

**THE SEMINAR OF JACQUES LACAN**

**BOOK XVII**

*Psychoanalysis upside down/The reverse side of psychoanalysis*

*1969-1970*

**Translated by Cormac Gallagher from unedited French manuscripts with an eye to  
the official published version**

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## Translator's Note

I have been asked why I undertook the translation of this seminar when an official translation had been signalled. There are a number of reasons:

*First:* The reading-group at St Vincent's University Hospital, for whom my translations are primarily intended, needed a text to work on in autumn 2000. We had sight of a first draft of the official translation but it was clearly unfinished and not adequate for our needs.

*Secondly:* A shadow of suspicion hangs over the official French version of the seminar. It was published in March 1991 at the same time as the seminar on *Transference*. The latter was so flawed that it gave rise to considerable criticism from serious students of Lacan's work, recently exemplified by Moustapha Safouan's very negative assessment in *Lacanian* published by Fayard in 2001. As a result, a corrected French version has now appeared. The published version of the current seminar has not received the same attention from critics but one is surely justified in wondering whether it too may not contain errors.

*Thirdly:* There is no critical French version of this seminar to compare with the acclaimed *Stécriture* version of *Transference* – cannibalised but not acknowledged in the corrected version. But when the official French text is compared to the 'pirate editions' that have been widely used by students over the years, a number of rather curious editorial decisions come to light. Here are the most obvious:

- The four replies to the questions of *Radiophonie* read by Lacan to his seminar are omitted.
- Only one of Lacan's two memorable visits to the University of Vincennes is reported.
- The discussion on *Hosea* with Professor André Caquot has been truncated and omits many of the lively exchanges with Lacan.
- A number of passages in the 'pirate' editions ring truer and are certainly more vivid than the corresponding ones in the official version.

*Fourthly:* These gaps and changes made me think it worthwhile, at least for our little group and for those who use these translations, to try to produce something that may be more complete and closer to the spirit of the seminar. I am also trying to highlight the need for a good critical edition of Jacques Lacan's seminars in French because only this will provide the basis for adequate translations.

Dublin  
October 2001

**Seminar 1: Wednesday 26 November 1969**

(1) I cannot prevent myself, once again, from questioning this audience which has stood by me, in every sense of the term, particularly today, by following me, for some of you in the third of my shifts. Before returning to this question, I can do no less than specify, so as to thank those I should, how I have come to be here. It is due to a loan that the *Faculté de droit* has kindly made to several of my colleagues at the *École des Haute Etudes* with whom it has kindly associated me. I would like to thank, and I believe I have your endorsement, the *Faculté de droit*, and in particular its higher authorities, most notably the Dean.

As my announcement has perhaps informed you, I will only be speaking here – not that the place was not offered me for every Wednesday – the second and third Wednesdays of each month, thereby freeing me, no doubt, for other duties, the other Wednesdays. And in particular, I believe I can announce that the first Wednesday of each month - at least for some of the time - that is, every second one, and therefore the first Wednesday of December, February, April and June, I will go to Vincennes to give, not my seminar as was erroneously announced, but what in contrast, and to emphasise that it is something different, I have taken care to call four *Impromptus*, to which I have given a humorous title which you can learn about on the spot where it has already been advertised.

Since, as you can see, I am happy to leave certain information in suspense, I shall take advantage of this to air a scruple that stayed with me after the reception I gave someone, because on reflection it was not very friendly. Not that I wanted it that way, but that was how in fact it turned out. One day somebody who is perhaps here, and will no doubt not make herself known, accosted me in the street just as I was stepping into a taxi. She pulled over on her scooter and said to me, "Are you Dr Lacan?" "Yes, I am", I said to her. "Why?" "Are you going to start (2) your seminar again?" "Yes, of course, soon." "Where?" And then, I undoubtedly had my reasons for this, I hope she believes me, I answered, "You shall see." She then took off on her little scooter, at such speed that I was left both nonplussed and full of remorse. It is this remorse that made me want to convey my apologies to her today, if she is here, in the hope that she will forgive me. In fact, this is surely an opportunity for observing that it is never, in any way at all, through the extreme behaviour of someone else that one shows oneself to be, at least apparently, exasperated. It is always because someone else's extreme behaviour happens to coincide with your own. It is because at the time I was already in a certain state of exaggerated preoccupation that no doubt I thus expressed myself in a very inappropriate way.

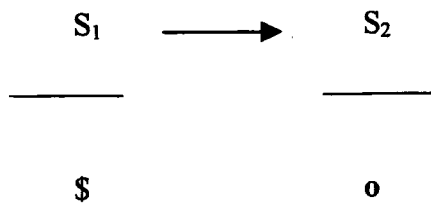
So then, let us go into what is involved in what we are tackling this year. I thought I should call this seminar The reverse side of psychoanalysis (*La psychoanalyse à l'envers*). You must not think that this title owes anything at all to the current situation that believes it is in the process of turning a certain number of places and formulations upside down. As proof, I will only mention this. In a text from 1966 – and specifically in one of these introductions that I wrote when I was collecting my *Ecrits* and which punctuate this collection – a text that is called *On my predecessors*, on page 68, I make a specific allusion, or more exactly I characterise what my discourse is about as 'taking up again the Freudian project', I say, 'from the reverse side'. So it was written down well before the events.

What does that mean? Last year, with great insistence, I distinguished discourse as a necessary structure that goes well beyond words, which are always more or less occasional. What I prefer, I said, and even wrote one day on the board, is *a discourse without words*. The fact is that, in all truth, it is well able to subsist without words. It subsists in certain fundamental relations that literally could not subsist without language. Through the instrument of language a number of stable relations are established within which there can be inscribed something that is much larger, that goes much further than actual utterances. There is no need for these utterances, for our conduct, for our acts, to be inscribed within the framework of certain primordial statements. If this were not so, how could we account for what we rediscover, in our experience and especially psychoanalytic experience – analytic experience only being evoked in this connection because it has designated it – how could we account for what we rediscover under the aspect of the superego?

(3) There are structures, we cannot designate them in any other way, to characterise what can be disengaged from this “in the form of, *en forme de*” a particular usage of which I stressed last year. Namely, what happens by virtue of a fundamental relation, the one that I define as that of one signifier to another signifier. This is the fundamental relationship. From this there emerges something that we call the subject – through the signifier which, on this occasion, functions as representative of this subject for another signifier.

How is this fundamental form to be situated? This year without further ado, we are going to write this form in a new way, no longer as we did last year as the exteriority of the signifier  $S_1$  which is the point of departure of our definition of discourse as we are going to emphasise it in our first step. I put down the signifier  $S_1$  to show what results from its relationship to the circle whose outline I am drawing here. I constructed a circle marked with the sign O, that is to say the field of the big Other. but let us simplify it. We will consider the battery of signifiers to be

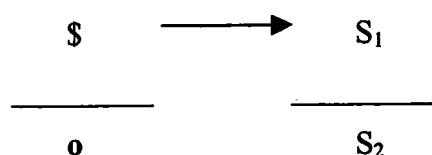
designated by the sign  $S_2$ . It is a matter of those that are already there, because at the point of origin at which we place ourselves in order to fix what discourse is about, discourse conceived as the status of the statement,  $S_1$  is to be seen as intervening. It intervenes on a signifying battery that we have no right ever to take as dispersed, as not already forming the network of what is called a knowledge. What arises initially from the moment that  $S_1$  comes to represent something, through its intervention in the field defined, at the point we have come to, as the field already structured by a knowledge, its sup-position, its *hupokeimenom*, is the subject, in so far as it represents this specific trait, as distinguished from the living individual. The latter is certainly its locus, its reference point, but it is not of the order of what the subject brings into play by virtue of the status of knowledge.



No doubt it is around this word “knowledge” that there exists the ambiguous point that we have to stress today, and I have already rendered your ears sensitive to it by taking several paths, tracks, moments, flashes of light. Shall I mention it for those of you who noted it down, for whom it is still trotting around in their heads? Last year I described knowledge as ‘the enjoyment of the Other’. A funny business. It is a formulation which, to be honest, had never yet been put forward. (4) It is not new, since already last year I made it sound sufficiently convincing, and upheld it without any special protests. This is one of the rendezvous that I announced for this year.

Let me complete first of all what initially had two legs, then three, let us give it its fourth. I think I have been insisting on it for long enough, and especially last year, since last year the seminar was designed for this – *From an Other to the other*, I called it. This other, the little other, with

its famous *the*, was what we designated at this level, that of algebra, which is a signifying structure, as the *o*-object. At this level of signifying structure, we only have to find out how it operates. Thus we are free to see what happens if we write things after giving the entire system a quarter turn, this famous quarter turn that I have been speaking about for long enough, and on different occasions – notably since the appearance of what I wrote under the title *Kant with Sade* – for people to realise that one day it would not be limited to the schema *Z*, and that there are other reasons for this quarter turn than this pure accident of imaginary representation.



This is an example. To put things clearly, if it seems justified to say that the chain, the sequence of letters of this algebra, cannot be disturbed by undertaking this operation that I have described as a quarter turn, we will obtain four structures, no more, the first of which, in a way, shows you the starting point. It is very easy quickly to produce on paper the three remaining ones. This is only so as to specify an apparatus that has absolutely nothing obligatory about it, as one would say from a certain perspective, nothing abstracted from any reality. On the contrary, it is already inscribed in what functions as this reality I was speaking about earlier, that of discourse, which is already in the world and which upholds it, at least the one we know. Not only is it already inscribed but it forms part of its arches.

Of course the form of letters in which we inscribe this symbolic chain is of little importance provided it is distinct – this is enough for something to be manifested about constant relations. Such is this formula. What does it mean? It situates a moment. What we will subsequently develop in our discourse will tell us what sense it is appropriate to give to this moment. This means that it is at the very instant at which the  $S_1$

intervenes in the field that is already constituted by other signifiers in so far as they are already articulated to one another as such, that in intervening within another system this \$ emerges, which is what we (5) have called the subject as divided. Its entire status is to be reconsidered this year, in the strongest sense. Well, we have always stressed that, from this trajectory there emerges something to be defined as a loss. This is what is designated by the letter that is to be read as o.

We have, of course, not failed to indicate the point from which we extracted this function of lost-object: from Freud's discourse about the specific sense of repetition in the speaking being. Because, it is in no way a question in repetition of just any effect of memory in the biological sense. Repetition has a certain relationship with the limit of this subject and this knowledge, which is called enjoyment (*jouissance*). This is why it is a logical articulation that is at stake in the formula that 'knowledge is the enjoyment of the Other'. Of the Other, of course, in so far as – for there is no other Other – the intervention of the signifier makes it emerge as a field. You will no doubt tell me that here, in sum, we are still going around in circles – the signifier, the Other, knowledge, the signifier, the Other, knowledge, etc. But this is where the term enjoyment enables us to show the point of insertion of the system. In doing this we are no doubt going outside what is authentically involved in knowledge, what is recognisable as knowledge, and are referring ourselves to the limits, to an outside field as such, the one that Freud's word dares to confront. What results from everything that this word articulates? Not knowledge, but confusion. Well then, from this very confusion we have to draw some reflections, since it is a matter of limits, and get out of the system. Get out of it in virtue of what? A thirst for meaning (*sens*), as if the system needed it! The system has no needs, but we beings of weakness, such as we will find ourselves to be over the course of this year at every turning point, we need meaning.

Well then, here is one. It is perhaps not the true one. But then, it is certain that we are going to see that there are lots of these *it is perhaps*



*not the true one*, and this insistence properly suggests to us the resignation (*démission* [a slip?]), the dimension of truth. Let us just note the very ambiguity that the word *Trieb* has taken on in psychoanalytic stupidity, instead of people applying themselves to grasping how this category of the word *Trieb* is articulated. It is not without forbears, I mean the word has already a use which goes back a long way, as far back as Kant, but what it is used for in psychoanalytic discourse would make it worthwhile for us not to rush in and translate it as *instinct*. But after all, it is not for nothing that these slippages occur, and though for a long time we have been insisting that this translation is an aberration, we have the right to take advantage of it. Not of course to consecrate, and above all in this respect, the notion of instinct, but to remind you of (6) what, in Freud's discourse, makes it something we can live with – and simply to try to make people 'inhabit' this discourse in a different way. In the popular mind, the idea of instinct is indeed the idea of a knowledge – a knowledge whose meaning we are unable to give, but which is supposed, and not without reason, to have as its result that life subsists. If we give a meaning to what Freud says about the pleasure principle as essential to the functioning of life, because it is the one that maintains tension at the lowest level, is this not already saying what his discourse will subsequently demonstrate as necessary for him? Namely, the death drive. This notion became necessary for him because of the development of an experience, the analytic experience, in so far as it is a structure of discourse. Because you must not forget that it is not by looking at how people behave that the death drive can be discovered. We have the death drive here. We have it where something happens between you and what I am saying. I said *what I am saying*, I am not speaking about what I am. What is the use, since in short this can be seen thanks to your presence. It is not that it speaks in my favour. It speaks sometimes, and most often, instead of me. In any case, what justifies that here I am saying something, is what I would call the essence of this manifestation [demonstration?], constituted by the diverse, successive audiences that I have attracted according to the places where I have spoken. I was particularly keen to add on

somewhere the following remark, because today, when I am in a new place, seemed to me to be the day to do so. The place has always carried weight in giving its style to what I called this manifestation.

I do not want to let the opportunity pass for saying that it has a relationship with the usual sense of the term *interpretation*. What I said by, for, and in your presence is, on each of these moments that I have defined as geographical locations, always already interpreted. I will come back to it, because this will have to take its place in the little revolving quadripodes I am starting to make use of today. But so as not to leave you completely in the void, I will point out something to you straight away. If I had to interpret what I said at *Sainte-Anne* between 1953 and 1963, I mean pin down its interpretation – interpretation in a contrary sense to analytic interpretation, which makes you feel how much analytic interpretation itself goes against the grain of the ordinary meaning of the term – I would say that what was most tangible, the chord that was really struck was fun. The most exemplary character of this audience, which was medical no doubt – but then there were some participants who were not doctors – was one that punctuated my discourse with a sort of continuous stream of gags. This is what I will take as most characteristic of what was, over ten years, the essence of (7) my manifestation. One further proof is that things only started to go sour from the day I dedicated a trimester to the analysis of wit.

This is a big parenthesis, and I cannot go any further in this direction, but I must add what was the characteristic of interpretation in the place where you left me the last time, the *Ecole normale supérieure*. E.N.S. – it is absolutely magnificent in initials. It revolves around being. One must always know how to profit from literal equivocations, above all when they are the first three letters of the word *enseigner*. Well then, it was in *rue d'Ulm* that it was noticed that what I was saying was a teaching. Before, this was not at all obvious. It was not even accepted. The professors, and especially the doctors, were very disturbed. The fact that it was not at all medical left a strong doubt over the fact that

this was a teaching, until these young chaps from the *Cahiers pour l'analyse*, came along, formed in a place where – as I had said a long time before, precisely at the time of the gags – people know nothing from their formation, but they teach it admirably. That they should have interpreted what I was saying as that does indeed have a sense. It is a different interpretation!

Naturally, no one knows what will happen here. I do not know whether the law students will come, but in truth, this would be crucial for interpretation. This will probably be by far the most important phase of the three, since it is a question this year of taking psychoanalysis from the reverse side, and perhaps, precisely, of giving it its status, in the sense of the term that is called juridical. In any case, it has always surely been concerned with the structure of discourse, and to the  $n^{\text{th}}$  degree. If that is not what law is, if that is not where one touches on how discourse structures the real world, where would it be? That is why we are no less at our place here than elsewhere and that it is not simply for reasons of convenience that I accepted this godsend. But it is also what causes you the least disturbance about my travels, at least for those who were accustomed to the other place. I am not sure that for parking it is very convenient, but then for that you still have *rue d'Ulm*. Let us take things up again.

We had come to our instinct and our knowledge as situated in short, with respect to what Bichat defines as life. *Life*, he says – and this is the most profound definition, it is not at all just a smart remark if you look at it closely - *is the totality of all the forces that resist death*. If you read what Freud says about life's resistance to the descent towards Nirvana, as the death drive was also designated at the time he introduced it, no doubt this descent towards a return to the inanimate is present at the heart of the analytic experience, which is an experience of discourse. (8) Freud goes that far. But what constitutes, he says, the subsistence of this bubble – really this image is required when you read these pages – is the fact that life only returns there along paths that are always the

same, and which it has once traced out. What is it, if not the true sense of what we find in the notion of instinct in terms of the involvement of a knowledge. This track, this pathway, is known to us, it is ancestral knowledge. And what is this knowledge, if we do not forget that Freud introduces what he himself calls beyond the pleasure principle, which is not for all that overthrown. The proof is that knowledge is what causes life to stop at a certain limit on the way to enjoyment. For the path towards death – this is what is in question in is a discourse on masochism – the path towards death is nothing other than what is called enjoyment. There is a primitive relationship between knowledge and enjoyment, and it is here that there is inserted what emerges when the apparatus of the signifier appears. From now on it is conceivable that we are linking up with the function of this emergence of the signifier. This is enough, you will say, what need do we have to explain everything? And the origin of language, why not? Everyone knows that in order to structure a knowledge correctly you have to abandon the question of origins and that what we are doing in articulating this is superfluous with respect to what we have to develop this year, which is situated at the level of structures. It is a useless search for meaning. But as I have already said, let us take note of what we are.

I will go on then. It is at the joint of an enjoyment – and not just any one, it must undoubtedly remain opaque – it is at the joint of one enjoyment privileged above all others, not because it is sexual enjoyment, since what this enjoyment designates as being at the joint is, as I have just said, the loss of sexual enjoyment, it is castration, it is in relation to this joint with sexual enjoyment that there emerges, in the Freudian fable of repetition, the engendering of something radical that gives body to a literally articulated schema. And this is what  $S_1$ , having emerged, first moment, repeats itself for  $S_2$ . From this entering into a relationship the subject emerges, the subject which something represents, a certain loss, and it is worthwhile to have made this effort towards meaning in order to understand its ambiguity. Because it is not for nothing that last year I called this same object, that I had designated

moreover as the one around which the entire dialectic of frustration organises itself in analysis, *surplus enjoying* (*plus-de-jouir*). This means that the loss of the object is also the gap, the hole, opened up to something which one does not know whether it is the representation of (9) the lack in enjoying, which situates itself with respect to the progress of knowledge, in so far as it takes on there a completely different accent through being henceforth knowledge punctuated by the signifier. Is it even the same?

The relationship to enjoyment is suddenly accentuated by the still virtual function called that of desire. Moreover, it is for this reason that I articulate as surplus enjoying what appears here, and not by force or by a transgression. Let us put a halt, I beg you, to this nonsense. What analysis shows if it shows anything – I am appealing here to those whose soul is a little bit different to the one that we could say, as Barrès says of the cadaver, talks rubbish – is very precisely that nothing is transgressed. To make one's way is not the same as transgressing. Seeing a half open door does not mean going through it. We shall have the opportunity of rediscovering what I am in the process of introducing.

This is not transgression then but rather breaking into, falling into the field of something that is of the order of enjoyment – an extra bonus. Well then, perhaps that is even what one has to pay for. That is why I told you last year that in Marx, the small *o* which is recognised there as functioning at the level that is articulated – by the discourse of the analyst, not by any other – as surplus enjoyment. Here you have what Marx discovers as what is really happening in surplus value. Naturally, Marx is not the one who invented surplus value. Except that before him nobody knew how to place it. It was the same ambiguous place as the one I have just mentioned, of excess work, of surplus work. What does this pay for, he says, if not precisely enjoyment, which must go somewhere. What is disturbing is that if one pays for it, one has it, and then when one has it, it is very urgent to squander it. If one does not squander it, it has all sorts of consequences.

Let us leave the matter in suspense for the moment. What am I in the process of doing? I am starting to get you to admit, simply by having situated it, that this four-legged apparatus, with four positions, is able to help define four radical discourses. It is not by chance that I gave you this form first, but there is no reason why I should not have begun with a different one, with the second for example. But it is a fact, determined by historical reasons that this initial form, the one that expresses itself on the basis of this signifier that represents a subject for another signifier, has a very special importance, in so far as in what we are going to state this year, it will be pinpointed as being, of the four, the articulation of the discourse of the Master.

(10) I think that there is no point in telling you about the historical importance of the discourse of the Master, since all the same, you are, on the whole, recruited through this sieve that is called the university, and because of this you cannot but know that philosophy speaks only of that. Even before it speaks about it, that is to say before it calls it by its name – it jumps out in Hegel and is quite specially illustrated by him – it was already manifest that it was at the level of the discourse of the Master that something appeared that concerns us, concerns us as regards the discourse that despite its ambiguity is called philosophy. I do not know how far I will be able to take what I have simply to pinpoint, to point out to you today, because we must not delay if we want to go through the four discourses in question. What are the others called? I will tell you right away, why not, if only to whet your appetite! This one, the second on the blackboard, is the discourse of the hysteric. It is not obvious straight away but I will explain it to you. And then the two others. One is the discourse of the analyst. The other – no definitely, I will not tell you what it is. Saying it just like that today would lead to too many misunderstandings. You will see, it is a discourse that is really in the news.

Let us go back to then to the discourse of the Master. I must justify the designation of the present algebraic formula as giving the structure of the discourse of the Master.  $S_1$ , let us say to go quickly, is the signifier, the function of the signifier on which is based the essence of the Master.

On the other hand you remember perhaps what I stressed last year on several occasions – the proper field of the slave is knowledge,  $S_2$ . There is no doubt about it reading the testimonies that we have of ancient life, in any case the discourses about this life – on this read Aristotle's *Politics* – what I put forward about the slave as characterised as being the one who is the support of knowledge is not in doubt. In ancient times it is not simply, as with our modern slave, a class, it is a function inscribed in the family. The slave Aristotle speaks about is just as much in the family as in the State and more in one than in the other. This is so because he has a know-how. This is very important because before knowing whether knowledge knows itself, whether one can ground a subject on the perspective of a knowledge totally transparent to itself, it is important to know how to take on board the register of what know-how is at its origin.

(11) Now what is happening before our eyes, and is giving a meaning, an initial meaning – you will find there are others - to philosophy is something that, luckily, we have traces of in Plato. And it is quite essential to remember this, in order to situate what is in question and, after all, if there is some sense in what is exercising us, it can only be to put things in their place.

What philosophy designates throughout its whole evolution is the following: the theft, the abduction, the removal from the slave of his knowledge, through the operations of the Master. To see this it is enough to be a little bit familiar with the dialogues of Plato, and God knows, over 16 years I have been making an effort so that those who hear me might acquire this familiarity. Let us begin by distinguishing what I will call on this occasion the two aspects of knowledge, the

articulated aspect and this know-how that is so close to animal knowledge, but which in the slave is not absolutely deprived of the apparatus that makes it into a network of language of the most articulated kind. It is a question of seeing that this, the second layer, the articulated apparatus, can be transmitted, which means transmitted from the pocket of the slave to that of the Master – assuming that they had pockets in those days! This is the whole effort of separating out what is called *episteme*. This is a funny word, I do not know whether you have ever thought about it a lot – *putting oneself in the right position*, in short it is the same word as *verstehen* [*Vorstellung?*]. It is the question of finding the position that enables knowledge to become knowledge of the Master. The function of *episteme* in so far as it specified as transmissible knowledge - consult Plato's dialogues – is still entirely borrowed from the techniques of the craftsman, that is to say, of serfs. It is a matter of extracting its essence so that this knowledge becomes the Master's knowledge. And then, that is naturally increased by a little return shock, which is called a slip, a return of the repressed. But, says someone or other, Karl Marx or someone else, where am I in this? consult *Meno*, when it is a question of the square root of 2 and its incommensurable. Someone says, "Hey, look get the slave over here, the little darling. You see he knows." They ask him questions, the Master's questions of course, and the slave naturally answers with what the questions already dictate as their response. There is a sort of derision in all this. It is a way to scoff at the character who is being given a roasting. It is shown that the serious business, the aim, is to show that the slave knows, but to acknowledge it only in this derisory way hides the fact that it is a matter of robbing the slave of his function at the level of knowledge. To give its sense to what I have just stated, it has to be seen - and this is the step we will take the next time - how the slave's position with respect to enjoyment is articulated. This is what I already began to say last year in the form of a colourful *hint* [myth?]

(12) What is usually said is that enjoyment is the privilege of the Master. What is interesting on the contrary, as everyone knows, is what belies



this. In short, it is the status of the Master that is at stake on this occasion. As an introduction today I only wanted to tell you how much this status is of profound interest to us, and it is worth keeping back the articulation of it until we take the next step. It is of interest to us when what is unveiled, and at the same time reduced to a corner of the landscape, is the function of philosophy. Given the space, shorter this year than others, that I have allowed myself, I am of course unable to develop it. It is not important, I hope that someone else will take up this theme and do what he will with it. Philosophy, in its historical function is this bargaining, this betrayal I would almost say, that pressures the slave's knowledge, so as to obtain its transmutation into the Master's knowledge. Does this mean that what we see emerging as the science that dominates us is the fruit of this operation? Here again, far from it being necessary for us to rush in, we note on the contrary that there it is nothing of the kind. This wisdom, this *episteme*, constructed with every kind of recourse to every dichotomy, only leads to a knowledge that can be designated by the term that Aristotle himself used to characterise the Master's knowledge, 'theoretical knowledge', not in the weak sense that we give this word, but in the emphatic sense that the word *theoria* has in Aristotle. A curious thing - I come back to this, because for my discourse it is a vital point, a pivotal point. - it is only from the day when, by renouncing what I may call this wrongly acquired knowledge, someone, I mean Descartes, for the first time extracted the function of the subject as such from the strict relationship of  $S_1$  to  $S_2$  - Descartes as I believe I can articulate him, not without the agreement of at least a good number of those who have dealt with him - it is on this day that science was born. It is important to distinguish the time at which the turning point emerges between this attempt at the transferring of knowledge from the slave to the Master and the time it starts again, which is only motivated by a certain way of positing, in the structure, any possible function of the statement in so far as it is only the articulation of the signifier that supports it. Here is a small example of the illumination that the type of work that I am proposing for you this year can bring.

Do not think that it stops there. What I have advanced here, once it has been shown, presents at least this character of uncovering something obvious: who can deny, once it has been said, that philosophy has ever been anything else but a fascinating enterprise to benefit the Master? We will of course come back to it.

At the other end we have Hegel's discourse, with its outrageous 'absolute knowledge', as it is called. What can this absolute knowledge (13) possibly mean, if we begin with the definition that I allowed myself to recall as being the originating one for our way of proceeding concerning knowledge? It is perhaps from this that we will start the next time. It will at least be one of our points of departure, for there is another one, which is no less important, and which is quite particularly salubrious because of the really overwhelmingly outrageous things one hears from psychoanalysts about what is involved in the desire to know. If there is one thing that psychoanalysis should force us to maintain *mordicus*, it is that the desire to know has no relationship with knowledge – unless of course we are happy with the lustful word of transgression. The radical distinction, which has far-reaching consequences from the point of view of pedagogy, that the desire to know is not what leads to knowledge, is something I will allow myself to justify in the more or less long-term. What leads to knowledge is the hysteric's discourse. But when all is said and done, there is in effect a question to ask oneself. Does the Master who operates this operation of displacement, of bank transfer, of the slave's knowledge, long to know? Does he have the desire to know? A real Master, as we have seen in general until a recent era - and a real Master is seen less and less - desires to know nothing at all, he wants things to work. And why would he want to know? There are things that are more fun than that! So then the question is how the philosopher managed to inspire the Master with the desire to know? I will leave you on this note. It is slightly provocative. If there are any of you who find this out between now and the next time, they can let me know!

## ANALYTICON

### VINCENNES – Impromptu No. 1: 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1969

**Jacques Lacan:** [*a dog walks across the podium*] I will talk about my egeria, who is just like that. She is the only person I know who knows what she speaks, I am not saying what she says. Because it is not that she does not say anything: she does not say it in words. She says something when she is anxious, which happens sometimes. She puts her head on my knee. She knows that I am going to die which a number of people also know. She is called Justine.

**X:** - What's going on here? He's talking to us about his dog!

**JL:** That's my dog, she is very beautiful, and you would have heard her speak.....the only thing she lacks in comparison to the one who has just passed is that she did not go to the University.

Here I am then, as a guest, at the Experimental Centre of the said University, an experiment which seems fairly exemplary to me. Since what is in question is an experiment, you might wonder what part you play. If you ask me, I will make a drawing for you I will try.

Because after all the University is very powerful, it has deep foundations.

I have kept for you the announcement of one of the four discourse positions I have announced elsewhere, where I have begun my seminar. I spoke about the Master's discourse since you are accustomed to hear this spoken of. And it is not easy to give an example, as someone who is very intelligent observed yesterday evening. I will try all the same because it is simple. This is where I am, having left things unfinished at my seminar. And, to be sure, here it is not a matter of continuing it. "Impromptu" I said. You can see that the thing with its tail down provided me with one earlier. I will continue in the same tone.

Secondly, the discourse of the Hysteric. This is very important because it is with this that the discourse of the psychoanalyst takes shape (*se dessine*). Except that there would have to be some psychoanalysts. This is what I spend my time at.

(2) X: Not at Vincennes in any case!

JL: You've said it, not at Vincennes.

X: Why cannot the students at Vincennes at the end of the teaching they are supposed to have received, become psychoanalysts?

JL: (*Speaking in a falsetto*) This is precisely what I am going to explain, Mademoiselle. That is precisely what is at stake. Psychoanalysis is not transmitted like any other knowledge.

The psychoanalyst has a position that sometimes proves eventually to be able to be that of a discourse. He does not thereby transmit a knowledge. Not that there is nothing to know, contrary to what is foolishly asserted, because this is what is called into question – and

why not quite rightly – the function in society of a certain knowledge, the knowledge that is transmitted to you. It exists.

X: Could you speak a little bit more slowly, because some students are not able to take notes.

X: You have to be sick to be taking notes! It means that you understand nothing about psychoanalysis and in particular nothing about Lacan!

JL: (*turning to the board*) This is a sequence, an algebraic sequence

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

X: A man can't be reduced to an equation.

JL: It holds up by constituting a chain, the start of which is in this formula:

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

the one I put forward as a signifier is defined as representing a subject for another signifier. It is an altogether fundamental way of writing it. It can in any case be taken for one. It was developed through my efforts from an attempt - after having put the necessary time into giving it its shape, the one I have now ended up with - it is an attempt to establish what was required in all decency to manipulate a notion by encouraging subjects to trust it and to operate with it. These are called psychoanalysands.

I first asked myself what could come of it for the psychoanalyst where he was at. For on this point it is quite obvious that the notions

(3) are not clear, since Freud, who knew what he was saying, said that it was an impossible function and yet one that is carried out every day. If you re-read his text very closely you will see that it is not the function that is in question but the being of the psychoanalyst. What is generated by the fact that one fine day a psychoanalyst commits himself to be a psychoanalyst?

This is what I tried to articulate when I spoke about *The psychoanalytic act*. My seminar that year, it was 1968, I interrupted before the end, in order, like that, to show my sympathy with the disturbances that were taking place and which continue in a moderate way. Contestation makes me think of something that was invented one day, if I recall correctly by my good and now dead friend Marcel Duchamp: "*The bachelor makes his own chocolate*". Take care that the agitator is not making his own chocolate [is not being swindled?]. In short, this *Psychoanalytic act* remained at a sticking point, if I can put it like that. And I have not had the time to come back to it, especially as examples of what it leads to are breaking out all around me.

X: You mean a relative deafness.

JL: An issue of a journal called *Etudes freudiennes* has appeared. I cannot recommend you highly enough to read it, never having hesitated to advise you to read bad things. Of themselves they are already like *best sellers*. If I recommend this to you it is because there are very, very good texts. Not like the little grotesque text on the remarks about my style that had naturally found its place in the uninhabited locus of *Paulhanerie*. This is different. You will draw the greatest benefit from it. Apart from an article by its editor which I could not praise enough, you have statements that are all indisputably agitating against the psychoanalytic institution. There is a charming, dependable Canadian who says, my God, some very relevant things about it; there is someone from the *Institut*

*psychanalytique de Paris* who has a very important position there on what is called the education committee, who makes a critique of the psychoanalytic institution as such, in so far as it is strictly in contradiction with everything that the very existence of the psychoanalyst demands. It is really marvellous. I cannot say that I would put my name to it myself, because I already have put my name to it. These are my own remarks! But for me this had a sequel, namely a certain *Proposition* that draws its consequences from this (4) impasse that is so masterfully demonstrated. It might have been possible to say somewhere in a tiny little note, that there was somewhere an extremist who tried to put that into a proposition that radically renews the sense of all psychoanalytic selection. It is clear that it is not being done. And I really do not know if one should complain about it since in the opinion of the people concerned, this contestation is completely up in the air, gratuitous. There is absolutely no question of this modifying anything whatsoever as regards the present functioning of the institute that the authors belong to.

X: Ah, Lacan is a great talker!

X: I haven't understood a word yet. Anyway you could start by explaining what a psychoanalyst is. For me he is a kind of cop. The people who go into psychoanalysis say nothing and only worry about themselves.

X: We had priests already but since that no longer worked now we have psychoanalysts.

X: Lacan, we have been waiting for over an hour now for what you are implicitly stating: the critique of psychoanalysis. That is why we are saying nothing because this would also be your own self-critique.

**JL:** But I am not criticising psychoanalysis in the slightest, there is no question of criticising it. He is not hearing me! I am not at all an agitator.

**X:** You said that psychoanalysts were not being trained at Vincennes and that this was a good thing. Because at Vincennes knowledge is being dispensed and that psychoanalysis was not a knowledge. In any case it is not supposed to be knowledge. So what?

**JL:** A bit of patience. I will explain it to you. I was invited, I remind you. It's beautiful, it's big, it's generous but I was invited.

**X:** By whom?

**JL:** By the philosophy department.

**X:** Is psychoanalysis revolutionary?

**JL:** Now there's a good question!

**X:** Is it knowledge or is it not knowledge? You're not the only paranoiac around here.

(5) **JL:** I will speak about a certain aspect of things that have happened here around some contestation in a department that I am not part of, namely, the Department of Psychoanalysis. There was the difficult question of credits (*unités de valeur*).

**X:** The question of credits is settled and this is not the time to be talking about it. There was all this scheming on the part of the academics in the Department of Psychoanalysis so as to drag them out all through the year. We couldn't care less about credits. It is a question of psychoanalysis. Do you understand? We don't give a damn about credits!



**JL:** For my part, I do not get the sense that no one gives a damn about them. On the contrary people are very sold on credits. It is a habit. I put the schema for the fourth discourse on the board, the one I did not name last time which is called the University discourse. Here it is in the position of mastery, as we say,  $S_2$  knowledge. I explained the last time ...

**X:** Who do you think you're kidding here? The University discourse is in the credits? That is a myth and what you are asking us to believe in is a myth. The people who refer to it lay down the rules of the game inside, the more people try to get out of this rule the more they are stymied by it. So do not say that the University discourse is on the board, because it is not true!

**JL:** The University discourse is on the board, and knowledge occupies a place on the board, on the top left, already designated in a previous schema...

**X:** On top and to the right of God we have Lacan.

**JL:** ...Already designated in a previous discourse. Because what is important in what is written are the relations, that is where it works or where it does not work. If you begin by putting in its place what essentially constitutes the discourse of the Master...

**X:** What is a Master? It's Lacan!

**JL:** ...namely, that he ordains, that he intervenes in the system of knowledge, you can ask yourself the question what it means when the discourse of knowledge, by this quarter turn, which has no need to be put on the board because it is in the real, by this displacement, knowledge has the whip hand. When that happens, where you are, is where there has been defined the result, the fruit, the fall, of the

relationships between the Master and the slave. Namely, in my (6) algebra what is designated by the letter, the object, *o*. Last year when I made the effort to announce something called *From an Other to the other*, I said that it was the place revealed, designated by Marx as surplus value.

You are the products of the University. The surplus value is you and you are proving it, even if only in this respect – which you not only consent to but which you also applaud – and I see no reason to object – which is that you leave here, equal to more or less to credits. You have all made yourself into credits. You leave here stamped with credits.

X: So the moral is it would be better to leave here stamped with Lacan.

JL: I don't stamp anyone. What's that about? Why do you presume that I want to stamp you? What nonsense!

X: No you won't stamp us, you can be sure of that. What I mean is that the people here are stamped because, wanting to maintain the discourse that you maintain for them, they are unable to maintain it in the style that is appropriate to their presence here. People want to speak in the name of a contestation that you describe as useless. There are others who go "*Tra-la-la, boum-boum, bang-bang*" in their little corner and that is what generates opinion. None of that is said under the pretext that it is up to you to say it. What I would like is for you to have the desire to shut up!

JL: Ah, aren't they wonderful! They think I would say it much better than they do (*then in a sharp voice*). Me, I am going home, that's what I am being reproached for.

X: Hey! Lacan don't make fun of people, eh?

JL: You are putting forward a discourse which is so exigent that...

X: What I am proposing is that one should not mock people. When they ask a question, you shouldn't answer in that tone of voice as you've already done three times already. When they ask a question, you give a reply and that's it. Now what questions have you asked?

And then there is something else since there are people here who think that psychoanalysis is all about the problem of getting a bit of ass, we should just have a wild 'love-in'. Are there any people who would like to change all this into a wild 'love-in'?

*(He starts undressing and stops when he has taken off his shirt).*

(7) JL: Listen, old boy, I already saw that last night. I was at The Open Theatre, there was a bloke who was doing that, but he had more guts than you have, he stripped completely naked. Go on, go on, for fuck's sake!

X: Come on, give us a break! Why does Lacan confine himself to such a minor criticism of our comrade's behaviour? To say to our comrade that he cannot undress, while you bang the table, might be very funny but it's also very simplistic.

JL: But I am simplistic.

X: And that makes them laugh, which is interesting.

JL: But I don't see why they shouldn't laugh all of a sudden.

X: Well, I would really like them to laugh at that precise point.

JL: That's sad.

X: Just as sad as to see people leaving here as if it were the Metro at six in the evening! That is sad too.

JL: So where have we got to? It seems that people cannot speak about psychoanalysis because they expect me to. Well then, they are right because in fact I will do it better than them.

X: That's not quite right since they feel the need to whisper into each other's ears!

JL: That's the proof!

X: There are a certain number of people, the same ones who take notes and who laugh, who when Lacan takes the audience in hand, say to one another without ever moving from their seats: "It is of the order of a certain topology, a certain number of things." Well then, it is these people that I would like to hear.

X: Come on, let Lacan speak.

JL: In the meantime you say nothing.

X: Lacan you're with us!

JL: I am with you.

Time is getting on. Let me all the same try to give you a little idea of what my project is in another place.

(8) It is a matter of articulating a logic which however frail it may seem to be – my four little letters look harmless, except that you have to know according to what rules they function - a logic which

however weak it appears is still strong enough to comprise what is the sign of this logical force, namely, incompleteness.

That makes them laugh! Except that it had a very important consequence, especially for revolutionaries, which is that nothing is all (*rien n'est tout*).

X: Oh good!

JL: Whatever way you come at things, whatever way you turn them, the property of each of these little four legged schemas is to leave to each its own gap. In the discourse of the Master, it is precisely that of the recuperation of surplus value. In the discourse of the University, it is a different one; it is the one that torments you. Not that the knowledge you are given is not structured and solid, but that you have only one thing to do, which is to weave yourselves into it with those who work, namely, those who teach you, very precisely as means of production and, by the same token, of surplus value.

In the discourse of the Hysteric, which is what has made possible the decisive shift by giving its sense to what Marx historically spelled out, namely, that there are historical events that can only be judged in terms of symptoms. No one saw how far this would take us until we had the discourse of the Hysteric to make the shift, together with something else, which is the discourse of the psychoanalyst. The psychoanalyst initially only had to listen to what the hysteric was saying. What the hysteric says is pure gold ...

X: So the Hysteric is the psychoanalyst's Master.

JL: "I want a man who knows how to make love". Ah yes, man stops there. He stops at the fact that he is, in effect, someone who 'knows'. As for making love, call back later! There is nothing that is all and

you can always make your little jokes, there is one that is not funny, which is called castration. This is what was finally discovered...

X: While this class drones quietly on there are 150 comrades from Beaux-Arts who were arrested by the cops and who since yesterday have been at Beaujon because they are not giving classes on the object like this mandarin here, and whom no one could care less (9) about. They went to give an open-air class at the *Ministère de l'Équipement* about the shanty towns and on the politics of M. Chalandon. So I think that the droning on of this formal class is a fairly good expression of the current state of rotteness in the University.

X: Because, honestly, everything he's saying is bullshit, huh?

JL: Yeah!

X: If people don't want me to speak it is obviously because no one knows how good I am at shouting. Lacan, I would like to tell you a few things.

It seems to me that we have reached a point where it is obvious that a protest can become more or less a form of possibility in this room. It is clear that people can shout a bit, that they can make jokes, but it is also clear and perhaps in an obvious way today, that we will never manage to get to a critique of the University if we remain in the University, in its classes, and within the rules that it established before we intervened in it.

I think that what our comrade has just said about the students from Beaux-Arts who went out of the University to give an open air class on the shanty towns and on the politics of Chalandon is a very important example. This makes it possible to find an outlet for our desire to change society and amongst other things to destroy the

University. And I would like Lacan to give us his point of view on this in a moment. Because to destroy the University will not take place with a majority of students from the inside, but much more with an alliance that we students must make about revolutionary positions with people who work with the peasants and the workers. I am well aware that the relationship with what Lacan was saying earlier does not exist, but...

JL: But not at all, not at all. It does exist.

X: Perhaps it does exist, but it is not obvious. The relationship between the actions that we must take outside and the discourse, since it is one, of Lacan, is obviously implicit. And it would be a good thing now if Lacan stated what he thinks of the necessity to leave the University and stop nit picking over words, challenging one (10) or other teacher over this or that quotation of Marx. Because the academic Marx: we're fed up with him here. We've been hearing drivel about it in this University all year. We know it's shit, and going on about the academic Marx means overall serving a bourgeois University. If the University has to be blown up, it would be from outside with others who are outside.

X: So why are you inside?

X: I am inside, comrade, because I want the people to leave, I have to come in to tell them.

JL: You see. It's all there, old boy. To get them to leave you come in.

X: Lacan, please, I want to finish. That's not the whole story because some students still think that by listening to M Lacan's discourse they will find the elements that will enable them to

challenge his discourse. I claim that this is to let yourselves get caught in the trap.

**JL:** You're quite right!

**X:** If we think that it is by listening to Lacan's discourse or Foucault's or Dommergues' or Terray's or someone else's that we will have the means to criticise the ideology that they are making us swallow we are blinding ourselves. I claim that it is outside that we have to go to find the means of blowing up the University.

**JL:** But outside of what? Because when you leave here you become aphasic. When you leave you continue to speak, consequently you continue to be inside!

**X:** I don't know what aphasic means.

**JL:** You don't know what aphasic means? It's absolutely disgusting that you don't know what an aphasic is. There are some minimum things...

**X:** I don't spend 24 hours a day in this faculty.

**JL:** Anyway you don't know what an aphasic is?

**X:** When some people leave the University it is so as to frig about in their own way. Others leave so as to militate outside if possible with people from the University that they have won over. That's what leaving the University means. It's not just leaving on your own, it's to have brought people with you. Now, quickly, give us your own point of view on this!

(11) **JL:** In short create a critical University? You mean what is happening here. Is that it? You don't know what a critical



University is either. No one has ever spoken to you about it! What's the point ...

X: There is nothing to understand.

JL: OK, I would like to make one little remark. The configuration of Workers and Peasants has all the same led to a form of society where it is precisely the University that is in the driving seat. What reigns in what is commonly called the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is the University.

X: Who gives a fuck? We are not talking about revisionism but Marxist Leninism.

JL: That's enough. That's enough! You asked me to speak so I will speak. I am not saying things that are up in the air, I am saying something precise there.

X: You are saying nothing!

JL: Have I not just said how I think the organisation of the USSR functions?

X: Absolutely not.

JL: Did I not say that it was knowledge that was king? I didn't say that? No?

X: So?

JL: So that probably has some consequences. You, my friend, would not be very comfortable there.

X: You have been asked a question about a particular society and you talk about another society. What needs to be said is why you think it is ineluctable.

JL: I am in total agreement. That is exactly what I am saying. The fact is that there are unsurpassable limits to a certain logic which I have called a weak logic, but still strong enough to leave you a bit of incompleteness ... and which you effectively bear witness to in a perfect way.

X: I wonder why this amphitheatre is stuffed full with 800 people.  
(12) Lacan is a great clown and he is famous and he has come here to speak. So he tells a few jokes and he's off! One of our comrades showed us earlier that by shouting loud enough you could go on for 10 minutes to say that groups were unable to get themselves out of the University and everyone, while recognising that there is no answer, is talking on with nothing to say, so if there is nothing to say, nothing to understand, nothing to do, why is everyone here? And Lacan why do you stay?

X: Gaspard has led us a bit astray into a false problem, because our comrade said that he came to the University in order to leave again with other comrades.

X: People talk about a New Society. Will psychoanalysis have a function in that new society and what will it be?

JL: Society is not something that can be defined like that in general. What I am trying to spell out, because psychoanalysis gives me the evidence for it, is that what dominates it, is the way language is used (*la pratique du langage*). The proof is perhaps that you envisage changing it; I mean what dominates it. Aphasia means that there is something that has broken down in this respect. Just imagine: there are people who happen to have something wrong with their brain and

who no longer have any idea how to manage language. That makes them somewhat crippled.

X: One can say that Lenin almost became aphasic.

JL: If you had had a bit of patience and if you really wanted our *Impromptus* to continue I would tell you that the revolutionary aspiration has only one possible way of ending, only one: always with the discourse of the Master, as experience has already shown. What you aspire to as revolutionaries is a Master. You shall have one!

X: We already have one, Pompidou.

JL: Do you really think that you have a master in Pompidou? What kind of joke is that? I too would like to ask you some questions. For whom here does the word liberal have a sense?

X: Pompidou is liberal, Lacan too.

JL: I am a liberal, like everyone else, only to the extent that I am anti-progressive, except that I am caught up in a movement that deserves to be called progressive. Because it is progressive to see the (13) psychoanalytic discourse established in so far as it completes the circle that could perhaps enable you to situate what exactly you are revolting against. Which does not stop it from continuing to function, and bloody well too. And the first people to collaborate with it, and here in Vincennes itself, are yourselves. Because you play the role of serfs in this regime. You don't know what that means either? The regime is showing you off. It says: "Look at them enjoying themselves!"

OK then! Right! Goodbye for today. Bye-bye. It's all over.

**Seminar 2: Wednesday 10 December 1969**

(1) I was warned in various ways that the protesters were on the lookout for me. People do not take it into account enough that I too am on the look out for the protesters, but for an object that interests me in a very particular way: whether they confirm or invalidate this level at which I situate the structure of a discourse. I have just said I. Obviously it is because I look at the discourse in question from elsewhere, from a place that another discourse, whose effect I am, situates me. In such a way that, on occasion, it is the same thing to say this discourse situates *me* or situates *itself*.

