other, it puts a negative bar, namely, it says that there is somewhere a function that is distinguished from it by being ‘not-all’ (*pas-toute*).

Not all, what does that mean? The least that can be said is that there are two of them. It is in the measure where at the level where there is articulated this ‘not all’, there is not just one enjoyment. Here do not go too quickly, here do not go too quickly and do not start supposing that what I am distinguishing, is something or other like that which sexually would correspond to this so called division of enjoyment called clitoral from an enjoyment called vaginal. That is not what is at stake. What I am talking about is this distinction that must be made between phallic enjoyment in so far as in the speaking being it predominates and that it is from there that there has been stolen the whole function of significance. That there is a distinction to be made

between this prevalent enjoyment in so far as it creates an obstacle to what is involved in the sexual relationship, that there is a distinction to be made between this enjoyment and that which, alongside – I introduced it to you the other day, I think sufficiently with what was involved in the tree, the tree described as that of science, of the knowledge (*science*) of Good and Evil – there is the fact that undoubtedly the animal, the animal is distinguished by subsisting not simply in a body, but that this body as such is only identified, only has (222) identity, not as has been said from all time traditionally, of thought, of this something or other which by the fact that it thinks would make it be, but from the fact that it enjoys itself. I mean that there is not only this apperception, apprehension, sensation, pressure, touch, sight, or any other mode of appropriation through the senses, it is only in so far as it consists and that it consists in a body, what is at stake is an enjoyment and an enjoyment which is found according to our experience to be of a different order than what is involved in phallic enjoyment.

This is how I began from the beginning of my teaching by authenticating, by making original from the imaginary relation, made reference to what I would call the homology, the resemblance, precisely this part which is so hesitant, when it is the speaking being that is at stake, the homology of bodies. That in the animal we must clearly note that phallic enjoyment whatever it may be does not have the same prevalence, does not have the same weight, the same weight in a way of opposition that it has with respect to enjoyment in so far as two bodies enjoy one another. This is the break through which there is damaged, as one might say, in analytic experience everything that is organised about love. That if one speaks as I said, I recalled it earlier, if one speaks about the knot, it is to make an allusion to the embrace, to the hug. But very different is the way in which there irrupts into the life of each one this enjoyment which, either belongs, as one might say to one of the bodies, but to the other only appears in the form, as I might say, of reference to another as such, even if something in the

body can give it a slight support, I mean at the level of this organ which is called the clitoris.

It is in so far as we must conceive of the Symbolic as stolen, subtracted from the order One of phallic enjoyment and in so far as the relationship of bodies *qua* two, by this very fact, cannot but go by way of the reference, the reflection onto something which is different to the Symbolic, which is distinct from it, and it is to know what here and now appears of the three in the slightest writing. What language in a way sanctions, is the fact that in its formalisation it requires something other than the simple homophony of the saying. The fact is that it is in a letter, and that is why the signifier shows, shows this precipitation through which the speaking being can have access to the Real. It is inasmuch as from all time every time it was a matter of (223) configuring something which is supposed to be in a way the encounter of what is emitted, of what is emitted as a complaint, as a statement of the truth, every time it is a matter of everything that is involved in this half-saying, an alternating, contrasting, half-saying, an alternating chant of what leaves the speaking being separated in two halves every time this is what is at stake, it is always, it is always from a reference to writing that what can be situated in language finds its Real, and it is inasmuch as I will try to push further for you this reference to the Real, to the Real as third, that I will leave that for today, apologising for not having been able to advance further.