At the level of this discourse, it is not blowing my own trumpet, or giving a good lecture, as they say, that matters. This is not irrelevant, of course, and no one can tell me that up to now you have not had a chance to take notes, and in truth I cannot complain of ever having been disturbed. But I do not think that protesting means disturbing a lecture - it would be unfortunate if I had to teach this to the protesters themselves - in truth, just as essential, in fact as whether or not I speak in a calm atmosphere is what those who listen to me are immersed in. In effect what I am speaking about signals the coming into action of this discourse that is not my own, but the one of which I am, to limit myself to this provisional term, the effect.

I think it is no harm, after having gone to Vincennes last week, where people might have thought that what took place was not to my taste. It was in effect agreed that my going, solely in the capacity of being a prominent person, would be the occasion for some obstruction. Does anyone think that this could in any way surprise me? Do I need to say that I was forewarned about what I might encounter there? And why do people want to turn this incident into a novelty in this context, whereas this obstruction did not start

yesterday? To go back to the beginning, when I began my discourse at Sainte-Anne, what I am calling *what my listeners are immersed in*, was at that time constituted by a little enquiry, the frequency of which I do not know, but which must have been monthly, then quarterly. They were subjected to an anxious questioning by the old master whose guest I was, as to whether my teaching corresponded to the requirements of what constitutes a medical teaching. It had been said, which was strangely anxiety-provoking, (2) that my teaching did not possess the characteristics of a medical teaching. As regards the subject that I chose to begin with namely, *Freud's technical writings*, what, could have been the characteristics of a medical teaching? Was it meant only to consist in some act of reverence, I did not say reference, to terms considered to be sacred because they themselves are situated right in the centre, in the heart of medical teaching? Should I have indicated, so that my teaching might be medical, that perhaps some day endocrine causes will be found for neurosis? Or quite simply have recalled that there is one of these little elements that we cannot fail to take into account and which is called the constitutional element? That would have been medical!

In short, since I did not delay over these salutations in order to stop them, they were convinced that they were confronted with the sad necessity of having to endure, at the heart of a place that is essentially medical, a teaching that was not such. It was then that I was made aware by people they were only too sure would get the message to me, since they were in analysis with me, what people thought of my audience. I mention this because in the audience that you make up today, I discern a bit better than the last time the components. I locate the faces better – there are many who are familiar, and I am delighted by this. But I am also delighted with the relative reduction that I observe – last time it was a bit like a busy metro station in here.

Do not forget all the same what you are immersed in - because a good number of you were already in this old audience before following me into that place from which, as it happened, I had to emigrate - is the quality of this audience seen from outside, which truly consisted then of those who afterwards were the pillars of the *École Freudienne*. One could not say that they were people who inspired great confidence! Well, good God,

there was a sense, it appears, merely by seeing their silhouettes passing certain windows before coming to listen to me at half past twelve, as usual, that they exhibited some sign or other of drug addiction and homosexuality. People sensed that. It was quite clearly what the general shape and the appearance of these strollers reflected. All this to tell you that it was not today or yesterday that my audience gives rise – to what, this is precisely what I am questioning – through its make up, to I know not what effect of discomfort. We experienced this in a place that made arrangements for us to stay and to be sure I am (3) grateful to those who ensured that the stay lasted so long. You must not imagine all the same that it is with these accidental places that the pinpointing of my audience as causing discomfort began. It was the students at the *Ecole normale*, these *normalians*, these little princes of the university, who know something about the fact that there is no need to know something in order to teach it, it was they who discovered that very curious things were happening at my seminar. It appears that over there when you were smoking – in truth because of this I gave a little echo, from time to time, to the fact that you might stop – something happened that I have never seen happening anywhere else, which is that the smoke went through the ceiling of the room, so that those whom I have just called elegant *normalians*, who were apparently in the libraries above, were not able to breathe. These are things that obviously only occur because of the kind of audience you are, and that was what I wanted to underline.

[*A porter appears*]

I who was in doubt about these protests at Vincennes, you really see it there, in the real. Make no mistake, what is rejected in the symbolic re-appears in the real!

All of this is happening in a zone that for all that does not lose its meaning.

[*The porter turns off the lights and closes the blackboard*]

However amusing these jokes that come from the organisation on high, I declare the session closed and I will give it in a week's time.

## Seminar 3: Wednesday 17 December 1969

$$\begin{array}{cccc}
 \begin{array}{c} \text{U} \\ \hline \text{S}_2 \rightarrow \text{o} \\ \hline \text{S}_1 \quad \$ \end{array} & 
 \begin{array}{c} \text{M} \\ \hline \text{S}_1 \rightarrow \text{S}_2 \\ \hline \$ \quad \text{o} \end{array} & 
 \begin{array}{c} \text{H} \\ \hline \$ \rightarrow \text{S}_1 \\ \hline \text{o} \quad \text{S}_2 \end{array} & 
 \begin{array}{c} \text{A} \\ \hline \text{o} \rightarrow \$ \\ \hline \text{S}_2 \quad \text{S}_1 \end{array}
 \end{array}$$

(1) It is useful to have these four formulae here to refer to. Those of you who were at my first seminar were able to hear the reminder of the formula that the signifier, as distinct from the sign, is what represents a subject for another signifier. The term 'represents' is to be distinguished, of course, from the word 'representative' and the word 'representation'. Since nothing indicates that the other signifier knows anything about the matter, it is clear that it is not a representation that is at stake but a representative. As a result, on that same occasion, I was able to use it to illustrate what I called the discourse of the Master. If we are able to see the discourse of the Master reduced to a single signifier, this implies that it represents something. Calling it some thing already says too much – it represents x which is precisely what is to be elucidated in the matter. Nothing, in effect, indicates how the Master might enforce his will. That this consent is necessary is beyond question, and the fact that in this instance Hegel can only refer to death as the signifier of the absolute master, is on this occasion a sign, a sign that nothing has been resolved by this pseudo-origin. In effect, in order for things to continue nobody must die, not the master who would demonstrate that he is its master only if he rose from the dead, namely,

if he had effectively gone through the test. As for the slave, it is precisely the same thing: he has specifically renounced confronting it. So then the riddle of the function of the master is not immediately soluble. I began, I indicated, because it is already on the path, a path that we need not pretend to have discovered, and which is not that of the theory of the unconscious, but the discovery of something that assures us that it is not at all self-evident that all knowledge, by virtue of being knowledge, knows itself to be such. Because what we discover in any experience of psychoanalysis is indeed precisely of the order of (2) knowledge (*savoir*) and not of information (*connaissance*) or of representation, is very precisely something that links, in a network relation, one signifier  $S_1$  to another signifier  $S_2$ . It is in these rather hazy terms, I would say, if I may, using this metaphor, to try to get you to see the accent that should be placed, on this occasion, on the term *knowledge*. It is nevertheless in such a relation and precisely in so far as it does not know itself that there resides the foundation of what knows itself, of what is calmly articulated as little master, as *ego*, as that which knows quite a lot about it. All the same, we see from time to time that it gets out of kilter. Here we have the eruption of the entire dimension of slips and stumblings in which the unconscious reveals itself. But we do much better and go much further when we allow ourselves to read a biography in the light of analytic experience, when we have the means for it, when we have enough documents to bear witness to what it believes, what it believed it had been as a destiny, step by step, indeed even in certain circumstances, how it brought this destiny to a close.

Nevertheless, in the light of this notion that it is not sure that a knowledge knows itself, it does not appear impossible for us to be able to read at the level of what unconscious knowledge there has been carried out the work which betrays what effectively is the truth of everything it had believed itself to be. In order to operate on the schema of the discourse of the Master, M, let us say that it is invisibly slave labour, which constitutes an unrevealed unconscious, which betrays



whether it is worthwhile speaking about this life. That which from truth, from true truth, gave rise to so many detours, fictions, and errors.

Knowledge then is put in the centre, in the dock, by psychoanalytic experience. This just by itself imposes on us the duty of a questioning which has no reason to restrict its field. In a word, the idea that knowledge can bring about in any way, or at any moment, even were it a hope in the future, a closed totality, is something that did not have to wait for psychoanalysis in order to appear dubious. Anyway it is clear that this doubting, perhaps, was tackled at a lower level when the Sceptics were involved, I mean those who were so called at the time when they constituted a school, something that we no longer have anything but the vaguest idea of. But, after all, how do we know whether it was worth the trouble? What do we know about it? It would perhaps be better not to judge. Everything we know about their knowledge only comes perhaps from what others were able to pick up from them, those who did not know from where there came the Sceptics' formulae about the radical questioning of all knowledge, and *a fortiori* of the totalisation of knowledge.

Something that is well designed to show how little impact the schools have had, is that the idea that knowledge can constitute a totality is, as I might say, immanent to politics as such. This has been known for a long time. The imaginary idea of the whole as given by the body, based on (3) the good form of satisfaction, on what at the limit is a sphere, has always been used in politics, and is part of political preaching. What is more beautiful, but also less open? What resembles more a closure of satisfaction? The collusion of this image with the idea of satisfaction is what we have to struggle against any time we encounter something that forms a knot in the work of bringing the paths of the unconscious to the light of day. It is the obstacle, the limit, or rather it is the cotton wool in which we lose sight of meaning, and in which we find ourselves obstructed.

It is important to know that it has always been used in politics and it is strange, it is curious to see that a doctrine like the one Marx began to articulate on the function of struggle, the class struggle, has not prevented it from giving birth to what is, for the moment, the problem that confronts all of us, namely, the persistence of the discourse of the Master. Undoubtedly, it does not have the same structure as the old one, in the sense that it is installed in the place indicated under this capital M. It is installed under the one on the left, which is capped by the U. I will tell you why. What occupies the place that we will provisionally call dominant is  $S_2$  which is specified not as being knowledge of everything, we are not at that point yet, but total knowledge (*tout-savoir*). You should understand by this: what affirms itself as being nothing other than knowledge, and what is called, in ordinary language, bureaucracy. We cannot say that there is not something there that creates a problem. In my first remarks three weeks ago we started from the fact that in the initial status of the Master's discourse, the slave's share is knowledge. And I was able to indicate, without being able to develop it the last time because of a slight contretemps that I regret, what happens between the discourse of the antique master and the modern master who is described as capitalist is some modification in the place of knowledge. I thought I could even go as far as to affirm that the philosophical tradition had a certain responsibility for this transmutation. So that it is because he has been 'dispossessed' of something – before, of course, of common property which means that the proletarian can be described as dispossessed, which justifies the undertaking and also the success of revolution. Is it not tangible that what is restored to him is not necessarily his share? Capitalist exploitation in effect frustrates his knowledge by making it useless. But what is given him through a type of subversion is something different – the knowledge of a master. And that is why he has only changed master. What remains is indeed in effect the essence of the master, namely, that he does not know what he wants because this is what constitutes the true structure of the Master's discourse. The slave knows a lot of things but what he knows above all (4) is what the master wants, even if he himself does not know it, which

is the usual situation, because otherwise he would not be a master. The slave knows and that is his function as slave. That is also the reason why things work, because all the same, things have been working for rather a long time. The fact that all knowledge has shifted into the place of the master, is something that, far from clarifying, makes a little bit more opaque what is in question, namely, the truth from which it emerges that there is a signifier of master. Because here the  $S_1$  of the Master is well and truly coiled up, showing the problem of what is involved in the new tyranny of knowledge. This is what makes it impossible in the course of historical movement for truth to appear, as we might perhaps have hoped. The sign of truth is now elsewhere. It is to be produced by those who are the substitutes for the slaves of antiquity, namely, by those who are themselves products, as they say, that are just as consumable as the others. *Consumer society*, we say. *Human material*, as was stated at one time – to the applause of some people who saw this as evidence of tenderness. This deserves to be highlighted, because moreover what now concerns us is to question what is involved in the psychoanalytic act. I shall not take it up at the level that remained interrupted two years ago when I had hoped to be able to loop-the-loop about the act on which the psychoanalyst is based, is established, as such. I will take it at the level of experience and of his interventions, once the experience has been established within its precise limits. If there is a knowledge that does not know itself, as I already said, it is to be situated at the level of  $S_2$ , which I describe as the other Signifier. I already insisted enough on this last year. This other Signifier is not alone. The belly of the Other, of the capital O, is full of them. This belly, like a monstrous Trojan horse, is what gives rise to the phantasy of total knowledge. It is clear however that its function implies that something comes and strikes it from outside, otherwise nothing would ever emerge from it, and Troy would never have been taken. What does the analyst establish? I hear a lot of talk about the discourse of psychoanalysis as if that meant something. If we characterise a discourse by focussing on what is dominant in it, there is the discourse of the analyst, and this should not be confused with the discourse of the

psychoanalysis, with the discourse effectively sustained in the analytic experience. What the analyst sets up as an analytic experience can be simply put – it is the hystericisation of discourse. In other words, it is the structural introduction, under artificial conditions, of the discourse of the Hysteric, the one indicated here by a capital H. I tried to highlight it last year by saying that this discourse existed, and that it would exist in any case whether psychoanalysis was there or not. I imaged it by giving it its most common support from which there has emerged for us the major experience, namely, the detour, the zigzag lines on which is based this misunderstanding that sexual relationships constitute in the human (5) species. Since we have the signifier it must be that we are able to understand one another, and that is precisely the reason why we do not understand one another. The signifier is not designed for sexual relationships. Once we have a speaking human being we've had it, there is no hope of this perfect, harmonious copulation which moreover is impossible to find anywhere in nature. Nature presents an infinite number of kinds of it, the majority of which do not involve any copulation, which shows the degree to which there is very little in the intentions of nature for things to become, as I mentioned earlier, a whole, a sphere.

In any case, one thing is certain, if for man it works more or less well, it is thanks to something that allows it, but initially makes it insoluble.

This is what is meant by the discourse of the hysteric, industrious as she is. In saying *industriouse*, we are making the hysteric a woman, but this is not her privilege. Many men go into analysis, and by that very fact are also forced to pass by way of the hysterical discourse, because it is the law, the rule of the game. It is a matter of knowing what can be got out of it as regards the relationship between men and women. So then we see the hysteric fabricating a man as best she can, a man animated by the desire to know.

I put the question at my last seminar, the question that emerges from the fact that we note that historically, the master has slowly frustrated the

slave of his knowledge in order to make of it a master's knowledge. But what remains mysterious, is how the desire for it could have come to him. If you believe me, he was quite happy to do without desire because the slave satisfied it before he even knew what he might be desiring. This is what my reflections would have dealt with the last time if this charming thing had not emerged from the real – I am assured that it is the real of decolonisation. He is supposed to be someone who was hospitalised, who supported us in the old Algeria, and has been fixed up here. As you see a charming frolic, thanks to which you will not know, at least for a certain time, because I have to press on, the kinship I establish between the philosophical discourse and the discourse of the hysteric, since it seems that the philosophical discourse animated the Master with a desire to know. What could be the hysteria that is in question here? Here is a domain that should not be despoiled. If there are people whose thinking likes to run a little ahead of what the speaker is telling them, they will find there an opportunity to exercise their talent. I assure them that the path seems to me to be a promising one. In any case, to give a fuller formula than localising it in the man-woman relationship, let us say that by simply reading what I have written here about the discourse of the hysteric, we still do not know, of course, what this \$ is. But if it is her discourse that is at stake, and this discourse ensures that there is a man animated by the desire to know, it is because it is a matter of knowing what? What she herself is worth, this person who is speaking. Because *qua* o-object she is something fallen, fallen due to the effect of discourse, always broken somewhere in her turn.

(6) In the final analysis, what the hysteric wants the man to know, at the limit, is that language cannot cope with the breadth of what she as a woman can open up about enjoyment. But this is not what is important to the hysteric. What is important for her, is that the other, the other called man, should know what a precious object she becomes in this context of discourse. Is not this after all the very foundation of analytic experience? If I say that he gives to the other as subject the dominant place in the discourse of the Hysteric, if he hystericises his discourse, if it makes him into this subject who is asked to abandon any other

reference than that of the four walls that surround him, and to produce signifiers that make up this free association which in a word is the mistress of the field. How could talking off the top of your head lead anywhere, if it had not been determined that there is nothing in the random emergence of signifiers that, from the very fact that we are dealing with signifiers, is not related to this knowledge which does not know itself, and which is really what is at work? Only there is no reason why in this way he should not know a little bit more about it. If the analyst does not speak, what will become of this abundant production of  $S_1$ ? Many things surely. The analyst who listens may register many things. With what an average contemporary may say, if he is not paying attention to anything, you could build up the equivalent of a little encyclopaedia. This would yield an enormous number of keys if it were recorded. Afterwards one could even construct it, get a little electronic machine made.

This moreover is the idea that certain people may have – they construct the electronic machine thanks to which the analyst has only to take a ticket to give them the answer. This is what is at stake in the discourse of the Analyst. In the experience, it is he who is the master. In what form? This is something that I will have to keep in reserve for future talks. Why in the form of  $o$ ? I have already underlined it elsewhere, but what is remarkable is that it is on his side that there is  $S_2$ , that there is knowledge – whether he acquires this knowledge by listening to his analysand or whether it is a knowledge that has already been acquired, mapped out, something that at a certain level, one can limit to analytic know-how. Only what must be understood about these schemas – as was already indicated by putting  $S_2$  in the discourse of the Master at the place of the slave, and to subsequently put it in the discourse of the modernised master at the place of the master – is that it is not the same knowledge. Here, in the discourse at the far right, what place is it at? At the place that in the discourse of the Master, Hegel, the most sublime of hysterics, designates for us as being that of the truth, because it cannot be said, in effect, that the *Phenomenology of the spirit* consists in

starting from a so-called *Selbstbewusstsein* supposedly grasped at the most immediate level of sensation, implying that all knowledge knows itself from the start. What use would all this phenomenology be if it were not something else that is at stake? Only what I am calling the hysteria of this discourse stems precisely from the fact that it avoids the (7) minimal distinction that would allow it to be seen that if ever this historical advance, which in fact is only the progress of the schools and nothing more, culminated in absolute knowledge, it would only be to mark the cancellation, the failure, the vanishing at the end of what alone motivates the function of knowledge – its dialectic with enjoyment. Absolute knowledge would be purely and simply the abolition of this term. Anyone who closely studies the text of the *Phenomenology* can have no doubt about it.

Now what does the position of  $S_2$  at the place of truth bring us? What is truth as knowledge? Make no mistake about it: how can you know without knowing? It is a riddle. That's the answer – it is a riddle – among others. And I am going to give you another example of what it can also be. The two have the same characteristic, which is proper to the truth – one can only ever half tell it. Our dear little truth that we get in holy pictures who emerges from the well, is never anything but a half-body. In Italy, in one of the lectures I was asked to give, I do not know why, and which I faced into, as I know, in a mediocre way, I evoked the chimera, in which there is precisely incarnated the original character of the discourse of the hysteric. She sets a riddle for the man Oedipus, who perhaps already had a complex, but not necessarily ... certainly not the one to which he was to give his name. He answers in a certain way, and that is how he becomes Oedipus. There could have been many different answers to what the chimera asked him. For example he could have said – two feet, three feet, four feet, that is Lacan's schema. That would have given a completely different result. He said – it is a man, a man as a baby, as a baby he began on all fours. If he starts using two, and then a third, right away he flies like a bullet into his mother's belly. This is what is called in effect, quite correctly the Oedipus complex. But I think

that you can see here what the function of the riddle means – it is something half-said (*un mi-dire*), just as the chimera appears to be a half-body, even if it completely disappears when the solution is given.

A knowledge *qua* truth – this defines what ought to be the structure of what is called an interpretation. If I have insisted at length on the difference of level between stating and stated, it is so that the function of the riddle may take on a meaning. The riddle is properly speaking that, a stating. I am giving you the task of making it become a statement. Work it out, as best you can – as Oedipus did – and you will suffer the consequences. This is what is at stake in a riddle. But there is something else, that is scarcely ever thought about, that I have touched on, tickled, from time to time, but in truth, it sufficiently concerns me for it not to be easy for me to speak easily about it. It is called the (8) quotation. What does a quotation consist of? It means that in the course of a text into which you are advancing more or less well, if you are, like that, in the right places of social struggle, all of a sudden you quote Marx, you add – *Marx said*. If you are an analyst you quote Freud, and you put in – *Freud said* – this is very important. The riddle is the stating – and make out as best you can as regards the statement.

The quotation is – I posit the statement and for the rest it is the solid support that you find in the name of the author whose responsibility I hand over to you. It is fine like that, and this has nothing to do with the more or less shaky status of the function of the author. When people quote Marx or Freud – it is not by chance that I chose these two names – it is in function of the way the supposed reader shares in a discourse that they are quoted. In its own way, the quotation is also something half-said. It is the statement which indicates to you that it is only acceptable in so far as you participate already in a certain discourse, structured at the level of the fundamental structures that are there on the board. You will note that this is the only vital point – could I have explained it before now – which ensures that the quotation, the fact that one quotes an author or not, may have an importance at the second degree. I am



going to make you understand this - and I hope that you will not take this badly – by something quite familiar. Suppose that at a second moment, you quote a sentence indicating where it comes from, with the name of the author, M Ricoeur, for example. Suppose you quote the same thing and you attribute it to me. This can absolutely not have the same meaning in the two cases. I hope that in this way I can get you to sense what is involved in what is called a quotation.

Well then, these two registers, in so far as they partake of the half-said, give the medium – and, as one might say, the ethics – under which interpretation intervenes. Interpretation – those who make use of it notice this – is just as much and halfway a riddle. A riddle picked out as far as possible in the texture of the psychoanalysand's discourse, and that you, the interpreter, can in no way complete by yourself, that you cannot consider as a confession without lying. A quotation on the other hand, sometimes taken in the same text, a particular statement. This can be taken as a confession, if only you connect it up to the whole context. But here in this case you are appealing to whoever is its author. What is striking, in effect, in this establishment of the analytic discourse, which is the mainspring of transference, is not, as certain people have believed they heard from me, that it is the analyst who is placed in function of the supposed subject of knowledge. If the psychoanalysand is invited to speak so freely – it is precisely in this way that he receives this liberty – it is because it is recognised that he can talk like a master, namely, like a birdbrain, but this would give just as good results as in the case of a true (9) Master, that it is supposed to lead to a knowledge – a knowledge that the one who accepts in advance to be the product of the cogitations of the psychoanalysand, namely the psychoanalyst, becomes the pledge and the hostage of – in the measure that, as this product, he is at the end destined to the loss, to the elimination of the process, I mean that he can assume this place if in the discourse of the Master, already in the simple functioning of the relationships between the master and the slave, it is clear that the desire of the master, is the desire of the Other, since it is the desire that the slave anticipates. It is a different question when it

comes to knowing what the analyst takes the place of, to unleash the movement of investment of the supposed subject of knowledge – a subject who, by being recognised as such, is, at his place, a fertile source of what is called transference. Undoubtedly it is only too easy to see passing here the shadow of a satisfaction in being recognised. This is not what is essential, if one supposes that the subject knows what he is doing even more than the hysteric, the truth of whose behaviour it is, but not at all its very being, the analyst for his part makes himself the cause of the desire of the analysand. What does such a strange thing mean? Ought we to consider it as an accident, a historical emergence that appeared in the world for the first time? Anticipating on a subsequent path which will draw us perhaps into a long detour, I will simply indicate for you that the function had already appeared, and it is not for nothing that Freud preferred to have recourse to so many pre-Socratics, Empedocles among others, as you know.

Because I know that at two o'clock there is something on in this amphitheatre, in future I will finish, as I am doing today, at a quarter-to-two. I will give you a rendezvous for the second Wednesday of January.

**Seminar 4: Wednesday 14 January 1970**

$$\begin{array}{cccc}
 \begin{array}{c} \text{U} \\ \hline \text{S}_2 \rightarrow \text{o} \\ \hline \text{S}_1 \quad \$ \end{array} & 
 \begin{array}{c} \text{M} \\ \hline \text{S}_1 \rightarrow \text{S}_2 \\ \hline \$ \quad \text{o} \end{array} & 
 \begin{array}{c} \text{H} \\ \hline \$ \rightarrow \text{S}_1 \\ \hline \text{o} \quad \text{S}_2 \end{array} & 
 \begin{array}{c} \text{A} \\ \hline \text{o} \rightarrow \$ \\ \hline \text{S}_2 \quad \text{S}_1 \end{array}
 \end{array}$$

I have been given red chalk, extremely red. Red on black – it is not obvious that it will be legible. Anyway, these are not new formulae because I already wrote them on the board the last time. It did not give rise to any protests. It is useful to have them presented there because – however simple they may be, however simple to deduce from one another, since it is just a matter of a circular permutation, with the terms remaining in the same order – it appears that our capacities for mental representation are not such that they can make up for the fact that they are written on the board or not.

We are therefore going to continue, to continue what I do here, a here that is always at the same time, here or elsewhere, Wednesday at 12.30 for the last 17 years.

This is well worthwhile recalling again at a moment when everyone is rejoicing at entering a new decade. For me it is rather an opportunity to turn back towards what the previous one has given me. Ten years ago, two of my students presented something that fell under the remit of Lacanian theses, under the title of *The unconscious: a psychoanalytic study*. This occurred, good God, by virtue of what one could call a

princely gesture. The prince is the only one who is capable of a liberal act, it being understood that a liberal act means an arbitrary act, it being also accepted that arbitrary means: not determined by any necessity. There was no necessity exerting pressure on this point, either in one direction or another, on the prince, my friend Henri Ey, who put *The unconscious* on the agenda of a certain congress, that of Bonneval, and entrusted at least a part of its composition to two of my students. This work is, in a way, taken to be definitive and, in truth, not without reason. It is very definitive in the way that these students of mine thought they could reach, get across something about what I was putting forward on this interesting subject, since what was at stake was nothing less than the unconscious, or in other words what my teaching had taken off from at the beginning – to get it across to a certain group. This group had been distinguished by a sort of instruction it had been given about what I was saying. The interest that it took in it was in effect made manifest by something that I expressed recently in a little preface – I no longer know where - as *forbidden to the under 50's*. This was in 1960, let us not (2) forget, and we were far – are we any closer, that is the question – from any contestation of authority and, among others, that of knowledge. And as a result, this prohibition, *forbidden to the under 50's*, that was put forward had curious characteristics. In any case – one of them compared it to a sort of monopoly, a monopoly of knowledge – this prohibition was purely and simply observed. This shows the kind of work that confronted those who had been willing to take it on – it was to make the ears in question understand something properly speaking unheard of. How did they do it? It is not too late for me to take stock of it, since moreover there was no question of my doing so at the time, for the good reason that it was already a lot to see this being brought into play for ears that were absolutely not prepared, who had not been exposed to the slightest bit of what I had been articulating at that time for seven years. It was obviously not the moment to contribute anything whatsoever that might have seemed like a correction directed at the very people who had devoted themselves to this pioneering work. Moreover, there were, in fact, many excellent elements in it. This point comes up

here then in connection with a thesis, a recent thesis, which, faith, was produced at the frontier of the French language area, where people are valiantly struggling to maintain its rights. It is at Louvain that a thesis has been written on what is called, perhaps inappropriately, my 'work'. Let us not forget that this thesis is a university thesis and that things must be put forward in a university style, and the least that can be said is that my 'work' lends itself badly to it. That indeed is why it is no bad thing that right up front of such a proposition, of a university thesis, there should be put in their place what university-style contributions had already been made in terms of being a vehicle of the aforesaid 'work', still in inverted commas. This moreover is why one of the authors of this Bonneval report is also put in the forefront of it, and in a way this meant that in my preface I could not avoid pointing out that some distinction should be made between what is eventually a translation of what I state and what I properly speaking said. In the little preface that I wrote for this thesis which is going to appear in Brussels – and it is obvious that a preface from me will give it a lift – I am forced to point out clearly – this is the only useful thing about it – that it is not the same thing to say that 'the unconscious is the condition of language', and to say that 'language is the condition of the unconscious'. Language is the condition of the unconscious: that is what I say. The way it is translated stems from reasons that certainly could be completely justified in detail, by strictly university motives – and this certainly would take us far, and (3) will perhaps take you far enough this year. From strictly university motives, I am saying, there flows the fact that no one who translates me, who has been formed in the style, the kind of requirements of the University discourse, can do anything other, whether he believes or not that he is commenting on me, than to reverse my formula. Namely, give it an implication, it has to be said, strictly contrary to the truth and without the slightest homology to what I put forward. Undoubtedly, the difficulty attached to translating me into university language is also what will strike all of those who for whatever reason attempt it, and in truth, the author of the thesis I am speaking about was animated by the best of reasons, those of an immense goodwill. This thesis, which is going to

be published then in Brussels, nonetheless retains all its value, its value as an example in itself, its value as an example also by what it promotes in terms of an almost obligatory distortion by reason of the translation of something that has its own laws into University discourse. I have to trace out these laws, they are those that claim to give at least the conditions of a properly analytic discourse. Naturally, this remains subject to the fact that, as I underlined last year, the fact that I am stating it here from a podium on high involves in effect a risk of error, an element of refraction, which means that from some angles it falls under the influence of the University discourse. This results from the fact that there is fundamentally something out of synch. To be sure, I do not in any way identify myself to a certain position. I assure you that every time I come here to bring you the word, what is at stake for me is certainly not what I have to say to you, or *what am I going to say to them this time?* In this respect I have no role to play, in the sense that the function of the one who teaches can be seen in terms of role, of a place to occupy which is, incontestably, a place of some prestige. That is not what I demand of myself, but rather something that is a putting into order which imposes on me the duty to submit this exploration to this test. Like anyone else, I would, of course, avoid this putting into order when confronted with this sea of ears among which there is perhaps a critical pair, having, with this dreadful possibility, to give an account of the path my actions have taken with respect to the fact that something of the psychoanalyst exists (*qu'il y a du psychanalyste*). That is my situation and the status of this situation as such has not been regulated, up to the present, in any way that is appropriate to it, except by imitating, except by encouraging, a resemblance to numerous other established situations. In the event, this leads to hypersensitive selection (4) practices, to a certain identification to an image, to a way of behaving, even to a human type that nothing seems to suggest should be obligatory, even to a ritual, indeed to some other measure that, at a better time, a time long past, I compared to that of a driving school, without moreover provoking from anyone any protest whatsoever. There was even someone close to me among my students of that time,

who pointed out to me that this was in truth what was desired by anyone who became committed to an analytic career – to obtain a driving licence just like at a driving school, along well mapped out paths involving the same type of examination.

It is certainly notable – I mean worth noting – that after ten years, I have come, all the same, to articulate this position of the psychoanalyst in a way that I describe as his discourse, let us say his hypothetical discourse, since moreover this is what is proposed for your examination this year. Namely – what about the structure of this discourse? I have come to articulate the position of the psychoanalyst in the following way. I say that it is substantially constituted by the o-object, by the o-object in so far as here, in the articulation of what I give as regards the structure of a discourse, in so far as it interests us, and let us say in so far as it is taken at a radical level where it has an import for psychoanalytic discourse, it is substantially that of the o-object in as much as this o-object precisely designates what, in the effects of discourse, presents itself as the most opaque, as having been for a long time overlooked, and nevertheless essential. What is at stake is the effect of discourse which is in effect one that rejects. I will try later to highlight place and function of this rejection.

Here then is what is substantially involved in the position of the psychoanalyst. But this object is distinguished in it in a still different fashion, which is that it comes here at the place where the discourse is ordered, from where there is emitted, as I might say, what is dominant (*la dominante*). You clearly sense the reservations I have about using this. To say what is dominant means exactly what I finally designate to distinguish each of these structures of discourse, giving them different names, that of the University, of the Master, of the Hysteric and of the Analyst, according to the diverse positions of these radical terms. Let us say that, because I am unable to give right away a different value to this term, I call dominant what I use to name these discourses. Dominant does not imply dominance, in the sense that this dominance might be

supposed to specify - something that is not sure - the discourse of the Master. Let us say that one can for example give, depending on the discourses, different substances to this dominant. Let us take the dominant in the discourse of the Master, where  $S_1$  occupies the place. If we were to call it the law (*la loi*), we would be doing something that has all its subjective value, and would not fail to open the door to a certain (5) number of interesting insights. It is certain for example that the law – by which we understand the law as articulated, this same law within whose walls we are finding shelter, this law that constitutes the body of laws (*le droit*) – should certainly not be taken as a homonym for what can be stated elsewhere under the heading of justice. On the contrary the ambiguity, the investiture that this law receives by claiming authority from justice, is here, very precisely, a point that our discourse may allow to be better sensed as regards its true sources, I mean those that allow ambiguity, and ensure that the law remains something that is first and foremost inscribed in structure. There are not an infinite number of ways of making laws, whether good intentions or the inspiration of justice animate them or not, because there are perhaps laws of structure which ensure that the law will always be the law situated at this place that I am calling dominant in the discourse of the Master.

In the discourse of the Hysteric, it is clear that we see this dominant appear in the form of the symptom. It is around the symptom that there is situated and organised what is involved in the Hysteric's discourse. This is an opportunity for us to grasp something. If this place remains the same and if, in a particular discourse, it is that of the symptom, this will lead us to question the same place as being that of the symptom when it is put to use in a different discourse. This indeed in effect is what we see in our own time – the law being called into question as a symptom. And it is not enough to say that this has become clear to us in the light of our times in order to account for it. I mentioned earlier how this same dominant place can be occupied, in the case of the analyst. The analyst himself must here represent in some ways the effect of what



is rejected by discourse, in other words the *o*-object. Does that mean that it will be just as easy for us to characterise the place described as dominant when it is the University discourse that is at stake? What other name can we give it? I mean one which would allow the sort of equivalence that we have posited as existing at least at the level of the question, between the law, the symptom, indeed what is rejected, in so far as this indeed is the place to which the analyst is destined in the psychoanalytic act. Well then, precisely, our perplexity in giving an answer to what constitutes the essence, the dominant of the University discourse, ought to warn us about something in our research – because what I am tracing out before you, are the very paths around which, when I question myself, my thinking wanders and strays before finding the points of which I can be sure. Here then the idea might come to us of (6) seeking what, in each of these discourses – to designate at least one place – might appear altogether certain to us, as certain as the symptom when hysteria is at stake. I already allowed you to see that, in the discourse of the Master, the *o* is precisely identifiable to what emerged from a hard-working thought, that of Marx, namely, what was involved, symbolically and really, in the function of surplus value. We would then already be in the presence of two terms, and, from there, it would only remain for us to slightly modify them, to give them a freer translation in order to transpose them into the other registers. Here the following suggestion takes shape – since there are four places to be characterised, perhaps each one of these four permutations might give us, within itself, the place that constitutes the most striking step forward in an order of discovery which is none other than what is called structure. Well then, however you put it to the test, such an idea will have the consequence of allowing you to put your finger on something that perhaps is not apparent to you at first sight. Independently of this place that I suggested to you might be the one to interest us, simply try, in each of these figures of discourse, as we will call them, to require yourself simply to choose a different place, defined in function of the terms above, below, on the right, on the left. No matter how you go about it you will not succeed in getting each of these places to be

occupied by a different letter. Try, in the opposite direction, to set yourself as a condition of the game the task of choosing in each of these four formulae a different letter. You will not succeed in getting each one of these letters to occupy a different place. Try it out. It is very easy to do on a piece of paper, and also if you make use of this little grid or figure called a matrix. With such a small number of combinations, a sample drawing is enough to illustrate this immediately in a perfectly obvious way. But if we think that there is here a certain signifying link that one can posit as altogether radical this simple fact is also an opportunity for us to illustrate what structure is. By positing the formalisation of discourse and, within this formalisation, giving oneself some rules designed to put it to the test, an element of impossibility is encountered. This is properly at the foundation, at the root of what a structural fact (*fait de structure*) is. And this is our interest in structure within analytic experience. And this, not at all because we might be supposed to be here at an already high degree of elaboration, at least in its pretensions, but from the start. If we allow ourselves to be (7) embraced by this handling of the signifier and its eventual articulation, it is because it is there in the data of psychoanalysis. I mean, it is in what came to a mind as insufficiently acquainted with this sort of elaboration as Freud was, given the formation we know he had in a kind of parapsychical science, physiology armed with the first steps of physics, and especially of thermodynamics. What Freud was led to formulate, following the vein, the thread of his experience, in a second phase of his teaching, has only greater importance, because after all, nothing seemed to require it of him in the first phase, that of the articulation of the unconscious. The unconscious allows desire to be situated, that is the meaning of the first step Freud took, already not simply implied but properly speaking articulated and developed in its entirety in the *Traumdeutung*. He takes this as given when, in a second phase, the one opened up by *Beyond the pleasure principle*, he articulates that we ought to take into account this function that is called what? Repetition. What is repetition? Let us read his text and let us see what it articulates. What makes repetition necessary is enjoyment, a

term that is explicitly spelt out. It is in so far as there is a seeking for enjoyment *qua* repetition, that there is produced something which is in operation in the step taken by this Freudian breakthrough. What interests us in terms of repetition, and what is going to be inscribed in a dialectic of enjoyment, is properly speaking what goes against life. It is at the level of repetition that Freud finds himself constrained in a way, and this by the very structure of discourse, to articulate the death instinct. A hyperbole, a fabulous and in truth scandalous extrapolation for anyone who might take literally the identification of the unconscious and instinct. Which means that repetition is not simply the function of the cycles that life comprises, cycles of need and of satisfaction, but of something different, a cycle that involves the disappearance of this life as such, and is a return to the inanimate. A point on the horizon, an ideal point, a point that goes beyond the frame, but whose sense is indicated by a structural analysis, it is perfectly well indicated by what is involved in enjoyment. It is enough to start from the pleasure principle, which is nothing other than the principle of least tension, of the minimal tension to be maintained for life to subsist. This demonstrates that in itself enjoyment goes beyond it, and that what the pleasure principle maintains is the limit as regards enjoyment. As everything indicates to us in the facts, in experience, in the clinic, (8) repetition is founded on a return of enjoyment. And what is properly articulated by Freud himself in this connection is that in this repetition itself, there is produced something which is a defect, a failure. I highlighted here at one time its kinship with Kierkegaard's remarks. By virtue of the fact that it is explicitly repeated as such, that it is marked by repetition, what is repeated can be nothing other, as compared to what it is repeating, than in a state of loss (*en perte*). Losing whatever you wish, losing speed – there is something that is a loss. As regards this loss, from the beginning, from the articulation that I am summarising here, Freud insists that in repetition itself, there is a waste of enjoyment. It is here that the function of the lost object takes its origin in the Freudian discourse.

That's Freud! Let us add that we do not need all the same to recall that it is explicitly around masochism, conceived of only in the dimension of the search for this ruinous enjoyment, that the whole text of Freud turns. Here now is where what Lacan contributes comes in: it concerns this repetition, this identification of enjoyment. Here, I borrow from Freud's text the function of the unary trait to give it a sense that is not highlighted there, namely, the simplest form of mark, namely, what is, properly speaking, the origin of the signifier. And I put forward something that is not in Freud's text, not seen in Freud's text, but that cannot in any way be set aside, avoided, rejected by the psychoanalyst, that everything that interests us analysts as knowledge originates in the unary trait.

The psychoanalyst in effect starts from a turning point, the one where knowledge is purified, as I might say, of everything that might create an ambiguity with natural knowledge, be caught up in something or other that is supposed to guide us in the world around us, with the help of some sensors or other which are supposed to be able to orient us in it from birth. Not of course that there is nothing of the kind to be found. When a learned psychologist writes in our own day – I mean, not so long ago, 40 or 50 years – something called *Sensation, the guide to life*, he is of course not saying anything absurd. But if he can state it in this way, it is precisely because the whole evolution of a science allows us to grasp that there is no co-naturality between this sensation and what, through it, can come to birth in terms of an apprehension of a supposed world. If the properly scientific development, the questioning of the senses of sight, indeed of hearing, proves anything to us, it is nothing other than something that we should accept as it is, with exactly the coefficient of artificiality with which it is presented. Among the vibrations (9) of light, there is an ultra-violet one of which we have no perception – and why should we not have? At the other end, infrared, it is the same thing. It is the same for the ear, there are sounds that we stop hearing, and it is not very easy to see why it should stop there rather than further on. In truth, when it is illuminated in this way, the only thing that can be

grasped is that there are filters, and that we manage with these filters. It is said that the function creates the organ. On the contrary, one makes use of the organ as best one can.

This something regarding the mechanisms of thinking, about which a whole traditional philosophy wanted to construct, to argue, attempting, along the paths that you know, by giving an account of what happens at the level of abstraction, of generalisation, to construct this something on a sort of reduction, of passing through the filter, of what is considered to be basic in sensation – *Nihil in intellectu quod non prius, etc* – this subject, this subject who can be deduced as subject of knowledge, this subject that can be constructed, in a way that now looks so artificial to us, on the basis of vital systems and organs which it is not clear in effect we can do without – is this what is at stake in signifying articulation? – those where there can begin to operate these first terms of spelling out which we put forward here, these most elementary terms, that bind, as I said, one signifier to another signifier, and which already have an effect in that this signifier can only be handled in its definition, if this has a meaning, that it represents for another signifier a subject, a subject and nothing else. No, there is nothing in common between the subject of knowledge and the subject of the signifier. There is no way of escaping this extraordinarily reduced formula, that there is something underneath. But precisely, we cannot designate this something by any term. It cannot be an *etwas*, it is simply a beneath, a subject, a *hupokeimenon*. Even for a thinking as invested with the contemplation of the primary and not at all constructed exigencies of the idea of knowledge, I mean the thinking of Aristotle, the simple approach of logic, the simple fact that he introduced it into the circuit of knowledge, requires him to rigorously distinguish *hupokeimenon* from any *ousia* in itself, from anything at all that could be thought of as essence.

The signifier is articulated then as representing a subject for another signifier. This is where we start from to give a sense to this inaugural repetition in so far as it is a repetition aimed at enjoyment. This allows

(10) us to see that knowledge is, at a certain level, dominated, articulated by purely formal necessities, necessities of writing, which culminates in our day at a certain type of logic. Now, this knowledge to which we can give the support of an experience which is that of modern logic, which is in itself and above all, the handling of a writing, this type of knowledge, is the very one that is at stake when it is a matter of measuring in the analytic clinic the incidence of repetition. In other words, the knowledge that seems most purified to us, even though it is quite clear that it could not in any way be extracted from empiricism by purification, is found to be the same knowledge that is introduced from the beginning. This knowledge shows its roots here, in the fact that in repetition, and in the form of the unary trait to begin with, it is found to be the means of enjoyment – of enjoyment precisely in so far as it goes beyond the limits imposed, under the term of pleasure, on the usual tensions of life. What appears from this formalism, to continue to follow Lacan, is, as we have said earlier, that there is a loss in enjoyment, and it is at the place of the loss of this something which introduces repetition, that we see arising the function of the lost object, of what I call *o*. What does this impose on us, if not this formula that at the most elementary level, that of the imposition of the unary trait, working knowledge produces, let us say an entropy. This is written *e, n, t*. You could write it *a, n, t, h*, that would be a nice play on words. This should not surprise us. Do you not know that energetics, is absolutely nothing else, whatever the ingenuous hearts of the engineers may think, than the sticking onto the world of the network of signifiers? I defy you to prove in any way, that going down 500 metres with a weight of 80 kilos on your back and once you have gone down climbing up the 500 metres, amounts to zero, no work. Try it out, go to work, you will see that you will have the proof of the contrary. But if you stick some signifiers onto it, namely, if you enter onto the path of energetics, it is absolutely certain that there has been no work.

So then, when the signifier is introduced as an apparatus of enjoyment, we have no reason then to be surprised to see appearing something that

is related to entropy, since entropy was precisely defined when people began to stick this system of signifiers onto the physical world. And you must not think I am joking. When you construct a factory anywhere, naturally you collect energy from it, you can even accumulate (11) it; after all it's a factory. Then, systems are brought into operation so that there can function these sorts of turbines, to the point that one can put energy in pots fabricated with the same logic that I am in the process of speaking to you about, namely, the function of the signifier. In our day, a machine has nothing in common with a tool. There is no genealogy between the shovel and the turbine. The proof is that you can quite legitimately call a little drawing you have made on a page a machine. Almost nothing is needed. It is enough simply for you to have conducting ink for it to be a very efficient machine. And why should it not be conducting, when the mark in itself already conducts pleasure (*volupté*)? If there is one thing that analytic experience teaches us, it is what concerns the world of phantasy. In truth, if it does not seem to have been tackled before analysis, it is because people had absolutely no knowledge of how to extricate themselves from it, except by having recourse to the bizarre, to the anomalous, from which came these terms, this pinpointing with proper names, which make us call this *masochism* and that *sadism*. When we put in these *isms* we are at the level of zoology. But there is all the same something altogether radical, which is the association in what is at the base, at the very root of phantasy, of this glory, if I can express myself in that way, of the mark. I am talking about a mark on the skin, from which there is inspired in the phantasy something that is nothing other than a subject identifying himself as being object of enjoyment. In the erotic practice that I am evoking, flagellation to call it by its name in case there are people here who are really hard of hearing, enjoying takes on the very ambiguity which means that it is at its level and no other, that the equivalence between the gesture that marks and the body object of enjoyment, can be touched. Whose enjoyment? That of the one who carries what I called the glory of the mark? Is it sure that this means the enjoyment of the Other? Certainly it is one of the ways the Other enters his world, and

undoubtedly one that cannot be refuted. But the affinity between the mark and the enjoyment of the body itself, is precisely where there is indicated that it is only from enjoyment, and not along any other paths that there is established the division by which narcissism is distinguished from a relation to the object. There is no ambiguity about this. It is in *Beyond the pleasure principle* that Freud forcefully marks that what constitutes in the final term the true support, the consistency, of the specular image in the system of the ego, is that it is sustained within by, that it only clothes this lost object by which enjoyment is introduced into the dimension of the being of the subject. In effect, since enjoyment is prohibited, it is clear that it is only because of an (12) initial chance, a contingency, an accident that enjoyment comes into play. The living being that operates normally, purrs with pleasure. If enjoyment is remarkable, and if it is ratified by having the sanction of the unary trait and of repetition, which establish it henceforth as mark, if that happens, it can only originate from a very slight gap in the meaning of enjoyment. These gaps, after all, will never be excessive even in the practices that I evoked earlier. It is not a matter of a transgression, of an irruption into a forbidden field by a wearing away of vital regulatory systems. In fact it is only in this effect of entropy, in this wastage, that enjoyment takes on its status, that it makes itself known. This is why I initially introduced the term *Mehrlust*, surplus enjoying.

It is precisely because it is glimpsed in the dimension of loss that something requires there to be compensated, as I might say, what is initially a negative number on that something or other has come to strike, resonate on the sides of the bell, has created enjoyment, and an enjoyment to be repeated. It is only the dimension of entropy that gives body to the fact that there is a surplus enjoying to be recovered. And this is the dimension that necessitates work, working knowledge, in so far as it initially stems, whether it knows it or not, from the unary trait, and, in its wake, everything that is going to be able to be articulated as signifier. It is starting from there that there is established this dimension of enjoyment, so ambiguous in the speaking being, who can just as well



theorise and make a religion of living in apathy, because apathy is hedonism. He can indeed make a religion of that, and nevertheless everyone knows that in its very mass – *Massenpsychologie* is the title of one of Freud's writings, at the same epoch – what animates him, what preoccupies him, what makes him be a different order of knowledge than these harmonising knowledges that link the *Umwelt* to the *Innenwelt*, is the function of surplus enjoying as such. This is the hollow, the gap that is no doubt initially filled by a certain number of objects that are, in a way, adapted in advance, designed to serve as stopper. This no doubt is where every classical analytical practice stops, by highlighting these diverse terms oral, anal, scopic, even vocal. These are the different names by which we can designate as object what is involved in the *o*. But the *o*, as such, is properly speaking what results from the fact that knowledge, at its origin, can be reduced to signifying articulation. This knowledge is a means of enjoyment. And I repeat, when it works, what it produces is entropy. This entropy, this point of loss, is the only point, the only regular point by which we have access to what is involved in enjoyment. In this there is expressed, there is completed, there is justified what is involved as regards the incidence of the signifier in the destiny of the speaking being. This has little to do with his word. It has to do with the structure, which is invested by the (13) fact that the human being, who is so-called no doubt because he is only the *humus* of language, has only to make himself *wordy* (*s'apparoler*) through this system. With something as simple as my four little signs, I was earlier able to make you put your finger on the fact that it is enough to give this unary trait the company of another trait,  $S_2$  after  $S_1$ , to be able to situate from this signifier, which is also licit, what is involved in its meaning and on the other hand, its insertion into the enjoyment of the Other – of that through which it is the means of enjoyment. At this point labour begins. It is with knowledge as a means of enjoyment, that there is produced this labour that has a meaning, an obscure meaning. This obscure meaning is that of the truth. No doubt, if I had not already tackled these terms from different illuminating angles, I would certainly not be so bold as to introduce them in this way. But a

considerable amount of work has already been done. When I speak to you about knowledge having its primary locus in the discourse of the Master at the level of the slave, who, if not Hegel, has shown us that what the work of the slave is going to yield us is the truth of the master? And no doubt the truth that refutes him. But to tell the truth, we are perhaps in a position to put forward other forms or schemas of discourse, and to see where the Hegelian construction gapes open, is left gaping, or is brought to a close in a forced way. If there is one thing that our whole approach delimits [to myths?], and which has undoubtedly been renewed by analytic experience, it is that no evocation of the truth can be made except by indicating that it is only accessible through the half-said, that it cannot be said in its entirety, because beyond this half, there is nothing to say. That is all that can be said. Here, consequently, discourse is abolished. One cannot speak about the unsayable, no matter what pleasure some people seem to find in this. It nonetheless remains that I illustrated this knot of the half-said the last time, by indicating how it is necessary to emphasise what is properly interpretation about it, what I articulated about the stating without a statement, about the statement with the stating in reserve. I indicated that these were points of axis, of balance, the axes of gravity, proper to interpretation, from which our progress ought to profoundly renew what is involved in the truth.

What is the love of truth? It is something that pokes fun by [is caused by?] truth's lack of being. This lack of being, we could describe in a different way – a lack of forgetting, that is recalled to us in the formations of the unconscious. It is not something that is of the order of being, of any kind of full being. What is this 'indestructible desire' that (14) Freud speaks about to close the final lines of his *Traumdeutung*? What is this desire that nothing can change, or weaken, when all else changes? The lack of forgetting is the same thing as the lack of being, because being is nothing other than to forget. The love of truth, is the love of this weakness whose veil we have lifted, it is the love of something that the truth hides, and which is called castration. I should

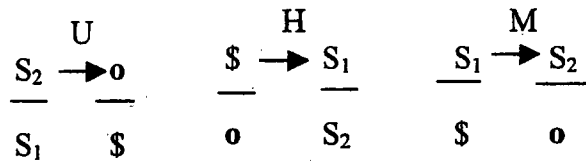
not need these reminders, which are in a way so bookish. It seems that it is among the analysts, particularly among them, that in the name of these few taboo words that make a blot on their discourse people never see what the truth is: impotence. It is on this that everything involved in the truth is built. That there should be love of weakness is no doubt the essence of love. As I have said, love is to give what one does not have, namely, what could repair this original weakness. And at the same time there can be imagined, there opens up, this role – I do not know whether I ought to call it mystical or mystifying – that has been given from all time, in a certain vein, to love. This so-called universal love, whose flag is waved at us to calm us, is precisely what we use to create a veil, an obstruction to what the truth is. What is asked of the analyst, and what was already indicated in my discourse the last time, is certainly not something that falls under the jurisdiction of this subject supposed to know, by which – understanding me, as usual, a little bit incorrectly - people believed I thought transference could be grounded. I often insisted on the fact that we are supposed not to know a great deal. What analysis sets up, is something that is quite the contrary. The analyst says to the one who is going to begin – *off you go, say anything whatsoever, it will be marvellous*. He is the one that the analyst establishes as subject supposed to know. After all, it is not such a matter of bad faith, because in the present case, he cannot trust anyone else. And transference is grounded on the fact that there is a chap who tells me, poor sod, to behave as if I knew what it was all about. He can say anything at all it will always result in something. There is good reason to talk about transference. It is not something that happens every day.

What defines the analyst? I have said it. I have always said it, always – simply, no one has ever understood anything, and what is more, it is natural, it is not my fault – I have always said, analysis is what one expects from a psychoanalyst. But this *what one expects from a psychoanalyst* - we obviously have to try to comprehend what that means. It is so much there, like that, within hand's reach – I have the feeling all the same, always, that I am only restating it – the work is for

me, the surplus enjoying is for you. What one expects from a psychoanalyst is, as I said the last time, to make his knowledge function in terms of truth. This indeed is why he limits himself to a half saying. I said it the last time, and I will have to come back to it, because it has consequences.

It is to the analyst and to him alone that there is addressed this formula that I so often commented on, the *Wo Es war soll Ich werden*. If the analyst is able to occupy this place on the top left that determines his discourse, it is because he is absolutely not there for himself. It is to where surplus enjoying was, the enjoying of the Other, in so far as I am producing the psychoanalytic act, that I for my part must come.

## Seminar 5: Wednesday 21 January 1970



Analytic discourse, at the level of structure where we are trying to articulate it this year, completes the roundabout of the three others, named respectively – I recall it for those who come here sporadically – the discourse of the Master, that of the Hysteric, which I put in the middle today, and finally the discourse that is of great interest to us here, because what is at stake is the discourse positioned as that of the University. But the fact that this analytic discourse completes the quarter circle displacements by which the three others are structured does not mean that it resolves them. That it allows us to pass to the reverse side (*à l'envers*) resolves nothing. This reverse side does not in any way explain the front side (*l'endroit*). It is a relationship of texture, of text that is at stake – of tissue, if you wish. It nevertheless remains that this tissue has a relief, that it captures something. Not everything, of course, since language shows the limit, precisely, of this word which has no existence except as language. It shows that even in the world of discourse, there is nothing that forms a whole, as I say – or better still, that the whole as such is rejected, is even supported, by having to be restricted in its use. This by way of introducing us to what today will be the object of an essential approach, with the goal of demonstrating what

an *envers* is. *Envers* resonates with *verité*. In truth, something deserves to be supported by this distinction – *truth* is not a word that is easy to handle outside logic, propositional logic, where it is made into a value, reduced to the inscription, to the manipulation, of a symbol, usually capital T, its initial. This use, as we shall see, is particularly hopeless. Indeed, this is what is healthy about it. Nevertheless, everywhere else, and specifically among analysts, I have to say and with good reason, particularly women analysts, it provokes a curious tremor, not unlike the one that has been pushing them, for some time, to confuse analytic truth with revolution. I have already spoken about the ambiguity of this term, which, in the use it has in celestial mechanics, can mean a return to the beginning. This is indeed from certain angles, what analytic discourse, as I said at the beginning, can accomplish with regard to three other orders, situating three other structures. It is not by chance that women are less enclosed than their partners in this cycle of discourses. Man, the male, the virile one, as we know him, is a creation of discourse nothing, (2) at least of what can be analysed in him, can be defined otherwise. The same cannot be said of the woman. Nevertheless, no dialogue is possible unless it is situated at the level of discourse. That is why, before trembling, the woman animated by the revolutionary virtue of analysis may tell herself that, much more than man, she has to take advantage of what we will call a certain culture of discourse. It is not that she has no gift for it, quite the contrary. And when she is animated by it, she becomes an outstanding guide in this cycle. This is what defines the Hysteric, and that is why on the board, breaking the order of what I usually write there, I placed her in the centre. It is nevertheless clear that it is not by chance that the word *truth* provokes this particular tremor in her. Only truth, even in our context, is not easy to access. Like certain birds that I was told about when I was small, it can only be caught by putting salt on its tail and of course this is not easy. My first reading book had as its first text a story entitled *The story of half a chicken*. It's true that is what it was about. It is not a bird that is any easier to catch than the others when the condition is to put salt on its tail.

What I teach, after all, ever since I have been articulating something about psychoanalysis, could well be entitled *The story of a half a subject*. Where is the truth of the relationship between this story of half a chicken and the story of half a subject? It can be taken from two angles. One could say that the first story I read determined the development of my thinking, as one might say in a University thesis. Or else, the structural point of view, the story of half a chicken might well have represented for the author who wrote it something that reflected some presentiment or other, not of *sychanalisse*, as it is put in *Le paysan de Paris*, but of what is involved in the subject. What is certain, is that there was also an image. The image of the half chicken was its profile from the good side. You did not see the other one, the cut, the one where the truth probably was, because you saw on the right hand page the half without the heart, but not without the *foie*, in the two senses of the word, no doubt. What does that mean? The fact is that the truth is hidden, but perhaps it is only absent. That would settle everything if that was how it was. You would only have to know everything there is to be known. After all, why not? When you say something, there is no need to add that it is true. Around this turns a whole problematic about judgement. You are well aware that Mr Frege puts the assertion in the form of a horizontal stroke, and distinguishes it from what is involved (3) when you affirm that it is true, by putting a vertical stroke on the extreme left. This then becomes an affirmation. Only what is true? Good God, it is what has been said. What has been said is the sentence, but there is no way of supporting the sentence by anything other than the signifier, in so far as it does not concern the object. Unless, like a logician whose extremist views I will put forward later, you posit that there is no object except a pseudo- object. For our part, we stay with the fact that the signifier does not concern the object, but the sense. As subject of the sentence, there is only sense. Hence this dialectic that we started from, that we call the *pas-de-sens* with all the ambiguity of this word *pas*. This begins with the non-sense forged by Husserl – *the green is one for*. This however may very well have a sense if what is in question for example is a vote with green balls and red balls. Only what

leads us onto the path where what is involved in being depends on sense, is what has most being. It is along this path, in any case, that we have gone beyond this *pas-de-sens* of thinking that what has most being cannot not exist.

Sense, as I might say, is responsible for being. It does not even have any other sense. Except, people have noticed for some time that this is not enough to make up the weight, the weight precisely of existence. A curious thing non-sense can make up the weight. That gets at your gut. And this is the step taken by Freud, when he showed that what was exemplary in the witticism, was the word with neither head nor tail.

This does not make it any easier to put salt on its tail. In that case truth flies off. Truth flies off just when you no longer want to catch it.

Moreover, since it does not have a tail, how could you have?

Astonishment and illumination. As you remember, a little story, a rather flat one, the exchanges about the golden calf (*veau d'or*) may be enough to wake up this calf that sleeps (*dort*) standing up. You can then see that he is, as I might say, made of hard gold (*or dur, ordure*). Between the implacable desire to endure (*le dur désir de durer*) of Eluard and the desire to sleep, which is indeed the greatest riddle - without anyone appearing to notice it - that Freud puts forward in the mechanism of the dream. Let us not forget it. *Wunsch zu schlafen*, he says, he did not say *schlafen Bedürfnis*, the need to sleep, that is not what is at stake. It is the *Wunsch zu schlafen* that determines the operation of the dream. It is curious that to this indication he adds the following, that a dream wakes you up just at the moment at which it might reveal the truth, so that you only wake up in order to continue dreaming - to dream in the real, or to be more exact, in reality. All this is striking. It is striking because of a certain lack of sense, when the truth, like nature comes rushing back. And at such a gallop, that scarcely has it crossed our field than it has already exited on the other side. The absence I mentioned earlier has produced a curious contamination in French. If you take the *sans*, which is supposed to come from the Latin *sine*, which is highly unlikely since its first form was something like *senz*, we can see that the *absentia*, in



the ablative, used in juridical texts and from which there comes this *sans*, a term without head or tail. We have already put forward this little word from the beginning of what we have been talking about today. So what? In talking about *senz* and then *sans* (*puis sans*), are we not dealing with a *puissance*? One quite different to this *en puissance* (in potency) of an imaginary virtuality, which is only power by being deceptive – but rather the being in sense, which is to be taken differently than being in the fullest sense, and is rather what escapes being, as happens in the *mot* quite correctly described as *esprit*. As moreover, we know, always happens in the act. In any act whatsoever, what escapes is what is important. And this is also the step taken by analysis, in the introduction of the bungled act as such, which is, after all, the only one that we know with certainty is always successful.

Around this there is a whole operation of litotes whose weight and accent I try to show in what I call the not-without (*pas-sans*). Anxiety is not without an object. We are *not without* a relation to the truth. But can we be sure that we ought to find it *intus*, within? Why not to one side? *Heimlich, unheimlich* – everyone has been able, from reading Freud, to remember the ambiguity hidden in this term which, by not being within, and nevertheless evoking it, emphasises precisely everything that is strange. On this, tongues vary strangely among themselves. Have you noticed that *homeliness*, in English means plain? Nevertheless, it is indeed the same word as *Heimlichkeit*, but it does not have quite the same accent. This indeed is also why *sinnlos* is translated into English as *meaningless*, namely, the same word that in translating *Unsinn*, will give us *non-sense*. Everyone knows that the ambiguity of roots in English leads to curious avoidances. On the other hand, strangely, and in an almost unique way, English will call *without* (*sans*), with and being outside. Truth does indeed seem in effect to be foreign to us, I mean our own truth. It is with us no doubt, but without us being all that concerned that we want to speak it. All we can say, this is what I

said earlier, is that we are *not without* it. A litotes of the fact that, in short, being within its reach, well, we would happily do without it. We (5) go from *without* to *not without*, and from that to not doing without (*sans-passer*).

Here I will make a little jump, and go to the author who has formulated most forcefully what results from the enterprise of positing that there is no truth except as inscribed in some proposition, and trying to articulate what in knowledge as such – knowledge being constituted on a foundation of proposition – can in all rigour function as truth. Namely, of articulating what, in whatever may be proposed, is true and can be sustained as such. The person in question is Wittgenstein who is, may I say, easy to read. Certainly. Try it. This requires you to be willing to move around in a world that is strictly one of cogitation, without looking for any fruit in it - which is a bad habit you have got into. You are very fond of collecting apples under an apple tree, or even gathering them up from the ground. There are better things for you to do than gathering up apples. Living for some time under this apple tree whose branches, I assure you, are enough to capture your entire attention, provided you set your mind to it, will all the same have the following characteristic: that you will get nothing from it, except for the affirmation that nothing can be said to be true other than the conformity to a structure that I will not even situate, by placing myself for an instant outside the shade of this apple tree, as logical, but as grammatical, as the author states quite clearly. For this author, this constitutes what he identifies to the world.

Grammatical structure is what the world is. And the only truth, in short, is a composite proposition comprising the totality of the facts that constitute the world. If we choose on the whole to introduce into it the element of negation that allows it to be articulated, we will have a whole set of rules to separate out which constitute a logic, but the whole is, he

says tautological, namely, as stupid as the fact that whatever you state is either true or false. To state that this indeed is either true or false, is necessarily true, but that also cancels out the meaning. Everything that I am telling you, he concludes in proposition 6.51, 2, 3, 4 - because he numbers them - everything that I have stated here is properly speaking *Unsinn*, namely, cancels out meaning. Nothing can be said that is not tautological.

What is at stake, is that the reader, after having followed the long circuit of statements, every one of which I would ask you to believe me is extremely attractive, should be overcome by everything that has just been said in order to conclude that there is nothing else that can be said - but anything that can be said is only non-sense. I have been a little (6) quick in summarising the *Tractus logico-philosophicus* of Wittgenstein. Let us simply add this remark, that nothing can be said, that nothing is true, except on the condition of starting from the idea, and this is Wittgenstein's approach, that a fact is an attribute of a crude proposition. I am calling a crude proposition one that elsewhere is put in quotation marks, in Quine for example, where the statement is distinguished from the stating. This is an operation that, even though I constructed my graph precisely on its foundation, I nevertheless have no hesitation in describing as arbitrary. It is clear, in effect, and this is Wittgenstein's position, that to say that there is no need to add a sign of affirmation to what is a pure and simple assertion, can be sustained. An assertion announces itself as truth. How then can one escape what is involved in Wittgenstein's conclusions except by following him to the very place that he is led to, namely, towards the elementary proposition, whose notation as true or false is what should, in any case, whether it is true or false, guarantee the truth of the composite proposition. I would say further that whatever the facts of the world may be, whatever we may state about it, what constitutes the world is the tautology of the totality of discourse.

Let us take the most restricted proposition, I mean from a grammatical point of view. It is not for nothing that the Stoics had already used it as a basis, by introducing it into the simplest form of implication. I will not even go that far, I will only take the first part, since, as you know, an implication is a relation between two propositions. *It is daylight*. This indeed is the minimum. The neutral *it*. *It is, that is* – in certain cases it has the same meaning. So then Wittgenstein only sustains the world by facts. There is no thing, unless it is sustained by a web of facts. No thing, moreover, except the inaccessible. Facts alone are articulated. This fact that it is daylight is a fact only by virtue of being said. The true only depends – this is where I have to re-introduce the dimension I am arbitrarily separating from it – on my stating, namely, if I state something about it. The true is not internal to the proposition where there is announced only the fact, the factitiousness of language. It is true that it is a fact, a fact constituted, in the event, by my saying it, while it is true. But that it is true is not a fact, if I do not explicitly add on that, moreover, it is true. Except that as Wittgenstein points out quite correctly, it is superfluous for me to add that it is true. Only there you are. What I have to say in place of this superfluity, is that I must really have a reason to say it, and this will be explained in what follows. Precisely, I do not say that I have a reason, I continue with what follows, (7) namely, my deduction, and I integrate *it is daylight*, perhaps as a fallacy – even if it is true – to my encouragement which may be to take advantage of it to make someone believe that he will clearly see what my intentions are. The stupidity, if I can express myself in this way, is to isolate the factitiousness of *it is daylight*. It is a prodigiously fruitful stupidity, because it creates a support, one that very precisely has as a result that there is pushed to its final consequences what I took support on myself, namely, that there is no meta-language. There is no other meta-language than every form of blackguardism (*canaille*), if by this we designate these curious operations that are deduced from the fact that the desire of man is the desire of the Other. All blackguardism comes from wanting to be the Other - I mean the big Other - for someone, in which there is outlined the shapes in which his desire is captured. So

then this operation described as Wittgensteinian is nothing other than an extraordinary display of, a hunting down of philosophical blackguardism. The only sense is that of desire. This is what one can say after having read Wittgenstein. There is no truth except of what the aforesaid desire hides about its lack, in order to pretend to make nothing of what it finds. Nothing throws a more certain light on what results from what the logicians have always articulated simply by dazzling us with the aura of paradox surrounding what is called material implication. You know what it is. It is simply implication. It has only been called material recently, because, all of a sudden, people rubbed their eyes, and began to comprehend the enormities involved in implication, I am speaking about the one that a particular Stoic supported. Namely, that the three following implications are legitimate: undoubtedly the false implies the false and the true implies the true, but it cannot be ruled out that the false implies the true, since, in short, what counts is what is implied, and if what is implied is true, the whole of the implication also is. Only, this means something. Why could we not, by slightly displacing the word *implies*, notice what is obvious in the fact – which was very well known in the Middle Ages - *ex falso sequitur quodlibet* that the false also involves the true on occasion, also means that the true, for its part, can come from anything whatsoever. But if, on the contrary, we reject that the true involves the false, that it can have a false consequence – because this is what we reject, otherwise there would be no possible articulation of propositional logic – we end up at this curious fact that the true has then a genealogy, that it always goes back to a first true, from which it cannot depart. This is such a strange piece of information and one so contested by our whole life, I mean our life as subject, that, just by itself, it would be enough to put in question whether (8) the truth can in any way be isolated as an attribute, an attribute of anything whatsoever that can be articulated to knowledge.

So then, the analytic operation, for its part, is distinguished by advancing into this field in a fashion distinct from what is found, I would say, incarnated in Wittgenstein's discourse, namely, a psychotic ferocity, alongside which Occam's well known razor, which states that we should not accept any logical notion except it is necessary, is as nothing. The truth, we start again at the beginning, is certainly inseparable from the effects of language taken as such. Certainly, no truth can be localised except with reference to the field in which it is stated – where it is stated as it can be.

So then, it is true that there is no true without a false, at least in principle. This is true. But that there is no false without a true, is false. I mean that the true can only be found outside any proposition. To say that the truth is inseparable from the effects of language taken as such, is to include the unconscious in it. On the contrary, to put forward, as I recalled the last time, that the unconscious is the condition of language takes on its meaning here, because it holds that an absolute meaning corresponds to language. One of the authors of the discourse on *The unconscious*, subtitled, *a psychoanalytic study*, formerly wrote it by superimposing an S on itself, by putting it over and under a bar, arbitrarily treated moreover with respect to what I had done with it. The signifier thus designated, whose meaning is supposed to be absolute, is very easy to recognise, because there is only one that can answer at this place. It is the I, the I in so far as it is transcendental, but is also illusory. This is the final, radical operation, the one that, precisely, is irreducibly guaranteed by what I designate as the discourse of the University – and this is what shows that it is not by chance that we find it here.

The transcendental I, is the one that whoever has announced a knowledge in a certain way conceals as truth, the S<sub>1</sub>, the I of the Master. The I identical to itself, it is very precisely from this that the S<sub>1</sub> of the

pure imperative is constituted. The imperative is very precisely where the I is developed [concealed?], because it is always in the second person. The myth of the ideal I, of the I that masters, of the I by means of which something at least is identical to itself, namely the speaker, is very precisely what University discourse cannot eliminate from the place where its truth is found. From every university statement of any philosophy whatsoever, even if it were one that strictly speaking could be pinpointed as being most opposed to it, namely, if it were the philosophy, the discourse of Lacan – the *I-cracy* unfailingly emerges. Naturally no philosophy is reducible to this.

(9) For the philosophers the question has always been much more supple and pathetic. Remember what is at stake. They all admit it more or less, and some of them, the most lucid ones, state it clearly – they want to save the truth. This took one of them, faith, very far – to the point, like Wittgenstein, of ending up with the fact that by making it the rule and the foundation of knowledge, there is nothing more to be said, nothing in any case that concerns it as such – in order to refuse, to avoid this rock. Undoubtedly there is something in the author that brings him close to the position of the Analyst, which is that he eliminates himself completely from his discourse. I spoke earlier about psychosis. There is, in effect, such a coincidence between an unquestioning discourse and something or other that is strikingly indicative of psychosis, that I say it once I have simply felt its effect. How remarkable it is that a University like the English University should have made a place for him. A place apart, make no mistake, an isolated place, which the author completely collaborated with himself, to such an extent that he withdrew from time to time to a little house in the country, in order to return to and to pursue this implacable discourse, by which, one can say, that even that of Russell's *Principia mathematica* is falsified. He did not want to save the truth. Nothing can be said about it, he said, which is not sure, because moreover we have to deal with it every day. But how then did

Freud define the psychotic position in a letter that I have often quoted? Precisely by something that he calls, a strange thing, *unglauben*, to want to know nothing about the quarter where truth is at stake. The matter is so pathetic for the university academic that one can say that the discourse of Politzer entitled *Foundations of concrete psychology*, which the approach of psychoanalysis stimulated him to produce, is a fascinating example of it. Everything is determined by this effort to get out of the University discourse that had formed him from head to toe. He is well aware that there is here a kind of ramp by which he could get out of it. You should read this little book, re-edited in paperback without, to my knowledge, anything being able to show that the author would himself have approved of this new edition, whereas everyone knows the drama created for him by the bouquets that buried something that from the start was meant to be cry of revolt. These scathing pages on psychology, especially of the University kind, are strangely followed by some steps that, in a way, bring him back to it. But what made him grasp that there was some hope for him of emerging from this psychology, is that he put the accent on the fact – as nobody had done at his epoch – that what was essential to the Freudian method in tackling what was involved in the formations of the unconscious, was that it put (10) its faith in the narrative. The accent is put on this fact of language, from which everything, in truth, was able to start. There was no question at the time – this by the by – of anyone, even at the *École normale*, having the slightest idea of what linguistics was, but it is all the same curious that he got close in this way to the fact that it is the mainspring that offers a hope for what he strangely calls concrete psychology. Curious ... you should read this little book, and if I had it here, I would read it with you. Perhaps one day I will make it the material for our talks here, but I have enough to say without having to delay on something whose significant strangeness every one of you can see – that it is by wanting to get out of the University discourse, that one implacably goes back into it. This follows step by step. What objections does he raise to the statements, I mean to the terminology, the mechanisms, that Freud puts forward in his theoretical progress if not



that, in stating around facts that can be isolated by formal abstraction, as he confusedly puts it, Freud allows there to escape what for him is the essential required in matters of psychology, namely, that any psychic act can only be stated if there is preserved what he calls the act of the I, and still better, its continuity. This is written down – the continuity of the I. This term is undoubtedly what allowed the author of the report whom I spoke about earlier to shine at the expense of Politzer, to whom he brings in a little reference, as a way like that, of persuading the audience that he had at that time. What a lovely occasion to produce a University man who moreover had also proved himself to be a hero. It is always consoling to have one from time to time, but that is not enough, if people take advantage of it without for all that being able to demonstrate how irreducible the University discourse is in relation to analysis. Nevertheless this book bears witness to a very particular struggle, because Politzer cannot fail to sense the degree to which analytic practice is very close, in fact, to what he outlines ideally as being completely outside the field of everything that had been done up to then as psychology. But he cannot do otherwise than fall back onto the requirement of the I. Not of course that I myself see in it something irreducible. The author of the report in question rids himself of it too easily when he says that the unconscious is not articulated in the first person, and by arming himself with one or other of my statements, about the fact that the subject receives his message from the other in an inverted form. This is certainly not a sufficient reason. Elsewhere I clearly said that the truth speaks I. *Me, the truth, I speak*. Only what does not occur either to the author in question or to Politzer, is that the I in question is perhaps innumerable, that there is no need for the continuity of the I for it to multiply its acts. But let us leave this, it is not the essential thing.

(11) Over against this use of propositions, shall we not, before leaving, present the following – *A child is being beaten*. This indeed is a

proposition that constitutes the whole of this phantasy. Can we attribute to it anything whatsoever that can be described in terms of true or false? This case, which exemplifies what cannot be eliminated from any definition of the proposition, allows us to grasp that if this proposition has the effect of being sustained by a subject, no doubt, it is by a subject as Freud immediately analyses it, divided by enjoyment. Divided, I mean that just as much the one who states it, this child that *wird, vertu, verdit, verdoie*, because of being beaten, *geschlagen* – let us play around a little bit more – this child who grows green, is beaten, jokes (*verdit, battu, badine*), *virtue*, these are the misfortunes of *vers-tu*, namely, the one who is hitting him, and who is not named, however the sentence is stated. The *you are beating me* is this half of the subject whose formula creates its link to enjoyment. To be sure, he does receive his own message in an inverted form – that means here, his own enjoyment in the form of the enjoyment of the Other. This indeed is what is at stake when the phantasy finds itself, in the first place, linking the image of the father to another child. It is the fact that the father enjoys beating him that here puts the stress on meaning and also on this truth which is a half – because moreover, the one who is identified to the other half, to the subject of the child, was not this child, unless, as Freud says, one reconstitutes the intermediary stage – never in any way substantiated by memory – where in effect it is himself. It is he who from this sentence creates the support of his phantasy, who is the beaten child.

Thus we are led back in fact to the fact that a body can be faceless (*sans figure*). The father, or the other, whoever he may be, who here plays the role, guarantees the function, provides the locus of enjoyment, is not even named. A faceless God, make no mistake. He nevertheless cannot be grasped except as body. What has a body and does not exist? Answer – the big Other. If we believe in this big Other, he has a body that cannot be eliminated from the substance of the one who said *I am what I am*, which is a quite different form of tautology. This is why

before leaving you I will allow myself to put forward something which is so striking in the story that, in truth, it is astonishing that it has not been sufficiently emphasised, or indeed not at all – materialists are the only authentic believers. Experience has proved it – I am talking about the time of the most recent historical eruption of materialism in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. Their God is matter. Well then, why not? This holds up better than all the other ways of grounding him. Only for us that is not enough, precisely because we have logical needs, if you will allow me to use this term. Because we are beings born from surplus enjoying, the (12) result of the use of language.

When I say *the use of language*, I do not mean that we use it. It is we who are used by it. Language uses us, and that is how it enjoys itself. That is why the only chance of God's existence, is that He – with a capital H – enjoys, it is that He is enjoyment. This indeed is why it is clear to the most intelligent of materialists, namely Sade, that the goal of death, is in no way the inanimate. Read the remarks of Saint-Fond towards the middle of *Juliette* and you will see what is at stake. If he says that death constitutes nothing other than the invisible collaboration with a natural operation, it is of course because for him after death, everything remains animated – animated by the desire for enjoyment. He can, moreover, call this enjoyment Nature, but it is evident from the whole context that it is enjoyment that is at stake. Enjoyment of what? Of a unique being who only has to say – *I am what I am*. And why is that then? How does Sade sense it so clearly? This is where there comes into operation the fact that in appearance he is sadistic. He refuses to be what he is, what he states he is. In making this furious call to give to nature in its murderous operations, from which forms are always reborn, what is he doing if not displaying his incapacity to be anything other than the instrument of divine enjoyment. That is Sade the theoretician. Why is he a theoretician? I will perhaps have the time in the final minutes, as is my usual practice, to tell you. The practitioner

is something different. As you know from a certain number of stories which are testified to us by his own writings, the practitioner is simply masochistic. It is the only clever and practical when enjoyment is at stake, because to exhaust oneself at being God's instrument, is backbreaking.

The masochist for his part is a delicate humorist. He does not need God for that, his lackey is enough for him. He gets his foothold by enjoying himself within very careful limits, naturally, and like every good masochist, as can be seen, it is enough to read it, he splits his sides laughing. He is a Master humorist. So then why in the devil is Sade a theoretician? Why this exhausting wish, because it is completely outside his influence, this wish he wrote, designated as such, that these particles which are all that is left of the fragments of lives that are torn, shredded, dismembered after the most extraordinary acts imaginable, must really, in order to finish things off, be subjected to a second death. Who could ensure that? Naturally, it is within our reach. I stated this a long time ago in connection with Antigone. Only, being a psychoanalyst, I was in a position to notice that the second death comes (13) before the first, and not after, as Sade dreams. Sade was a theoretician. And why? Because he loves the truth. It is because he wants to save it that he loves it. What proves that he loves it, is that he refuses it, that he does not seem to notice that in decreeing the death of God, he exalts Him, that he bears witness for Him, by the fact that he, Sade, only reaches enjoyment by the little means I mentioned earlier. What can be meant by the fact that in loving truth, one thus falls into a system that is so obviously symptomatic? Here one thing stands out – to posit oneself as the residue of the effect of language, as the one who ensures that, from enjoying, the language effect only extracts what the last time I stated about the entropy of a surplus enjoying – this is what is not seen – the Truth as outside discourse, what – it is the sister of this forbidden enjoyment. I say *it is the sister*, because it is related only by

the fact that, if the most radical logical structures are attached effectively to this pedicle torn from enjoyment, the question is posed inversely as to what enjoying these conquests that we are making in our day in logic correspond to. The fact, for example, that the only consistency in a logical system, however weak it may be, as they say, comes from designating its force as an effect of incompleteness, in which its limits are marked. To what enjoyment does the way in which the foundation of logic itself proves to be bursting open correspond? In other words, what is the truth here? It is not in vain nor by chance that I designate as sisterly the position of truth with respect to enjoyment. Except by stating it in the discourse of the Hysteric. We will have to develop this. Curiously quite recently someone gave a lecture to the Americans about something that everyone knew. Freud had what is modestly called an affair, *une affaire*, with his sister-in-law. So what? We have known for a long time the place that Minna Bernays held in Freud's preoccupations. The support of some Jungian tittle-tattle changes nothing. But in it I hold onto this position of sister-in-law. Sade whom everyone knows was separated from his wife by Oedipal prohibitions – as the theoreticians of courtly love have always said there is no love in marriage – is it not because of his sister-in-law that he loved the truth so much?

I will leave you on this question.

## Seminar 6: Wednesday 11 February 1970

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Today we are going to move forward, and to avoid perhaps one misunderstanding, among others, I would like to give you this rule as a first approximation for the reference of a discourse: it is what it declares it wants to master. This is enough to classify it as having a kinship with the discourse of the Master. This indeed is the difficulty of the one that I am trying to bring as close as possible to the discourse of the Analyst – it ought to find itself at the very opposite of any will for mastery, at least a declared one. I am saying *at least a declared one*, not because he should dissimulate it, but because after all it is always easy to slip into the discourse of mastery because in truth, we start from there in what constitutes teaching. The discourse of consciousness has been taken up again, is taken up every day, indefinitely. One of my best friends, someone very close to me, in psychiatry, of course, found the most appropriate note – the discourse of synthesis, the discourse of the consciousness that masters. It was to him that I was responding in certain remarks that I made a long time ago on psychic causality, and they are there to bear witness to the fact that well before taking in hand the analytic discourse, I had already taken a certain orientation, in particular when I told him more or less the following: how can this

psychical activity be apprehended otherwise than as a dream, when one hears thousands and thousands times a day *this bastard chain of destiny and inertia, of dice throws and stupor, of false success and unrecognised encounters that make up the everyday text of a human life?* So then, you must not expect anything more subversive in my discourse than not claiming to have a solution.

Nevertheless it is clear that there is no more burning issue than what, in discourse, refers to enjoyment. Discourse ceaselessly touches on it because it originates there and it stirs it up anew once it tries to return to this origin. It is in this respect that it challenges any pacification. Freud's discourse is a strange one, it has to be said, one that is most contrary to the coherence, to the consistency of a discourse. The subject (2) of the discourse does not know himself *qua* subject giving the discourse. That he does not know what he is saying might be acceptable, we have always managed to make up for this. But what Freud says, is that he does not know who is saying it. Knowledge – I think that I have insisted enough already on this for it to get into your head – knowledge is something which is said, that speaks itself. Well then, knowledge speaks all by itself, and that is what the unconscious is. That is where it ought to have been attacked by what is called in a more or less diffuse way, phenomenology. To contradict Freud, it was not enough to recall that knowledge knows itself ineffably. The attack should have been directed at the fact that Freud puts the accent on what everyone should know – knowledge counts, knowledge enumerates, details itself, and this is what is not obvious. The fact is that what is said, the rosary, is said by no one, it happens all by itself. If you will allow me, it was with this that I wanted to start with that aphorism. You will see why I pulled back. I did so to as usual, but luckily I did it before 12.31pm so as not to delay the end of our meeting this time. If I were to begin in the way I always feel like doing, it would be in an abrupt way. It is because I feel like doing it that I do not do it. I am trying to win you over, I spare you sudden shocks. I wanted to begin with an aphorism which, I hope, is going to strike you by its obviousness,

because it is indeed because of this that Freud has carried the day, despite the protests that welcomed his entry into the world of the commerce of ideas. What carried the day was that Freud does not bullshit [*ne déconne pas*]. This is what imposed this sort of prestige that he has in our times. It is probably also the reason why there is someone else who as we know, despite everything, survives rather well. One and the other, Freud and Marx, are characterised by the fact that they do not talk bullshit. This can be noticed in the fact that by contradicting them, people always slip, slip very easily into talking bullshit. They disorganise the discourse of those who want to trip them up. Very often they fix it irreducibly in a sort of conformist, retarded, academic recursion. Would to Heaven that these contradictors, as I might say, would talk bullshit. They would continue the work of Freud, they would be in a certain order, the one that is in question. People ask themselves after all why from time to time so and so is described as stupid [*con*]. Is it all that disrespectful? Have you not noticed that when people say that someone is stupid, that means rather that he is not all that stupid? The depressing thing is that people do not know too well how it is involved in enjoyment. And it is for this reason that it is called that. This is also (3) what gives Freud's discourse its merit. He is up to it. He is up to a discourse that sticks as closely as possible to what is related to enjoyment – as close as was possible up to him. It is not all that easy. It is not easy to situate oneself at this point where discourse emerges, or even, when it returns to it, stumbles, when it gets close to enjoyment.

Obviously, in this regard, Freud sometimes slips away, abandons us. He abandons the question around feminine enjoyment. According to the latest news, Mr Gillespie, an eminent personage who distinguished himself by all sorts of wheeler-dealing between the different currents that have traversed analysis during these last 50 years, shows a sort of joy, a curious joy, in the latest issue of the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, at the fact that, thanks to a certain number of experiments, which are supposed to have been carried out at the University of Washington on vaginal orgasm, a clear light is supposed to



have been projected on what had caused the debate, namely, the primacy or not, in the development of the woman, of an enjoyment initially restricted to the equivalent of male enjoyment. This work by a certain Masters and Johnson is in truth not without interest. Nevertheless, when, without having been able to consult the text directly, but on the basis of certain quotations, I see that the major orgasm, which is supposed to be that of the woman, comes from the whole personality, I wonder how a movie camera picking up images in colour, placed inside an appendage representing the penis, recording from within what is happening on the wall that surrounds it when it is introduced, is capable of grasping the whole personality in question.

It is perhaps very interesting, as an accompaniment, in the margin of what Freud's discourse allows us to put forward. Indeed this gives its meaning to the word *déconner*, just as one says *déchanter* [to change one's tune]. Perhaps you know what descant is – it is something that is written alongside plain chant. It can also be sung, it can act as an accompaniment, but ultimately, it is not quite what one expects from plain chant. Indeed, it is because there is so much descant that it is necessary to recall here in its brutal relief what emerges from what I could call the attempt at economic reduction that Freud gives to his discourse on enjoyment. It is not for nothing that he masks it in this way. You are going to see the effect it has when it is stated directly. But this is what I thought I should do today in a form that, I hope, will strike you, even though it will teach you nothing, except the proper tone (4) of what Freud discovers. We are not going to talk about enjoyment in that way. I have already told you enough for you to know that enjoyment is the barrel of the Danaids, and that once you get into it you do not know where it will end up. It begins with a tickle and it ends like a blaze of petrol. That is how enjoyment always is. I will take things from a different angle that cannot be said to be absent from analytic discourse. If you read the veritable body of work that makes up this anniversary issue of the *International Journal*, you can understand why the authors congratulate themselves on the solidity revealed by the past

50 years. I would ask you to put it to the test – take any issue whatsoever in these 50 years, you will never know its date. It always says the same thing. It is always just as insipid, and since analysis is a preservative, it is also always the same authors. Except that out of tiredness they have reduced their input from time to time. One of them expresses himself on a single page. They congratulate themselves that, in short, these 50 years have well confirmed these primary truths, that the mainspring of analysis is goodness, and that what fortunately has been made evident throughout these years, with the progressive effacing of Freud's discourse, is in particular the solidity and the glory of a discovery described as *the autonomous ego*, namely, the conflict free ego. This is the result of 50 years of experience, in virtue of the injection of three psychoanalysts who had flourished in Berlin, into American society where this discourse about a solidly autonomous ego certainly promises attractive results. In terms of a return to the discourse of the Master, in effect, one could hardly do better. This gives you an idea of what one could call the regressive impact that follows any kind of attempt at transgression, which was all the same what analysis was at one time.

So then, we are going to say things in a particular way, around a word that you will easily find in going through this issue, since it is already one of the current themes of analytic propaganda – in English, it is called *happiness*, in French we call it *bonheur*. Unless we define it in a rather miserable way, namely, that it is to be like everyone else, which is what *the autonomous ego* comes down to, it must be said that no one knows what happiness is. If we are to believe Saint-Just who said it himself, happiness has become since his own time, a political factor. So then, let us try here to give body to this notion by another abrupt statement that I would ask you to note is central to Freudian theory: there is no happiness except from the phallus (*il n'y a de bonheur que du phallus*).

(5) Freud writes this in all sorts of ways, and even writes it in the naïve fashion which consists in saying that there is no more perfect way of approaching enjoyment than the masculine orgasm. Only what the Freudian theory puts the accent on, is that it is only the phallus that is happy and not its bearer, even when, not out of oblativity, but out of desperation, he brings it to a partner who is supposed to be in desolation at not being herself the bearer of it. Here is what psychoanalytic experience positively teaches us. The aforesaid bearer, as I express it, struggles to get his partner to accept this privation, in the face of which all his loving efforts, his little attentions and tender services are in vain, because they reawaken the aforesaid wound of privation. This wound, then, cannot be compensated for by the satisfaction that the bearer would have in calming it. On the contrary it is reawakened by its very presence, by the presence of that whose loss causes this wound. This is very exactly what is revealed to us by what Freud was able to extract from the discourse of the Hysteric. It is starting from there that it can be conceived that the hysteric symbolises this primary dissatisfaction. I have highlighted her promotion of unsatisfied desire by basing myself on the minimal example that I commented on in this writing that remains under the title of *The direction of the treatment and the principles of its power*, namely, the dream described as that of the butcher's beautiful wife. Let us remember there is the butcher's beautiful wife and her husband who likes to screw, a man who is a really supreme sod (*un con en or*). Because of this she has to show him that she does not agree with the fact that he is in addition trying to fulfill her, which means that this would settle nothing as regards the essential, despite the fact that this essential is something that she has. There you are. What she, for her part, does not see, because she also has limits to her little horizon, is that this would mean leaving this essential of her husband to another who, for her part, would find the surplus enjoying, because this indeed is what is at stake in the dream. All we can say is that she does not see it in the dream. There are others who do see it, for example, this is what Dora does. By adoring the object of desire that the woman has become on her horizon, the woman she is enveloped by,

who in the case history is called Frau K, whom she contemplates in the shape of the Madonna of Dresden, by this adoration, she puts a stop to her penile claims. And this is what allows me to say that the butcher's beautiful wife does not see that ultimately, like Dora, she would be happy to leave this object to someone else.

These are only pointers. There are other solutions. If I am pointing this one out, it is because it is the most scandalous. There are many other refinements in the way of substituting for this enjoyment, whose system, which is the social one, and which culminates in the Oedipus complex (6) means that, because she is the only one who could bring happiness, precisely because of that, she is excluded. This is properly speaking the meaning of the Oedipus complex. And this indeed is why what is interesting in analytic investigation, is to know how, in supplying for the prohibition of phallic enjoyment, something is contributed whose origin we have defined by something quite different to phallic enjoyment, which is situated, and, as one might say, cross ruled (*quadrillée*) by the function of surplus enjoying. All I am doing here is recalling glaring facts in the Freudian discourse that I have already highlighted on several occasions, and that I want to insert into their configuration relationship, which is not central, but connected to the situation that I am trying to describe about the relationships between discourse and enjoyment. That is why I am recalling them, and want to give them an additional emphasis, designed to change whatever aura may still persist for you around the idea that the Freudian discourse is centred on the biological data of sexuality. I will take my measure here, from something that, I must confess to you, I discovered not too long ago. It is always the most visible things, those that display themselves, that one sees least. I suddenly asked myself: how does one say sex in Greek? The worst thing about it is that I did not have a French-Greek dictionary and in any case none exist - well there are small, pretty pathetic ones. I had found *genos*, which of course has nothing to do with sex, because it means a whole lot of other things, race, lineage, generation, reproduction. Subsequently another word appeared on the horizon for me, but its

connotations are quite different: *phusis*, nature. This dividing up of living beings, on the one hand among themselves in two classes, with what we see this involves, namely, very probably, the irruption of death, - since the others, good God, those that are not sexed, do not appear to die all that much - this is not at all what we are saying, this does not in any way have the same accent as when we talk about *sex*. The stress of course is not at all on this biological reference. This shows that one must be very, very careful before thinking that there is here a suspicion, not simply of any organicity whatsoever, but even a reference to biology, that pushes the function of sex to the forefront in Freudian discourse. It is here that you notice that *sex*, with the accent that it has for us and its order of use, its significant diffusion, is *sexus*. As regards Greek, it would be necessary to pursue the enquiry into other positive languages but in Latin it is very clearly attached to *secare*. In the Latin (7) *sexus*, there is implied what I first highlighted, namely, that it is around the phallus that the whole operation turns. Naturally, the phallus is not the only thing in sexual relations. Only what is privileged in this organ, is that in a way one can clearly isolate its enjoyment. It can be thought of as excluded. To use violent words - I am not going to swamp it in symbolism for you - it has precisely a property that we can consider, in the whole field of what constitutes the sexual apparatus, as very local, very exceptional. In effect, there are not very many animals among whom the decisive organ of copulation is something that can be isolated so clearly in its functions of tumescence and detumescence, determining a perfectly definable curve, described as orgasmic - once it is done, it is done. *Post coitum animal triste*, as Horace said. Not necessarily. But this clearly marks that he feels he has been frustrated. There is something in this that does not concern him. He can approach things differently, he may find it great fun, but anyway Horace found it rather sad - and this proves that he had still retained some illusions about relationships to the *phusis*, to this bud that sexual desire is supposed to constitute. So that puts things in their place, when we see that, all the same, this is how Freud presents things. If there is something in biology that might be an echo, a vague resemblance, but in

no ways a root, for this position whose roots in discourse we are now going to point out, if there is something that, by saying *bye-bye* to the domain of biology, would give us an approximate idea of what is represented by the fact that everything is played out around this stake, that one does not have and the other does not know what to do with, it would be more or less what happens in certain animal species. Quite recently, and that is why I am speaking to you about it, I saw some very pretty fish, monstrous as ought to be a species in which the female is about this size [*arms apart*], and the male is like that, really small [*shows little finger*]. He hooks himself onto her belly, and he hooks on so well that his tissue is indiscernible – one cannot see, even under a microscope where the tissues of one and the tissues of the other begin. He is there, hooked on by the mouth, and from there he fulfils, as one might say, his functions as a male. It is not unthinkable that this greatly simplifies the problem of sexual relationships, when the exhausted male, at the end, reabsorbs his heart, his liver, nothing of all that remains, he is there suspended at his proper place, reduced to what remains, after a certain time, in this little animal pocket, namely, principally the testicles.

(8) It is a question of articulating what is involved in this phallic exclusion in the great human game of our tradition, which is that of desire. Desire has no immediately proximate relationship to this field. Our tradition posits it as what it is, *Eros*, the making present of lack. It is here that one can ask – how can one desire anything at all? What is lacking? There is someone who one day said – do not tire yourselves out, there is nothing lacking, see the lilies of the fields, they sew not, neither do they spin, but they have their place in the kingdom of heaven. It is obvious that to put forward such challenging proposals, you would really have to be the very one who identified with the negation of this harmony. This at least is how he has been understood, interpreted, when he was described as the Word (*le Verbe*). He had to be the Word itself to deny what was as obvious as this. Anyway, this is the idea that people had of him. He did not say as much. He said, if we are to believe one of his disciples – *I am the way, the truth and the life*. But

that he was made into the Word, is what clearly marks that people knew all the same more or less what they were saying when they thought that only the Word could disavow himself to this extent. It is true that we can well imagine the lilies in the fields as a body entirely given over to enjoyment. Every step of its growth identical to a formless sensation. The enjoyment of a plant. Nothing in any case allows us to escape it. It is perhaps infinitely painful to be a plant. Anyway, no one amuses themselves dreaming about that, except me.

It is not the same thing for an animal, which has what we interpret as an economy – the possibility of moving around in order to obtain the minimum of enjoyment. This is what is called the pleasure principle. Let us not stay where there is enjoyment, because God knows where that might lead, as I already said earlier.

Now, there is this fact, that, all the same, we know the means of enjoyment. I spoke to you earlier about tickling and grilling. Well then we know what to do, that is even what knowledge is. In principle no one wants to make too much use of it, and nevertheless, it is tempting. This is even what Freud discovered precisely around 1920, and this is, in a way, the retrogressive point of his discovery. His discovery was to have spelt out the unconscious and I defy anyone to say that this could be anything other than the remark that there is a perfectly articulated knowledge for which, properly speaking, no subject is responsible. When a subject happens to encounter it all of a sudden, to touch this knowledge that he did not expect, as a speaking being, he finds himself, faith, quite confused. This was the first discovery. Freud said to his (9) subjects: 'Speak, speak then, act like a hysteric, and we will see what knowledge you encounter, and the way you are sucked into it, or on the contrary reject it, we shall see what is going to happen.' And this led him necessarily to this discovery that he calls the *Beyond the pleasure principle*. This is what essentially determines that what we are dealing with in the exploration of the unconscious, is repetition. Repetition does not mean that when one has finished something one begins again,

like digestion or some other physiological function. Repetition is the denoting, the precise denotation of a trait that I distinguished for you in the text of Freud as being identical to the unary trait, to the little stroke, to the element of writing, of a trait in so far as it commemorates an irruption of enjoyment.

This is why it is conceivable that the rule and principle of pleasure can be violated, why it gives way to unpleasure - for there is nothing else to say, not necessarily pain - to unpleasure, which means nothing other than enjoyment. It is here that the insertion of generation, of the genital, of genetics (*du génésique*), into desire, is shown to be completely distinct from sexual maturity. No doubt, to talk about premature sexualisation has its interest. Undoubtedly, what is called the first sexual surge in man is very obviously what people say it is, namely, premature. But alongside this fact that it can imply, in effect, the operation of enjoyment, it nevertheless remains that what is going to introduce the cut between the libido and nature is not simply organic auto-eroticism. There are other animals besides men who are able to excite themselves, and this has not led monkeys to a very advanced elaboration of desire.

On the contrary, the favour found here in function of discourse is not just a matter of talking about prohibitions, but simply of the dominance of the woman as mother, mother who says, mother on whom one makes demands, mother who orders, and who at the same time establishes the dependence of the little man. The woman allows enjoyment to risk the mask of repetition. She is presented here as what she is: the setting up of a masquerade. She teaches her child to make a display. She leans towards surplus enjoying, because she, the woman, plunges her roots, like the flower, into enjoyment itself.

The means of enjoyment are opened up to the principle of the fact that the closed and foreign enjoyment of the mother has been renounced. This is where there will come to be inserted the huge social complicity



that inverts what we could call the natural difference of the sexes, into a sexualisation of organic difference. This overturning implies the common denominator of the exclusion of the specifically male organ. Henceforth the male is and is not what he is with respect to enjoyment. And from this also, the woman is produced as an object, precisely by not (10) being what he is, on the one hand in terms of sexual difference, and on the other by being what he renounces in terms of enjoyment.

It is absolutely essential to give these reminders at a time when, in speaking about 'the reverse side of psychoanalysis', the question is posed about the place of psychoanalysis in politics. The intrusion into politics can only be accomplished by recognising that there is no discourse, and not just analytic, except about enjoyment, at least when one expects from it the work of the truth. The characterisation of the discourse of the Master as involving a hidden truth (*une vérité cachée*) does not mean that this discourse hides itself, that it takes cover. The word *caché* has etymological virtues in French. It comes from *coactus*, from the verb *coactare*, *coacticata*, *coacticare* – that means that there is something compressed, as in a superimposition, something that needs to be unfolded in order to be legible. It is clear that his truth is hidden from him, and someone called Hegel articulated that it is given to him through the labour of the slave. Only there you are, this discourse of Hegel is the discourse of a Master, which depends on the substitution of the State for the Master by way of the long path of culture, in order to culminate at Absolute Knowledge. It does indeed seem to have been definitively refuted by some discoveries made by Marx. I am not here to give a commentary on him, and I will not offer an appendix here, but I will simply show the degree to which, from the psychoanalytic belvedere, we can, from the start, confidently put in doubt the claim that at the horizon, work generates an Absolute Knowledge, or even any knowledge. I have already put this forward before you and I cannot take it up again here. But it is one of the axes on which I would ask you to situate yourselves in order to grasp what is involved in subversion.

If knowledge is a means of enjoyment, labour is something different. even if it is accomplished by those who have knowledge. What it generates can certainly be truth, but no labour has ever generated knowledge. There is something against it, as can be seen by a closer observation of the relationships in our culture between the discourse of the Master to something that has arisen, and from which has started the examination of something that, from Hegel's point of view, entwined itself around this discourse: the avoidance of absolute enjoyment, in so far as it is determined by the fact that in fixing the child to the mother, social complicity makes of her the elective site of prohibitions. Moreover, does not the formalisation of a knowledge that renders all truth problematic suggest to us that, rather than a progress that has been brought about through the work of the slave – as if there had been the slightest progress in his condition, quite the contrary – what is at stake is a transferring, a plundering of what was, at the beginning, knowledge, inscribed, concealed in the world of the slave. The discourse of the (11) Master had to impose itself on this. But also, by this very fact, in getting into the mechanism of its repeated assertion, he had to grasp the loss involved by his own entry into discourse, and in a word, see emerging this o-object that we have pinpointed as surplus enjoying.

This in short, this and no more, is what the Master had to make the slave, the only possessor of the means of enjoyment, pay for. The Master was satisfied with this little tithe, with a surplus enjoying, and there is nothing to indicate after all that the slave was unhappy in himself at having to give it. The case is completely different as regards what is found at the horizon of the rise of the Master-subject in a truth that is affirmed by its equality to itself, by this I-crazy (*je-cratie*) I once spoke about, and which is it seems, the essence of every affirmation in culture that has seen this discourse of the Master flourish more than all the others.

Looking at it more closely, the subtraction from the slave of his knowledge is the whole history of this dialectic whose stages Hegel

follows step by step – a curious thing, without having seen where it was leading, and for good reasons. He was still in the field of the Newtonian discovery. He had not seen the birth of thermodynamics. If he had been able to take on board formulae that, for the first time, had unified this field described as thermodynamics, perhaps he would have been able to recognise something about the reign of the signifier, of the signifier repeated at two levels,  $S_1$ ,  $S_1$  again. The first  $S_1$  is the dam. The second  $S_1$ , underneath, is the reservoir that collects it and makes the turbine turn.

The conservation of energy has no other meaning than this mark of an instrumentation that signifies the power of the Master. What is collected in the fall must be conserved. That is the first of the laws. There is unfortunately something that disappears in the interval, or more exactly, does not lend itself to a return, to a restoring of the point of departure. This is what is called the Carnot-Clausius principle, even though a certain Meyer contributed a lot to it. Does not the analogy of this discourse, which in its essence gives pride of place to everything that concerns the beginning and the end, while neglecting everything that, in between, may relate to knowledge, does not the putting at the horizon of the new world of these pure numerical truths, of what is countable, not signify, just by itself, something quite different than the coming into play of an Absolute Knowledge? Is it not the very ideal of a formalisation where nothing is considered except as the count – energy itself is nothing other than what can be counted, the thing that, if you manipulate the formulae in a certain way, is found always to make up the same total – is this not the sliding, the quarter turn – which means that at the place of the Master there is established a completely new articulation of knowledge, one that can be completely reduced formally, (12) and that in place of the slave, there comes not something that could be inserted in any way into the order of this knowledge, but which is much more rather the product. Marx exposes this process as plundering. Only he does so without noticing that its secret is in knowledge itself – just like the reduction of the worker to being nothing more than value.

When surplus enjoying has passed to a higher level it is no longer surplus enjoying, but simply inscribed as a value, to be inscribed or deducted from the totality of what is accumulated – what is accumulated from a nature that has been essentially transformed. The worker is only a credit (*unité de valeur*) - a warning to those for whom this term has an echo. What Marx exposes in surplus value is the plundering of enjoyment. And nevertheless this surplus value is the memorial of surplus enjoying, an equivalent of surplus enjoying. Consumer society takes its meaning from the fact, that to the element of it that is qualified as “human”, in quotation marks, there is given the homogenous equivalent of any surplus enjoying whatsoever that is the product of our industry, in a word, a pinchbeck surplus enjoying. Moreover, this may take on. One can pretend to surplus enjoying, a lot of people are still at that stage.

If I wanted to give you material for your dreams about where there begins this process whose rules are given by our science, I would tell you, because I recently re-read it, to amuse yourself with *Satiricon*. I think that what your man made of it is not at all bad. What he will never be forgiven for, is to have made a spelling mistake in writing *Satyricon*, whereas there is no *y*, but apart from that, it is not bad. It is less good than the text, because in the text, things are taken seriously, you do not stop at images, and you see what it is all about.

In a word, it is a good example to show the difference between being a Master and being a wealthy man (*un riche*). What is marvellous in discourses, in any discourses whatever, even if they are the most revolutionary, is that they never say things crudely, as I have been trying to do a little bit – anyway, I did what I could for Freud’s discourse.

Ever since there have been economists, we see how interesting this is for us analysts, because if there is something that has to be done in analysis, it is the setting up of this other field of energetics, which would necessitate different structures. If you are Maxwell, you can unify the

fields of thermodynamics and electromagnetics as much as you like, but you will all the same run into a difficulty as regards gravity, and this is rather curious because everyone began with gravity, but anyway, what matter.

As regards the field of enjoyment – which, alas, will never be called the (13) Lacanian field as I would have wished, because I will surely not have the time even to sketch out its foundations, even though I wanted to – there are some remarks to make. It is very curious, that in the crowd of authors into whom I stick my nose from time to time, there is, as everyone knows, one called Smith who has written something called *The wealth of nations*. And he is not alone, they are all there racking their brains, Malthus, Ricardo and the others – what is the wealth of nations? They are here trying to define it: is it use-value - that must count for something - or exchange-value? Marx was not the one who invented all that. He was very perplexed by it. Now it is extraordinary that ever since there have been economists nobody, up to now - even for an instant, I am not saying to dwell on it – has made this remark that wealth is the property of the wealthy. Just like psychoanalysis, as I said one day, is something done by a psychoanalyst, it is its principal characteristic, you must start from the psychoanalyst. When it is a question of wealth, why not start from the wealthy? I have to stop in two minutes, but I am all the same going to make a remark that stems from an experience that is not specially that of an analyst, but that anyone could have. The wealthy man – this is very important - has a property. He buys, he buys everything, in short – anyway he buys a lot. But I would really like you to meditate on the fact that he does not pay. People imagine that he pays, for reasons of accountancy that stem from the transformation of surplus enjoying into surplus value. But in the first place, everyone knows that surplus value is added to very regularly. There is no circulation of surplus enjoying. And very specifically, there is one thing that he never pays for, which is knowledge. In effect, there is not only the dimension of entropy in what happens on the side of surplus enjoying. There is something else that someone has noticed,

which is that knowledge implies an equivalence between this entropy and information. Of course it is not the same, it is not as simple as Mr Brillouin says. But all the same you have to see something: the wealthy man is only a master – and this is what I would ask you to go and see in *Satiricon* – because he has redeemed himself. The masters involved at the horizon of the antique world are not businessmen. See how Aristotle speaks about it – it disgusts him. On the contrary, when a slave has redeemed himself, he is only a Master in that he begins to risk everything. This indeed is how a personage who is none other than Trimalcion himself expresses himself in *Satiricon*. From the moment that he is wealthy, why is he able to buy everything without paying? Because he has nothing to do with enjoyment. That is not what he repeats. He repeats his purchase, he buys everything, or rather he redeems everything that presents itself. He is the proper material for a Christian. His destiny is to be redeemed. And why does one allow oneself to be bought by a wealthy man? Because what he gives you is part of his essence as a wealthy man. In buying from a rich man, from a developed nation, you believe – this is the meaning of the wealth of nations – that you are simply going to participate at the same level as the rich nation. Only in this affair, what you lose, is your knowledge, which gave you your status. Into the bargain the rich man acquires this knowledge. Simply, precisely, he does not pay for it.

We have arrived today at the limit of what I can say before we evacuate this room. To end, I would simply introduce, the question of what can happen about the promotion, of the taking up again of the voice, of what is involved in surplus enjoying, of  $\phi$ , at the level where there is played out the function of the rich man for whom knowledge is only a system of exploitation. It is here, in a way, that the function of the analyst offers something like a dawn. I will try to explain to you the next time what its essence is. It is certainly not to refashion this element into an element of mastery. In effect, as I will explain to you, everything revolves around lack of success.

**Seminar 7: Wednesday 18 February 1970**

Right! It must be beginning to dawn on you that the reverse side of psychoanalysis is the very thing that I am putting forward this year under the title of the discourse of the Master. Not of course in an arbitrary way since this discourse of the Master already has its letters of credence in the philosophical tradition. Nevertheless, in the way I am trying to separate it out, it takes on here a new accent by virtue of the fact that in our day, it so happens that it can be separated out in a kind of purity because of something that we experience directly in politics. What I mean by that is that it encompasses everything, even what believes itself to be revolution, or more exactly what is romantically called revolution with a capital R. The discourse of the Master accomplishes its revolution in the opposite direction to the circuit that completes itself.

Highlighting it in this way is a little aphoristic, I agree, but it is done as an aphorism is intended to do, to illuminate things by a simple flash. At its horizon, there is something that interests us - I mean you and me - there is the fact that the discourse of the Master has only a single counterpoint, the Analytic discourse, which is still so unappropriated. I call it counterpoint because its symmetry - if one exists, and it does exist - is not with respect to a line, nor with respect to a plane, but with respect to a point. In other words, it is obtained by the completion (*bouclage*) of this discourse of the Master to which I referred just now. In other words, what I was not able, because it is starting to weary me,

to write again on the board, namely, the arrangement of these four terms, the two numbered S's, \$ and o, as I wrote it out the last time, and as I hope that you have it more or less transcribed on your notebooks. This inscription that I did not have time to write out because I was struggling with something else, sufficiently illustrates this symmetry with respect to a point, which means that the Analytic discourse is located very precisely at the opposite pole to the discourse of the Master.

Right! In psychoanalytic discourse, we sometimes see certain terms that serve as a *phylum* in the explanation, that of father for example. (2) And we sometimes see someone attempting to gather together its main elements. A painful exercise, when it is carried out within what people expect, at the point that we have got to, from a psychoanalytic statement and stating, namely, within a developmental reference. As regards the father, people think that they are obliged to start from childhood, from identifications, and then it turns into something that can really go as far as extraordinary nonsense, strange contradictions. We will be told about primary identification as being what links the child to the mother, and this seems in effect to be self-evident. However it is very curious that if we consult Freud, in his discourse of 1921 which is called *Group psychology and the analysis of the ego* it is very precisely the identification to the father which is given as primary. This is certainly very strange. Freud highlights here, that primordially the father proves to be the one who presides over every first identification, and precisely in this, that he is, in an elective fashion, the one who deserves love. This is certainly very strange, because it is in contradiction with everything that the development of analytic experience was found to establish about the primacy of the mother-child relationship. A strange discordance between the Freudian discourse and the discourse of psychoanalysts. Perhaps these discordances are the result of confusion, and the order that I am trying to establish by a reference to what are in a way primordial discourses is there to remind us that it is strictly unthinkable to state anything



whatsoever that is ordered with respect to analytic discourse without remembering the following. To be effective, our effort, which is, as we know perfectly well, a reconstructive collaboration with the one who is in the position of analysand whom we allow, in a way, to make his way into his own quarry, this effort that we make to extract, in the form of imputed thinking, what has in effect been lived by the one who well merits on this occasion the title of 'patient', should not make us forget that because of signifying links the subjective configuration has an objectivity that can be perfectly well mapped out and grounds the very possibility of the help that we contribute in the form of interpretation. Here, at a particular point of the linkage, specifically the altogether initial one, between  $S_1$  to  $S_2$ , it is possible that there opens up this fault which is called the subject. Here linkage-effects, in this case signifying ones, are brought into operation. Whether this lived experience that is called more or less properly thinking is or is not produced somewhere, there is here produced something that is due to a chain, exactly as if it came from thinking. Freud never said anything else when he spoke about the unconscious. This objectivity (3) not only induces but determines this position, which is a subject position, in so far as it is the focus of what are called defences.

What I am putting forward, the new thing that I am going to announce today, is that in transmitting itself (*en s'émmentant*) towards the means of enjoyment which are those described as knowledge, the master signifier, not only induces, but determines castration.

I am going to come back to what you should understand by master signifier, starting from what we have put forward in this connection. At the outset, undoubtedly, there is none. All signifiers are equivalent in some sense, since they only operate on the difference of each one to all the others, by not being the other signifiers. But it is also through this that each one is capable of attaining the position of master signifier, very precisely because its eventual function is to represent a subject for every other signifier. This is how I have always defined it.

Only the subject that it represents is not univocal. It is represented, no doubt, but it is also not represented. At this level, something remains hidden in relation to this same signifier. It is around this that the operation of the psychoanalytic discovery is played out. Like any other it was not without (*pas sans*) preparation. It had been prepared for by this hesitation – which is more than a hesitation – this ambiguity, sustained under the name of dialectic by Hegel, when it is posited from the outset that the subject affirms himself as knowing. Hegel dares to start, in effect, from the *Selbstbewusstsein* as it is most naively expressed, namely, that all consciousness knows that it is conscious. And nevertheless he weaves a series of crises into this starting point – *Aufhebung*, as he says – the result of which is that this *Selbstbewusstsein* itself, the inaugural figure of the master, finds its truth in the work of the other *par excellence*, the one who knows himself only by having lost this body, this very body by which he is supported, because he wanted to keep it and its access to enjoyment, in other words, the slave.

How can we not try to break down this Hegelian ambiguity? How can we not be led to make an attempt along another path starting from what we are given by analytic experience, to which we must always return in order to better circumscribe it.

More simply, starting from the fact that what is at stake is that there is a use of the signifier that can be defined by starting essentially from the split between the master signifier and the body that we have just been speaking about, the body lost by the slave in order to become nothing other than the one in which all the other signifiers are inscribed. This is how we could give an image to this knowledge that Freud defines by putting it within the enigmatic parentheses of the *Urverdrängt* – which means precisely what did not need to be repressed because it was so from the beginning. This headless knowledge (*savoir sans tête*), as I might call it, is indeed a political fact (4) whose structure can be defined. Starting from there, everything

that is produced – I mean in the proper, full sense of the word *produce* – by labour, everything that is produced about the truth of the master, namely, what he hides as subject, is going to connect up with this knowledge in so far as it is split off, *urverdrängt*, in so far as it is and no one understands anything about it. Here is something that I hope has an echo for you – without you knowing, moreover, whether this echo comes from the right or from the left. It is initially structured in what is called the mythical support of certain societies that we can analyse as ethnographic, namely, as escaping the discourse of the Master. For the discourse of the Master begins with the predominance of the subject, in so far as it tends precisely to be supported only by this ultra-restricted myth, of being identical to its own signifier. This is why I pointed out the last time the natural affinity mathematics has with this discourse, where A represents itself, without needing a mythical discourse to establish its relations everywhere else. This is how mathematics represents the knowledge of the master in so far as it is constituted on laws other than those of mythical knowledge.

In short, the knowledge of the master is produced as a knowledge that is entirely autonomous with respect to mythical knowledge, and this is what is called science. I showed you its face the last time by means of a rapid evocation of thermodynamics and, further, of any unification of the field of physics. This depends on the preservation of a unit which is nothing other than a constant, always found in the count – I am not even saying in quantification - from a manipulation of numbers, that is defined in such a way that it makes this constant appear in every case in the count. This is sufficient and it is the only thing that supports what, at the foundation of physical science, is called energy.

This support depends on the fact that mathematics can only be constructed on the basis of the fact that the signifier can signify itself. The A that you have written once can be signified by its repetition as A. Now this position is strictly untenable and constitutes an infringement of the rule as regards the function of the signifier. It can

signify anything, except of course itself. It is this infraction of the initial postulate that one must rid oneself of in order that mathematical discourse can be inaugurated. Between the two, the original infraction (5) and the construction of the discourse of energetics, the discourse of science is only sustained, in logic, by making of truth an operation of values, by radically eluding all its dynamic power.

In effect, the discourse of propositional logic is, as has been underlined, fundamentally tautological. It consists in organising propositions composed in such a way that they are always true, whatever the true or false value of the elementary propositions. Does this not mean getting rid of what I have just called now the dynamism of the work of truth?

Well then, analytic discourse is specified, is distinguished, by raising the question of what use is this form of knowledge that rejects and excludes the dynamic of the truth. A first approximation: it serves to repress what dwells in mythical knowledge. But by excluding this, it finds itself at the same time knowing nothing more about it except in the form of what we rediscover under the species of the unconscious, namely, as a wreckage of this knowledge, in the form of a disjointed knowledge. What is going to be reconstructed from this disjointed knowledge will in no way make its way back to the discourse of science or to its structural laws. This means that here I am distinguishing myself from what Freud states about it. This disjointed knowledge as we rediscover it in the unconscious is foreign to the discourse of science. And this is precisely why it is striking that it imposes itself. It imposes itself exactly because of something that I stated the other day in a particular form – and if I used it, you have to believe that I did not find a better one – that it does not bullshit (*qu'il ne déconne pas*). However stupid (*con*) this discourse of the unconscious may be, it corresponds to something that depends on the establishment of the discourse of the Master itself. This is what is called the unconscious. It imposes itself on science as a fact. This

constructed, namely, factitious science, cannot it is true fail to recognise what appears before it as an artefact. Only it is prohibited from raising the question of the artisan, precisely because it is the science of the master, and this will make the fact all the more of a fact.

Very shortly after the last war – I had been born a long time before – I took into analysis three people from the high country of Togo, who had spent their childhood there. Now, I was not able, in their analysis, to find any trace of tribal practices and beliefs. They had not forgotten them but they only knew them from the point of view of ethnography. It has to be said that everything was designed to separate it from them, given what they were, courageous little doctors who were trying to make their way into the medical hierarchy of France, and do not forget we were still at the colonial stage. What they knew about it then from the point of view of the ethnographer was more or less what you find in the newspapers, but their unconscious functioned according to the good old rules of the Oedipus complex. This was the unconscious that (6) they had been sold along with the laws of colonisation, an exotic, regressive form of the discourse of the Master, in the face of the capitalism described as imperialism. Their unconscious was not that of their childhood memories – you could feel that – but their childhood was retroactively experienced in our *fam-il-ial* categories – write the word the way I taught you to last year. I defy any analyst to contradict me, even if he were to go out into the field. Not that psychoanalysis is of any use in carrying out an ethnographical enquiry. That having been said, this enquiry has no chance of coinciding with native knowledge, except by referring to the discourse of science. And unfortunately, this enquiry has not the slightest idea of this reference, because it would have to relativise it. When I say that it is not through psychoanalysis that one can get into an ethnographical enquiry, I certainly have the agreement of every ethnographer. I will perhaps have less when I tell them that, to get a little idea of the relativisation of the discourse of science, namely, to have perhaps a small chance of carrying out a correct ethnographical enquiry, it is necessary, I repeat,

not to proceed by way of psychoanalysis, but perhaps, if that exists, to be a psychoanalyst.

Here, at the crossroads, we are stating that what psychoanalysis enables us to conceptualise is nothing other than something that is on the path that Marxism opens up, namely, that discourse is linked to the interests of the subject. This is what Marx on occasion calls the economy, because these interests are, in capitalist society entirely commodity-based (*marchands*). Only since commodities are linked to the master-signifier, exposing it in this way solves nothing. Because commodities are no less linked to this signifier after the socialist revolution.

I am now going to write out plainly the proper functions of discourse, as I have stated them.

<u>Master-signifier</u>	→	<u>knowledge</u>
subject		enjoyment

This activation (*mise en fonction*) of discourse is defined by splitting, precisely by the distinction between the master-signifier and knowledge.

Note that this is the question for anyone who wants to know more about 'primitive' societies in so far as I classify them as not being dominated by the discourse of the Master. It is fairly probable that the (7) master-signifier is mapped out in a more complex economy. Indeed, the best sociological research in the field of these societies gets close to this. Let us rejoice, all the more so since it is not by chance that the functioning of the master-signifier is simpler in the discourse of the Master. In it, it can be entirely handled by this relationship of  $S_1$  to  $S_2$  that you see written here. In this discourse the subject finds himself bound to the master-signifier with all the illusions that this

involves, whereas the insertion into enjoyment is the doing of knowledge.

Well then, my contribution this year is that these functions specific to discourse can find different sites. This is what is defined by their rotation around these four places, which you do not see designated here in any way by letters, but only by what, whenever necessary, I call *above, on the left, below and on the right*. I add, a bit late in the day, in order to enlighten those who on the basis of their common sense, might have decided that here for instance is desire, and on the other side, the site of the Other. Here we find represented what I spoke about in an older framework, at a time when I was happy with this sort of approximation, that man's desire is the desire of the Other.

(8) The place that figures beneath desire is that of truth. Under the Other, it is the one where loss is produced, the loss of enjoyment from which we extract the function of surplus enjoying.

<u>desire</u>	→	<u>Other</u>
truth		loss

Here is where the discourse of the Hysteric shows its worth. It has the merit of maintaining the question of what is involved in sexual relations in the setting up of a discourse, namely, how a subject can sustain them or, to put it better, cannot sustain them. In effect, the answer to the question of knowing how he can sustain them is this: by allowing the Other to speak, and precisely in so far as it is the locus of repressed knowledge.

The interesting thing, is this truth: that what is involved in sexual knowledge is entirely presented as foreign to the subject. This is what is originally called the repressed in the Freudian discourse. But that is not what is important. Taken in its purist form, this has no other effect,

as one might say, than to justify obscurantism – the truths that are important to us, and they are not few, are condemned to being obscure. They are nothing of the kind. I mean that the discourse of the Hysteric is not there to bear witness to the fact that the inferior is below. On the contrary, it is not distinguished, as a battery of functions, from those assigned to the discourse of the Master. And that is what allows there to figure in it the same letters used by the latter, namely, \$, S<sub>1</sub>, S<sub>2</sub> and o.

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \underline{\$} & \longrightarrow & \underline{S_1} \\ & & o \quad S_2 \end{array}$$

Only, the discourse of the Hysteric reveals the relation of the discourse of the Master to enjoyment, by the fact that in the discourse of the Hysteric knowledge goes to the place of enjoyment. The subject himself, the hysteric, is alienated from the master-signifier as being the one whom this signifier divides – the one (*celui*), in the masculine, represents the subject – the one who refuses to become its body. People talk about somatic compliance in hysterics. Even though the term is Freudian can we not see that it is very strange, and that what is at stake is rather a refusal of the body. In following the effect of the master-signifier, the hysteric is not a slave. Let us now give it the sexual gender in which this subject is most often incarnated. In her own way she is on a kind of strike. She does not surrender her knowledge. She nevertheless unmask the function of the master with which she remains solidary, by highlighting how much of the master is in the One - with a capital O - from which she withdraws herself *qua* object of his desire. This is the proper function that we have pinpointed a long time ago, at least in my School, under the title of the idealised father.

So now, let us go straight to the point, and let us recall *Dora* – there is (9) no escaping it - which I presume is known by all those who are here to listen to me. Those who have not opened it –too bad! You



have to read *Dora* and, throughout all the ‘convoluted’ interpretations – I am using the explicit term that Freud gives to the economy of his manoeuvring – not lose sight of something that I would dare say Freud covers up with his prejudices. I am making little parenthesis. Whether you have the text in your heads or not, consult it and you will see these sentences that for Freud seem to be self-evident – for example, that a girl all by herself can work out particular difficulties. Even when a gentleman jumps on her, there is no need to make a scene about this, if she is a good girl, of course. And why? Because this is how Freud thinks about it. Or again, which takes things a little further, that a normal girl should not be disgusted when someone pays court to her. This seems self-evident. We have to recognise that there is in operation what I am calling prejudice, in a certain way of approaching what is revealed here by our Dora. If you read this text keeping in mind some of these reference points that I am trying to get you accustomed to, you will see that is not illegitimate for you yourselves to pronounce the word *convoluted* that I pronounced earlier. The lavish subtlety, the astuteness, of these reversals whose multiple planes Freud explains, showing how there is refracted, by way of three or four successive defences, what I call Dora’s manoeuvres in matters of love, which echo what Freud himself had designated in his text of *Traumdeutung*, may perhaps allow you to see that these complications depend on a certain style of approach. In accordance with what I stated at the beginning of my discourse today about the father, namely, that the subjective conjuncture of his signifying articulation receives a certain kind of objectivity, why not start from the fact that Dora’s father, a pivotal point of the whole adventure, or misadventure, is properly speaking a castrated man, I mean as regards his sexual potency? It is obvious that he is at the end of his tether, very sick.

In every case, from *Studien über hysterie* on, the father becomes what he is through a symbolic judgement. Because after all even a sick person or a dying one is what he is. To consider him to be deficient as compared to a function that he is not occupying, is to give him a

symbolic role (*affectation*). It is to state implicitly that the father is not simply what he is, that it is a title like *a war veteran*.— he is *a veteran of generation*. He is a father, like the veteran, up to the end of his life. This implies in the word *father* someone who potentially can still create. And it is with respect to this, in the symbolic field, that it must be remarked that the father, in so far as he plays this major, pivotal role, this master-role in the discourse of the Hysteric, that it is precisely from the angle of the power of creation that he sustains his position (10) with respect to the woman, even though he is out of action. This what characterises the function from which there springs the hysteric's relation with the father and it is very precisely this that we designate as being the idealised father.

Let us note again, in order to stick to it ... I said that I would go straight to the point, I am taking Dora, and I would ask you to re-read the case in my sense to see whether what I say is true. Well then, how does what is organised in Herr K, whom I shall curiously call here the third man, suit Dora? I said it a long time ago, but why not take it up again while sticking to the structural definition that we can give it with the help of the discourse of the Master? What suits Dora is the idea that he has the male organ. Freud spots this and he indicates very precisely that it plays the decisive role in Dora's initial approach, initial run-in as I might say, with Herr K when she was 14 and he corners her in a window recess. This does not affect in any way the relations between the two families. Nobody thinks, moreover, that there is anything surprising in it. As Freud says, a girl works this sort of thing out on her own. What is curious is that, as it happens, she does not work it out on her own, she gets everybody else involved – but later. So then, why? Certainly, it is the organ that makes the third man, Herr K, worthwhile, but not so that Dora can find her happiness in it, as I might say, but so that someone else may deprive her of it. What Dora is interested in is not the jewel, even an indiscreet one. Remember this case history that lasted for 3 months, and which is entirely designed to serve as a cupule for two dreams. The first dream,

the one described as that of the jewel box, bears this out – it is not the jewel, it is the box - the dream says ‘the jewel box’ - envelope of the precious organ, this is the only thing she enjoys. She knows very well how to enjoy it by herself, as is borne out for us by the decisive importance for her of infantile masturbation, the style of which, moreover, is not indicated in the observation, except that it is probable that it has some relationship with what I will call the fluid, flowing, rhythm, the model of which is enuresis. In her history her enuresis is described as having been induced belatedly by that of her brother who was a year and a half older than her and at eight years of age was affected by an enuresis of which she in a way belatedly took up the baton.

This enuresis is completely characteristic and is like the stigma, as one might say, of the imaginary substitution of the child for the father, precisely as impotent. Here I call on all those who, from their experience of children are able to pick out this event for which people quite frequently seek the intervention of an analyst. To this we can add (11) what I might call the theoretical contemplation of Frau K as she appears full-blown in Dora’s open-mouthed session before the Dresden Madonna. This Frau K is the one who knows how to sustain the desire of the idealised father, but also how to contain what corresponds to it, as I might say, and by the same token to deprive Dora of it. She thus finds herself doubly excluded from laying hold of it. Well then, by that very fact, this complex is the mark of the identification to an enjoyment in so far as it is that of the master. A little parenthesis. It is important to recall the analogy that has been made between enuresis and ambition. But let us confirm the condition imposed on Herr K’s presents – it has to be a box. He gives her nothing else, a jewel box. Because she herself is the jewel. His own jewel that I earlier described as indiscreet, can lodge itself elsewhere, and let that be clear. Hence the breakdown whose meaning I marked a long time ago, when Herr K says to her – *my wife means nothing to me*. It is very true that at that moment the enjoyment of the Other is offered to her, and she wants

none of it. Because what she wants is knowledge as a means to enjoyment, but to make it serve the truth, the truth of the master that she incarnates, as Dora. And this truth, to finally state it, is that the master is castrated. In effect, if the only enjoyment to represent happiness, which I defined the last time as perfectly closed, that of the phallus, dominated this master – you see the term I am using, can only dominate the master by excluding it – how would the master establish this relationship to knowledge – that held by the slave – whose profit is the forcing of the surplus enjoying? Moreover, the second dream stresses that the symbolic father is indeed the dead father, that one only reaches him from a place that is empty and without communication. Remember the structure of this dream, the way in which she receives the news through her mother. *Come if you want to*, says the mother, echoing, as it were, what Frau K had proposed to her the other time, to come to the place where all the dramas with her husband that we have spoken about were to take place. *Come if you want to, your father is dead, and he is being buried*. And the way she goes there, without ever knowing in the dream how she managed to arrive at a place where she has to ask whether it is indeed where this gentleman, her father, lives, as if she did not know. Well then, in the empty box of this apartment deserted by those who after having invited her, have gone to the cemetery, Dora easily finds a substitute for this father in a large book, a dictionary, in which one learns about sex. She clearly marks here that what is important for her, even beyond the death of her father, is what he produces in terms of knowledge. A knowledge, not just any knowledge – a knowledge about the truth. With this she has enough of the analytic experience. This truth towards which Freud has helped her (12) in a precious way – and that is why he is attached to it – she will get the satisfaction of getting everyone to recognise it. What was really involved in the relations of her father to Frau K as well as hers to Herr K, everything that the others wanted to bury about the perfectly authentic episodes that she was the representative of, all this has to be done. And this is enough for her to conclude her analysis with dignity,

even if Freud does not seem to be at all satisfied with its outcome as regards her destiny as a woman.

In passing, there are a few little remarks that it would be no harm to make. For example, in the dream about the jewels, where Dora has to leave because of the threat of fire, Freud, pausing in the analysis, tells us that it must not be forgotten that for a dream to stand on its own two feet, it is not enough for it to represent a decision, a lively desire of the subject as regard the present, there must be something which gives it a support in a childhood desire. And here he takes his reference – this is usually taken to be a stylistic flourish – from the entrepreneur, the entrepreneur who makes the decision, and his relationship to the capitalist whose accumulated resources, the capital of libido, will allow this decision to be actualised. These are things that are supposed to be only a metaphor. Is it not amusing to see that they take on a different value after what I have told you about the relation of capitalism to the function of the master – of the quite distinct character of what can be done between the process of accumulation and the presence of surplus enjoying – of the very presence of this surplus enjoying to the exclusion of a good old orgasm (*bon gros jouir*), the simple orgasm, the orgasm that is realised in the raw in copulation? Is it not precisely from this that the infantile desire gets its energy – its accumulated energy with respect to this object that constitutes the cause of desire, namely, what is accumulated in terms of libido capital because precisely of infantile immaturity and the exclusion of the enjoyment that others will call normal. This all of a sudden gives its proper accent to the Freudian metaphor when he refers to the capitalist.

But on the other hand, if Freud was able to carry to its term a certain success of Dora through his lucid courage, nevertheless, let us say, the clumsiness of his attempts to hold onto his patient is no less apparent. Read these few lines where, in a way despite himself, Freud indicates some disturbance or other which is, faith, overwhelming, pathetic, by telling himself that perhaps if he had shown more interest – and God

knows he shows her plenty of it, the whole case study testifies to it – he would no doubt have succeeded in getting her to take further this exploration in which one cannot say that, on his own admission, the way he led her was without error. Thank God, Freud did not do it.

(13) Fortunately, in giving Dora the satisfaction of being interested in what he experiences as her demand, her demand for love, he did not take on, as is usually done, the place of the mother. Because one thing is certain, is it not to this experience, even though it subsequently weakened its attitude, that we owe the fact that Freud noted – and before it his shoulders drop, it makes him lose courage - that anything he was able to do for hysterics ended up in nothing other than what he pinpointed as *Penisneid*? Which means specifically, when it is articulated, that it ends up with the reproach by the girl addressed to the mother of not having created her a boy. Namely, to the carrying forward onto the mother, in the form of frustration, of something that, in its signifying essence - and in a way that it gives its place and its vital function to the discourse of the Hysteric with respect to the discourse of the Master - is reduplicated on the one hand in the castration of the idealised father, which betrays the secret of the master, and on the other hand, in privation, the assumption by the subject, whether feminine or not, of the enjoyment of being deprived.

But why did Freud make a mistake at this point when, if my analysis today is to be believed, he only had to nibble what was being handed to him?

Why did he substitute for the knowledge that he had collected from these golden mouths, Anna, Emmy, Dora, this myth, the Oedipus complex? The Oedipus complex plays the role of a knowledge that has pretensions to being true, namely, a certain knowledge that is situated

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \text{o} & \longrightarrow & \$ \\ \hline & & \\ \text{S}_2 & & \text{S}_1 \end{array}$$

in the figure, that is precisely not written, of the discourse of the analyst at the site of what I earlier called that of the truth.

If the whole of analytic interpretation has taken the path of gratification or non-gratification, of responding or not to demand, in short, towards an ever increasing avoidance of the dialectic of desire in favour of demand, a metonymical sliding, where people try to maintain a constant object, it is probably because of the strictly unworkable nature of the Oedipus complex. It is strange that this did not become clearer more quickly. And in effect, who uses it, what place is held in an analysis by the reference to this famous Oedipus complex? I ask all those here who are analysts to answer. People from the Institute, of course, never use it. Those from my School make a little effort. Naturally it does not produce anything, it comes down to the same thing as for the others. It is strictly unworkable, except in terms of a crude reminder of the value of the mother as an obstacle to any investment of an object as cause of desire. Hence the extraordinary lucubrations that analysts arrive at about what they call the *combined parent*. That only means one thing – constructing a receiver of (14) enjoyment, O, that is generally called God, with whom it is worthwhile playing the doubles or quits of surplus enjoying, namely, this operation called the superego.

Ah! I am spoiling you today. I never have never yet tackled this business of the super-ego. I had my reasons for that. I had to get at least to the point that I am at, in order that what I stated last year about Pascal's *Wager* could become operative and demonstrate, perhaps some of you have guessed it that the superego is exactly what I began to state when I told you that life, the provisional life that is played out in favour of a chance of eternal life, is the o, but that it is only worth the trouble if the O is not barred, in other words, if it is everything at once. Only, like the combined parent, it does not exist, that there is the father on one side and the mother on the other, just as the subject also does not exist. It also is divided in two, since it is barred, as, in a word,

it is the answer my graph designates to stating. This calls seriously into question whether one can play doubles or quits between surplus enjoying and eternal life.

Yes indeed, this recourse to the Oedipus myth is really something sensational. It is really worth our trouble stretching out towards it. And today I wanted to make you sense the enormity of the fact that Freud, for example, in the last of his *New introductory lectures on psychoanalysis*, could believe that he had settled the question of the rejection of religion from any acceptable horizon, could think that psychoanalysis plays a decisive role in this and believed that he had finished with it by having told us that what supports religion is nothing other than this father to whom the child has recourse in his childhood, whom he knows to be all loving, that he anticipates, prevents any discontent that may manifest itself in him. Is this not a strange thing when one knows in fact what the function of the father is? Certainly, this is not the only point where Freud presents us with a paradox, namely, the idea of referring it to some original enjoyment or other of all the women, when it is well known that a father has enough with just one of them, and even then he should not boast about it. A father has with the master – I am talking about the father as we know him, as he functions – only the most distant relation, because in short, at least in the society Freud had to deal with, he is the one who works for everybody. He is responsible for the *famil* that I spoke about earlier. Is there not enough strangeness in all of this to suggest to us that after all, what Freud preserves, in fact if not in intention, is very precisely what he designates as being most substantial in religion – namely, the idea of an all-loving father. And this indeed is what is designated by (15) the first form of identification among the three that he isolates in the article that I mentioned earlier, the purely loving identification to the father – the father is love, and the first thing to be loved in this world is the father. A strange survival. Freud believes that this will make religion evaporate, whereas he is preserving what is really its very substance with this bizarrely constructed myth of the father.



We will certainly come back to it, but you can already see what is essential – all this culminates at the idea of murder. Namely, that the father, the original father is the one that the sons killed, as a result of which it is from the love of this dead father that a certain order evolves. In these huge contradictions, in their baroqueness and in their superfluity, does this not appear to be nothing more than a defence against these truths that the superabundance of all myths clearly articulates - well before Freud, in choosing that of Oedipus, restricted these truths? What is he trying to dissimulate? It is the fact that, once he enters into the field of the discourse of the Master in which we are trying to orient ourselves, the father from the beginning is castrated.

Freud gives us an idealised form of this and one that is completely masked. Nevertheless, the experience if not the words of the hysteric, at least the configurations that she offered him, would have better guided him here than the Oedipus complex, and led him to consider that this suggests that everything is to be put in question again, at the level of analysis itself, about what knowledge is necessary, in order that this knowledge can be put in question at the locus of the truth. This is the goal of what I am trying to develop before you this year.

**Seminar 8: Wednesday 11 March 1970**

What is remarkable in the formulation I am going to try to give you of the discourse of analysis, situating it by starting from what, by all sorts of traces, it already manifests itself at first sight as related to, namely, the discourse of the Master, is, we would rather say, is that it is from the fact that the truth of the discourse of the Master is masked, that analysis derives its importance. In the four places where there are situated the articulating elements on which I ground the consistency that can emerge when these discourses are put into relation with one another, it is clear that the place that I have designated as that of truth can only be distinguished by approaching what is involved in the functioning of what comes from the articulation at that place. This is not peculiar to it, the same can be said for all the others. For example, the localisation that, up to now, consisted of designating the places as *top right* or *top left* and so on, is not of course satisfactory. What is at stake is a level of equivalence in the functioning, for example, of what one could write as follows: that the  $S_1$  in the Master's discourse can be said to be congruent with, or can be equivalent to what comes to function as  $S_2$  in the discourse, which I have described in order to fix your ideas or at least your mental accommodation, as the University discourse.

$$M(S_1) \approx U(S_2)$$

This place will be described as functioning as the place of orders, of commands, whereas the place underneath in my various little four-legged schemas, is the place of truth, which of course poses a problem. In the discourse of the Master, in effect, it can be occupied only by this \$, which in truth, at first sight, nothing necessitates, because what in the first instance does not calmly posit itself as identical to itself? We will say that the principle of not mastered but *master-ised* discourse, with a hyphen, of discourse as made master – is to think of itself as univocal. And surely the step taken by psychoanalysis is to make us posit that the subject is not univocal. Two years ago when I was trying to articulate *The psychoanalytic act* - a project that has remained stalled and that, like others, will never be taken up again – I gave you the striking formulation of *either I do not think or I am not*. This alternative, just by being put forward, cuts a figure, and a fairly (2) resounding one, once the discourse of the Master is at stake. Again, to justify it, we have to bring it forward from somewhere else, where it is obvious. It has to put itself forward in the dominant place, and this in the Hysteric's discourse, in order for it to be in effect quite certain that the subject is placed before this *vel* that is expressed in *either I do not think or I am not*. Where I think, I do not recognise myself; where I am not, that is the unconscious. Where I am, it is all too clear that I go astray. In truth, presenting things in this way shows that if this has remained obscure for such a long time in the discourse of the Master, it is precisely because it is at a place that, by its very structure, masked this division of the subject.

What did I tell you, in effect, about any possible speech (*dire*) at the place of truth? The truth, I tell you, can be stated only by a half-saying (*mi-dire*), and I gave you a model of it in the riddle, for it is truly thus that it always presents itself to us, and certainly not in the shape of a question. A riddle is something that presses us for an answer as if we were in mortal danger. Truth is a question, as has been long known, only for administrators. *What is truth?* – we know by whom that was, once and for all, pronounced in a really memorable way. But this form

of half-saying that truth is constrained to, is something different, as is this division of the subject who takes advantage of it to mask itself. Because the division of the subject is something quite different. If *where he is not, he thinks*, if *where he does not think, he is*, it is because he is indeed in both places, and I would even say that this formula of *Spaltung* is incorrect. The subject participates in the real by the fact, precisely, that it is apparently impossible, or to put it better, if I had to employ a figure that does not appear here by chance, I would say that he is like an electron, as it is proposed to us at the junction of wave theory and corpuscular theory. We are forced to admit that it is as one and the same that it passes through two distant holes at the same time. So then, the order of what we image as the *Spaltung* of the subject, is different to the one that requires that truth be represented by being stated only in a half-saying. Here there appears something that it is important to stress, because in truth, from this very ambivalence, as we take up the word in a different sense, which means that truth is represented only as a half-saying, each of the formulae by which a discourse is situated takes on singularly opposed meanings. Is this discourse that I intentionally pinpoint as University good or bad, because, in a way, it is the University discourse that shows where it can go wrong, but in its fundamental arrangement it is also the one that shows what guarantees the discourse of science.

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \underline{S_2} & \rightarrow & \underline{0} \\ S_1 & & \$ \end{array}$$

(3) Because you should locate  $S_2$  as occupying the dominant place in the University discourse in so far as it is to the place of orders, of commands, to the place first held by the master, that knowledge has come. How does it happen that we find nothing other at the level of its truth than the master-signifier as such in so far as it operates to bring about the order of the master. This indeed is what the present movement of science comes from, after marking a moment of hesitation which Gauss bears witness to, for example, when we see in

his note-books that he had been close to the statements made at a later date by Riemann, and that he had made the decision not to publish them. *I am not going any further* – why put into circulation even this purely logical knowledge if it looked likely that as a result of it, much of the tranquil state of affairs that existed might in effect be disturbed? It is clear that we are no longer at this stage and that this is due to the progress, to this tipping over by a quarter turn that I have described, which brings to the dominant place a knowledge that is denatured from its primitive localisation at the level of the slave, by having become pure knowledge of the master, and regulated by his command. Who in our day would dream for even an instant of stopping the movement of the articulation of the discourse of science in the name of anything whatsoever that might result from it? Good God, things have already happened. They have shown where we are going, from molecular structure to atomic fission. Can anyone think for even an instant that it is possible to stop something that, by the operation of signs and the upsetting of contents in the changing of combinatorial places, encourages the theoretical attempt to put itself to the test of the real, in a manner which, by revealing the impossible, makes a new power emerge from it? It is impossible not to obey the command that has taken the place of the truth of science – *Keep going. Go on. Keep going to get to know still more*. Very precisely because of this and because of the fact that the sign of the master occupies this place, any question about the truth is properly speaking crushed, and specifically any question about what this sign of the  $S_1$  of the command to *Keep on knowing* may be concealing, about what this sign, by occupying this place, may contain as a riddle about what it is.

Only the riddle is, the riddle is, in the field of the sciences that have the cheek to call themselves human sciences we see clearly that the command *Keep on knowing* is creating something of a stir. In effect, (4) as in all the other little four-legged squares or schemas, it is always the one here on the top right that does the work – so as to get the truth to emerge, because this is the meaning of work. The one who occupies

this place in the discourse of the master is the slave, in the discourse of science it is the *a-studé*.

We could play around with this word, it might revitalise the question a little. Earlier we saw him compelled to continue to know at the level of physical sciences. In the human sciences we see something for which a word would have to be made up. I do not yet know if this is the right one, but like that, as a way of approach, instinctively, from its resonance, I would say *astudé*. If I manage to get this word accepted in the vocabulary, I will have more luck than when I wanted to change the name of the floor mop (*serpillière*).

*Astudé* has more reason for existing in the human sciences. The student feels himself *astudé*. He is *astudé* because like every worker – you can take your bearings from the other lower orders – he has to produce something. It sometimes happens that my discourse gives rise to responses that have some relationship to it. Rarely, but it does happen from time to time, and I am delighted. When I arrived at the *Ecole Normale*, some young people began discoursing about the subject of science, which I had made the object of the first of my seminars in 1965. The subject of science was relevant but it is clear that it is not self-evident. They got rapped over the knuckles, and it was explained to them that the subject of science did not exist. And at the vital point at which they thought they had made it emerge, namely, in the relationship of zero to one in the discourse of Frege, it was pointed out to them that the progress of mathematical logic had allowed the subject of science to be completely reduced, not by suturing it but by vaporising it.

The discontent of the *astudés* is nevertheless not unrelated to the fact that they are all the same asked to constitute the subject of science with their own hide, and this, according to the latest reports, seems to present some difficulties in the area of human sciences. And that is why, in a science that is so well established on the one hand, and so

obviously all-conquering on the other - sufficiently all-conquering to describe itself as human, no doubt because it treats humans like *humus*, things are happening that allow us to land on our feet again, and make us put our finger on what is involved in the fact of substituting at the (5) level of truth a pure and simple commandment, that of the master. You must not imagine that the master is always there. It is the commandment that remains, the categorical imperative *Keep on knowing*. There is no longer any need for somebody to be there. We are all embarked, as Pascal says, in the discourse of science. It nevertheless remains that the half-saying finds itself justified by the fact that it is clear that, on the subject of human sciences, there is nothing that holds up. You would be quite wrong to believe ... I would like to protect myself in advance against the idea that might stir in some little retarded brain or other, that my remarks imply that one should put a brake on this science, and that when all is said and done, there might perhaps be some hope of salvation by returning to the attitude of Gauss. If such conclusions were imputed to me they could quite correctly be described as reactionary. I am highlighting them because it is not unthinkable that, in zones that in truth I do not think I am very inclined to frequent, given what I talk about, people might deduce this sort of misunderstanding from what I am talking about. I would like however to get it across that in anything whatsoever that I am articulating with a particular aim of clarification, there is not the slightest idea of progress, in the sense that this term might imply a happy solution. The resolutions proposed by truth, when it arises, may from time to time be happy ones – and then, in other cases, disastrous. It is hard to see why the truth should always necessarily be beneficial. You would have to be particularly wrongheaded to imagine such a thing, when everything proves the opposite.

In short, it is certain that in what is described as the position of the analyst – in cases that moreover are improbable, because is there even an analyst who knows it, but it can be posited theoretically – it is the object itself that takes the place of the commandment. It is as identical

to the o-object, namely, what presents itself to the subject as the cause of desire, that the psychoanalyst offers himself as a target for this insane operation of psychoanalysis, in so far as it engages itself on the track of the desire to know.

I told you at the start that the desire to know, the *epistemological drive* to give the name that they invented to depict it, was not all that obvious. It a matter of seeing where it comes from. As I pointed out, it is not the master who invented this all by himself, someone must have imposed it on him. It was not the psychoanalyst, who, good God, has not always been around, and what is more, he is not the one that stimulates it, he offers himself as a target point for whoever is bitten by this particularly problematic desire. We will come back to it.

(6) Meanwhile, let us try to highlight that in the structure described as that of the discourse of the analyst, he, as you see, says to the subject: *Off you go, say everything that goes through your head, however divided it may be, however obviously this demonstrates that either you are not thinking or you are nothing at all, it's fine. What you produce will always be accepted.*

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \text{o} & \longrightarrow & \$ \\ \hline & & \\ \text{S}_2 & & \text{S}_1 \end{array}$$

Strange. Strange for reasons that we will have to punctuate, but that from now we can begin to sketch out, in that you were able to see on the upper line of the structure of the discourse of the Master a fundamental relation, which is, to put it quickly, the one constituted by the bond of the master to the slave, by means of which, Hegel *dixit*, with time the slave will show him his truth – by means of which also, Marx *dixit*, he will have taken all this time to foment his surplus enjoying. Why does he owe this surplus enjoying to the master? This, of course, is what is masked, what is masked in Marx. It is that the master to whom this surplus enjoying is due has renounced everything,



and in the first place enjoyment, because he has exposed himself to death, and remains well fixed in this position so clearly articulated by Hegel. He has, no doubt, deprived the slave of the disposal of his body, but that is nothing, he has left him enjoyment. So then, how does this enjoyment come back within reach of the master and manifest its requirements? I think I clearly explained it to you at one time, but I am taking it up again, because you cannot repeat important things too often. In all of this, the master makes a little effort so that everything may work, namely, he gives the order. By simply fulfilling his function as master, he loses something. It is through this something lost that at least some bit of enjoyment ought to be restored to him – precisely surplus enjoying.

If, because of this rage that possessed him to castrate himself, he did not take this surplus enjoying into account, if he had not made it into surplus value, in other words if he had not grounded capitalism, Marx would have seen that surplus value is surplus enjoying. Despite all this, of course, capitalism was founded, and the devastating consequences of the function of surplus value is designated with great pertinence by Marx. Nevertheless, to finish it off, it would have perhaps been necessary to know at least what the first phase of its articulation is. It is not because in the socialism of a single country you nationalise the means of production that you have for all that (7) finished with surplus value, if you do not know what it is.

So then, this surplus enjoying, this surplus enjoying shows us that in the Master's discourse, since it is there all the same that surplus enjoying is situated, there is no relationship between what is more or less going to become the cause of desire of someone like the master who, as usual, understands nothing about it, there is no relationship

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

between that and what constitutes his truth. In fact there is a barrier here at the lower level. The barrier that it is immediately possible for us to name in the discourse of the Master is enjoyment, quite simply in so far as it is prohibited, fundamentally prohibited. Enjoying is something you take in little morsels, but as for going right to the end, I have already told you how this is incarnated – no need to stir up any more lethal phantasies. This formula defining the discourse of the Master, has the interest of showing that it is the only one to make impossible this articulation that we have highlighted elsewhere as phantasy, in so far as it is the relation of  $o$  to the division of the subject – ( $\$ \diamond o$ ). From its very start the Master's discourse rules out phantasy. And this is what makes it completely blind at its foundations. The fact that elsewhere, and specifically in the Analytic discourse, it is displayed along a horizontal line in a completely balanced way, phantasy can emerge, tells us a bit more about what is involved in the foundation of the Master's discourse.

Be that as it may, for the moment, taking things up again at the level of the Analyst's discourse, you should note that it is knowledge, namely, the whole articulation of the existing  $S_2$ , everything that one can know, which is, in my way of writing – I am not saying in the real – put in the place of truth. What can know is, in the Analyst's discourse, requested to function in the register of truth. What does that mean? We sense that this concerns us but what on earth can it mean? It is not for nothing that I have made this detour into what is going on today. The poor tolerance, let us say, a certain mad rush that knowledge has made in the form known as science, as modern science, is something that perhaps, without our always understanding it beyond the tip of our noses, can make us sense that surely, if, somewhere, there is a chance that knowledge questioned as a function of truth may make sense, it (8) must be in our little merry-go-round, at least if we have confidence in it.

May I tell you that this, incidentally is what justifies me – this is completely incidental, we will see where it takes us - in saying that, since I had my trap shut when I was about to talk about the names of the father, I will never again talk about it. This might seem to be a tease, not very nice. And then – who knows – there are even people, science fanatics, who tell me *Keep on trying to know. What's this about? Of course you must say what you know about the names of the father.* No, I will not say what the name of the father is, precisely because I am not part of the University discourse. I am a little analyst, a stone that was first rejected. Even if in my analyses I become the cornerstone, once I get up from my armchair I have the right to wander. This is a turnabout, the rejected stone that becomes a cornerstone. It may also be, inversely, that the cornerstone goes walkabout. This is how I may even have some chance that things will change! If the cornerstone wandered off, the entire edifice might collapse. Some people are tempted by that. Anyway, let's not make a joke of it. I simply do not see why I should speak about the name of the father. Because, in any case, where it is situated, namely, where knowledge functions as truth, you should note that we are properly speaking condemned to not being able, even on this point that is still vague for us, about the relationship between knowledge and truth, to state anything whatsoever, except by a half-saying.

I do not know whether you sense the import of this. It means that, if we say something in a certain way in this field, there will be another part of it which, by virtue of this saying itself, will become absolutely irreducible, completely obscure. So that, in short, there is a degree of arbitrariness, there is a choice that can be made about what must be clarified. So that, if I do not speak about the name of the father, this will enable me to speak about something else. It will not be unrelated to the truth, but it is not as it is for the subject – it will not be the same. Good! That was a parenthesis.

Let us come back to what we have noted about what becomes of knowledge in the place of truth, I mean in the discourse of the analyst. I do not think that you have had to wait for what I am going to tell you now for it to have become obvious to you. You must all the same remember that what occurs there at the start has a name, it is myth. To (9) see it, we did not have to wait for the discourse of the Master to fully develop and show its last word in the discourse of the capitalist, with its curious copulation with science. People have always seen that, and in any case, it is all we see when it is a matter of truth, at least of the first truth, of the one that interests us a little, all the same, even though science makes us renounce it by simply giving us its imperative, *Keep on trying to know* but in a certain field – a curious thing, in a field that is in some discord with what concerns you, old boy. Well then, it is occupied by myth.

Myth today has been made into a branch of linguistics. I mean that the most serious things said about myth come from linguistics. On this I cannot but recommend you to refer to chapter 11, “The structure of myths” in *Structural Anthropology*, a collection of articles by my friend Lévi-Strauss. Obviously, you will see there being expressed the same thing as I am telling you, namely, that truth can only be supported by a half-saying. The first serious examination of these large units, as he calls them, for they are mythemes, obviously yields something that I do not impute to Lévi-Strauss, because I am going to read what he writes, literally. “*The impossibility of connecting up groups of relations*” – what is at stake are bundles of relations which is how he defines myths – “*is overcome, or, more exactly, replaced by the affirmation that two relations that contradict one another are identical in the measure that each is, like the other, self-contradictory.*” In short half-saying is the law internal to every kind of stating the truth, and what best incarnates it, is myth.

We can all the same declare ourselves to be not completely satisfied that in psychoanalysis we are still at the stage of myth. Do you know

the effect that the use of the central typical myth of psychoanalytic discourse, the Oedipus myth, has on mythographers? I think you can all answer this question. It is very amusing. There are people who have been occupied with myth for a long time. No one had to wait for my dear friend Claude Lévi-Strauss, who brought an exemplary clarity to it, to be intensely interested in the function of myth. There are circles where people know what a myth is, even if they do not (10) necessarily define it as I, for my part, have just tried to situate it for you – even though it is difficult to admit that even the most obtuse worker does not see that, all that can be said about myth, is that the truth shows itself by an alternation of strictly opposite things that must be got to turn around one another. This holds for whatever has been constructed ever since the world began up to and including the higher, very elaborate myths like Yin and Yang. You can bullshit (*déconner*) a lot about myths, because it is precisely the field for bullshitting. And bullshitting, as I have always told you, is the truth. They are identical. Truth allows everything to be said. Everything is true – on condition that you rule out the contrary. Only the fact that this is how things are nevertheless plays a role. Well, the Oedipus myth as Freud made it function – I can tell you for the sake of those who do not know this – makes the mythographers laugh! They find it completely inappropriate. Why is this myth so privileged in analysis? The first serious study that was made of it shows moreover that it is much more complicated. As luck would have it Claude Lévi-Strauss, who relishes a challenge, lays out in this same article the complete Oedipus myth. It can be seen that it concerns something quite different than knowing whether or not you are going to screw your mammy!

It is nevertheless curious, for example, that an excellent clear-headed mythographer from a good school, from a good tradition that began with Boas and which has converged upon Lévi-Strauss, a certain Kroeber, after having written an inflammatory book on *Totem and taboo* has, 20 years later, written something to point out that it must indeed all the same have its *raison d'être*. That there was something,

he could not say what, moreover, and that this myth of Oedipus was a tough nut to crack. He says no more than that but, given the critique he made of *Totem and taboo*, it is well worth noting. It tormented him, it worried him, that he had spoken so ill of it, especially when he saw that it was spreading, namely, that the most insignificant student believed he could chime in. That he could not tolerate. It would be necessary – I do not know if you want me to do it this year – to study the composition of *Totem and taboo*, because it is one of the most lunatic things you can imagine. After all, it is not because I preach a return to Freud that I cannot say that *Totem and taboo* is lunatic. That is why you have to return to Freud – to see that if it is so lunatic, given (11) that he was a chap who knew how to write and think, there must be a reason for it. I do not want to say any more – *Moses and monotheism* is something else again – because on the contrary we are going to speak about it. You can see all the same that I am putting things in order for you, even though I did not begin by presenting you with a well-worn path. I made sure, all by myself, nobody helped me, for example, that people knew what *The formations of the unconscious* are, or *Object relations*. You might think that now I am simply doing little somersaults around Freud. That is not quite what is at stake.

Let us try set up some blocks to things that are said about what is at stake in the oedipal myth in Freud. As I am in no hurry, I will not finish it today. I do not see why I should tire myself. I speak to you as it comes to me, and we shall see, in our own little way, where it will take us.

I will start at the end, by telling you straight away what I am aiming at, because I do not see why I should not show my hand. This is not quite how I intended to speak to you, but at least it will be clear. I am not at all saying that the Oedipus complex is of no use, or that it has no relationship with what we do. True, it is of no use to psychoanalysts, but since it is not sure that psychoanalysts are psychoanalysts, that proves nothing. Psychoanalysts are becoming increasingly involved in

something that is, in effect, extremely important, namely, the role of the mother. These are things, good God that I have already begun to tackle. The role of the mother is the mother's desire. This is of cardinal importance. The mother's desire is not something that can be tolerated just like that, that you are indifferent to. It always causes damage. A huge crocodile between whose jaws you are – that is the mother! You never know what may suddenly come over her and make her shut her trap. That is the mother's desire. So then, I tried to explain that there was something reassuring. I am telling you simple things, I am improvising, I have to say. There is a cylinder (*rouleau*), a stone one of course, which is there, potentially, at the level of her trap, and it acts as a restraint, a wedge. It is what is called the Phallus. The cylinder protects you, if, all of a sudden, it snaps shut. These are (12) things that I have presented in their own time, at a time when I was talking to people who had to be handled with kid gloves: I mean psychoanalysts. They had to be told things crudely, like that, so that they could understand them. What is more, they did not understand any better. I spoke therefore at that stage about the paternal metaphor. I introduced it, I have never spoken of the Oedipus complex except in that form. That should be a bit suggestive, should it not? I said that it was the paternal metaphor, even though that was not how Freud presents things to us. Especially since he really believes that this blessed story of the murder of the father of the horde, this Darwinian buffoonery, actually happened. The father of the horde – as if there had ever been the slightest trace of the father of the horde. We have seen orang-utans. But not the slightest trace has ever been seen of the father of the human horde! Freud holds onto it as real. He clings to it. He wrote all of *Totem and taboo* in order to say so – it necessarily happened, and it is from there that everything began. Namely, all our troubles, including that of being a psychoanalyst.

It is striking – someone might have got a little bit excited about this paternal metaphor, and known how to make a little breakthrough. This is what I have always desired, that someone should go forward, open

up a track for me, begin to show a little path. Would that someone had anticipated me! Anyway, be that as it may, it has never happened, and so the question of Oedipus remains intact. So then, I am going to make some preliminary remarks because the thing really does have to be hammered home. This affair cannot be conjured away. There is one thing that we are really inured to, trained in, in analytic practice, which is this business of manifest content and latent content. That is our experience. For the analysand who is there, the latent content is his knowledge. We are there to get him to know everything that he does not know even while knowing it. That is what the unconscious is.

For the psychoanalyst, the latent content is on the other side, in  $S_1$ . For him, the latent content is the interpretation that he is going to make, in so far as it is not this knowledge that we can discover in the subject, but what is added onto it so as to give it a meaning. This remark could be useful for some psychoanalysts. Let us now leave to one side for the moment this manifest content and this latent content, except for retaining the terms.

What is a myth? Do not answer all at once! It is a manifest content. If there is one thing that is quite clearly a manifest content, it is a myth. That is not enough to define it and we defined it differently earlier. But it is clear that, if you can put a myth on index cards – using the technique proposed by Lévi-Strauss – and then stack them up to see what combinations emerge, it is the manifest order. Two myths in relation to one another are exactly like my little things that make a quarter turn and then give results. They are not latent, my little letters on the board, they are manifest.

So what is it doing there? The manifest content has to be put to the test. And by doing this, we shall see that it is not so manifest as all that. Let us do it this way – I am doing the best I can – let us recount the little story. The Oedipus complex as Freud talks about it when he refers to Sophocles is not at all treated like a myth. It is Sophocles'



little story minus, as you will see, its tragic component, namely, he limits himself to that. According to Freud, what Sophocles' play reveals is that you sleep with your mother when you have killed your father. Murder of the father and enjoyment of the mother - to be understood in the objective and subjective sense, you enjoy the mother and the mother enjoys, there is a link. The fact that Oedipus absolutely does not know that he has killed his father nor that he is making his mother enjoy, or the fact that he enjoys her, in no way changes the question, since precisely it is a fine example of the unconscious. I think I have exposed for a long enough time the ambiguity involved in the use of the term *unconscious*. As a substantive, it is something that has in effect as its support the repressed representative of representation. In the adjectival sense, one can say that poor old Oedipus was unconscious (*était un inconscient*), the very least one can say is that there is some equivocation here.

In any case, this does not bother you. But, all the same, we have to see what things means. So here is this myth of Oedipus, borrowed from Sophocles, and then there is the unbelievable story I was speaking about earlier, the murder of the father of the primal horde. It is rather curious that the result is exactly the opposite. The old daddy had the women all to himself, which is already is incredible – why would he (14) have them all to himself – while there are other blokes around, all the same. The women too may have their own ideas. He is killed. The consequence is completely from the myth of Oedipus – for having killed the old man, the old orang-utan, two things happen. I am putting one of them in parenthesis, because it is incredible – they discover that they are brothers. Well, that may give you some idea of what fraternity is about, I will give you a little elaboration, as a little tothing-stone – we will perhaps have the time to return to it before we separate this year. The energy that we have from all being brothers very clearly proves that we are not so. Even with your blood brother nothing proves that we are his brother – we can have a completely opposite batch of chromosomes. This passion for fraternity, not to

mind the rest, liberty and equality, is something that is outrageous and we would do well to see what it is covering over. I know of only a single origin for fraternity – I mean human, always *humus* – it is segregation. We live of course in a period where segregation, ugh! There is no longer any segregation anywhere. It is unheard of when you read the newspapers. Only in society – I do not want to call it *human* because I use terms sparingly, I am careful about what I say, I am not a man of the left - I note everything that exists, and in the first place fraternity, is founded on segregation. No fraternity is even conceivable, has the slightest foundation, as I have said, the slightest scientific foundation, except through the fact that people are isolated together, isolated from the rest by something. It is a matter of knowing how it works, and of why it is that way. But in any case, that it is like that leaps to the eye, and acting as if it were not true must necessarily have some drawbacks. What I am telling you here is a kind of half-saying. If I am not telling you why it is like this, it is first of all because, if I say this is how it is, I am unable to say why it is like this. Here is an example. In any case, they discover that they are brothers, one wonders in the name of what segregation. This means that, as regards the myth, this is a little weak. And then, they all decide, with one heart, that no one will touch the little mammies. Because, besides, there is more than one of them. They were interchangeable, since the old father had them all. They could sleep with the brother's mother, precisely, since they are brothers only through their father.

(15) No one ever seems to have been amazed by the curious fact of the extent to which *Totem and taboo* has nothing to do with the usual use of the Sophoclean reference.

*Moses* is the last straw. Why does Moses have to be killed? Freud explains it for us, and this is really rich – it is so that Moses can return in the prophets, by the path of repression, no doubt by mnemonic transmission through chromosomes, it must be admitted. The remark that an imbecile like Jones makes, that he seems not to have read

Darwin, is accurate. Nevertheless, he had read him, since it is on Darwin that he bases himself to carry off *Totem and taboo*.

It is not for nothing that *Moses and monotheism* like the rest of everything that Freud writes, is absolutely fascinating. If you are a free spirit you might say that it seems to have neither head nor tail. We will speak about it again.

What is certain, is that what is at stake for the prophets is not something that has anything at all, this time, to do with enjoyment. I want to let you know – who knows, perhaps someone might do me a good turn – that I started looking for the book that serves as a linchpin for what Freud states, namely, the work of a certain Sellin published in 1922. *Mose und seine Bedeutung für die israelitisch – jüdische Religionsgeschichte*.

This Sellin is not an unknown. I managed to get hold of *Die Zwölf Propheten*. He begins with *Hosea (Osèe)*. He is a minor prophet but he is daring (*osè*). So daring that, it seems it is in him that one finds a trace of the supposed murder of Moses. I should tell you that I did not have to wait to read Sellin to read *Hosea*, but the fact that, in my whole life, I have never been able to get hold of this book is beginning to madden me. It is not in the *Bibliothèque Nationale*, it is not in the *Alliance Israélite universelle*, and I have moved heaven and earth all over Europe to get it. I think all the same that I will manage to get my hands on it. If any one of you has it in your pocket you could bring it to me at the end of the seminar. I would give it back!

In any case, in *Hosea* there is one thing that is quite clear. This text of *Hosea* is extraordinary. I do not know how many people here read the Bible. I cannot say that I was brought up in the Bible, because my (16) roots are Catholic. I regret it. But on the other hand, I do not regret it, in the sense that when I read it now – well, now, it's a fair while ago – it has a fantastic effect on me! This familial delusion,

these entreaties by Yahweh to his people which contradict one another between one line and the next, is enough to make your head spin.

There is one sure thing, all relations with women are *znout* [?] as he says in his strong language, in fact outside the law. I will write it on the board for you in Hebrew, in very beautiful letters, in cursive script. It is prostitution, *Znanim*. [*Hebrew added*]

When he addresses Hosea this is the only thing that matters – his people have definitively prostituted themselves. Everything that surrounds him, the entire context, epoch, is prostitution. What analytic discourse uncovers when we explore the discourse of the Master is that there is no sexual relationship. I already told you this in the strongest terms. Well then, the idea we get is that the chosen people found themselves implicated in something where things were very probably different, where there were sexual relationships. This is probably what Yahweh calls prostitution.

In any case, it is quite clear, that if it is the spirit of Moses that is returning here, it is not exactly a murder that has engendered access to enjoyment that is at stake. All the same, you have to see things as they are. All of this is so fascinating that no one has ever seemed to see – it would no doubt have appeared too immediate, too stupid, to make these objections, and moreover, they are not objections, we are at the heart of the subject – that the prophets, when all is said and done, never mention Moses. One of my best students made this remark to me – it must be said that she is a Protestant, so that she knew these verses a long time before I did. But above all they absolutely do not speak about something that for Freud seems to be the key, namely, that the God of Moses is the same God as the God of Akhenaton, a God who is supposed to be One. As you know, this is very far from being the case, Yahweh talks all the time about other gods. As regards the other gods, the God of Moses simply says that one must not have relations with them, but he does not say that they do not exist. He says that one must not throw oneself at idols, but after all, this also concerns idols that

represent him, as was certainly the case of the Golden Calf. They were expecting a god, they made a golden calf. It was quite natural.

We can see that there is here a completely different relation, which is a relation with Truth. I have already said that Truth is the little sister of (17) enjoyment, we will have to return to this. What is certain is that the crude schema *murder of the father – enjoyment of the mother* totally elides the tragic dimension. Of course it is through the murder of the father that Oedipus gains free access to Jocasta, but that she is given to him, is due to popular acclaim. Jocasta, as I have always told you, knew something about it, because women never fail to have little pieces of information. She had a servant who had been present at the whole affair, and it would be curious if this servant, who had returned to the palace and who turns up at the end, had not told Jocasta, “he’s the one who bumped off your husband”. Be that as it may, it is not the important thing. What is important is that Oedipus gained access to Jocasta because he had triumphed in a trial of truth. We shall come back to the riddle of the Sphinx. And then, if Oedipus comes to a very bad end – we will see what this *comes to a very bad end* means and to what extent it is called coming to a bad end – it is because he absolutely wanted to know the truth. This is where we see that it is not possible to tackle seriously the Freudian reference without bringing to bear, beyond murder and enjoyment, the dimension of truth.

That is where I can leave you today. Simply, in seeing how Freud articulates this fundamental myth, it is clear that it is really excessive to include everything within the same Oedipal bracket. What does Moses, in the name of the good God – make no mistake – have to do with Oedipus and the father of the primal horde? There really must be something there that is linked to the manifest content and the latent content. To conclude today, I would say that what we are proposing is to analyse the Oedipus complex as being a dream of Freud’s.

**Seminar 9: Wednesday 18 March 1970**

Someone in this audience thought it right, and I thank her for it, to pick up on what I had said the last time about a certain disappointment of mine, that no one, I said, had given me the pleasure - pleasure as you know is the law of least effort - of anticipating me on a track that I had to open up! So then the person in question - I can see she is smiling, she is here, why not name her, Marie-Claire Boons, sent me an off-print from a highly interesting journal called *L'Inconscient*. I have an excuse for not having read her article before. This journal, in effect, in which I must say some very good things have appeared, is not sent to me, paradoxically perhaps, because of the very fact that when it started, at least in its editorial committee, it took its authority from my teaching. Having had my attention drawn to this issue on *La paternité*, I first of all read the article by Marie-Claire Boons with great care, and then another one by our friend Conrad Stein. I am quite prepared, if Marie-Claire Boons wants, to give today a commentary on her article, in which a certain number of questions about the path she chooses on the murder of the father in Freud might be brought to light. I believe, in truth, that it could easily be shown that nothing in it goes any further than what I had already put forward about the Oedipus complex at the date at which she published it - put forward, as I said, very modestly.

There is another method, which is that today I try to make progress by showing that it is already implicit in the careful progress I have made up to now. So then, perhaps, at a second stage, on the occasion of one

of our meetings, retroactively, what I want to say would be clearer than if I were just to leave you hanging on the various points of an article which, in effect, presents from many angles a sort of opening up, of questioning, and, if you will, of preparation, for a second step. You can express a wish now for one or other of these methods – I will leave (2) it to Marie-Claire Boons (*inaudible response*)... So then, I will proceed in the second way.

The death of the father. In effect, everyone knows that this seems to be the key, the vital point of everything that is stated and not only in the name of myth, about what psychoanalysis has to deal with. Marie-Claire Boons, by the end of her article, would even give us to understand that many things flow from this death of the father, and notably something or other that would make psychoanalysis, in a certain way, free us from the law. Some hope! I am well aware that it is in this register that a libertarian focus is supposed to attach itself to psychoanalysis. I think that nothing of the kind is involved – and this is the entire sense of what I am calling the reverse side of psychoanalysis.

The death of the father in so far as it echoes this sentiment with a Nietzschean centre of gravity, this statement, this good news, that God is dead, does not seem to me, far from it, something that liberates us. The primary foundation for proving this, is indeed Freud's own utterance. Marie-Claire Boons, at the start of her article, quite rightly points out something I already said two seminars ago, that the announcement of the death of the father is far from being incompatible with the justification for religion given by Freud, by way of an analytic interpretation of it. This is that religion itself is supposed to be based on something that, quite astonishingly, Freud advances as primary, that the father is the one who is recognised as deserving love.

Here already there is the indication of a paradox, which leaves the author I have just named in some perplexity about the fact that, in

short, psychoanalysis would seem to prefer to maintain, to preserve, the field of religion. Here too, it can be said that nothing of the kind is involved. The point of psychoanalysis is well and truly atheism, provided we give this term a different sense than that of *God is dead*, since everything indicated that, far from calling into question what is at stake, namely the law, it rather consolidates it. A long time ago, I observed that to the sentence of old father Karamozov, *If God is dead then everything is permitted*, the conclusion required by the text of our experience is that to *God is dead* the response is *nothing is permitted anymore*.

(3) To illuminate something whose horizon I am announcing for you, let us start from the death of the father, if in fact this is what Freud puts forward as being the key to enjoyment, to the enjoyment of the supreme object identified with the mother, the mother aimed at in incest. It is certain that it is not by starting with an attempt to explain what 'sleeping with the mother' means, that the murder of the father is introduced into Freudian doctrine. Quite the contrary, it is starting from the death of the father that the prohibition of this enjoyment is established as primary.

In truth, it is not only the death of the father that is at stake, but the murder of the father, as the person about whom I am speaking also put it very clearly in the title of her investigation. It is here in the Oedipus myth, as it is stated to us, that the key to enjoyment is found. But if this indeed is the way that this myth – we are examining it closely – is presented to us when it is stated, I have already said that it would be well to treat it as what it is, namely, a manifest content. By virtue of this fact, one has to begin by articulating it properly. The Oedipus myth, at the tragic level at which Freud appropriates it for himself, clearly shows that the murder of the father is the condition for enjoyment. If Laius is not put out of the way - in the course of a struggle in which, moreover, it is not certain that it is by this step that Oedipus is going to succeed to the enjoyment of the mother – if Laius



is not put out of the way, there will not be this enjoyment. But is it at the price of this murder that he obtains it? Here is where the most important thing appears and takes on all its relief, because the reference is taken from a myth enacted in tragedy. It is obtained by virtue of having delivered the people from a question that is decimating the best of them as they tried to answer what presents itself as a riddle, namely, is represented as being supported by this ambiguous being of the Sphinx, in which strictly speaking a double disposition is incarnated, because it is made up, like the half-saying, of two half bodies, by answering it, Oedipus finds himself - this is where the ambiguity lies - suppressing the suspense that the question of truth thus introduces into the population. He surely has no idea to what extent the answer he gives to the question anticipates his own drama, but also to what extent, in making a choice, his answer falls perhaps into the trap of truth: "*It's man*". Who knows what man is? Has everything been said about him by reducing him to this process, so ambiguous in the case of Oedipus, which has him first going around on all fours, then on his two hind legs - in which Oedipus like his entire line, is distinguished, as Claude Lévi-Strauss has very well pointed out, (4) by not walking straight - then, at the end, with the aid of a stick, which even though not the white cane of the blind man, was nonetheless to be for Oedipus of the most unusual kind, this third element being, his daughter Antigone?

The truth has been set aside. What does that mean? Is it so as to leave the field open to what will remain the way back for Oedipus. Because the truth will re-emerge for him, and this, because he wanted once again to intervene, in the presence of a misfortune that is twice as great this time, no longer decimating his people through the choice of those who volunteer for the Sphinx's question, but striking it in its entirety in this ambiguous form that is called the plague, with everything that it involved in the thematic of antiquity. It is here that Freud points out to us that, for Oedipus, the question of truth is renewed, and that it ends up with what? With what we are able to identify, in a first

approximation, to something that has at least a relationship with paying the price of castration. Does that really say it all? Even though at the end, what happens to him is not that the scales fall from his eyes, but that his eyes fall from him like scales. Is it not in this very object that we see Oedipus being reduced, not to undergoing castration, but, I would rather say, to being castration itself? Namely, what remains when one of the privileged supports of the o-object disappears from him in the form of his eyes. What does this mean, if not that the question arises whether what he has to pay for is to have mounted the throne, not by the path of succession, but by the path of this choice made of him as a master, for having effaced the question of truth. This is what he has to pay for. In other words, introduced as you already have been to my statement that what constitutes the essence of the master's position is to be castrated, can you not see that we find here, veiled to be sure, but well sign-posted that it is also from castration that what is properly speaking succession proceeds.

If – since the phantasy of it is always very curiously indicated, but never properly linked up to the fundamental myth of the father's murder – if castration is what strikes the son, is it not also what makes him accede by the proper path to what the function of the father is about? This is indicated in all our experience. And does it not indicate that it is from father to son that castration is transmitted? Henceforth, what about death presenting itself as being at the origin? Do we not have here the indication that it is perhaps a way of covering things over? Although it emerges, is experienced, in the very position of the analyst in the subjective process of the function of castration, is there not something here that nevertheless hides it, veils it, in some way (5) places it as one might say under its aegis, and so avoids us carrying to its very core what would allow the position of the analyst to be stated in a final and rigorous manner. How does this come about? It is no harm to notice that the myth of the father's murder as essential is initially encountered by Freud in the interpretation of dreams, and that a wish, a desire for death is manifested there. Conrad Stein's article

produces a remarkable clarification and critique of it by highlighting a renewed outbreak of these death wishes towards the father at the very moment his death has become real. If it is true that, *The interpretation of dreams* emerged, according to Freud himself, from the death of his father, Freud thus wants to see himself as guilty of the death of his father. Is this also, as the author repeats and underlines, the mark of something that is hidden there, and is properly speaking the wish that the father should be immortal? This interpretation is put forward in line with analytic psychologism, which takes as a basic assumption, that the essence of the infantile position has its foundation in an idea of omnipotence that would see it as beyond death. When put forward by an author who does not abandon these presuppositions, this interpretation is, as I might say, valid. Quite the contrary, the result of criticising what is said about the essence of the child's position, is that the death wishes and what they mask, if they mask anything, must be tackled along a different path. And first of all, how can we think that, in what we have to state about the subjective structure as depending on the introduction of the signifier, we can give pride of place in that structure to anything whatsoever that might be called a knowledge of death?

By reading in a different way Freud's analyses of some of his major dreams, such as the famous request to close the eyes, with the ambiguity of this *an eye* under a bar - which moreover is brought forward by him as a way of expressing an alternative - Conrad Stein uses it very skilfully in line with his interpretation, which is that of a denial of death in the name of omnipotence. But it can be read in a different sense. In effect, it is perhaps open to another meaning, if we take the last dream in the same series and make it the centre, as I once did. Freud himself puts the emphasis on a dream that comes not from him but from one of his patients, a dream which states, *he did not know that he was dead*.

(6) I broke this dream down in order to analyse it, by aligning it along the two lines of stating and stated. This was done to remind us that it is either one thing or the other. Either death does not exist, there is something that survives, but the question is not resolved for all that, of whether the dead know that they are dead. Or there is nothing after death, and it is quite certain in that case that they do not know. This in order to say that no one knows, no living being in any case, what death is. It is remarkable that the spontaneous productions that are formulated in the unconscious are expressed on the basis that death, for everyone, is properly speaking unknowable.

I once emphasised that it is indispensable for life that something irreducible does not know – I will not say that we are dead, because this is not what must be said – that in the name of *us*, we are not dead, not altogether in any case, and this indeed is our foundation, that something does not know that *I* am dead. I am dead, very exactly, in so far as I am destined to die – but in the name of this something that does not know it, I do not want to know it either. That is what enables us to place at the centre of logic this *all men – all men are mortal* – whose basis is precisely the non-knowledge of death, and by the same token what makes us believe that *all men* means something.

All men born of a father, who, we are told, in so far as he is dead – he, the man – does not enjoy what is there to be enjoyed. The equivalence is therefore established in Freudian terms, between the dead father and enjoyment. It is he who keeps it in reserve, as I might say. As it is expressed no longer at the level of the tragic, with all its subtle suppleness, but in the statement of the myth of *Totem and taboo*, the Freudian myth is the equivalence between the dead father and enjoyment. It is to this that we can attribute the term of structural operator. Here the myth transcends itself, by stating under the heading of the real – for this is what Freud insists upon, that it really happened, and that it is the real – the dead father is in charge of enjoyment, is where the prohibition of enjoyment started, where it came from. The

fact that the dead father is enjoyment presents itself to us like the sign of the impossible itself. And this is why we rediscover here those terms that I define as fixing the categories of the Real, in so far as it is radically distinguished, in what I articulate, from the Symbolic and from the Imaginary – the Real is the impossible. Not in the name of a (7) simple obstacle we bang our heads against, but the logical obstacle of what, in the symbolic, is declared to be impossible. This is where the Real arises.

There in effect, beyond the Oedipus myth, we recognise an operator, a structural operator, the one described as the Real Father – with, I would say, even this property that as paradigm it is also the promotion, at the heart of the Freudian system, of the father of the Real, which places at the centre of Freud's teaching the term impossible. This means that Freudian teaching has nothing to do with psychology. There is no conceivable psychology of this original father. Only, the presentation given of him in Freud's teaching evokes derision, and I do not need to repeat what I said about it during the last seminar – he who enjoys all the women, an inconceivable idea, when it can normally be seen that it is already a lot to satisfy one. Here we are thrown back on a completely different reference, that of castration, once we defined it as the source of the master signifier. I will show you at the end of today's discourse what that may mean.

The Master's discourse shows us enjoyment as coming to the Other. It is he who has the means for it. Language only obtains it by insisting to the point of producing the loss by which surplus enjoying is embodied. At the start, language, even that of the master, can be nothing other than demand, a demand that fails. It is not from its success, it is from its repetition that something of a different dimension is generated that I have called the loss – the loss by which surplus enjoying is embodied. This repetitive creation, this inauguration of a dimension that organises everything by which analytic experience is going to be able to be judged, can also start from an original impotence, in a word, that of the

child - which is a long way from omnipotence. If people have noticed that psychoanalysis shows us that the child is father to the man, it is very much because there must be somewhere, something that mediates between them, and it is very precisely the agency (*insistance?*) of the master, in so far as it managed after all to produce, out of any signifier whatsoever, the master signifier.

At the time when I was formulating what was involved in object relations and its relations with Freudian structure, I proposed that the Real Father is the agent of castration. But I had put it forward after having taken care to separate out first of all what was distinct in the (8) essence of castration, frustration and privation. Castration is an essentially symbolic function, namely, conceived from nowhere other than signifying articulation, frustration is imaginary, privation, as is self-evident, from the Real. What can be defined about the fruit of these operations? This is from the riddle that the phallus proposes to us *qua* manifestly imaginary that we must make the object of the first of these operations, castration. It is, why not, faith, something quite real that is always in question in a frustration, even if the only resource of the claim that grounds it, is to imagine that this real is owed to you, which is not self-evident. It is clear that privation on the other hand can only be situated with respect to the symbolic, for when we are dealing with something real, nothing can be lacking. What is real is real, and it is necessary that this introduction, even though essential, should come from elsewhere, otherwise we ourselves would not be in the real, namely, that something is lacking in it and this indeed is what initially characterises the subject. I remained less explicit at that time about the role of agents - though I did not fail to indicate it. The father, the Real Father, is none other than the agent of castration - and this is what the affirmation of the Real Father as impossible is designed to mask from us. What does *agent* mean? In a first approach, of course, we slip into the phantasy that it is the father who is the castrator. It is very striking that none of the forms of the myth to which Freud attached himself gives any idea of it. It is not because at a first

hypothetical phase the sons, the sons who are still animals, cannot get at the flock of women, that they are, as far as I know, castrated.

Castration, as statement of a prohibition, can in any case only be grounded on a second phase, that of the myth of the murder of the father of the horde. And according to the myth itself, it comes from nothing other than a common accord, a singular *initium* whose problematic character I showed you last time.

Moreover, the term *act* should be noted here. If what I told you about the act when I dealt with the psychoanalytic act is to be taken seriously, namely, if it is true that there can only be an act in a context already filled with everything involved in the incidence of the signifier, from the moment it is brought into play in the world, there cannot be any act in the beginning, in any case no act that can be described as murder. The myth can here have no other sense than the one to which I reduced it, a statement of the impossible. There can be no act outside (9) a field already so completely articulated that the law does not situate itself therein. There is no other act than the act that refers to the effect of this signifying articulation and involves its whole problematic – with on the one hand, the fall (*chute*) involved in, or rather involving the very existence of anything whatsoever that can articulate itself as subject, and, on the other hand, what pre-exists there as legislative function.

So then, is castration linked to the nature of the act that the function of the Real Father proceeds from? This is very precisely what the term agent that I have proposed allows us to put on hold. In our tongue the verb *agir*, has more than one resonance, beginning with that of actor. *Actionnaire* [shareholder] also – why not, the word is made up from action, and this shows you that *une action*, is perhaps not altogether what one believes it to be. Activist also – does not the activist define himself, properly speaking, on the basis of the fact, that he considers himself to be rather the instrument of something? Of Actaeon, huh, while we are at it – it would be a good example for whoever knows

what this means in terms of the Freudian thing. And finally, what one simply calls *my agent*. You see what this means in general: *I pay him for that*. Not even that, *I compensate him for having nothing else to do* or *I honour him*, as they say, pretending to begin from the fact that he is capable of something else. This is the level of the term where what is involved in the Real Father as agent of castration should be taken up. He does the work of the master-agency. We are increasingly familiar with the functions of the agent. We live at an epoch in which we know what it conveys in terms of fakery, advertising, stuff that has to be sold. But we also know that this is how things work at the point that we have come to in the expansion, the paroxysm, of the discourse of the master in a society that is founded on it. All of this would encourage us ... It is getting late. Here I am going to be forced to make a little cut which I indicate to you in passing, because we shall perhaps take up again what is at stake, which for me is worthwhile, and does not seem to be unworthy of making the effort to clarify it. Since I put the stress on, attach a very special note to, the function of agent, one day I will have to show you all the developments that result from introducing the notion of double agent, which everyone knows is in our day one of the most indisputable, the most certain, objects of fascination. The agent who takes this on does not simply want the ordinary dealings of the master, which is everyone else's role. He (10) thinks that what he is in contact with, namely, that anything that is really worthwhile, I mean in the order of enjoyment, has nothing to do with the strands of this net. In his little job, he tells himself that this is ultimately what he preserves. A strange story, one that takes us very far. The true double agent is the one who thinks that what escapes the strands, also has to be adjusted (*agencer*). Because if this is true, the adjustment is going to become so, and by the same token the first adjustment, the one that was obviously fake, will also become true. This is most likely what was guiding a character who put himself, no one knows why, into the function of the prototypical agent of this discourse of the master, in so far as he assumed the authority to preserve something whose essence an author, Henri Massis, has



profiled by uttering these prophetic words, *walls are good*. Well, someone called Sorge, with this so Heideggerian name, found a means of infiltrating Nazi agents and of becoming a double agent for the benefit of whom? For the benefit of the Father of the Peoples who everyone hopes, as you know, will be the one to ensure that the true will also be adjusted properly.

The reference that I am recalling, with the Father of the Peoples, has many links with that of the Real Father *qua* agent of castration. Since Freud's teaching cannot do otherwise, if only because it speaks about the unconscious, rather than starting from the discourse of the Master, all he can make of this famous Real Father is the impossible. But all the same, we know this Real Father – he is something of a quite different order. First of all, in general, everybody admits that he is the one who works, and does so in order to feed his little family. If he is the agent of anything, in a society that obviously does not give him a big role, it remains the case, nevertheless, that there is an exceedingly nice side to him. He works, and then, he would very much like to be loved. This is something that shows that the whole mystification that makes him into a tyrant quite obviously lies elsewhere. It is at the level of the Real Father *qua* language construct, as moreover Freud always pointed out. The Real Father is nothing other than an effect of language, and does not have any real other. I am not saying other reality, since reality is something different. It is what I was talking to you about a moment ago. I could even go a little bit further immediately by pointing out to you that the notion of the Real Father is scientifically unsustainable. There is only one Real Father, it is the (11) spermatozoon, and up to now at least, nobody has ever thought of saying that he was the son of this or that spermatozoon. Naturally, one can raise objections by means of a certain number of examinations of blood groups, of rhesus factors. But this is quite new, and it has absolutely nothing to do with everything that up to now has been stated as being the function of the father. So that there is something that analysis can raise as a question - I sense that I am entering dangerous

territory, but who cares – it is after all not only among the Arunta tribes that the question could be raised of who is really the father when a woman finds herself pregnant. If there is one question that analysis might ask itself, this is it. Why? In a psychoanalysis, might it not be – one suspects this from time to time – the psychoanalyst who is the Real Father? Even if he is not at all the one who has done it at the level of the spermatozoon. From time to time one suspects it, when it is around a patient's relation to – putting it modestly – the analytic situation, that she has finally become a mother. There is no need to be an Arunta to ask oneself questions about what is involved in the function of the father. We notice, by the same token, because it gives a broader perspective, that there is no need to take the reference in analysis that I have taken as the most burning one, for the question to be raised. One can very well give one's husband a baby that is, even if one has not slept with him, someone else's child, precisely the person you would have liked to be the father. It is all the same because of that that you have had a child.

This takes us, as you see, make no mistake, some way into the dream. I am only doing it in order to wake you up. If I said that everything that Freud has lucubrated – not to be sure at the level of myth, nor about the recognition of death wishes in the dreams of patients – is a dream of Freud's, it is because the analyst should, in my opinion, tear himself away a little from this plane of the dream. What the analyst has encountered, guided by the striking things introduced by Freud, what he has learned from this encounter, has in no way been fully decanted as yet. Last Friday, I presented at my case presentation a gentleman – I do not see why I should call him sick – to whom things had happened, which meant that his encephalogram, as the technician told me, is always at the border of sleep and waking, oscillating in such a way that you never know when he is going to pass from one to the (12) other, and that is how things stand. That is a little bit how I see all our analytic colleagues, the shock, the birth trauma of analysis, leaves them like that. And that is why they flutter around, in order to extract

something more precise from the Freudian articulation. This is not to say that they do not get close to it, but what they would have to see is, for example, the position of the Real Father as Freud articulates it, namely, as an impossible, which means that the father is necessarily imagined as depriving. It is not you, nor he, nor I, who imagine, it is due to the position itself. It is not at all surprising that we ceaselessly encounter the imaginary father. It is a necessary, structural dependency of something that precisely escapes us, namely, the Real Father. And defining the Real Father in a sure way is strictly ruled out, unless it is as the agent of castration.

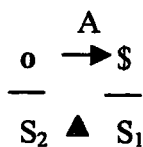
And this castration is not necessarily what is so defined by someone who psychologises about it. This was seen to emerge, it seems, not so long ago, at a thesis defence, when someone, who has decisively chosen the path of making psychoanalysis into the psycho-pedagogy we are familiar with, said "For us, you know, castration is only a phantasy". But no, no way!. Castration is the real operation introduced by the impact of any signifier at all, on the sexual relationship (*rapport du sexe*). And it goes without saying that it determines the father as being this impossible real that we have described. It is a matter now of knowing what is meant by this castration, which is not a phantasy.

It has as a result that there is no cause of desire that is not produced by this operation, and that phantasy dominates the entire reality of desire, namely, the law. As regards the dream, everyone now knows that it is demand, that it is the signifier at liberty, which insists, which squeals and stamps its foot, which has absolutely no idea of what it wants. The idea of putting the omnipotent father at the origin of desire is very adequately refuted by the fact that it is from the hysteric's desire that Freud extracted his master-signifiers. It must not be forgotten, in effect, that this is where Freud began, and that he has avowed what remains at the centre of his question. It is all the more precious to have got hold of this, because it was repeated to us by a donkey who had no

idea what it meant. It is the question: *What does a woman want?* A woman. But not just anyone at all. Merely posing the question means that she wants something. He did not say: *What does the woman want?* Because after all there is nothing to say that *the* woman wants (13) anything at all. I will not say that she adapts to every circumstance. She is unadapted to all circumstances, *Kinder, Küche, Kirche*, but there are many others, *Culture, Kilowatt, Culbute*, as someone has put it, *Raw and cooked (Cru et Cuit)* all that suits her equally well. She absorbs them. But as soon as you ask the question: *What does a woman want?*, you are situating the question at the level of desire, and everyone knows that situating the question at the level of desire for the woman, means questioning the hysteric. What the hysteric wants – I say this for those who do not have this vocation, there must be many – is a master. That is absolutely clear. This is so even to the point that the question must be asked if it is not from this that the invention of the discourse of the Master started. This would complete what we are in the process of tracing out in a very elegant manner. She wants a master. This is what resides in the little top right hand corner, to give it no other name. She wants the other to be a master, to know many things, but all the same not to know enough not to believe that she is the supreme prize of all his knowledge. In other words, she wants a master over whom she reigns. She reigns, and he does not govern. It is from this that Freud started. She, is the hysteric, but this is not necessarily specific to one sex. As soon as you ask the question *What does so-and-so want?* you enter into the function of desire, and you bring out the master-signifier.

Freud produced a number of master-signifiers which he covered with the name of Freud. A name can also be used as a stopper for something. I am astounded that people can associate with this stopper which is a name of the father, whatever it may be, the idea that there can be at this level any kind of murder whatsoever. And how can people think that it is by reason of their devotion to the name of Freud that analysts are what they are? They are unable to disentangle

themselves from Freud's master-signifiers, that is all. It is not so much Freud that they hold onto, but to a number of signifiers – the unconscious, seduction, trauma, phantasy, the ego, the id, and all the rest – there is no question of their leaving that orbit. At this level they have no father to kill. One is not the father of signifiers, one is at most a father *because of them*. No problem at this level. The real mainspring is the following – enjoyment separates the master-signifier, in so far as one would like to attribute to the father, knowledge *qua* truth. If we take the schema of the discourse of the analyst, the obstacle put up by enjoyment is found where I drew the triangle, namely, between what can be produced, in whatever form, as master-signifier, and the field that knowledge has at its disposition in so far as it posits itself as truth.



And this is what allows us to articulate what is really involved in castration – it is that, even for the child, whatever you may think, the father is the one who knows nothing about the truth. I will take things up the next time at this point.

**Seminar 10: Wednesday 8 April 1970**

I don't know how you spent the time we were apart. You have in any case taken advantage of it in one way or another. For my part, I was lucky enough to find, I am indicating it to the person who so kindly indicated to me that she was an *astudée* at the Sorbonne, I indicate to her that I found, that I had the Sellin I spoke to you about sent from Copenhagen. Namely, this little book of 1922, which subsequently suffered a certain rejection by Sellin, and is the book around which Freud makes revolve his confidence that Moses had been *tudé*.

Of course the importance of having it is that, apart from Jones and perhaps one or two others, I am not aware that many psychoanalysts took an interest in it. Nevertheless, this Sellin deserves to be examined in the text, since Freud considered that he carried weight, and it is naturally appropriate to follow him so as to put this high regard to the test. This seems to me to be in line with what I am advancing this year about the reverse side of psychoanalysis. But as I have only had this book, written in a very vigorous German, for roughly five days, you will understand that despite the assistance a number of great and little

rabbis – actually, well, there are no little rabbis, there are Jews – have been kind enough to give me, I am not yet ready today to give you an account of it, at least not one that would satisfy me.

On the other hand, it so happens that I have been asked – not for the first time, this soliciting has been going on for a long time – to reply on Belgian radio to a man, M Georgin, who frankly won my respect by sending me a long text which provides at least the proof that he, unlike many others, has read my *Ecrits*. He got what he could from it, by God, but all things considered it was quite something. Truthfully, then, I was rather flattered by it.

To be sure, this does not make me any more inclined towards this exercise which consists in having oneself recorded on the radio – it always wastes a lot of time. However, as he appears to have organised things so that it will take as short a time as possible, I will perhaps concede to it. The person who will perhaps not concede to it, on the other hand, is him, given that, in order to answer these questions of (2) which I will give you three examples, I did not think I could do better than not yield to the inspiration of the moment, to the kind of exploration that I carry out here every time I stand before you, which is nourished by abundant notes, and which gets across, good God, because you see that I am driven by this exploration. It is even, perhaps, the only thing that justifies your presence here.

The conditions are different when it is a matter of speaking to some tens – who knows even hundreds - of thousands of listeners, among whom the abrupt test of presenting oneself without the support of the person may cause other effects. I will in any case refuse to give anything other than these texts that have already been written. So this

means putting a lot of confidence in this condition since, as you will see, the questions put to me come necessarily because of the gap between what is produced by a constructed articulation, and what is expected by what I will call a common consciousness, and a common consciousness also means a series of common formulae. This language, the ancients, the Greeks, had already called it, in their tongue, *Koine*. That can be immediately translated into French – *la couinée*. It squeaks. I do not despise *Koine*. Simply I believe that it may favour the production of some effects of precipitation, at the introduction precisely of the most abrupt of discourses.

Right! That is why today I am going to tell you about my replies to three of these questions. This is not simply a way of sparing myself some effort, because, believe me, it will be a far greater effort to read these texts to you than to proceed as I usually do.

Without further delay, I will spell out the first of these questions, which is this:

*In your Ecrits you state that Freud anticipated, without realising it, the research of Saussure and that of the Prague Circle. Can you explain what you mean by that?*

This is what I will do then, not by improvising, as I warned you, but by replying as follows:

Your question surprises me, I say, because it carries with it a relevance that separates it from the pretensions of a conversation that I have put to one side, it has even a reduplicated relevance, or rather one of two



degrees. You prove that you have read my *Ecrits*, which apparently people do not think is necessary in order to understand me. In them you choose a remark which implies the existence of a different type of enquiry than one that can be mediated to the masses (*la médiation de masse*). The fact that Freud anticipates Saussure does not imply that some rumour passed from the first to the second. So that in quoting me, you show that I have answered before having made up my mind about it, this is what I describe as surprising me.

Let us start from the end point: Saussure and the Prague Circle

(3) produced a linguistics that has nothing in common with what this name covered previously, even though its keys could be found in the hands of the Stoics, but what did they do with it!

Linguistics, with Saussure and the Prague Circle, is established from a cut which is the bar placed between the signifier and the signified, so that there dominates in it the difference from which the signifier is constituted absolutely, but is also organised from an autonomy that is in no way inferior to crystal-type effects, in the system of the phoneme, for example, which is its first successful discovery. The idea was to extend this success to the whole symbolic network by only admitting as sense what corresponds to it in the network, in terms of the incidence of an effect, yes, of a content, no. This is the wager that can be won because of the inaugural cut. The signified will be or will not be scientifically thinkable depending on whether or not there can be sustained a field of the signifier which, through its very material, is distinguished from any physical field obtained through science. This implies a metaphysical exclusion, to be taken as the fact of a lack of being (*désêtre*). No meaning can henceforth be held to be self-evident: that it is bright when it is daytime, for example, in which the Stoics have anticipated us, but I already asked: to what end? Even if I go as far as to neglect some of what I might call the semiotic acceptations of the word, any discipline which starts from the sign taken as object, in order to mark that this was what created an obstacle to grasping the

signifier as such. The sign presupposes the someone to whom it gives a sign of something. It is this someone whose shadow concealed the way into linguistics. No matter how you describe this someone it will always be foolish. The sign is sufficient for someone to appropriate language as a simple tool. Language is no longer anything but the support for abstraction, as in the average discussion, with the whole progress of criticism, or I should say of thinking, as the key.

I will have to anticipate myself, taking up my own word to myself, about what I intend to introduce by writing it (*sous le graphie de*) as *l'achose* (athing) to give a sense of the effect in which linguistics takes up its position. It is not a progress, rather a regression. This is what we need against the unity of obscurantism which is already welded together with the goal of forestalling *l'achose*. No one seems to recognise around what the unity is constructed and that at the time of someone who collected there the signature of things, *signatura rerum*, not enough account was taken of cultivated stupidity by daring to inscribe language in the register of communication.

The return to communication protects, as I might say the rear of what makes linguistics out of date by covering in it what is ridiculous which often can only be discerned *a posteriori*, namely, what in the occultation of language, only looked like a myth by being called 'telepathy'. Lost child, little beggar of thought which boasted about transmission without discourse, the myth, this myth, still managed to captivate Freud who did not unmask in it the kingpin of this den of (4) thieves (*cour des miracles*) that he was promising to clean up. Miracles, make no mistake, when everything goes back to this first one performed by the fact that one 'telepathises' with the same stuff as one compromises. Social contract, in short, a communicative effusion of promises of dialogue even though every man – and who does not know what he is – is mortal. Ah! We should sympathise because we have been put into the same box. Let us talk about everything – make no mistake – of everything together, except about what invited the mind

of the syllogist to involve Socrates in it, because from this it emerges that no doubt death is administered like the rest, and by and for men, but without them being from the same quarter as what is involved in the telepathy that is conveyed by a telegraphy that the subject is ceaselessly embarrassed by every time one gets to this piece of nonsense. That this subject is difficult to communicate, is indeed determined by what gives energy to linguistics, going as far as putting the poet, yes the poet, in its pocket. Because the poet is produced by being – allow me here to translate the one who demonstrated it, my friend Jakobson - eaten by verses/worms (*vers*) who find their own arrangement among themselves without worrying – it is obvious – about what the poet knew about it. Hence the consistency, in Plato, of the ostracism with which he deals with the poet in his *Republic* and the lively curiosity that he shows in *Cratylus* for these little beasts that words appear to be, as they do whatever suits them. We see how precious formalism was in sustaining the first steps of linguistics.

But it is all the same from stumblings in the steps of language, in what is called speech, that it really took off. That the subject is not what knows what it is saying, when there is well and truly said something through the mouth in which it lodges, of course, but also in the blunderings of a behaviour for which the brain is supposedly responsible but by which it is only helped when it is asleep, because this organ is shown to hold its subjective importance only from the fact that it regulates sleep, here is what Freud unveils as the unconscious. For my passage in this world, under the name of Lacan, will have consisted in articulating that it is that and that it is nothing else. Anyone at all can now assure himself of it, simply by reading me. Anyone at all therefore who operates according to these rules, by psychoanalysing, must hold to it, or otherwise pay for it by slipping into stupidity. So then, in stating that Freud anticipates linguistics, I am saying, for my part, what has to be recognised and is the formula that I am now releasing: the unconscious is the condition of linguistics. Without the eruption of the unconscious, there is no way for linguistics

to emerge from the dubious light by which the University, in the name of the human sciences, still eclipses science. Crowned at Kiev by the good offices of Baudouin de Courtenay, it would no doubt have remained there. But the University has not said its last word, it is going to make this a subject for theses: 'The influence on the genius of Raymond [*sic*] de Saussure of the genius of Freud, show how the first got wind of the second, before radio existed!' To be that deaf is to behave as if it had not always happened. And why would Saussure not have realised, to borrow the terms of your quotation, I say to Monsieur GeorGIN, better than Freud himself, what Freud anticipated, specifically the Lacanian metaphor and metonymy, the locus where Saussure generated Jakobson?

If Saussure does not get away from the anagrams that he deciphers in Saturnian poetry, it is because he knows their true importance. Blackguardism does not make him stupid, because he is not an analyst. In this position on the contrary, the evil procedures that University infatuation is invested with do not miss their man – there is some hope in this – and lead him straight into the fib of saying that the unconscious is the condition of language, when he tries to make himself into an author at the cost of what I said, and drummed into those interested, namely, that language is the condition of the unconscious. I still smile at this procedure which has become stereotypical, to the point that two others, but for the internal use of a Society, that its University bastardy has killed off, dared to define *passage à l'acte* and acting-out, very exactly terms that I had put forward to them as opposing one another, but simply inverting what I attributed to each one of them, as a way, they thought, of appropriating to themselves what no one had been able to articulate previously.

If I were to weaken now, the only work I would leave are these chosen rejects of my teaching that I made an obstacle to being made into news items, and the fact that they diffuse it says it all. What I stated in a confidential discourse nevertheless displaced the way people

commonly hear things, to the point of bringing me an audience which bears witness to it by being so large and so stable. I remember the discomfort with which I was questioned by a man who had attended the presentation of my *Dialectic of desire and subversion of the subject* in front of an audience made up of people from the Party, the one and only, into which he, as a Marxist, had strayed. Very kindly, in the way I am always kind, I highlighted at the end of this reject in my *Ecrits* the bewilderment that had greeted it. "Do you believe then, he said to me, that it is enough for you to have said something, written letters on the blackboard to produce a result?" Such an exercise has nonetheless had its effect, I had the proof of it by way of a rejection which found a rightful place in my book, the funds of the Ford Foundation which had justified this meeting by paying for it, unbelievably dried up on the spot.

The effect that is propagated is not that of the communication of speech – this is intended for you – but the displacement of discourse. Freud not understood, even by himself, because of having tried to make himself understood, is less well served by his disciples than by this propagation, the one without which the convulsions of history remain a riddle, like the events of the month of May that baffle those who spend their time trying to make them a slave of a sense whose dialectic presents itself as derisive.

Right! If you are not too tired, I will tell you what I replied to the second question which was formulated as follows – you will see that it (6) is important:

*Linguistics, psychoanalysis and ethnology have in common the notion of structure. Starting from this notion, Monsieur Georjin asks me, could one not imagine the articulation of a common field that would one day unify psychoanalysis, ethnology and linguistics?*

I reply and I think that this answer is more important than the first impressionistic one that I gave. I answer as follows:

Structure is a word by which there is indicated the coming into play of the effect of language, starting from the fact that it a *petitio principii* to make of it an individual or collective function, or that it is supposed to be the support of something supposed in an existence which, whatever it may be, me or an organism adapted for knowledge, implies the someone of whom I spoke earlier. A function by which, then, someone represents for himself, as I might say, the relations that constitute the real, this latter term being posited as a Lacanian category. On the contrary it is from the presence already in reality, which is not categorical, but given, from the presence, not of relations in the first place, but of formulae of the relation, which are embodied in language, that we start to follow the effect of it which is properly structure. That is how a discourse can dominate reality without presupposing the consensus of anyone, because it is what determines difference by creating a barrier between the subject of statements and the stating subject. There is nothing more exempt from idealism, on the other hand there is no need to confine structuralists, unless one wants them to take responsibility for the inheritance of the rottenness covered, I am not saying caused, by existentialism. Anybody at all who takes his bearings from structure easily locate himself in it. In order to present here my answer to the unification – you remember: psychoanalysis, ethnology and something or other, linguistics – to the reunification that you propose to me. Note: what is special to the tongue is the way in which structure falls under the crystal-type effect described above. To describe this particular thing as arbitrary is the lapse that Saussure committed from the fact that reluctantly, of course, but because of that all the more open to stumbling, he took it up starting from this University discourse whose hidden aspect, as I show you, is precisely this signifier that dominates the discourse of the Master, the signifier of the arbitrary. You see that to speak about the body is not a metaphor when the symbolic is at stake; because the

aforesaid body is found to be a determinant for the body taken in the naïve sense. The first makes the second by being incorporated in it. Hence the incorporeal that remains to mark the first, from the time after its incorporation. Let us give due credit to the Stoics for having known how to stamp, by this term incorporeal, the way in which the symbolic is involved in the body. What I am going to speak about are incorporeal, namely, the function, not of the subject, but of what creates the reality of mathematics, the application of the same effect that gives reality to topology, or analysis in the broad sense for logic. But it is as incorporated that the structure creates affect, neither more nor less, an affect to be taken from the fact that an individual (*l'être*) is (7) articulated since it is only a being of fact, or because of having been said somewhere. In this way it is shown that it is secondary to the body, whether it is dead or alive. Who does not know the critical point from which we date man as a speaking being: the burial place, which is where in one species it is affirmed that contrary to any other, the dead body preserves in itself what gave to the living being the character of body. "Corpse", remains that do not become dead meat (*charogne*), the body in which there dwelt the word, that language "corpsified". Zoology can start from the pretension of the individual to be the being of whatever lives, but it is only to reduce it, to pursue it to the level of a colony of polyps. The body, taken seriously, is first of all what can bear its own mark by being ranked in a sequence of signifiers. From this mark, it is the support of the, not eventual, but necessary relation, because even to withdraw from it, is still to support it. Before any date, 'minus-one' (*moins-un*) designates the locus described by Lacan as the Other (with the abbreviation O). From the 'less one' (*un-en-moins*) the bed is made for intrusion which anticipates extrusion; it is the signifier itself. This is not the way of all flesh. Of those only that the sign by negating them, raises up, because bodies are separated from them, the clouds, the upper waters from their enjoyment, charged with a lightning that redistributes body and flesh. A re-division that is perhaps less countable, but with regard to which people do not seem to notice that ancient burial represents in it this very 'set' from which our

most modern logic is articulated. The empty set of bones is the irreducible element from which are organised other elements, the instruments of enjoyment, necklaces, goblets, arms: sub-members more to enumerate enjoyment than to make it enter into the body. Have I brought the structure to life? Enough, I think to announce that, as regards the domains that it is supposed to unite to psychoanalysis, nothing destines the two that you have spoken about in any special way.

Linguistics may define the material of psychoanalysis, or even the apparatus of its operation. It leaves blank the question of where there is produced what makes it effective, I mean what, by articulating it as the psychoanalytic act, I thought I could illuminate more than any other act. A domain is only dominated by an operator. The unconscious may be, as I said, the condition of linguistics; this does not give linguistics the slightest hold over it. I was able to put this to the test by the contribution with which I had asked the greatest French linguist to bestow an illustriousness on the beginnings of a journal done in my style, which because of this fact I had wanted to make more specific in its title: it was called *La Psychanalyse*, to recall it to those who held it cheap. From this request to the linguist, I had been hoping for a step forward in the problem of antithetical words, which you can well imagine I am not astonished was introduced by Freud. If the linguist can do no better, as it appeared, than to formulate that the comfort (*bon aise*) of the signified requires a choice in an antithesis, this ought to give people who, because they speak Arabic, have to deal a lot with such words, as much trouble as replying to an anthill that has (8) come alive.

There is no less a barrier on the side of ethnology. An investigator who allows his indigenous informant to tell him sweet nothings about her dreams will be brought up sharp if he attributes them to what is called the field. And the censor, in doing this, as he calls it, does not appear to me, even if he is Lévi-Strauss himself to show contempt for



my little patch. What would happen to the field if he went soft on the unconscious? That would not give it, whatever might be dreamt, any exploratory effect, but rather our sort of puddle.[?] Because an enquiry that limits itself – it is its very definition – to the collection of a knowledge, will find itself being fed by our own type of knowledge. And you must not expect even a psychoanalysis to record the myths that have conditioned a subject just because he grew up in Togo or in Paraguay. Because psychoanalysis – I already pointed this out to you here – operates from the discourse that conditions it and that I am defining this year by taking it from its reverse side.

One will obtain, even from it, no other myth than the one that remains in our discourse: the Freudian Oedipus complex. As regards the material from which the analysis of a myth is carried out, let us listen to Lévi-Strauss stating that it is untranslatable, if you understand this correctly, because what it says literally, is that it does not matter in what tongue they are collected. They will always be themselves analysable by being theorised in large units – this is the term of Lévi-Strauss – by means of which a definitive mythologising will articulate them. One can grasp here the mirage of a common level with what I would call the universality of analytic discourse, but, and because of the one who proves it, Lévi-Strauss on this occasion, without the illusion being produced. Because psychoanalysis does not operate by means of an interplay of mythemes. The fact that it can only take place in a particular tongue that is called a positive tongue, even if use is made of translation in the course of analysis, guarantees “that there is no metalanguage”, as my own formula goes. The effect of language is only produced there from the linguistic crystal. Its universality is only the topology that is rediscovered, because of the fact that a discourse is displaced in it, this discourse specified by the fact that mythology at the final limit is reduced to it. Should I add that the myth, in the articulation of Lévi-Strauss, is: the only ethnological form to justify your question, I say to GeorGIN – the unification – that the myth therefore in this articulation alone rejects everything that I

promoted about the agency of the letter in the unconscious. The myth does not operate either from metaphor nor even from any metonymy. It does not condense, it explains. It does not displace, it dwells, even in changing the order of the tents. It only operates by combining its heavy units, in which the complement that guarantees the presence of the couple, demonstrates the weight of a knowledge. This knowledge is precisely what ruins the apparition of its structure. So then in (9) psychoanalysis – because also moreover in the unconscious – man knows nothing about the woman, nor the woman about the man. It is in the phallus that there is summarised the mythical point by which the sexual is implicated in the passion of the signifier. That this point appears moreover to multiply itself is what particularly fascinates the academic in whose discourse this point is lacking. From this there proceeds the recruiting of novices into ethnology. And this marks the humorous effect, black humour of course, of painting oneself in the colours of a particular sector.

Ah! For want of a University that might be ethnic, we are going to make a University out of an ethnic. Hence the wager of this fishing expedition that defines the field as the locus where there can be written down a knowledge whose very essence is that it cannot be transmitted by writing. Since we despair of ever seeing the final class, let us recreate the first, the echo of knowledge that there is in classification. The professor only comes back at dawn... I would say as a counter point to Hegel. You know the story of the owl and twilight.

I would even keep my distance from saying that I take structure on board: because of what your question brings into play in terms of psychoanalysis. First of all, just because I defined the signifier as no one had ever dared to, you should not imagine that the sign is not my concern! Quite the contrary it is my first and it will also be my last. But this detour was necessary. What I exposed in terms of an implicit semiotics whose disarray was the only thing to allow linguistics, does not mean that it does not have to be redone, and in that same name,

because in fact it is from the one that remains to be constructed that we will refer back to the ancients. If the signifier represents a subject, says Lacan – not a signifier – and for another signifier – let us insist: not for another subject – so then how can it fall to the level of the sign which as long as logicians have been around, represents something for someone? I am thinking about the Buddhist in wanting to bring life to my crucial question, the one that I have just posed, the fall of the signifier to the sign, I will bring it to life with the: no smoke without fire. As a psychoanalyst, it is by the sign that I am warned. If it signals to me the something that I have to treat, I know, by having through the logic of the signifier found a way to break the lure of the sign, that this something is the division of the subject, which division is due to the fact that it is the other who makes the signifier, which means it will only be able to represent a subject by only being a one of the other [?] This division has repercussions on the avatars of the (10) assault which this division as such confronted it with the knowledge of the sexual, traumatically, from the fact that this assault is condemned to failure in advance for the reason that I have said, that the signifier is not suitable for giving body to a formula about sexual relationships. Hence my statement: there is no sexual relationship, to be understood as: that can be formulated in structure. This ‘something’ into which the psychoanalyst, by interpreting, brings about an intrusion of the signifier, certainly I have been wearing myself out for twenty years to ensure that he will not take it to be a thing, because it is a fault (*faillie*), indeed one of structure. But if he wants to make someone of it, it is the same thing, because it goes from the personality to the total person, that ne’er-do-wells sometimes go on about. The slightest memory of the unconscious requires, nevertheless, the maintenance at that place of the two of some kind, with this supplement from Freud that it cannot satisfy any other unification than that of the logic that is written as: either one or the other. If this is how things are at the beginning, when the signifier turns into a sign, where now can we find the someone that has to be urgently procured for it? This is the *hic* that turns into *nunc* by simply being a psychoanalyst, but also Lacanian.

Who does not know that soon everyone will be such – my audience is a prodromus of it – and so the psychoanalysts as well. For that, the rise to the social zenith of the object described by me as *o* will be enough, through the anxiety effect that is obviously provoked, which the product of our discourse [*a slip*] ... which our discourse provides by failing to produce it. That it should be by such a fall that the signifier drops to the sign, is proved among us by of the fact that when people no longer know which way to turn (*à quel saint se vouer*), in other words when there are no more signifiers to cook – that is what the saint provides, as you know – you buy anything whatsoever, specifically an automobile, which is enough to give a sign of understanding, as one might say, one's boredom, or in other words the affect of the desire for something Other – with a capital O. This says nothing about the small *o* because it is only deducible to the measure of the psychoanalysis of each one, which explains that few psychoanalysts handle it properly, even if they have got it in my seminar.

I will speak therefore in a parable, namely, to throw people off the scent. In looking more closely at the 'no smoke', as I might say, perhaps one might take the step of noticing that it is of the fire that this 'no' gives a sign. What it gives a sign of conforms to our structure. Because since Prometheus, smoke is rather the sign of this subject that is represented by a match, first signifier, for its box, the second, that for Ulysses approaching an unknown shore, smoke in the first place allows him to presume that it is not a desert island. Our smoke is therefore the sign, why not, of the smoker? But go on to the producer of the fire: it would be more materialistic and as dialectical as one could wish. That Ulysses nevertheless gives the someone, is put in doubt by recalling also that he is 'no one'. He is in any case no one in that a foolish Polyphemus is deceived by it. But the obvious fact that it is not to give a sign to Ulysses that the smokers have pitched camp, (11) suggests to us a greater rigour at the source of the sign. Because it makes us sense, as in passing, that the mistake made in seeing the world as a phenomenon, is that the noumenon, by thus being only able

to give a sign to the *nous*, in other words, to the supreme someone, another sign of intelligence, shows the poverty from which yours proceeds in supposing that everything gives a sign: it is the someone from somewhere, from nowhere, who must be manipulating everything. Let that help us to put the 'no smoke without fire' at the same level as 'no prayer without God', so that we may understand what has changed. It is curious that forest fires do not show the someone to whom the careless sleep of the smoker is addressed. And that it required the phallic joy, the primitive urination with which man, says psychoanalysis, replies to fire, to put us on the path of the fact that there is, Horatio, in heaven and earth, more materials to make a subject than the objects that your knowledge imagines. Products for example for the quality of which, in the Marxist perspective of surplus value, the producers, rather than the master, could hold to account for the exploitation that they undergo. When one has recognised the sort of surplus enjoying that makes one say 'that's really someone', one will be perhaps on the path of a dialectical matter perhaps more suitable than the Party-fodder (*chair à Parti*), well known for making himself the *babysitter* of history. It could be the psychoanalyst if his *passe* were illuminated.

This is how I answered the second question. There is a third which is the following:

*Would not one of the possible articulations between psychoanalysis and linguistics be the privilege accorded to metaphor and metonymy, by Jakobson on the linguistic plane and by you on the psychoanalytic plane?*

I will not read the reply I gave to this question, because it is so impertinent that it pisses me off. There has been enough nonsense talked about whether or not I borrowed metaphor and metonymy from Jakobson. When I produced them, I thought all the same that among my listeners, there were some who knew who Jakobson was! They

only discovered it a fortnight later because I said it when I brought out my contraption. Only at that people said to me: look at Lacan, he is not quoting Jakobson! After which they read Jakobson, and realised that I had all the less reason to quote Jakobson in that I was saying something completely different. And at that point they said to me: Ah! He's turning Jakobson upside down. He's distorting him! Anyway, these are all anecdotes!

*Question Four: You say that the discovery of the unconscious culminates at a second Copernican revolution – Ha! That makes your hearts sink! – In what way is the unconscious a key notion that subverts the whole theory of knowledge?*

(12) OK, let's go and after that we'll leave it.

Your question gives rise to some hopes tinged with a certain 'frighten me', that is inspired by the meaning that has come down to our epoch in the word: revolution. One could note the passage of this word to a super-egoistic function in politics, to an ideal role in the prize list of thinking. I note that I am not the one who plays here on these resonances whose deadening I say, only the structural cut can combat, I mean the resonances. I say that the structural cut alone can give its full sense to the word revolution. Why not start from the irony that revolution should be made the responsibility of celestial revolutions, which don't quite catch its tone? What is revolutionary in the re-centring of the sun around the solar world? After all, in listening to what I am articulating this year about a discourse of the Master, one may find that it completes very well its revolution, which, by the loop taken by science, by the *episteme* that I am demonstrating to be its aim, can be accounted for by its start from an absolute master-signifier which here is represented by the sun. In common consciousness, the idea that it turns around, this is heliocentrism – what I love, is that Gloria made a typing error a little earlier, because this morning she typed that as, she wrote: *hegocentrism*. I find that sublime! And it

implies that it turns around, without there being any further need to look at it. Can I blame Galileo for the political insolence of the *Roi-Soleil*? The Ancients, on the contrary, found a kind of dialectical usage to which the appearances, which result from the tipping over of the earth onto the ecliptic, lend themselves. The images of light and shade are ready there for an articulated discourse. I would put in opposition to heliocentrism, a photocentrism, as being much less enslaving. The metaphor that Freud takes from Copernicus, and to connote from it, for his part, if you remember his text, rather an effect of collapse than of subversion, is aiming in fact at attacking centrism itself. Exactly, the received pretension of a psychology that one can say all the more unbroached at his epoch in that it is still so at ours: the pretension of consciousness of wanting to classify what it has at its disposition in the register of representation. It is clear in reading this figure of an encompassing completely insouciant, we could say, of the requirements of a topology because of what it is simply unaware of, that this is what is aimed at in the metaphor. It is in deepening this that one encounters its relevance and this is why I am taking it up again. Because the history taken textually from where the Copernican revolution is inscribed, demonstrates that it is not the change of centre that is its essential, to the point - in parenthesis - that for Copernicus himself it was the least of his worries. That around which there turns – but precisely it is not the word to use – around which there gravitates (13) the effect of a knowledge which is on the way to locating itself as imaginary, is clearly – it can be read, by keeping a diary of Kepler's approach as Koyré did – to free oneself from the idea that the circular form, because it is the most perfect, is the only one that is appropriate to be applied to the celestial body. To introduce, in effect, the elliptical trajectory is to ensure that it aims at getting closer to the focus occupied by the master body, but also of the other, as empty as it is obscure, which slows it down. Here is where the importance of Galileo lies, not in this ellipse, which he does not seem to have spent much time on in any case, except in the skirmishing of his trial, whose stake I indicated earlier is ambiguous, even though not the side to be

taken in it. His importance lies in the first steps that he arranges to have carried out in the research about the fall of bodies by which this ellipse is going to be illuminated. What I mean, is that if there is something in history, to illustrate, in the most opaque fashion moreover, the definition that I gave of structure, it is the formula that Newton finally gives as a key to this fall of bodies, by definitively explaining through it the path of the stars. Because it is also the presence at every point of the real, in other words in every element of mass, of the formula of attraction taken in itself, in other words a second-degree equation. Because this is what we have succeeded in stifling, by no longer thinking about it, by completely forgetting the surprise and the scandal shown by Newton's contemporaries, at the fact that every point in the world is aware at every instant of the masses in operation and exercises a pull on them as far as this world extends. Is it necessary to recall here that the gravitational field is distinguished by its weakness compared to other fields, the electromagnetic one, for example, brought into play by physics, and that it moreover resists the ideal, that is nevertheless almost realised, of the unification of the field. In any case from the twist in transcendental aesthetics – I mean these terms in the Kantian sense – that is constituted by the Einsteinian correction, in its stuff, the curvature of space, and in its justification, necessitated by a transmission that the limited speed of light does not allow to cancel out, it remains that the Newtonian revolution has proved to be unthinkable – this is what Newton himself admits in his "*Hypotheses non fingo*" – and that it confirms my formula that the impossible is the Real. There is no point in underlining that in the moon landing, the LM, it is the same formula, this time realised in an apparatus, that is at stake. This is what makes me underline the a-cosmicity of present reality. All of this is in no way saying that Newton should be put under the heading of structuralism, or even ascribed to structure, but first of all that our science finds itself in the field of the exact, already articulated from the fact that the problem is posed in the field of the conjectural ones. In order underline subsequently the form that one could describe as



uneducatable which, in the theory of knowledge, is specified by (14) psychology. Because if as it is claimed, Kant is justified by a so-called cosmology that needs to be renovated after Newton, how does it come about that there is nothing articulated in it about what Newton put forward in terms of the formula of the relation as intruder into the real? The thing in itself, on the contrary, the one Kant requires, is quite simply nothing other than psychology, which is stated there, just as in Wolf, indeed in d'Alembert. And in just the same way, there will be the "autonomous ego" dragged in straight up by the New York clique despite the Freudian revolution. Let me show my hand, about this ego and this psychology: the thing in itself is the knowledge that the world has of itself. It is not surprising that the forms of this knowledge are defined as *a priori*, since this world, is, by this fact, total. But what had these forms got to do with the Newton's equations and what can be deduced from them as acceleration? There is nothing astonishing in that pure or practical reason are incapable here of demonstrating again anymore that they are not as organs, in this respect like the rest, just as intrinsically specularised as the being of a solid may be when it is constructed by a revolution, in other words derived from an intuitive geometry that is not revolutionary at all. I note here that revolution, no matter what capital R is attached to it in French, is nevertheless at present reduced to what it is for Chateaubriand: the return of the master, the very one, the great one, our own, who only precipitates for a historian, worthy of this name, Tocqueville, the ideologies of the *Ancien Régime*, indeed for another, Taine, a madness that is worth a precautionary internment until it has calmed down. Without mentioning the rhetorical debauchery that is supposed to disqualify it. This is how it would be if Marx had not given it its structural titles, by justifying it from the discourse of the capitalist, with the discovery that this involves, of surplus value as foreclosed in this discourse, but animating by this fact class consciousness, in other words allowing the political work that Lenin brought about. This is why my analysis of Freud reiterates Copernicus from a different angle to that of metaphor. Freud in the unconscious

discovers the incidence of a knowledge such that in escaping consciousness, because it is outside its grasp, is nevertheless denoted as properly articulated, structured I say, like a language, otherwise unthinkable as regards the effects by which it is marked, but moreover, not implying anything whatsoever that knows it, in the double sense of: know about things, as an artisan knows about things, complicit with a nature to which it is born at the same time as it, and of recognising oneself in it in the way in which conscience makes us believe that there is no knowledge that does not know itself to be knowing. Such is this knowledge described as unconscious, as regards which it seems, without my being able to immediately sanction it, that once more, it is the impossible that rejects it into the real. If it exists, it is sufficient to disqualify the illusion of a simple knowledge, not that it does not exist, but as a mirage to be contradicted. Knowledge is a function of a nature, which here only knows itself from a denaturing produced with (15) respect to this knowledge, by a succession of retorts, the first affecting this – this knowledge – by producing in it the repression of signifiers. Most especially the negative figure, adding to itself the condition of representability which, however material it may be, the fact of the signifier rejects. Nevertheless that there comes back from it, an expressly articulated retort – and this is what gives it its value – the denial – I underline the term – that corresponds to it in Freud, *Verleugnung*, the denial that the unconscious contributes of what in its effects that I have just mentioned be interpreted as a meaning (*sens*). This means that the unconscious exults only in non- sense, precisely in ‘nonsense’, later it takes part in nature only to avoid meeting it. I am only recalling, to remind you, and for those who are unaware of them, these Lacanian banalities, which through my work are inscribed under the rubric of *Formations of the unconscious*. And I underline, that here I did not articulate neuroses. If I have to complete these banalities, it is because of the fact that there is rejected this operation of the insistence of unconscious knowledge starting from a conceivable subject, in order to pronounce on them what Freud calls the verdict – remember these terms: a judgement that rejects and condemns – that, as I say

foreclosed from the symbolic, this knowledge reappears in the real of hallucination. It is in order to fix these terms correctly that I had for years, to roll over and over at the feet of those for whom it was their day-to-day experience, without dragging them from these dreams that for them are fairly representable so that they can continue to sleep. It was enough that, afraid of an eventual waking, they believed in my reality, and rejected me from these symbolic delights. From which, brought back to the real of the *ENS*, of being, therefore – you can write that with a ‘g’ if you wish – of the *étang* of the *Ecole Normale Supérieure*, I heard myself from the first day being really summoned to declare what being I accorded to all of that. I answered that the question appeared to me to be inappropriate, that I did not believe myself to be responsible for any ontology with respect to my listeners. The fact is that by breaking them into my *logie* I made *honteux* of its ‘onto’. I have drunk deep of all ‘onto’ for a long time as my answers here bear witness. I will go straight to the point and not allow the wood to hide the trees: being is only born from the flaw that the *étant* produces by speaking. A formula that relegates the author to putting his act as its means. This *étant* must then have the time to express itself. This “needs the time” (*faut du temps*) is properly how being solicits us in the unconscious. It is indeed to being that there corresponds each time that “time is necessary”, but listen, I operate decisively with the crystal of my tongue to refract the signifier, to decompose the subject. Time is necessary for it: it is French that I am speaking to you (*que je vous cause*), not distress I hope. What is necessary in this ‘time is necessary’ describes the flaw from which I started. It is on the term: ‘what is necessary (*ce qui faudra*)’ that I operate. And even though the practice in a grammar designed to prevent Belgians from committing Belgicisms – it is a book I have a lot of respect for – is not (16) recommended by this *faudra*, it is recognised in it. Otherwise the grammar *faudrait* its duties. However necessary it is that it should be there, you touch by this little proof that it is indeed from lack that in French the *falloir* becomes necessity. Even though *l’estuet* – because that was how it was

pronounced: *est opus, est opus temporis* on this occasion, even though *l'estuet* started, as I might say, by drifting from the *l'estuair* (estuary) of old French. Inversely, this *falloir* returns to *faillie*, not by chance, from the subjunctive modality, to *défaillance: à moins qu'il faille* (unless it is necessary...). At what level for the articulation of the unconscious can we find the attachment of saying to being?

Undoubtedly, the degree to which time is part of its stuff is not an imaginary currency, but let us say that it is textile, made up of knots which only means the holes that are found there. This level has no *en-soi* (in itself) except what falls into it from masochism. This is precisely what psychoanalysis picks out by relegating it from a someone, who is going to support the "needs time" as long as is necessary so that from this saying, *l'étant* makes being of something. You know that I wanted for a few months to introduce the enormity of the psychoanalytic act. This someone, picked out by the psychoanalyst, is that by which the being to come is determined, in the same way as someone has defined the path of the true. This was done by the Stoics, not without some coherence – no, I beg your pardon, I skipped, I'm tired, I skipped a little paragraph. There is only one knowledge that mediates the true, it is logic which only got going in the right way when it made the true and the false into pure signifiers, T, F, or as they say again, values. This was done by the Stoics, not without coherence with the morality of a politicised masochism. The rejection of Greek mechanics barred the access to mathematical logic from which alone there could be built up a purely textured true. That is why the Stoics could be harassed by the Sceptics, whose critique is only sustained – paradoxically – from the supposition of a true of nature, even if they held it to be inaccessible. This is precisely what psychoanalytic experience refutes, everyone learning from it that the true of nature can be summed up in the enjoyment that allows the true of texture. The interval that someone operates on by intervening in it, in psychoanalysis, is only representable by the distance between the written and the word. It is only from the written that a logic could be sustained, the logic described as mathematical, in which the Sceptics

would be surprised to note that it obtains the irrefutable assurance of the true on assertions just as empty as, for example:

- A system defined as the order of arithmetic only achieves consistency by always obtaining a separation of the true and the false by confirming itself as being incomplete, in other words by requiring formulae that can be verified elsewhere to be unprovable:

(17)

- Or again, this unprovable is derived on the other hand from a demonstration which decides on it independently of its truth;

- Or again, there is an undecidable that is articulated from the fact that the unprovable cannot even be decided.

The cuts of the articulated text of the unconscious must be recognised from such a structure, namely, from what they allow to lapse. Because here once again I am going to take advantage of the crystal of the tongue, to remark that this *chu*, because it is *falsus* in Latin, links the false certainly, very distinctly in its sense as opposed to the true, to our "needs time" and to its "*faillir*", because it is the past participle of *fallere* from which the two verbs *faillir* and *falloir* come, each from its detour. And note that I only bring in etymology in order to support the effect of the homophonic crystal. The fact is also that the dimension of the false has to correct itself when it is a matter of interpretation. It is precisely by being *falsa*, even if not completely appropriate, that an interpretation operates because being is to one side. It must not be forgotten that in psychoanalysis the *falsus* is causal of being in the process of verification. Freud no doubt, at his epoch, did not need any more in this field than the support of Brentano, which is perfectly distinguishable even though discreet, in a text like that of the *Verneinung*. It would be enough to indicate where the someone is up to the job from the side of the analyst, even if I did not force the way finally to his purity as a logical bottle-imp. But there is added to it in

Freud this feature that I believe to be decisive, the unique faith that he had in these Jews with whom moreover he rejected what must be carefully noted by his mark of aversion: occultism. This unique faith was had in them of not failing the earthquake of the truth. Why them and not others, if not because the Jew – and Freud ended up like them – is the one who, throughout all the centuries starting from the return from Babylon wherever he went, knew how to read and that the Midrash is his path – the Midrash, I am going to tell you what it is. Because they had the book with the most historical, the most anti-mythical style there is, the Bible, the Hebrew people interrogated literally each one of its letters and these even from an inflection of a desinent, from an inversion, or even the placing together of something that is not held to be preconceived, to question the Book for example about what it had not been able to say about the childhood of Moses. Why in this interval where Freud had so clearly seen the false operating, was it necessary for him to push the death of the father, and not be satisfied, another crystal-type effect, with simply the sickle of time (*la faux du temps*)?

**Seminar 11: Wednesday 15 April 1970**

I will not say that I am introducing to you Professor André Caquot, director of studies at the fifth section of Religious Sciences at Hautes Etudes, where, as you know, I am a lecturer. I will not say that I am introducing him because I do not have to introduce him to you. I introduce myself as having been, by his grace and kindness, entirely dependent on him during the time that has passed since two days before our last meeting, that is, from the moment I decided I wanted to get to know a thing or two about, to approach the question of, Sellin's book. I have said enough about this book for you to be aware of its importance. For those who by chance have come here for the first time I recall that this is the book that comes at the right moment, or again, as I expressed myself, like a ring on a finger, for Freud, so that he is able to defend his thesis that the death of Moses was a murder, namely, that Moses is supposed to have been killed.

I learnt, thanks to Monsieur Caquot, how this book is situated first of all with respect to exegesis, namely, its insertion in the flowering of what can be called textual criticism as it was established, especially in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in German universities. It was necessary to locate Sellin with respect to those who preceded him and those who came after him, Edouard Meyer and Gressman, before many others, to grasp the point of view that he introduced, whose dimensions are given in this text. It was not without some difficulty, as I indicated the last time, that I managed to get hold of this book, since it was nowhere to be found in Europe. Through the efforts of the *Alliance Israélite*

*Française* I ended up by getting it from Copenhagen and thus I had a text that I could bring to the attention of Monsieur Caquot who is one of the rare people not only to have heard of it but to have already had it in his hands sometime before I came and made my request. And we examined this text very specially as regards the point at which it (2) enables Freud to situate what he has his heart set on, and not necessarily for the same reason as Sellin. That necessarily obliged us to turn to this field in which my ignorance is profound. You are incapable of knowing everything that I do not know! Fortunately, moreover, because if you knew everything that I do not know you would know everything! As a result of the attempt I made to put into order what I myself was able to learn from Monsieur Caquot, I suddenly realised that there is a big difference between knowledge, knowing what one is speaking about, what one believes one is capable of speaking about, and what is involved in what I will presently describe using a term that will serve to explain what we are going to do here. For the second time then, there will be a break in the way I address you. Last time you were subjected to a difficult trial, to the point that some of you suggested the hypothesis that it was done in order to air the room a bit – not very successfully, I see. This time I believe you will, on the contrary, have grounds for staying. And if, subsequently, I had to offer you again what I am able to do today thanks to Monsieur Caquot, it would be in a different way. Let us say that, all things considered, I felt myself drawing back from the thought of handling again today what we have been forced to handle, namely, Hebrew letters. In the text I read out to you the last time I inserted a definition from the *Midrash*. What is at stake is a relationship to written material (*l'écrit*) that is subjected to certain laws that are of great interest to us. In effect, as I told you, it is a question of placing oneself in the interval of a certain relationship between written material and a spoken intervention which is based on it and refers to it. The whole of analysis, I mean analytic technique, can, in a certain way, be elucidated by this reference, by being considered as an 'operation' – in quotes – of interpretation. This term has been used indiscriminately



ever since people have been talking about conflicting interpretations, for example – as if there could be any conflict of interpretations! At the very most, interpretations complement one another, they operate precisely with this reference. What is important here is what I told you the last time: the *falsum*, with the ambiguity that around this word there can be established the fall (*chute*) of the false, I mean what is contrary to the true. I said that on occasion, this falsity of interpretation may even have its impact by displacing the discourse.

(3) So then what we are going to do is this. I cannot wish for better in order to transmit to you what is at stake. For me this can in no way meet the requirements of a knowledge in this field, but rather something that I have called getting a whiff (*une mise-au-parfum*) of something. I am going to continue the operation in your presence, that is, continue trying to get a whiff of something, by a way that has nothing fictitious about it, by questions that necessarily remain unexhausted, the ones I put to Monsieur Caquot over the last few days. In this respect I will be, like you, in a relationship of getting a whiff of a certain knowledge, that of biblical exegesis. Do I need to tell you that Monsieur Caquot is in this fifth section as an expert in Comparative Semitic Religions? I believe, from the experience I have had of him, that nobody in this domain could be more appropriate, in the sense that I found him to be so myself, to make you feel what Sellin's approach is all about, when he extracts from the text of *Hosea* - you will see by what procedures - something that he himself really wants to bring out. He has his reasons for this, and these reasons are important for us. What Monsieur Caquot taught me about this matter is also precious.

I mentioned ignorance earlier. To be a father, I mean not only a Real Father but a father of the real, there are things that one must be fiercely unaware of. It would be necessary, in a certain way, to be unaware of everything that is not concerned with what I tried to fix in my text last time as the level of structure, this having been defined from the order

of the effects of language. This is where one falls, as I might say, on truth – the on (*sur*) being equally able to be replaced by from (*de*). One falls from truth, namely, a remarkable thing, if we envisage this absolute reference, we could say that anyone who sticks to it – but of course it is impossible to stick to it – would not know what he is saying. Saying this certainly does not in any way specify or serve to specify the analyst. This would be to put him - or more exactly, you are ready to tell me that this would be to put him - on the same level as everybody else. Who knows, in effect, what he is saying? But this would be a mistake. It is not because everybody speaks that everybody says something. What might be at stake is an entirely different reference, of knowing into what discourse one is inserted, at the limit of this position that is in a way fictitious. There is someone who corresponds to that position, and whom I am going to name without hesitation, because it seems to me to be essential to the interest that we analysts should have in Hebrew history and to the fact that it is perhaps (4) not conceivable for psychoanalysis to have been born anywhere other than in this tradition. And someone was born into it who insists, as I have emphasised, on the fact that to advance things in the field he has discovered, he has confidence properly speaking only in these Jews, who have known how to read for quite a long time, and who live – this is the *Talmud* – with reference to a text. He, or what, I am going to name, who realises this radical position of fierce ignorance, has a name: it is Yahweh himself.

In his challenge to this chosen people, the characteristic of Yahweh is that he is fiercely unaware of everything that exists, at the time he announces himself, of certain practices, of certain relationships, of the religions that existed and flourished at the time, and which are founded on a certain type of knowledge – precisely sexual knowledge. When we talk about *Hosea* presently, we shall see the extent to which his invective against them is directed at this point, at whatever is involved in a relationship that mixes supernatural agencies with nature itself, which in a way depends on it.

What right do we have to say that was based on nothing, that the way to touch Baal who, in return fertilised the earth, did not correspond to something that might be effective? Why not? Simply because there was Yahweh, and because a certain discourse was inaugurated that I am trying this year to isolate as the reverse side of analytic discourse, namely, the discourse of the Master, precisely because of that, we no longer know anything about it. Is this the position that the analyst should take up? Surely not. The analyst – and I would go as far as to say that I have been able to experience it in myself – the analyst does not have this fierce passion that surprises us so much where Yahweh is concerned. Yahweh situates himself at the most paradoxical point with respect to another perspective that would be, for example, that of Buddhism, where one is recommended to purify oneself of the three fundamental passions, love, hate and ignorance. What is most striking in this unique religious manifestation is that Yahweh lacks none of them. Love, hate and ignorance, as you can see, are passions that are not properly speaking absent from his discourse. What distinguishes the analyst's position – today I am not going to write it on the board using my little schema, where the analyst's position is indicated by the o-object on the top left – and it is the only sense that can be given to (5) analytic neutrality, is not to partake in these passions. This means that he is all the time in an uncertain zone where he is vaguely in quest of getting into step with, getting a whiff of, what is involved in the knowledge that he has nevertheless, properly speaking, to repudiate. What is at stake today is a way of tackling Yahweh's dialogue with his people, namely, what Sellin might have had in mind, and also what is revealed to us by the encounter that came about with what interests Freud – which is properly speaking along this line, but in which he stops, in which he fails, making the thematic of the father a sort of mythical knot – which is now one of the perspectives that I have to develop for you - a short circuit, or, to be exact, a failure.

I told you that the Oedipus complex is Freud's dream. Like any dream it needs to be interpreted. We have to see where this displacement-

effect is produced, which is to be understood as what can be produced by a certain shift in a writing. The Real Father, if we can try to rehabilitate him from Freud's articulation, can be properly articulated to what concerns only the imaginary father, namely, the prohibition of enjoyment. On the other hand, what makes him essential is masked, namely, the castration that I was alluding to just now in saying that there was here an order of fierce ignorance, I mean at the place of the real father. This is what I hope I may be able to demonstrate to you all the more easily in that today we shall have clarified a certain number of things about Mr Sellin. This is why, if you don't mind, I will be the first to put a few questions to Monsieur Caquot.

He is well aware, since I have told him about it in a thousand ways, what our basic problem is about – how, why, did Freud need Moses? It is obvious that it is essential to know this to have some idea of what is meant by Moses. Sellin's text effectively begins by raising this question *Who was Moses?* And by summarising the various positions of those who came before him, and who are working along with him.

There is no question of these positions being clarified except in function of the question of knowing how long Yahweh has been (6) around. Was Yahweh already the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? Is this a tradition that we can trust? Or was this tradition retroactively reconstituted by the religious founder who would then be Moses inasmuch as, at the foot of Horeb, or more precisely on Horeb itself, he is supposed to have received in writing, you should note, the Tablets of the Law? Obviously it is completely different. Sellin's book revolves, properly speaking around *Mose und seine Bedeutung für die israelitisch-jüdische Religionsgeschichte*.

Why was it necessary for Sellin to present us a Moses who had been killed? This is a question I do not even want to begin to answer, so as to leave the field completely open to Monsieur Caquot. It is certain that this is closely linked to the fact that Moses is regarded as a

prophet. Why is it in his capacity as a prophet that he has to be killed? More precisely, Sellin thinks he has undergone the death of a martyr because he is a prophet. This, I think, is what Monsieur Caquot wants to clarify for us

**Monsieur Caquot:** Allow me first of all to present the personage we are talking about because we are here not to explain the text of *Hosea* – we would need to spend the rest of the year on that – but to explain an opinion on *Hosea*, that of Ernst Sellin.

Ernst Sellin is the very model of these German University professors at the beginning of the century, of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He was born in 1867 and he had an absolutely rectilinear career as a professor of the Old Testament in the Protestant faculties of theology in Germany. At the time, in 1920, he was a full professor of the Old Testament at the University of Berlin. It is perhaps no harm to know something about his ideology.

Sellin was a fairly typical representative of evangelical Protestantism, what we would rather describe as liberal today, in this Germany at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The religion of Israel is above all seen by people of this tendency as, if you wish, a lesson in morality. They always insist on the ethical elements in “revelation”. Now these ethical elements we find – and this was the most common opinion in Sellin’s time – on the one hand in what are called the major prophets such as the *Isaiahs*, *Jeremiah*, and then in the minor prophets also, the 12 minor prophets among which *Amos* and *Hosea* are the oldest representatives, and on the other hand this moral revelation is found (7) in the Decalogue, the Decalogue, in particular what is called the ethical Decalogue of *Exodus* 20 which you know as the Ten Commandments. Sellin attributes the Ten Commandments – and he is not the only one – to Moses himself. And so then how can we link up these two high points of Old Testament revelation? Sellin then posits the following, which is a sort of postulate: the prophets, the great

prophets who wrote, are the inheritors of the Mosaic tradition, of the true tradition that has come from Moses and which also comprises, conveys, authentic elements about the life, the fate of Moses who is the first prophet. There is supposed to be then, if you wish, a continuity between Moses and Hosea since we are talking about him. The second element that determined his reflection in *Mose und seine Bedeutung* and which led him to affirm, to advance this thesis, which I hasten to say is extremely uncommon. The thesis of the death of Moses had never been defended before him except by Goethe in a passage that I do not know, but which has been picked out and that Sellin himself did not know. It was a few years later that Karl Bude, one of Sellin's colleagues, pointed out that this idea of the death of Moses had already been put forward by Goethe.

So then, why the death of Moses? I will venture to redo in the opposite direction, if you wish, the presentation of the book *Mose und seine Bedeutung* by Ernst Sellin. The point is that there is a rather significant fact. At the moment when Sellin was writing his *Mose und seine Bedeutung*, which appeared in 1922, he had just finished a commentary on the twelve minor prophets including naturally the book of *Hosea*, which had been published in the same year, 1922, in a series of exegetical commentaries that are called the *K.A.T.: Kommentar zum Alten Testament*, "*Die zwölf Propheten Buch*", the book of the twelve minor prophets. In this commentary on *Hosea*, there is no question for even an instant of the death of Moses. He skips over the passages that he discusses throughout the book of the *Mose und seine Bedeutung*, he gives a completely different exegesis of it. He still had not made, as one might say, this discovery, he had not yet conceived this hypothesis of a death of Moses. So then I think that it is after having completed the writing of his commentary on Moses (*sic*) that Sellin came on this idea while reflecting on something else. And this something else, is another biblical passage quite different to *Hosea*, but which is equally prophetic, it is the *Deutero-Isaiah*, chapters 40 and following of the *Book of Isaiah* and in particular the chapters, the end of chapter 52 to

the beginning of chapter of 53, a collection by a prophet of the 6<sup>th</sup> century in which there is question of a servant of Yahweh whose sufferings have an expiatory value for the sins of the people, which is considered by the Christian tradition and also by this Protestant (8) exegetical tradition as also being one of the high points of Old Testament revelation because it introduced the idea of a redemptive death and that there is certainly in the Gospel or in Christian writings the appropriation of the figure of the suffering servant onto the person of Jesus. That is undeniable. So then starting from that, look at the importance that he attaches to Moses, the importance that he attaches to the prophets, from *Hosea* up to the *Deutero-Isaiah*, who is also a prophet, as hereditary successors of Moses. Sellin, I believe, made the following discovery: the suffering servant of *Deutero-Isaiah*, whose death has a redemptive value, is Moses himself. And starting from there, he set about trying to rediscover, in the earlier prophetic books, allusions to the death of Moses. And this is where he reinterpreted a certain number of passages from *Hosea* in order to get them to say – I really mean to get them to say – that there was a question of the death of Moses. *Hosea*, right, one of the oldest prophets, a guardian of the prophetic tradition, namely, of the authentic tradition about Moses, is supposed to have expressed – it has to be said in covert words, and words that are so covert that they are probably not there – the death of Moses.

**Lacan:** Not that they were not there, but they had never been previously read.

**Caquot:** ...that had never been read, never read before Sellin and which were never read after Sellin. But as you can see, I believe that it is obviously a type of study that you are not accustomed to, but it is rather amusing to see how Sellin proceeded and that gives you an idea; moreover there is no need to cast a stone at him: the exegetes of that epoch considered in a way that the copyists of the Bible did not know Hebrew. I am putting this in a rather crude way, but when all is said

and done that's it. They said: it's bad Hebrew, so then it has to be corrected. So then the results: they took a sentence that was obviously enigmatic, very difficult, because this Hebrew of the 8<sup>th</sup> century was practically above all a poetic Hebrew which had become a dead language. And the rabbinical commentaries, by the Rabbis and the Jewish authors at the beginning of our era, for example, the translation of the *Septuagint* was made by Jews who knew Hebrew, well then, they did not understand it any more than we do. Nevertheless they very often had the same text. So then starting from there, they said: the Hebrew text, the text of the Hebrew Bible is corrupt, let us correct it, let us replace a word that appears bizarre, let us replace it by a word that is well known and in that way they sometimes manage – this is the general rule – to banalise the text, making the text of the Bible express something really impoverished; and sometimes they manage to make it say – and this is Sellin's case – exactly what the exegete wanted it to say.

(9) **Lacan:** Would the people who composed the *Septuagint* have had a text that is earlier than the text that we have?

**Caquot:** Earlier, yes, because the oldest Hebrew manuscripts are – the complete Bible – come from the 9<sup>th</sup> century of our era and the *Septuagint* version was certainly developed before the Christian era. But it appears that – obviously it is not always the case, but personally I believe, I have a certain experience, that the Greek version of the *Septuagint* has very often before its eyes or in its ears the same text as the printed Bible, the Massoretic Bible, the traditional Bible, but that sometimes, not understanding it, they interpret it. This is how you have to envisage the study of the old translations of the Bible.

So then I don't know...if we continue to...



**Lacan:** I think that really if you could get across in this gathering an idea of the manipulations that took place around certain really key words...

**Caquot:** So then for the subject that interests us, namely Sellin's Moses, right, you have to start from two texts, texts of *Hosea* and also another text that I will first of all present to you very rapidly, which is chapter 25 of the *Numbers*, a very curious, a very difficult text, certainly recast by ancient traditions before of course finding its fixed form in writing in the Bible and which describes, as you know, the idolatry of the Israelites on the plains of Moab – the cult of the Baal of Peor – and this happens in a place called Shittim. The text is very difficult. I will venture to re-read the end: *Numbers 25* – I am reading a translation, the text is easy and here we can take any translation whatsoever – “*while Israel dwelt at Shittim, the people gave themselves over to debauchery with the daughters of Moab*” – I am skipping over, right - ... “*the anger of God flamed up against Israel. And here a man from the children of Israel...*” and then here a very curious passage, “*a man from among the children of Israel brought to his brothers a Medianite before the eyes of Moses and before the eyes of the whole assembly of the children of Israel. At that very moment the priest Phinehas*” – the ancestor of the Jerusalem priesthood at the royal epoch – a fictitious ancestor – “*Phinehas pierced the man of Israel and the Medianite woman through the belly and this brought to a halt the scourge*” – we don't really know what it was, probably it seems to have been a plague, but we are not too sure and the text skips over it – “*brought to a halt a scourge, the scourge that had been* (10) *unleashed to punish, as a punishment for the idolatry on the plains of the Baal of Peor*”. OK. This text is very important but for a different reason: because it grounds – I am pointing it out in passing – it grounds the election of a priestly dynasty that claims to go back to Phinehas. Phinehas receives at that very moment a priestly alliance, namely the guarantee of the perpetuity of the priesthood in his descendants as a reward for the zeal he showed in punishing the

Israelites who had sinned on the Plains of Moab. But then here – starting from verse 14 – another indication which seems to come, which appears to be a kind of incident “*the man of Israel who was killed with the Medianite was called Zimri, the son of Salou. He was a prince, a Simeonite, and the Medianite woman was called Cozbi.*”

Sellin’s hypothesis: the text has been distorted. They wanted to efface the memory of something completely different and this completely different thing was the following: that in the place called Shittim, on the plains of Moab, the man who had been put to death to expel the scourge, the plague that had struck Israel, was not this person Zimri from the tribe of Simeon, it was Moses himself. It was Moses, and the redemptive death of Moses was veiled. In effect he adds on some arguments: it is quite obvious who it is that had married a Medianite. It was Moses, because in the tradition Moses’ wife, Zippora, is the daughter of a Medianite priest. So then this spouse of a Medianite whose name has also been dissimulated because she is called Cozbi, and not Zippora – if it had been Zippora, it would be too easy – Cozbi which is an insulting nickname, derived from a name that signifies a lie, so then, you see, the priests, the priestly tradition which is at the origin of chapter 25 of the *Book of Numbers*, as we know it, are supposed to have eliminated Moses and are supposed to have replaced him by this kind of stopgap that is called Zimri. But if we re-establish the tradition that Sellin believes to be authentic, what is at stake here was a murder of Moses at Shittim. All that, I am presenting it, but once again what Sellin says is absolutely arbitrary.

So then starting from there, we can look at the passages of *Hosea*. There are three passages that are particularly significant. The first is in chapter 5 in verses...2. Now here, it must be said, I have to give up trying to translate of *Hosea* 5, 2. I could read *Hosea* chapters 5 verse 2 for you in Hebrew; but we have to admit, it is unintelligible and the most honest thing to do is to translate it by a series of dots.

*Hosea 5, 2*, I read a translation, it is one of the last to appear in French, it is the translation described as that of the ecumenical Bible, which is said in principle – these at least are the instructions – to be as close as (11) possible to the Hebrew text:

5, 1 “*Hear this, you priests, pay attention, Houses of Israel, Houses of the King, lend me your ear. It was up to you to deliver justice. But you have been a trap at Micpa and a net that was stretched out on Tabor*” – namely, that you have really walked people into it in a way.

Verse 2.....

**Lacan:** Do we know anything else about what happened at Micpa?

**Caquot:** Oh yes, this is an allusion to the episodes of...Micpa was a place of...in the pre-Royal epoch, Micpa was a gathering place, if you like, where justice was pronounced. As regards Tabor, it is more mysterious.

So then, after, our Bible, the most faithful edition possible, says the following: “*The infidels have dug a deep grave.*”

Literally, there are so few words that I am going to write them out for you. I am going to transcribe them, anyway, if there are any of you who read Hebrew: *shahata settim he einikou*.

The verb “*he einikou*” – they have dug deep, they have made something deep. This word “*settim*” that is translated by infidels, the subject of “*he einikou*”: “*the infidels made something deep*” that’s acceptable. But “*shahata*” all that one can say is that this noun is a substantive whose function we cannot see in the sentence, but which is attached to a verbal root “*shahat*” which signifies to disembowel, to massacre.

Now look at what this becomes with Sellin. Yes, so then I am reading the up to date translation:

*"The infidels have dug a deep grave"* a mistranslation, yes one can say that the infidels have dug, but the deep grave no. There is no deep grave in this text because *"shahata"* has been confused with *"shahat"* with a *tav*, namely an emphatic consonant with a simple consonant. There is no deep grave in the text and so then here is what Sellin made of it, I am writing it underneath: *"shahat hasshitim he einikou"*. Which gives: they have deeply dug a grave or the grave (*shahat* with a *tav*) of Shittim, and so we rediscover the Shittim of *Numbers 25*, verse 1 which is, according to Sellin's hypothesis, the place where Moses is supposed to have been assassinated. There you are. First example.

That is not all because we also have to look, if it does not bore you (12) too much, at the two other passages that Sellin invokes for his hypothesis. So then the other passage is *Hosea 9* verses 7 – 14. The *Book of Hosea 9*, is a rather easier passage while there, frankly this verse 2 of chapter 5 for the moment I will not translate it. It is not worth the trouble, it is certain there is a word that signifies, as the commentary says, which evokes, a massacre: they have dug, or the infidels have dug (or deepened) but we do not know what. I do not know whether the text is corrupt or whether quite simply, we no longer understand it and that the writers of the *Septuagint* did not understand it either.

**Lacan:** The writers of the *Septuagint* spoke about laces, shoe laces....

**Caquot:** That's further on.

The second passage, then we were saying *Hosea 9*, 7 – 14. It is a passage which seems to be speaking about the contempt in which the prophet is held. *"The days of chastisement have come, the days to render up an account. Let Israel know it! The prophet becomes mad."*

*The man possessed by the spirit becomes delusional because of the greatness of your crime and the greatness of the attack that you are undergoing. The sentry of Ephraim is with my God, he is the prophet. They lay a trap for him on all his paths, he is attacked even in the house of his God.”*

In verse 7 there is question of a prophet. This prophet, I believe that almost everybody – and this appears to be the most obvious interpretation – recognises that this is a way that Hosea designates himself after having been the victim of the persecution of his contemporaries, the contempt of his contemporaries. But Sellin, once he sees the word prophet, jumps on it: it's Moses. So then this is how verse 8 is arranged and this is not easy either. I will begin again by giving you the text of the Bible on one line and on another line what Sellin makes of it:

**Translation by Monsieur Caquot:** *“The sentry of Ephraim is with my God and the prophet is a trap laid on all his paths”* (it is a nominal sentence without a copula) *“tshofe Ephraim im elohai”* and underneath *“navi pah iahoush al kol derekai”*.

Well then, look at what this becomes in Sellin: *navi* is not Hosea nor a collective noun *“Ephraim looks towards the tent of the prophet”* (meaning, to play a dirty trick on him) namely, that he transposes two words and makes of *“elohai”*, good God, he makes it into a substantive *“ohel”* or its plural *“ohelai”* which signifies the tent or the tents: Ephraim looks towards the tent of the prophet...

Subsequently, further on, he discovers in the following verse the word Shittim, still in this chapter 9. There is a word which signifies adversary: *“mastema bebeit elohav”*, *“someone who attacks an adversary in the house of his God”*.

This is in parallel to the trap on the path that we have seen earlier. This is the end of verse 8 and verse 9: “*he einikou*” and then we rediscover something that we have seen earlier “*shiheitou*”: *they have gone to the depths of corruption* our version translates it, namely, that they have done something profoundly, they are corrupt. So then for (13) Sellin now, this “mastema” he reads as: at Shittim – still the same business, the Shittim of *Numbers 25, 1*, “*he einikou*”, they have dug and in place of “*shiheitou*” obviously he preserves the consonants, but he reads it as “*shahato*” instead of “*shieitou*”. “*Shiheitou*” is a verb in the third person plural that signifies “they are corrupt” and “*shahoto*” is a substantive that signifies “his grave”: at Shittim, they have dug his grave, the grave of Moses naturally!

And even then he is not finished. Here is the text of *Hosea* which, for its part, might have a certain power of conviction, but which will be somewhat less weakly interpreted than the others by Sellin. It is the end of chapter 12, the beginning of chapter 13 of *Hosea*. In this passage we are undoubtedly dealing with Moses and Moses described as a prophet. I will read the end of it for you – what was in question in the earlier part was the patriarch Jacob and then we pass on to Moses....

**Lacan:** What appears to be striking all the same is that the transformation of “*elohim*”, namely God, into “*ohel*”, the tent, was done by other modern commentators.

**Caquot:** Yes, it is possible, but Sellin is not the only one of his kind to work like that. Only he all the same has gone a little bit further than the others who do not draw such risky conclusions from it.

Chapter 12: “*Jacob has fled to the Plains of Aram* – an allusion to the episode of Genesis 29 – *Israel*, namely Jacob – it is the same name taken up again – has served – *has worked* if you like – *for a woman* (Leah and Rachel). *And for a woman he made himself into a guardian*

*of the flock* – literally he has protected it – *but through a prophet the Lord brought Israel out of Egypt and by a prophet Israel was protected*". There is a play on words in which a comparison is made between the action of God through Moses and the action of Jacob to have his women. The constructions of verses 13 and 14 are a very nice and very conscious parallel because both end on the word, the verb "*sharmar*" and "*mishmar*" and here it is certain that the prophet (*navi*), who is in question in verse 14 is Moses, he is the one who brought Israel out of Egypt. Moreover it is not the only case, one of these cases where Moses is called a prophet, it is characteristic of this passage of *Hosea* and of the translation of the *Book of Deuteronomy*. And we know that there are certainly links between *Hosea* and *Deuteronomy*, which comes a little bit later than it.

So then verse 13. You will see that fundamentally the liberty that Sellin takes with this text does not make it any more convincing than the interpretations that he took from chapter 5 and from chapter 9. "*Hirahis Ephraim tamrouim*" So then the subject, Ephraim irritated.....*tamrouim*, now that is annoying, it's something that one could understand: Ephraim irritated "*tamrouim*" bitterly, and this is obviously a plural substantive that can be employed adverbially: in a bitter way. There is certainly the root of bitterness in that word.

**Lacan:** It's a rare word.

**Caquot:** Yes, yes, rare!

(14) "*Vdamav alav iatosh v'herfato*" he will spill his blood on him. "*Iashiv lo adonav*" and his opprobrium will restore his Lord to him.

This is a verse which is not very easy, but that one can all the same understand. Ephraim has suffered or has afflicted "*tamrouim*" in a bitter manner, you have to supply a complement, he has afflicted someone who is probably his Lord – "*adonav*" a common factor in the

two hemistichs. The translation of the ecumenical Bible: "*Ephraim has caused bitter pain to God.*"

Subsequently, the following verse: "*yitosh*" he will reject, subject, probably "*adonav*" his Lord which is the common subject of the two verbs of the hemistich 14b: the Lord will reject his blood upon him. To reject one's blood on someone is a fixed juridical formula. It indicates a punishment. And "*iashiv lo*" he will render to him, the Lord will render to Ephraim, his shame "*vherfato*", the shameful act that he has committed. He will pay him back for his shameful behaviour.

Chapter 13, 1, is the continuation of the preceding development according to Sellin: "*kedabber*" when Ephraim spoke, "*reuteit*" that's a difficult word. Literally: while Ephraim was speaking "*reuteit*" a very surprising substantive which occurs only once in the Bible and signifies shaking. What we understand as: when Ephraim spoke, "*reuteit*", there was terror, shaking. It is an elliptical expression, which is altogether conceivable in Hebrew poetry and in archaic Semitic poetry in general. It is one of these extremely concise formulae in which there is not a word too many.

When Ephraim spoke it was terror, shaking, "*nasa hou eb Israel*". This verb "*nasa*" signifies to carry: it carried into Israel, but which can sometimes be an ellipse to signify as in the expression "*nasa kol*", to raise one's voice, which amounts to saying 'to speak'. When Ephraim spoke it was terrifying, and he raised something or other, he raised his head, he raised the word in Israel. And so then 12, 1b: "*vaiahisham baBaal vaiamot*" he sinned through Baal and he is dead. The idea of verse 13 is clear enough: formerly Ephraim was a person to be dreaded, but he sinned through Baal and he is dead.

Now look at what this becomes in Sellin. It is rather complicated because, moreover not alone does he correct one word in every two,



but he changes the verses or the place of the hemistichs! First of all, instead of "*reuteit*", this word seems a little bizarre to him, and indeed it is because it is found only once in the Bible, so then if it is only found once, people have a tendency to believe that it has no right to exist. So then he reads it quite simply as "*torati*" – my law – when Ephraim spoke my law. Moreover it is a correction that was taken up again five years ago by Père Tournaix (?) in an article, he took up the correction of Sellin, which really is not credible. Instead of "*nasahou eb Israel*" he reads "*nasi*", this is a minor correction. And that becomes: he was a prince in Israel. But above all he transposes verse 13, 1a, as he has corrected it, and he puts it after the preceding sentence, he transposes, if you wish 12, 15b, he puts 12, 15b after 13, 1a. And so you see we get the following, with other corrections, I will read Sellin's translation:

*"But by a prophet, I led Israel out of Egypt  
and by a prophet, he was protected."*

This is more or less the Hebrew text.

*"Ephraim irritated him; he made Israel bitter."*

And so then this is where he puts 13, 1a.

*"As long as Ephraim spoke my law" (Ephraim *torati* instead of *reuteit*)*

*"He was a prince in Israel" (nasi hou eb Israel instead of nasa hou eb Israel. 13b now. The verb that Sellin, I don't know why, translates as "he has expiated", while it signifies "he has sinned": "He expiated because of Baal, and he has been killed".*

I do not know why, I have not even looked, he translated "*iesham*" which signifies quite simply that he has committed a sin, he turned it back to front, he made of it: he expiated, he expiated his sin because of Baal: and instead of "*iamot*" he died, he has read "*iumat*" by change in the vowels: he has been killed. And the person in question is of course (15) Moses!

And so now we rediscover the element of 12, 15b that Sellin again corrects. He corrects the third person “*yitosh*”, he turns it upside down, will make his blood fall on him. Sellin corrects it to: “I will make his blood fall on you”!

In the Hebrew text it is the blood of Ephraim, but in Sellin’s interpretation it becomes the blood of Moses!

“I will make his blood fall on you and I will call you to account for the opprobrium that he has undergone.”

This means that in this passage of *Hosea* 12, 14, and 13, 1, there is supposed to be a question of an assassination of Moses for which God will call the Israelites to account.

But anyway you see the artifices through which, because one cannot call them anything else, by what artifices Sellin has managed to make the text of *Hosea* say something that it certainly did not intend to say and which has never been seen in the text of *Hosea*, either by the old translators, nor by modern commentators on the whole, except for Sellin.

And I believe that we have here the most characteristic place - in this *Mose und seine Bedeutung* - to grasp the approach of this exegete.

Obviously we can debate about the servant of *Isaiah*, there are features that could be understood as alluding to Moses, that is incontestable. Only I have the impression that Sellin overvalues them.

Just as when he makes a big deal, he also wants to see an allusion to the assassination of Moses in a personage of *Deutero-Zechariah*, of the prophet Zechariah in chapter 13, if I am not mistaken, of Zechariah, where there is a question of a personage who has been transpierced. It is certainly not Moses, anyway it is equivocal, it is vague.

Here you see where Sellin might have hung his explanation, it was on these three passages of *Hosea* and you see how he proceeded.

Once again, it is not his fault, it was the times he was living in: it was usual, at his time, to allow oneself such liberties with the text. And what happened, given the authority of Sellin, is that it was taken seriously by people who were not quite of his profession.

**Lacan:** What is remarkable to me, is that in the article of 1928, which you have one of the sheets of there, he started working in a different way. He worked using the version of the *Septuagint* and he finally culminated at quite different kinds of corrections.

**Caquot:** Here is the interpretation Sellin gives of our passage in 1928: "Through a prophet, I led Israel out of Egypt and through a prophet (naturally Moses) it was protected."

(16) That's fine.

"*Ephraim was bitterly irritated, every time that Ephraim spoke quarrelsome words*". So then this time it is "*reuteit*" that is tricked about differently. At one time he corrected it as "my law" and now as "quarrelsome remarks", the last correction by Sellin in his article of 1928.

**Lacan:** Through an unbelievable detour from a word in the authors of the *Septuagint*...

**Caquot:** Yes, [.....]. It is perfectly possible, but this does not mean that the authors of the *Septuagint* had read that.

"Every time that Ephraim made quarrelsome remarks, they had to be tolerated in Israel."

“*Anasahou*”, he tolerated it.....in Israel. This time he kept the verb “*nasa*”.

“He expiated because of Baal and underwent death.”

“I will reject his blood on you and his opprobrium, I will visit on you.”

That is exactly the same solution as in 1921. I could spend more time studying the way in which Sellin proceeded but it would probably be a little pernicky.

**Lacan:** In Sellin’s thinking it is nowhere said that if you suppose that the text has the same import as figures and so then restoring a text has a certain sense, it is nowhere said that this text, as one might say, or this vocalisation could be understood by someone. Because to say, for example, that paragraph 25 of *Numbers* hides the event of “the murder of Moses”, there is complete ambiguity.....

**Caquot:** Well, a complete postulate.

**Lacan:** Yes, that’s it. In Sellin’s thinking which, I do not think, brings into play the categories of the unconscious.....

**Caquot:** Certainly not!

**Lacan:** .....the fact of hiding the event at Shittim with a whole unbelievable story – which is probably not such an unbelievable story moreover but which would be so if it effectively replaced it – we are here at the level of something that oscillates, of something completely untenable in the register of the thinking of Sellin himself. And I believe that this is what makes it interesting, it is in a way to see the extraordinary latency that is involved in such a way of proceeding. We can accept up to a certain point that Freud found a certain

reinforcement, in a way, in the idea that what is at stake was something which emerged, despite every intention, despite the strong resistance to remembering which is supposed to be part of its register. But it nevertheless remains obviously very strange that this is supported by writings and that it is with the help of these writings that it can be deciphered again. Because there is one thing that Jones bears witness to, which is that Freud is supposed to have had – this is something that is supposed – is supposed to have had from Sellin himself – Jones takes note of it, a communication to the fact that after all he was not as sure as all that, namely, something that you indicated to us earlier that (17) in the second edition of the K.A.T. he takes up more or less.....

**Caquot:** In the 1929 edition, he drops the exegesis that I have sketched out from 1922 for chapter 5 and for chapter 9. The case for the death of Moses...

**Lacan:** So he keeps 12?

**Caquot:** He keeps 12 and there Moses is at stake. Simply on the other hand, I think that he gave up putting forward his hypothesis about the death of Moses because it is in his works on the famous dead servant of the *Deutero-Isaiah*, the servant of Yahweh. The Mosaic hypothesis that Sellin defended in 1922, he himself renounced, and I specified that in 1929 and since then he twice changed his opinion about the servant. He completely abandoned it: the servant is not Moses. He perhaps kept this idea of a death of Moses, but he gave up to making use of it, if you wish, as a way of interpreting the theme of the servant. I really wonder if Freud was not the victim of the academic prestige of Sellin...

**Lacan:** The question that I ask myself, is whether Freud had read him very carefully...

**Caquot:** Ah yes, I think so, the book of *Mose und seine Bedeutung* is clear and rigorous.

**Lacan:** That's quite true...

**Caquot:** It's false but it's true!

**Lacan:** But on the other hand Freud does not look for any support in this articulation. He simply notes that there is someone called Sellin who recently forward an acceptable hypothesis that Moses is supposed to have been killed. And he signals it by this very short note which indicates the reference, no more, the reference to the work of 1922 of *Mose und seine Bedeutung* and nothing more. So then I pointed out earlier, because I forgot to do it up to now, that Jones mentions that in the work of 1935, namely, later again than what we have been able to verify ourselves, in a work of 1935, he is supposed to have maintained his position...

**Caquot:** Yes, I could perhaps find that text.....I'll send it to you.

**Lacan:** Listen, if I really have not over-abused your time up to now in what I asked you to do, and I am very grateful to you for it, and everyone else thanks you for it, I think that it would be simply interesting for the rest of what I am going to have to say if you would all the same give us an idea that *Hosea* has a meaning that has absolutely nothing to do with what Sellin tells us, and that for *Hosea*, in fact, the important point, the use of the word '*ich*' that we were (18) speaking about the other day, which is really connected and is close to what...in any case, the novelty of *Hosea*, if I have correctly understood, is in short this summons, this very particular type of summons, because I hope after all that everyone will go looking in a little Bible, anyone at all moreover, to simply have an idea of the tone of *Hosea*! This kind of furious invective that is really itching, that of the word of Yahweh speaking to his people in a long discourse which I already pointed out when I spoke about it, when I spoke about *Hosea* before having Sellin's book. For my part I read in *Hosea*, I never read anything like that, far from it, but on the contrary I pointed out to you in passing the importance of invective, of the indication of rituals of sacred prostitution from one end to the other. So then the putting into

opposition of that of sort invitation through which Yahweh declares himself to be the spouse – and one can say that here there begins what in itself is a kind of long rather mysterious tradition in which it clearly appeared to me we could really situate the meaning, which makes Christ the spouse of the Church, and the Church the spouse of Christ. This begins here, there is no trace of it before *Hosea*, is there? The term used for spouse, ‘*ich*, the one we looked at together, is the very one by which, in the second chapter of *Genesis*, at the moment when the ‘*ich* in question names his wife. The first that is spoken about, that is to say on verse 27 of the first chapter in which God creates them man and woman, is, if I read it properly, *zakhar* and *nekevah*. The second time – since things are always repeated twice in the Bible – ‘*ich* indicated the being, the object, made from his rib, in the form *ichã*. As if, by chance, you only need to add a little *a*.

This ‘*ich* to designate the term spouse, is it a matter of something even more stripped of sexuality...

**Caquot:** The ‘*ich* is not sexed in any way. The conjugal uses are only a small part of the acceptations of the word ‘*ich* which designates man in general. It is no more astonishing than when one says “my man” for my husband. In French, *mon homme* is rather more colloquial.

**Lacan:** Even though in the following verse this thing which could be called ‘your spouse’ is really linked to the repudiation of the term Baal, which can have the same meaning on occasions, namely, the lord and the master in the sense of spouse.

**Caquot:** Even though Baal is the master. We can observe that the feminine, Beoula, is the woman as husband in potency. The terminology is extremely fluid. In *Hosea* the acceptations are restricted so as to play upon Yahweh who is the Baal, in opposition to Baal who is in operation. It is I who am your Baal, you should not be (19) running after other Baals!

**Lacan:** There is here a formation and an extremely sharp difference, which remains, in short, fairly opaque, despite the centuries of commentaries. It is quite curious.

**Caquot:** It is the conjugal metaphor. This is the first time it appears in the Bible. It is what enables, much later, the allegorisation of the *Song of songs*. It is *Hosea* that makes this allegory possible. I wondered whether there was not some kind of de-mythisation, namely, the transference onto the collectivity of Israel of the goddess who is the *parêdre* [?] or the wife of Baal in the Semitic religions. There are at times when Israel is indeed described as a goddess. But that has never been said. This remains in the mentality of the Semitic religions of the Orient which cannot conceive of a God without his goddess. Prophetic religion replaces the goddess with Israel. This might be the case with *Hosea*.

**Lacan:** That is very important. Ultimately, around that there revolves something of what I had begun to announce earlier. You did not point that out to me!

Right! Given the time I think we can leave it there and thank Monsieur Caquot.



**Seminar 12: Wednesday 13 May 1970**

*[As the Law Faculty was closed because of the date, the Seminar could not be held. Lacan answered a certain number of questions that were put to him 'on the steps of the Pantheon'. This is the transcription of Lacan's answers. Several questions, inaudible on the recording, are missing.]*

I would really like to have some explanation of the unmannerly carry-on that brings us here. For the moment, I am waiting for someone to ask me a question.

X: *[On Hegel's dialectic]*

I became aware in recent days that I had already spoken quite precisely, though not at all intentionally, about the functions of master and slave, extracted from Hegel's discourse, and indeed even more than I am doing now. I only ever put forward things that I come up against, and for me it was therefore already supposedly settled. But it is not the same thing as rechecking the text of my seminar, which is always taken down in shorthand, as you know. In November 1962, when I began my seminar on *Anxiety* at Sainte-Anne and, from the second seminar on, I articulated in an extremely precise way, something which is, in short, identical with what I am now developing about the discourse of the Master. I indicated how the positions of the master and the slave, established in the *Phenomenology of the spirit*, can be distinguished. This is Kojève's starting point, even though

there is a section prior to their coming on the scene. There is a whole section at the beginning about sense perception – but this is not what I am emphasising. What I find I am now developing under the heading of the discourse of the Master was already motivating the way in which I approached anxiety. This has a certain importance because recently, someone whose intentions I do not need to characterise did a whole (2) report, which will be published in two days time, in order to expose in a note the way I put affect into the background, or even rubbish it. It is a mistake to think that I neglect affect – as if already the behaviour of this whole crowd was not enough to affect me. My entire seminar that year was on the contrary articulated around the fact that anxiety, is the central affect, the one around which everything is organised. I do not date things from my seminar on *Anxiety*. If in it I introduced anxiety as the fundamental affect, it is all the same a good thing that already, I had not been neglecting affect – not by a long shot. I have simply given all its importance, in the determination of the *Verneinung*, to what Freud says explicitly, that affect is not what is repressed. Freud has recourse to this famous *Repräsentanz* that I translate as representative of representation, and which others, and moreover not for nothing, persist in calling ideational representative, which does absolutely not mean the same thing. In one case the representative is not representation, in the other case the representative is only one representation among others. These are two radically different translations of the term. My translation implies that affect, through repression, is displaced, is effectively displaced, unidentified, not located in its roots – it slips away. This is what is essential in repression. It is not that the affect is suppressed, it is that it is displaced, and unrecognisable.

X: [*On the relations between existentialism and structuralism*]

You're talking as if existential thinking was of itself a guarantee of giving its place to affect.

X: *What do you think of the relations that exist between you and Kierkegaard as regards anxiety?*

You cannot imagine, my friend, the extent to which people attribute kinfolk to me. It is enough for me to speak about someone for me to be considered a descendant. It is typical university-style giddiness. Why in effect would I not have spoken about Kierkegaard? It is clear that if I put all this emphasis on anxiety in the economy, because what is at stake is an economy of enjoyment, it is obviously not so as to (3) neglect the fact that at a certain historical moment there was someone who represents the emergence, the advent, not of anxiety, but of the concept of anxiety, as Kierkegaard himself explicitly entitled one of his works. He wrote 'the concept of anxiety'. It is not for nothing that historically this concept emerged at a certain moment. This is what I had intended to present to you this morning.

I am not alone in making this rapprochement with Kierkegaard. Yesterday I received a book by Manuel de Dieguez, published by Gallimard in the collection, *Idées* – is it there by any chance? Well, the things he says about me! Since I had to prepare my stuff for you and because everything is done at the last minute – what I say to you is only put together in the final few hours, everything I write and say to you is in general written down between five in the morning and eleven – I have not had the time to find my bearings in this great hustle and bustle into which I am inserted, not only in relation to Kierkegaard but Occam and Gorgias as well. It is all there, and also huge chunks of what I talk about. It is rather exceptional because he gives quotations which is good, half the book is called "*Lacan and – I'll give you three guesses – transcendental psychoanalysis*". Read it. To me it seems to be pretty overwhelming. I had not thought of myself as being all that transcendental, but then it is always hard to know. Someone once said to me apropos books that were published about him, "*Ah! Don't we have ideas my friend, don't we just!*" Let's move on.

X: *Do you think, then, that the ideas that you get from the practice of psychoanalysis with patients give you something that cannot be found outside of it?*

It is precisely because I think it that I have taken all this trouble for the last eighteen or nineteen years. Otherwise I do not see why I would do it. And I do not see why my fate should be to have had my name explicitly added to the list of philosophers, which is what some people have taken the liberty of doing. This does not seem to me to be entirely justified.

(4) X: *Can you go back to what you started to say about Hegel?*

I am certainly not going to give this morning's seminar here. I am not here for that. I am using the opportunity to learn a bit more about what some of you may have to say to me, which does not happen too easily when we are in a lecture theatre. It may happen here this morning.

X: *You have spoken about the Other as the treasury of signifiers, and you have said that there was no confronting it, because given that free association is not coherent it is not the Other. Could the Other not include incoherent things? The signifier is not necessarily coherent.*

Are you sure I said what you are imputing to me? Where did I say that there was no confronting the Other? I do not think I ever said that. I would be amazed. If I did say it, it was clumsy, but it would surprise me just as much if I had committed such a blunder.

X: *[Inaudible]*

I will try to give you the guts of it at my next seminar, if it takes place.

X: *[Inaudible]*

I am having a go at philosophy? It's very exaggerated to say that.

X: *I have that impression.*

Yes, people have that impression. I was asked just a moment ago whether I believed that things I talk about may not be problematic. I said I did. The only reason I put them forward is because of a specific experience, the psychoanalytic experience. If it were not for that I would consider that I had neither the right, nor above all the desire, to prolong the philosophical discourse very much beyond the moment at which it was quite rightly effaced.

X: *But that it transforms the philosophical discourse.*

It does not transform it. It is a different discourse. That is what I am trying to demonstrate to you at every instant by recalling, since this is what I really think, to those who have no idea of the analytic experience that this is what I am aiming at and that I start from that. (5) Otherwise this discourse would not have such a philosophically problematic appearance as was pointed out earlier by the gentleman over there, who spoke first, expressing it in sophisticated terms. I do not think that this is right, even if the person I evoked earlier, Michel de Dieguez, situated me as someone to be underlined, situates me at the centre of some mixture or other, a sort of crack, or opening up of philosophical discourse. The way he positions me is not badly done, it is done in an extremely attractive way, but at first sight – I will perhaps modify what I think about it – in reading it, I said to myself, all the same, to put me into that lineage is quite some *Entstellung*, quite some displacement away from the import of what I am saying.

X: *What you say is always decentred with respect to meaning (sens), meaning is something you eschew.*

That is precisely why my discourse is an analytic discourse. The structure of analytic discourse is to be like that. Let us say that I stick to it as well as I can, if I am able to, without daring to say that I strictly identify myself to it. At the present time there is no way it can be sustained. Yesterday I read an amazing article in a review called *L'Inconscient*, that, for personal reasons, I had never opened. In the latest issue someone called Cornelius Castoriadis, no less, has this question about my discourse, taken supposedly in reference to science. What does he say? He says what I kill myself repeating, namely, that this discourse has an extremely precise reference to science. What he exposes as being the essential difficulty of this discourse is what you have just said, namely, let me be precise, this never-ending displacement, is the very condition of analytic discourse. And it is in this respect that one can say it is conditioned by - I will not say complementary to - but conditioned by the discourse of science precisely, in that the discourse of science leaves no place for anxiety. I had intended insisting on this for you this morning. I will not spoil what I have to say about it in a week's time, but you will see it is centred on that.

(6) X: *As regards anxiety, I thought it was the opposite of enjoyment.*

What I insist on when I tackle affects, is that this affect precisely can be distinguished from all others, in that it is said to be without an object. Look at everything that has been written about anxiety, this is what people always insist on - fear can be referred to an object, if this object can be expressed, it is formed. Whereas anxiety is said to be without an object. I say on the contrary that anxiety is not without an object. I already articulated this eight years ago, and it is very clear that I still have to explain it to you. At that time I did not designate this object as surplus enjoying, which proves that there was something that had to be constructed before I could name it as such. It is very precisely the... I cannot say the name, because precisely it is not a name. It is surplus enjoying, this is what we will have to look at, but it

is not nameable, even though it can be approximately named, expressed, in this way. That is why it has been expressed in terms of surplus value. This object without which there is no anxiety, perhaps cannot be tackled in any other way. This is precisely what I have given a clearer and clearer shape to over the years. In particular, I have given a lot of chatterboxes the opportunity to rush into print and produce hasty compositions about what I may have had to say under the heading of the o-object. Anything else?

X: [*Inaudible*]

In the little schemas I put on the board for you this year, my four-footed contraptions, you will find the essential reference points, even though they are not easy to use. In the articulation that I describe as the university discourse, with  $S_2$  on the top left and  $S_1$  underneath, the o is in the place of what? In the place, let us say, of the one exploited by University discourse, who is easy to recognise – it is the student to whom there is affected the notation o. It is by focussing our reflection on this place of o in the notation that many things can be explained about the singular phenomena that for the moment are taking place around the world. To be sure, we have to distinguish in a radically polarised way between the emergence of his radicality – this is what is produced – and the way the function of the university has become clogged up, blocked, maintained – that can last for a long time. It has, (7) in effect, an extremely precise function, related at every moment to where we have got to with the discourse of the Master – namely, its elucidation. In effect, this discourse has for a long time been a masked discourse. It will become less and less so, simply through its internal necessity. What use has the university been? This can be read according to each epoch. It is by virtue of the fact that the discourse of the master is more and more thoroughly negated, that the discourse of the university shows – you must not believe for all that that it is shaken or finished – that for the moment it is encountering some funny old difficulties. These difficulties are manifest and can be approached in

terms of their close relationship to the position of the student as being, in the discourse of the university, in a more or less masked manner, always identified with this o-object, which is charged with producing what? The \$ that then comes on the bottom right. That is the difficulty, because it is charged with producing a subject. What kind of subject? In any case, a divided subject. That it is less and less tolerable that this reduction should be limited to producing teachers is quite clearly brought to the light of day in the present epoch, and this requires a study that is all the less improvised for being in the process of actually happening. What is happening, and what is called the crisis of the university, can be inscribed in this formula, because it exists, it is posited, it is grounded at an altogether radical level. It is not possible to restrict oneself to treating it in the way that is being done. It is uniquely on the basis of the revolving, revolutionary, relationship, as I describe it - in a slightly different sense from the usual one - between the university position and the three other discourse positions, that what is happening in the university at the moment can be illuminated.

X: [*On revolutionaries and the proletariat*]

The proletariat? When did I mention the proletariat? In the discourse of the master his place is quite clear. In its beginnings, the discourse of the Master was concerned with everything that initially passed as being the proletariat, who was initially the slave. We come back here to the Hegelian term. At the start, as I have stressed, the slave was Knowledge. The evolution of the discourse of the Master is there. Philosophy played the role of constituting a master's knowledge, extracted from the slave's knowledge. It has, as I might say, been decanted. Science as it has currently come to the light of day, properly consists in this transmutation of the function, as I might say - we are more or less led at some moment to come up against one archaic theme (8) or other, and as you know, I encourage you to be prudent about this. In any case, there is certainly a difficulty in knowledge, which



derives from the opposition between know-how and *episteme*, properly so called. *Episteme* was constructed from an interrogation, from a purification of knowledge. The philosophical discourse shows at every moment that the philosopher refers to it. It is not for nothing that he called on the slave to answer and that he demonstrates that he knows, that he knows what he does not know. You can only show he knows when the right questions are put to him. It is along this path that the displacement came, which means that today our scientific discourse is on the side of the master, that it represents him as such. It is precisely this that cannot be ignored.

X: *Where then do you place the proletarian?*

Listen! He can only be at the place at which he has to be, on the top right, at the place of the big Other, is that not so? Very precisely there knowledge no longer carries any weight. The proletarian is not simply exploited, he is also the one who has been stripped of his function of knowledge. The so-called abolition of slavery has had, as always, other correlatives. It is not only progressive. It is progressive only at the price of a stripping away. I will not risk going into that. I will only go into it with prudence, but if there is something whose tone strikes me in the thematic that is called Maoist, it is its reference to the knowledge of manual labour. I absolutely do not claim to have an adequate view on this, but I am simply highlighting a point that struck me in function of the schemas I have been telling you about. The re-emphasising of the knowledge of the exploited seems to me to be very profoundly justified in the structure. It is a matter of knowing whether there is not something here – for me, this is how the question is posed – that is entirely dreamed up. Because how, in a world in which there has emerged, in a way that indeed exists and is a presence in the world, not the thinking of science, but science in some way objectified, I mean these things entirely forged by science, Hertzian waves, simply these little things, gadgets and things, which for the moment occupy the same space as us, in a world in which this emergence has taken

place, can know-how at the level of manual work carry enough weight to be a subversive factor? This is how, for me, the question arises.

Right, I'm off!

**Seminar 13: Wednesday 20 May 1970**

A lot of water has passed under the bridge since our last meeting, I am speaking about the one in April and not the most recent one which took place elsewhere and with only some of you. The remarks that were exchanged on the steps of the Pantheon were not of a poor standard since they enabled me to go over a number of points that deserved to be made more precise, in response to a questioning that was not at all inapt. That is what I think looking back after a week. But my first reaction immediately afterwards, to someone who was seeing me home, had nevertheless been of a certain inadequacy. Even the best of those who spoke, and whose questions were not unsatisfactory, seemed to me, at first sight, to be lagging behind a little. This seemed to me to be reflected in the fact, that at least in this familiar challenge that was not yet a questioning, I was situated by them within a certain number of reference points that are certainly not to be entirely rejected. I recall that the first was to *Gorgias*, which I am supposed to be repeating here in some sort of way. Why not? But the trouble is that, in the mouth of the person who was evoking this character whose efficacy we, in our days, cannot assess very well, what was in question was someone belonging to "the history of thought". That is where there is a pulling back that seems to me unfortunate – this term allows for a sort of sample of long distance snapshots with regard to one or other person who has been bracketed within the thinking function. It seems to me that there is nothing less homogenous, as I might say, nothing that would allow a species to be defined. It is not legitimate to give to

some people, in whatever capacity one might imagine them, a function that would be that of a species, as representing thought. Thought is not a category. I would almost say that it is an affect. Even so, this does not mean that it is what is most fundamental from the point of view of affect. The fact that in terms of affect only one exists constitutes a certain position, a new one to be introduced into the world, which I say is to be referred to what I gave you a schema of, put up on the blackboard when I was speaking about psychoanalytic discourse. In truth putting it on the blackboard is distinct from talking about it. I remember that at Vincennes, when I appeared there on an occasion that has not happened since but which will happen again, someone felt obliged to shout out at me that there were real things that truly preoccupied the assembly. Namely, that people were being beaten up at a place more or less distant from where we were gathered, that this is what we should be thinking about, that the blackboard had nothing to do with this real. That is where the error lies. I would go as far as (2) to say that, if there is any chance of grasping something called the real, it is nowhere other than on the blackboard. And even, what I may have to say about it, what takes shape in speech, is related only to what is written on the blackboard.

That is a fact. And it is demonstrated by this fact, by this artifice, that is science, whose emergence one would be completely wrong to register only as coming out of the philosophical kitchen. Metaphysical science, perhaps, rather than physics. Does our scientific physics deserve to be called metaphysical? That is what would need to be specified. It seems possible to me to specify it particularly on the basis of the psychoanalytic discourse. In effect, on the basis of this discourse, there is only one affect, namely, the product of the speaking being's capture in a discourse, in so far as this discourse determines it as object. It is from this that the Cartesian *cogito* takes on its exemplary value, on condition that one examines and revises it, as I am going to do rapidly, once again, today.

I recalled the affect by which the speaking being of a discourse is determined as object. What has to be said, is that this object is not nameable. If I try to name it as surplus enjoying, this is only a system of nomenclature. What object is constructed by the effect of a certain discourse? We know nothing about this object except that it is the cause of desire, namely, that strictly speaking it is as lack of being that it manifests itself.

So then, no being is determined by this. Certainly, what the effect of a given discourse impacts on may well be a being called man, for example, or else a living being that one may add is sexed and mortal. And people boldly advance towards thinking that this is what the discourse of psychoanalysis is brought to bear on, under the pretext that what is constantly being debated in it is sex and death. But from our starting point, if effectively we start with what initially reveals itself, and as the primary fact, as structured like a language, this is not where we are at. No individual (*étant*) is at stake in the effect of language except a speaking being.

At the outset we are not at the level of the individual (*l'étant*) but of being (*l'être*). However, we must beware here of the mirage of believing that being is thus posited, and of the error that lies in wait for us, of assimilating this to everything that has been organised as dialectic from an initial positing of being and nothingness. This effect – let us now add inverted commas – of “being”, its first affect, appears only at the level of what becomes the cause of desire. Namely, at the level of what we situate, through this initial system–effect of the analyst, the analyst as a place, as a position, that I am trying to circumscribe with these little letters on the blackboard. This is where (3) the analyst posits himself. He posits himself as cause of desire. An outstandingly original or even paradoxical position that is ratified by a practice. The importance of this practice can be measured by being referred to what has been designated as the discourse of the Master. What is at stake here is not a relationship of distance, nor of overview,

but a fundamental relationship: analytic practice is properly initiated by [is intermingled with?] this discourse of the Master. There is something that is made present by virtue of the fact that every determination of the subject, therefore of thinking, depends on discourse. In this discourse, in effect, there arises the moment which it would be quite wrong to believe is at the level of a risk. This risk is after all quite mythical. It is a trace of myth that still remains in Hegelian phenomenology. Is the master supposed to be nothing other than whoever is strongest? This is certainly not what Hegel writes. The struggle for pure prestige at the risk of death still belongs to the reign of the imaginary. What does the master do? This is what the articulation of discourse that I am giving you indicates. He operates on what I have called, in different terms, the crystal of the tongue. Why not use in this respect what can be designated in French by the homonymy of *m'être*, *m'être 'à moi-même'*? It is from this that there emerges the *m'être* signifier which I leave you to write as you prefer — [*maître or m'être*].

I began to articulate how this unique signifier operates by means of its relation with what is already there, already articulated, in such a way that we can only conceive of it from the presence of a signifier that is already there, I would say, from all time. In effect, if this unique signifier, the signifier of the *master*, to be written as you wish, is articulated to something of a practice that it organises, this practice is already shot through with, woven with what, certainly has not been separated out from it, namely, signifying articulation. This is at the source of all knowledge, even though initially it could only be approached as know-how (*savoir-faire*).

We find the trace of the primary presence of this knowledge even where it is already distant, because of having been adulterated for a long time in what is called the philosophical tradition, precisely through the engagement of the signifier of the master with this knowledge. Let us not forget that when Descartes posits his *I think*

*therefore I am*, it is because for a long time he sustained his *I think*, by questioning, by doubting, this knowledge that I described as adulterated which is the knowledge already elaborated at length by the interference of the master.

What can we say about current science that will allow us to find our bearings? Here out of didactic weakness I recall only three stages, because I am not sure that you are keeping up with what I am saying. Three stages: science; behind that philosophy; and beyond something of which we have some notion if only through biblical anathemas. If I dealt at length this year with the text of *Hosea* in connection with what Freud, after Sellin, extracted from it, the greatest benefit of it is (4) perhaps not – though there is also that – the calling into question of the Oedipus complex, which I have called this *residue of myth*, in psychoanalytic theory. Undoubtedly, if we needed something here to presentify, some ocean or other of mythical knowledge ruling the lives of men – and how can we know whether it was harmonious or not – the best reference might well be to what Yahweh curses with what I called his fierce ignorance, by the term of prostitution. To my eyes this approach is quite adequate, and surely better than the usual references to the fruits of ethnography. Ethnography conceals within itself some confusion or other because it clings to what is collected as if it were natural. And collected how? Collected in writing, that is to say, detailed, extracted, forever falsified because of the so called field work from which people claim to have uncovered it. This is certainly not to say that mythical knowledge says anything more, or better, about the essence of sexual relationships. If psychoanalysis makes present to us sex, and death as its dependency – even though here we are not sure of anything, apart from a general apprehension of the link between sexual difference and death – it is by demonstrating in a way that I would not call empty, but simply articulated that, because of the capture in discourse of this being – whatever he may be, namely, even if he is not a being – nowhere does there appear the articulation in which the sexual is expressed except in a complex manner, which one

cannot even say is mediated, even though there are *medii* – media, if you like – one of which is this real effect that I call surplus enjoying, which is the small *o*. In effect what does experience indicate to us? That it is only when this small *o* is substituted for woman that man desires her. That inversely, what the woman has to deal with, assuming that we are able to speak about it, is her own enjoyment which is represented somewhere by an omnipotence of man, which is precisely that through which man, articulating himself, articulating himself as master, finds himself lacking. This is where we have to start from in analytic experience. What might be called man, that is to say the male as speaking being, disappears, vanishes, because of the very effect of discourse, of the discourse of the master (*du maître*) – write that as you will - because of only being inscribed in castration, which in fact is properly to be defined as a privation of the woman – of the woman in so far as she is realised in an adequate signifier. The privation of the woman – this, expressed in terms of the failure of discourse, is what castration means. It is indeed because it is not thinkable, that as a go-between, the speaking order establishes this desire, constituted as impossible, which makes the mother the privileged feminine object in so far as she is prohibited. This is how there is dressed up in an organised way, the fundamental fact that there (5) is no place possible in a mythical union defined as sexual between man and woman. Here indeed is what we grasp in psychoanalytic discourse, the unifying One, the whole One, is not what is involved in identification.

The pivotal identification, the major identification is the unary trait, it is the being marked *one*. Before any promotion of any individual (*étant*), by virtue of a singular *one*, of what bears the mark, from this moment on, there re-emerges the language effect and the first affect. This is what the formulae I wrote on the blackboard recall.

$$\frac{1}{1 + 1} = ? \frac{\text{I am (one)}}{\text{I think = therefore I am one}}$$



Somewhere there is isolated this something that the *cogito* only marks also by the unary trait that can be taken to underlie *I think* in order to say *therefore I am*. Here the division is already marked by an *I am* which elides *I am marked by the one* – because Decartes is of course inserted into a scholastic tradition, from which he extracts himself by an acrobatic feat, which is not at all to be disdained as a way of getting out. Moreover, it is in function of this initial position of the *I am* that *I think* can even be written. You will remember how I have been writing it for a long time now – *I think: therefore I am*.

This *therefore I am* is a thought. It is infinitely better tolerated because it bears its characteristic of knowing, which does not go beyond the *I am marked by the one* of the singular, of the unique, of what? – of this effect which is, *I think*. But there again, there is an error of punctuation, which I expressed as such a long time ago – the *ergo*, which is nothing other than the *ego* at stake, is to be put on the side of the *cogito*. The *I think, I am* is what gives the formula its real significance. The cause, the *ergo*, is thought. This is where we should start as regards the effect of what is involved in the simplest order, from which the effect of language operated at the level of the emergence of the unary trait. To be sure, the unary trait is never alone. Therefore, the fact that it is repeated – that it is repeated by never being the same – is properly speaking the very order, the one at stake by virtue of the fact that language is present and already there, already effective. Our first rule is never to question the origin of language, if only because this is sufficiently demonstrated by its effects.

(6) The more we extend its effects, the more this origin emerges. The effect of language is retroactive, precisely in that the more it develops it manifests what it is as lack of being. Moreover, I would indicate – in passing because today we have to push ahead – that we can write it like this, and bring into play, in the strictest form, what, from the origin of the rigorous use of the symbolic, is manifest in the Greek tradition,

namely, at the level of mathematics. The fundamental reference is Euclid and the definition he gives us of proportion is primary, was never given before him, I mean before what remains as having been written under his name. Of course who knows from where he might have borrowed this strict definition. The one that gives the only true foundation of geometrical proof is found, if I remember correctly in Book 5. The term proof is ambiguous here. By always highlighting the intuitive elements in the diagrams he makes it easy for you to overlook the fact that very formally, the requirement in Euclid is one of symbolic proof, of an order arranged in equalities and inequalities, which alone allow proportion to be guaranteed, not in an approximate, but in a properly provable way, in this term *logos* – this is the sense of proportion.

It is curious and illustrative that we had to wait for the Fibonacci series to see there being distinguished what is involved in the apprehension of the proportion known as the proportional mean. I will rewrite it here – you know that I used it when I was talking about *From an Other to the other*.

$$\frac{1}{1 + \frac{1}{1 + \frac{1}{1 + \frac{1}{1 + \frac{1}{1 + \dots}}}}}} = \gamma$$

There is a romanticism that still continues to call it the golden number, and wears itself out finding it on the surface of everything that was painted or drawn throughout the ages, as if it were not certain that all this was only too easy to see. You only have to open a book on aesthetics that takes this reference into account to realise that, even though it can be seen that way, it is certainly not because the painter drew the diagonals in advance, but because there is, in effect, some kind of intuitive harmony or other which means that this is always what is most appropriate. Only there is also something else that you

will easily grasp. Taking each of these terms and starting to calculate them from the bottom up, you will quickly see that you are dealing first with a half, then with two thirds, next with three fifths. So you find the numbers whose sequence makes up the Fibonacci series, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, (7) each being the sum of the two preceding numbers, as I pointed out to you at one time. This relation of two terms we can write for instance as  $U_{n+1} = U_{n-1} + U_n$ . The result of the division  $U_{n+1} / U_n$  will be equal, if the series is taken far enough, to the effectively ideal proportion that is called the proportional mean or again the golden number.

If we now take this proportion as an image of what is involved in affect in so far as there is a repetition of this *I am (one)* on the next line, there retroactively results what causes it – the affect. This affect we can temporarily write as *equal to o*, and we know that it is the same *o* that we find in the effect.

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

The effect of the repetition of the 1, is this *o*, at the level of what is designated here by a bar. The bar is precisely only the fact that there is something to be got over for the 1 to affect it. In short, it is this bar that is equal to *o*.

And there is nothing astonishing in the fact that affect can legitimately be written below the bar, as the thought, overturned effect because it makes the cause emerge. It is in the first effect that the cause as thought cause emerges. This indeed is what justifies us in finding, in this first tentative use of mathematics, a surer articulation of what is involved in the effect of discourse. It is at the level of the cause, in so far as it emerges as thinking on reflection of the effect, that we touch on the initial order of what is involved in lack of being. Being initially affirms itself only by the mark of the 1, and everything that

subsequently follows is a dream – specifically, the mark of the 1 in so far as it may encompass, reunite anything whatsoever. It can not reunite anything at all except precisely the confrontation, the addition of the thought of the cause to the initial repetition of the 1. This repetition already costs, and institutes, at the level of the o, the debt of language. Something is to be paid to the one who introduces its sign. This year I have given a title to something, a nomenclature that tries to give it its historical weight – it is not strictly speaking this year, but let us say that for you it is this year – by using the term *Mehrlust*. What is reproduced from this infinite articulation? Because o is the same here and there, it is self evident that the repetition of the formula cannot be the infinite repetition of the *I think* within *I think*, a mistake phenomenologists never fail to make, but simply the following: *I think*, if it is an effect, can only be replaced by *I am*: '*I think therefore I am*'. (8) I am the one who thinks *therefore I am*, and so on indefinitely. You will observe that the small o always gets further and further away in the series that reproduces exactly the same order of 1's, as they are here deployed on the right, except that for the final term there would be a small o.

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

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

A remarkable thing, you should note. It is enough for this small o to subsist, however far down you take it in a descending order, for the equality to be the same as in the formula I first wrote, namely, that the repeated and multiple proportion equals in total the result of the small o. What is distinctive about this series? In short it does nothing other, if I am not mistaken, than mark the order of converging series whose intervals are greater because they are constant. Namely, still the small o.

This, in a way, is only a localised articulation. It certainly does not pretend to settle, by a fixed and guaranteed proportion, the effectiveness of the most primary manifestation of number, namely, the unary trait. It is only done to remind you what is involved in science as we are now, as I might say, lumbered with it – I mean have it present in our world in a manner that goes well beyond anything that might be speculated on as a result of knowledge (*connaissance*). In effect we should all the same not forget that the characteristic of our science is not that it introduced a better and more extensive knowledge of the world, but that it made emerge into the world things that did not exist in it in any way at the level of our perception. People try to organise science according to a mythical genesis starting from perception, on the pretext that such and such a philosophical meditation is supposed to have dwelt for a long time on the question of knowing what guarantees that perception is not illusory.

This is not what science came from. Science came from what was in embryo in the Euclidean proofs, even though these remain very suspect because they still contain that attachment to the diagram whose obviousness is taken as a pretext. The entire evolution of Greek mathematics proves to us that its highpoint is the manipulation of numbers as such. Consider the method of exhaustion which already in Archimedes prefigures what will culminate at what is essential, at what is for us the structure, as it happens, namely, calculus, infinitesimal calculus. There was no need to wait for Leibniz, who moreover, with his first touch reveals a certain awkwardness in its regard. This was already begun by Cavalieri by simply reproducing Archimedes' exploit on the parabola, in the 17<sup>th</sup> century but well before Leibniz.

(9) What is the result of all this? You can no doubt say about science that *nihil fuerit in intellectu quod non prius fuit in sensu*. What does that prove? *Sensus* has nothing to do, as we know, with perception. *Sensus* is only there by way of what can be counted, and the fact of counting dissolves it rapidly. Taking what is involved in our *sensus* at

the level of the ear or of the eye, for example, ends up with an enumeration of vibrations. And indeed it is thanks to this operation of number that we well and truly set about producing vibrations that had nothing to do either with our senses or with our perception. As I was saying the other day, on the steps of the Pantheon, the world which was presumed to have always been ours is now populated, in the very place where we are, by a considerable and intersecting number of what are called waves without you having the least suspicion of it. This is not to be neglected as a manifestation, presence, existence of science, and this would require us not to be content to speak, to describe what is around our earth as atmosphere, stratosphere, whatever you feel like spherising, as long as we can apprehend particles. Account should also be taken in our epoch of what goes well beyond and which is the effect of what? Of a knowledge that has progressed less through its own filtering, through its critique as we might say, than through an audacious leap from an artifice, that of Descartes, of course – others will choose others – the artifice of remitting the guarantee of truth to God: If there is a truth, let Him take responsibility for it. We take it at face value. By means of the simple operation of a truth that is not abstract but purely logical, by the simple operation of a strict combinatorial simply subject to the fact that it is necessary that rules, under the name of axioms, should always be indicated by the simple operation of a formalised truth, a science is constructed that no longer has anything to do with the presuppositions that the idea of knowledge has always implied. Namely, the dual polarisation, the imagined ideal unification of what knowledge is, where one can always find, by whatever name one dresses them up, *endosune*, *eidós*,, for instance, the reflection, the image, always ambiguous moreover, of two principles, the male principle and the female principle.

The space in which the creations of science are deployed can henceforth only be qualified as unsubstance (*insubstance*), as a-thing (*l'achose* with an apostrophe) a fact that entirely changes the sense of

our materialism. The oldest representation of the infatuation of the master – write it as you like – is that man imagines he forms woman. I think you all have sufficient experience to have encountered this (10) comical story at one or other stage of your lives.

Form, substance, content - call it what you will – this myth is what scientific thinking must detach itself from. I consider that I am allowed to move forward here with a somewhat crude ploughshare in order to properly express my thought. I lose standing by acting as if I had one, whereas, precisely, this is not the issue, but, as everyone knows, thinking is communicated by means of misunderstanding, of course. So then, let us practice communication and say what is the nature of this conversion by which science is established as distinct from any theory of knowledge. In fact that means nothing, because it is precisely in the light of the apparatus of science, to the extent that we can grasp it, that it is possible to ground what is involved in the errors, the impasses, the confusions that in effect did not fail to appear in what was articulated as knowledge, with this underpinning that there were two principles to split apart – the one that forms and the other that is formed. This is indeed what science allows us to put our finger on and this fact is reinforced in that we find an echo in analytic experience. To express myself in these large approximate terms, let us for example take the male principle – what effect does the incidence of discourse have on it? It is that *qua* speaking being, he is summoned to account for his “essence” – irony, in inverted commas. It is very precisely, and only from the affect that he undergoes from this effect of discourse, namely, in so far as he receives this feminising effect which is the small o – that he recognises what makes him, namely, the cause of his desire. Conversely, in the case of the so-called natural principle, which not for nothing has always been symbolised, in the bad sense of the word, by a female reference, it is on the contrary, from unsubstance as I said earlier that this void appears, the void of what? The thing that is

at stake, if we want, very much in the distance, a very long way away, to give it the horizon of the woman, let us say that it is in what is involved in unformed enjoyment, precisely without any form, that we can find the place in the *operçoit* in which science comes to be constructed. What I perceive (*perçois*), in a supposedly original way, must in effect be replaced by an *operçoit*. It is in as far as science refers only to an articulation which is only taken from the signifying order that it is constructed out of something of which nothing existed beforehand.

This is precisely what it is important to grasp if we want to understand something that is involved in what? In the forgetting of this very effect. All of us, such as we are, to the extent that the field extends by virtue of the fact that science perhaps functions as the discourse of the (11) Master, we do not know the point to which – for the reason that we have never known at any point – each of us is initially determined as small o-object.

I was speaking earlier about these spheres with which the extension of science – which curiously is found to be very effective at what happens to the individual – circles the earth, a series of zones that it describes as what it finds. Why not take into consideration the locus where these fabrications of science are situated, if they are nothing other than the effect of a formalised truth? What are we going to call this locus?

Here again I am overemphasising what I want to say, and I am not necessarily very proud of what I am putting forward on this occasion, but I think it is useful, you will see why, to raise this question which is not one of nomenclature. What indeed is at stake is the place that is well and truly occupied – by what? I spoke earlier about waves. That is what is at stake. Hertzian or other waves, no phenomenology of perception has ever given us the slightest idea of them and it would



certainly never have led us to them. We will certainly not call this locus the noosphere which is supposed to be populated by ourselves [*noumena?*]. If there is one thing that is put to the back row of anything that may be of interest to us this indeed is it. But using *aletheia* in a way which, I agree, has nothing emotionally philosophical about it, you could, unless you find something better, call it the *alethosphere*.

Let us not lose the run of ourselves. The *alethosphere* can be recorded. If you have a little microphone here you are connected to the *alethosphere*. What is really stunning is that if you are in a little vehicle that is taking you towards Mars you will still be able to plug into the *alethosphere* and even this surprising effect of structure which means that two or three people went for a stroll on the moon, believe me that in terms of their exploit, it is certainly not for nothing that they always remained within the *alethosphere*. These astronauts, as they are called, who ran into some little difficulties at the last minute, would probably not have got out of them so well – I am not even talking about their relationships with their little machine, because they might well have got out of them on their own – if they had not been accompanied all the time by this small *o* of the human voice. By virtue of this they were able to allow themselves to talk nothing but bullshit, as for example that everything was going well, when everything was going badly. But what matter. The important thing is that they remained in the *alethosphere*. It will take time to notice all the things that populate it, and that is going to make me introduce you to another (12) word. It is all very well to say the *alethosphere*. It is because we suppose that what I call formalised truth already has sufficiently the status of truth at the level at which it operates, at which it *operçoit*. But for the operated on, for what wanders about, the truth is not unveiled at all. The proof of this is that the human voice, with its effect of supporting your perineum (*périnée*), as I might say, in no way

unveils its truth. We shall name it with the help of the aorist of the same verb that a famous philosopher pointed out *aletheia* came from. Only philosophers would think of such things, and perhaps some linguists. We are going to call it the *lathouses*. The world is increasingly populated by *lathouses*. Since you seem to find that amusing, I am going to show you how it is written. Notice that I could have called it *lathousies*. That would have gone better with *ousia*, it is open to all sorts of ambiguity. *Ousia* is not the Other. It is not the individual (*l'étant*), it is between the two. It is not quite being, either, but ultimately it is pretty close.

As for feminine *unsubstance* I would be willing to go as far as *parousia*. And for the tiny little o-objects that you are going to encounter when you leave, on the pavement at every street corner, behind every shop window, in the superabundance of these objects designed to cause your desire in so far as it is now science that governs it, think of them as *lathouses*. I notice a bit late since I invented it not too long ago that it rhymes with *ventouse* [windy]. There is wind in it, lots of wind, the wind of the human voice. It is quite comical to find that there to meet us. If man had taken less to God's spokesman by believing that he is united with woman, this word *lathouses* would perhaps have been found a long time ago.

In any case this sudden little apparition is designed to make you not to take your relationships with the *lathouses* for granted. It is quite certain that everyone has to deal with two or three things like that. The *lathouses* has absolutely no reason to put a limit on its multiplication. What is important is to know what happens when one really puts oneself into relationship with the *lathouse* as such. The ideal psychoanalyst would be the one who commits this absolutely radical

act, of which the least that can be said is that to see it being done is anxiety provoking.

One day, at a time when I was being treated as a commodity, I tried, because that was part of the ceremony, to put forward a few little things on this subject. In effect, while I was being treated in this way, people were very keen to pretend they were interested in what I might have to say about analytic formation, and I advanced - naturally in a (13) spirit of absolute indifference, since people were only interested in what was happening in the corridors - that there was no reason why a psychoanalysis should cause anxiety. It is quite certain that if the *lathouses* exists, anxiety - since this is what is at stake - is not without an object. That is where I started from. A better approach to the *lathouse* ought to calm us a little bit. The question is to put oneself into a position such that there is someone that you have been dealing with because of his anxiety, wants to come to the point of occupying the same position that you hold, or that you do not hold, or that you barely hold - comes to the point of knowing how you hold it, or how you do not hold it, and why you hold it, and why you do not hold it. This will be the object of our next meeting whose title I can already give you - it will be on the relationships, still supported by the same little schemas, between impotence and impossibility. It is clear that it is altogether impossible to hold the position of the *lathouse*. However that is not the only thing that is impossible, there are many other things as well, on condition that one gives a strict sense to the word impossible, namely, determines them only from the level of our formalised truth. Namely, that in every formalised field of truth, there are truths that cannot be proved. It is at the level of the impossible, as you know, that I define what is real. If it is real that there is the analyst, it is precisely because it is impossible. That forms part of the position of the *lathouse*. The trouble is, that in order to be in the position of *lathouse* it is really necessary to have circumscribed it as

impossible. It is for this reason that people much prefer to put the emphasis on impotence which also exists, but which is, as I will show you, at a different place to strict impossibility.

I know that there are some people here who sometimes suffer to see me, as we say – how can we put it – abuse, challenge, vociferate against analysts. These are young people who are not analysts. They do not realise that I am doing something nice. These are little signs of recognition that I direct at them. I do not want to set them too arduous a test. And when I allude to their impotence, which is therefore my own, it means that at that level we are all brothers, and we have to sort ourselves out as best we can. I hope that this will win them over before I talk to them about the impossibility of the analyst's position.

## ANALYTICON

### Vincennes - Impromptu Number 2: Wednesday 4 June 1970

...I regret that the properly speaking Vincennes attendance is not more numerous, because the first time they gave me a welcome that I would describe as warm, in the sense that things got a little heated. I was very pleased with that. I left feeling a little bit warmer myself...

...It is precisely about this that I would like to question you. I am talking about things, especially this year, concerning the reverse side of psychoanalysis....

What is that? Well, my friend, this is precisely the question! Now would you shut that thing or I will give it a kick (*a tape recorder*). Turn that thing off now and get the hell out of here!

Because it is very precisely the reason why I did not come back on two occasions, it is because the Department of Psychoanalysis took the liberty of reproducing in a text and I have the stamp here on the cover: Department of Psychoanalysis. Now I consider, as regards my relations with the Department of Philosophy, this business of publishing – because inasmuch as what happened here had a certain value, in any case the value of illustrating what I am talking about

when I talk about dialogue, namely, of course that there is no dialogue, but all the same it was something that happened: things got heated! To reproduce that as coming from the Department of Psychoanalysis is what I call treachery, because naturally when you read it, it was absolute bullshit! I am talking about those who intervened, because me, for my part, I did what I could to make it the least stupid possible. So the guy who published that and who wanted to start up again today, where is he? Where is the person called Bernard Mérigot, so that I can see him? It's you? It's you! Well you have the sort of mug that I expected! What do you mean this wasn't done under the auspices of the Department of Psychoanalysis! It is printed on it! It's kind of treachery! That is the way they try to trick you! Because here you can read it: this is what happens in effect in the Department of Philosophy! And you were going to start up again today, huh! Everyone does it, in effect as he will and I know that it's considered amusing in Paris to have little meetings in the evening with "there will be a tape of Lacan". In any case, that does not mean in any way that the Department of Psychoanalysis which had absolutely nothing to do with my coming to the Department of Philosophy, had to produce this publication. And if everyone has the right, in effect, to record, everyone has not the right to publish what I might want to say here. And this is what was going to happen once again!

(2) There were things today that I had hoped to say to the people from Vincennes. I wanted to question myself with them about what they may understand about the things that I am talking about, I mean in their position, their position as people who are at the *Centre Expérimental de Vincennes*. How do they experience this experiment? What do they hope for from it? Because, of course, as regards hopes, there are people other than you who hope for something in the results of the *Centre Expérimental de Vincennes* and even inside Vincennes there are also people who are hoping for something, there is a great variety!

All right, I am not going to do this thing without some support. I received this morning a little text that was put together yesterday. Someone was good enough to bring me to bring me this thing that is called "*La loi d'orientation*" which is in the *Bulletin Officiel de L'Education Nationale*. Here is the final paragraph of article one: "*In a general manner, higher education, the totality of the teaching that follows secondary studies, contributes to the cultural promotion of society and by that very fact to its evolution – evolution to society – towards a greater responsibility of everyone in their own destiny.*" Huh? So you see!

I admit that for my part I would not be reassured if I was in your situation. The evolution of society towards a greater responsibility then added to each man in his own destiny, because it is rather curious to see written in the same sentence the society which evolves thanks to cultural promotion and we will try to say where it can be situated. You will then be more and more responsible for your own destiny, this is the purpose of the totality of the teaching that follows on secondary studies!

I will allow myself, because there is such a majority here of people who are used to my seminar, to put down here without further commentary this little schema that I consider I promoted as specific to what I articulated, this year, about the University discourse.

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

(3) This schema signifies that knowledge is here represented by this  $S_2$  which has the meaning of specifying that the only knowledge is an articulated one. Even intuitive knowledge needs to be such to have the consistency of knowledge, to be able to be verified. What is

involved in the  $S_1$  is precisely what we are going to have to try to say, then what is involved in the  $o$ , which is on the same line as the  $S_2$ , the small  $o$  is what in the University discourse is specified by an object whose essential function I have been trying for some time to show in every effect of discourse.

It is in connection with this  $o$  that I make the connection between what in analytic discourse allows there to be articulated what is called desire, and something that is posited as its cause, except that this cause cannot properly speaking be found except by situating it in the locus of the Other. Namely, that what psychoanalysis reveals is that our desire, our desire, what appears to us, although barely graspable, to be nevertheless what is most proper to us, for it we are dependent on what I call the locus of the Other, in so far as it is there that there is inscribed through destination, because it is only here that there can be inscribed everything that is articulated.

I mean that it is ruled out that anything whatsoever should take a written form outside this locus that is not neutral, that is inhabited, that is inhabited not by anything whatsoever, that is inhabited first of all by what one can imagine to be at the horizon of the phases of the first knowledge, this first knowledge in which an irruption is made, a bite, that I am claiming to take advantage of, to exploit... (*another episode with the man with the tape recorder*).

I am going to summarise in the shortest possible way what I intended to say to you. I regret having to pass over the other extracts from the *loi d'orientation* that I highlighted, but all the same the following deserves to be mentioned: *“Teachers and researchers enjoy complete independence, a complete liberty of expression in the exercise of their function of teaching and in their activity of research, within the reservations that are imposed on them in conformity with University traditions and the arrangements of the present law, the principles of objectivity and of tolerance.”*



What I wanted to say to you today was a first remark about what constitutes 'objectivity', with respect to you, because what you represent here in this picture, what is properly speaking its support, is the o-object. If analysis is the practice that has allowed there to be brought out from the o-object its character of irreducible residue in everything that is caught up in the effect of language, it is indeed in order to show that it is not something negligible. And that it is not at (4) all by chance that you find yourselves very properly, as those who enter into the field of the University discourse, entering it here essentially in the name of the fact that you are so many o-objects. And you can do nothing about the fact that you are in a line of progenitors which roots you in it, very far back, but luckily you only have to know the last two or three generations. It is because of the fact that each and every one of you have been brought forth to fill the hole, that you are the cause of the desire of these last two or three generations.

It is in this capacity that you are projected as objects of hope, in that one cannot otherwise define that you are what succeeds to secondary studies, secondary studies themselves being the preparation for this continuation, in other words the period when people tried to form you to render you suitable for the function that you are going to occupy here, in higher education.

For the moment, the objectivity in question has been embodied. Objectively, you are, each one of you individually a credit (*une unité de valeur*). Little *va-va*, little *leu-leu*, each one of you is a credit. You are valued. One has to bow before so many credits!

One thing about this reform of the University is that it sets out clearly what is involved. In the University, there was what is called a discontent, a discontent that is due to something which is of the order of a peculiar social imbalance. For example – I am bringing things

out clearly – it says that what is at stake as regards this troop that higher education takes on the responsibility of forming even though it is ten times too late: you should understand, when one is in higher education one has no longer any need to be formed, one is already super-formed!

As objects, you are credits and like little *o*-objects, as I reminded you: the principles of objectivity and of tolerance, as they say, as *o*-objects you are tolerated!

This is the point on which I would have liked to put forward some remarks for you today. In other words, I would have liked to disorient you. Naturally, I am going to be forced to return quite simply onto my little track, I mean to say things that are simply the beginning of what I am going to continue to say at the *Faculté de Droit*. I am going to give you the guts of what will be taken up at my next talk. I will give a commentary on it with the support of what I had more or less prepared for you today.

There is something that defines the function which is occupied on the top left successively by one of these four letters of our algebra. This (5) function is primordial to introduce us to what is involved in the discourse of the Master. The discourse of the Master is a funny old thing. It is very curious that people do not spend more time on the fact that it is completely ruled out that what establishes, installs, maintains the discourse of the Master is force, because, after all, those to whom this discourse is applied are the great majority. It is absolutely impossible to see why the discourse of the Master would hold up. The discourse of the Master, is a fact of discourse. It is that the signifier can function as a Master signifier. This is obviously more and more masked for us for the reason that, far from this discourse being in the slightest way shaken by all the attempts that think they are subversive, just take the measure of something you can put your finger on: the degree to which, with respect to what you can

imagine about the past, precisely force is always manifest and more crushing here to sustain effectively now the discourse of the Master. Simply in coming to see you today, I encountered 36 vehicles that, just by themselves, bear witness to the mass of force ...!

It is a false appearance. We have only got to that stage by reason of the fact that it began with something completely different which was well and truly the signifier of the Master, the signifier  $S_1$  in so far as it is what precipitates, what integrates, what polarises everything that can be found as most precious in the world. Namely, this immense human knowledge which finds itself caught, squeezed, in this movement inaugurated by the establishment of the discourse of the Master.

You should not allow yourself to be impressed by these deployments of force. It is a consequence, of course, of the fact that a certain number of things have happened to the Master, and in particular he has succeeded in making slide towards him, nice and quietly, the apparatus of knowledge. This is what is called science, the science which is not at all an affair of the progress of knowledge, but which is something that functions, which in particular always functions to the advantage of the discourse of the Master.

This is the prestige which still allows what is involved in the university to hold up; because what the university has to support historically, is something that is quite incapable of holding up in present conditions. This idea of this knowledge which is supposed to be the sum total of all that can be collected in scarce memories, the wrecks, the things that float, that have happened, that are called cultural. These would have had their day a long time ago if it were not for the fact that they are sustained by this apparatus that is still (6) functioning which introduced into it everything that it can support in terms of science, I am talking about this old human discourse. What it can support in terms of science, are the methods of filing, of

classification. So then, in the name of that, this old knowledge preserves like that the appearance of holding up.

And for reasons that have nothing to do with the virtue of this discourse – a certain number of people are here as students, namely, are pushing themselves forward to be recognised in this society which is in the process of really losing the run of itself, namely, of very quickly getting rid of its principal supports – credits pass progressively from a use value to an exchange value. You are predestined, whatever you may wish, in this little mechanism, to play the same role of everything that is involved as o-object in capitalist society, namely, to function as surplus value. You are the true values in the sense that you form part of the movement, of the numerical movement, that is going to sustain the style of exchange, the style of market, that capitalist society constitutes.

Only it is one thing to be an incarnated surplus value and something else to be a countable surplus value. When one is an incarnated surplus value, this collection is added up - the credits - that also of course generates things, namely, a discontent whose import you would be wrong to believe that I limit to the noisy complaints that I hear here. Because in truth the things that I am in the process of telling you are very serious things and which are altogether of a kind, - naturally, on a different plane to these squeals - to question very seriously the society that is at stake, namely, capitalist society.

If I had the time, I would note that what is happening highlights something important, namely, what you are explicitly charged with proving, what you are beginning to prove in fact, naturally in a different way than by these squeals. It is that as regards the masses, you can count on nothing, as the whole progress of history shows you, because imagine that if it is in effect in the masses that you can find revolutionaries, you no longer find them in the masses when they

are organised *en masse*. At that stage those who have made the revolution are rebels. For example, the sailors at Kronstadt.

So then, there are perhaps in effect some people who for the moment are charged with demonstrating that. There is nothing to say that (7) they will not also succeed in doing something, but we do not know what. For the moment, what they are dealing with, is what Freud in *Massenpsychologie und Ich-Analyse* demonstrates, which is that what the mass produces is idealisation, imaginary idealisation. It reproduces very precisely the re-emergence of the discourse of the Master.

That is the reason why, when people have tried to associate Freud with Marx – I am not all the same the only one to have this attitude that I am going to tell you about – it makes me laugh, because if there is something precisely that Freud contributes, it is something beyond Marx and specifically something which allows it to be seen why after the effect, the effect delivered by the discourse of Marx, as regards the stability of the discourse of the Master, nothing has changed.

So then, it is a matter of seeing what at the level of the o-object that you constitute, namely, from the quarter where it has its incidence in a discourse, what you are offered. This is something that I cannot take any further today, but which I will continue at my next seminar with two terms that I have not yet put forward. These two terms are called impossibility and impotence. They are not the same. Impossibility, as you can imagine, as if by chance, is put forward, is highlighted, illuminated in Freud's discourse, and is so very specifically in connection with analysing, *Analysieren*. It is one of these *unmögliche Beruf*, one of these impossible professions to which he associates *Regieren*, governing and also what interests us, the formation of men, *erziehen*.

The impossible, I have stated, I, Lacan, the impossible is the real. If you find that this is not sufficiently proved by the fact that to govern, to bring up, to educate, to analyse also – why not, we are not stinting ourselves – is the real. What is at stake, the connection by which science can connect up with something that concerns you, is precisely this, that this impossible is demonstrated as such, I said demonstrated.

I mean that what the questioning about language contributes to us is the following: it allows us to see that here mathematics, the logic which flows from it, once again does not fail us. This is what they demonstrate. It is precisely that we should not lose ourselves – because it is just as well not to lose oneself – in seeking the truth, with catching it in the toils of language, in formalising it.

Mathematical logic teaches us, makes us take the step that there is an impossible to be proved as true in every system whatever it may be, even at a certain level of elevation – one can hardly say that arithmetic is too much – that there is something impossible that demonstrates the true. Here we hold the real.

(8) Do not place your trust in the truth, it has a relationship to what? Not to knowledge certainly but precisely to this real. It was the way to orient oneself towards this real, as long as one did not have any other means. This indeed is the reason why it can only be expressed in a half-saying. Naturally it is there, in its place: this thing that plays the role of truth, in what might be a knowledge, a knowledge put in its place, it is the  $S_1$  of the discourse of the Master.

Everyone can carry out the test that this is what the real supports with a certain knowledge. And I began with that by saying that science is what constitutes, maintains in force the discourse of the Master, and this is precisely the trap that is being set for you, if you allow yourself to be fascinated by this truth, because precisely it is only the

half of it. It is one aspect. This is what requires the half-saying of the truth.

And what you have to experience is this: it is not on the side of what is hidden under this statutory a-cephalic – you can write that as you like – knowledge, which is the one in which there is presented – and it is not near being grounded – the University. Under this system, this statute, this collation, this imagination of an established knowledge, of course, one senses that things are cracking up a little bit. A little more rope is being given in terms of humanism, or of the humanities. Believe me, the system will remain just as healthy, at least for a good period of time. What is asked of you, who are in effect at a place which is that of the Other, is to produce, to produce something that helps out this affair. What you have to produce, is there on the bottom right, it is called culture. As you were told: the cultural promotion of society.

In the whole measure that you are able to produce some agreeable nonsense, you will feed the system. Because this is what impossibility protects itself with; it is to demonstrate an impotence in the whole measure that you yield to this capture, where you get excited like young dogs. I am surprised that there is not one there today as there was the other time. There was already someone called Goethe who spoke about that in connection with a dog that he called *Studentenscholar*, the true animal formed by the studies that he *lait* [?], as you remember, sometimes; perhaps. Anyway there is no dog, but you should not imagine that by throwing yourself into the hunt for everything that your indignation offers to you, that you are not serving the system. On the contrary, you are feeding it!

The thing that you might have to do, is to keep in the closest way to the impossible. It is in this that one or other, or even all, undoubtedly (9) all are not ready to take up this function, it is in this that one or other of you may accomplish what really deserves the title of

revolution as regards the discourse of the Master. It is to complete the circuit. I mean that *anar* [anarchist] or not, it is perhaps to be *ana* without the *r* that would be better for you, in other words to be analysts, in other words to be in the position of questioning what is involved in culture in the Master position.

You should not be wasting your time while you are here at the *Centre Expérimental* or elsewhere. You do not have to produce culture, you have to seek out a lower notch, seek out the less rather than the more, not the truth, the impossible of the real. That is what those who are the best among you, who are not there precisely because they are in the clink, this is what they should attach themselves to. It is a matter of truly seeing over against what is involved in the system, a functioning and a real.

That particular way is, properly speaking, only operable precisely because of the following, namely, *qua* cause of desire, the cause of what is lacking as a matter of course even in what may appear highest in human activity, namely, this function of language in the system of science, of what you have to deal with, here and now. What am I doing but that. Making the effort so that people should come to birth who know how to maintain themselves in this position of analyst from which effectively and only from which, there can be accomplished, brought about, what I called this circuit (*tour*) of the discourse of the Master.

Because after all if you modify here my little schema in order to substitute that of analytic discourse, what you will see when the *o* for its part, has gone to the position on the top left, is what? It is something that is going to be produced on the bottom right. It is the  $S_1$  that you will rediscover there, namely, a new Master signifier.

I am damned well not progressive, because what I am explaining to you is that things go round in a circle. Things go round in a circle all



the same, but you change a notch. It is when the step has been taken of what is effectively involved in the incidence of analytic discourse, that a new loop will be able to begin, which no doubt will not do as much as we might presume by making vanish the whole system on which we are basing this demonstration, but which, after a circuit, will obtain perhaps something of a change of phase. The Master signifier will perhaps be a little bit less stupid. You can be sure that if it is a little bit less stupid, it will be a little more impotent. This will not be absolutely speaking a progress. This will mean that what you will have done will have a meaning, and to tell you what meaning depends on, well, you can wait until I have got a little bit further on in my discourse.

**Seminar 14: Wednesday 10 June 1970**

This is not the time of year to be proposing long-drawn-out trials. So I am going to try to lighten things. Fortunately, we are winding up, as they say. I would even be inclined to leave it at that, if I did not have to propose a little complement designed to bring out what was essential in what I hope I got across this year. A little point for the future through which, by being circumscribed a little better, notions that are somewhat new, may perhaps give you a glimpse of the way in which they possess this characteristic that I always emphasise, and which those who find themselves working with me at a more practical level can confirm, of being absolutely in touch with experience.

We do not rule out that this may be of use elsewhere, at the level of something that is happening at the moment, without our knowing quite what is at stake. Naturally, when things happen, we never quite know, when they are happening, what is at stake, especially when these things are covered over with news stories. But in any case, something is happening in the University. In various places people are surprised. What is has got into these students, our little sweethearts, our favourite sons and daughters, the darlings of civilisation? What is happening to them? Those who say that are idiots, they are paid for that.

It may be the case, nevertheless, that some part of what I am spelling out about the relationship between the Analyst's discourse and the Master's discourse could show the way in which it would be possible in some way to justify, to understand, what is happening and to reach

some agreement. What is happening at the moment, is that everyone is competing to minimise the impact of failed, compressed, little demonstrations that will be increasingly pushed into a corner. While I said I could justify it, explain it, I would like you to understand that to the extent I could manage to do so, succeed in getting you to understand something, you can be certain that I have stuck a finger in your eye. Because, in short, this is what, what I want to articulate today as simply as I can, amounts to.

The fact is that there is a relationship between what is happening, and the things I have taken the risk of manipulating for some time which, by that very fact, provide a kind of guarantee that this discourse hangs together. I am taking the risk of manipulating them in a way which, when all is said and done, is absolutely wild! I do not hesitate to speak about the real and that for some time, since it is even in this way that I took the first steps in this teaching. Then, as the years passed, a little formula emerged that the impossible is the real. God knows it was not overused at the beginning. Then I happened to propose some references or other to Truth, which is more common. There are, all the same, some very important remarks to make, and I feel obliged to (2) make a number of them today before leaving all of that to the innocents who will use them without rhyme or reason, which is really par for the course, sometimes in my own entourage.

I went to visit Vincennes a week ago as a way of indicating succinctly that I was responding to an invitation from that place. Moreover, I announced this to you the last time, so as to give you the right starting point for a reference with which I began and which is far from being innocent – that is even why you have to read Freud. We read in effect in *Analysis terminable and interminable*, lines that concern what is involved in being an analyst. It is pointed out there that one would be very mistaken to require of him too much normality and psychical correctness, this would make him too much of a rarity. “And finally we must not forget that the analytic relationship, *und endlich ist nicht zu*

*vergessen, dass die analytische Beziehung auf Wahrheitsliebe, is based on a love of truth and d. h. auf der Anerkennung der Realität gegründet ist, that is, on a recognition of reality*" [SE XXIII 248; GW XVI 94]. *Realität* is a word you will recognise even if you do not know German since it is copied from our Latin. It is in competition, in the way Freud employs it, with the word *Wirklichkeit* which also sometimes signifies what the translators looking no further, translate quite simply, in both cases, as reality. In this connection I have a little memory of the truly foaming rage that overcame a couple or more particularly one of them – I really do have to call him by his name, it is not an accident, it is someone called Laplanche, who as everyone knows had a certain role in the avatars of my relations with analysis – at the thought that another – whom I am also going to name, since I named the former, someone called Kaufmann – put forward the idea that it was necessary to distinguish between this *Wirklichkeit* and this *Realität*.

The fact of having been anticipated by the other in making this remark, which was in effect altogether primordial, unleashed a kind of passion in the first of these two characters. This pseudo-contempt displayed for this fastidiousness is all the same something quite interesting. The sentence finishes as follows: "*und jeden Schein und Trug ausschliesst, precludes any kind of sham or deceit*" [*ibid*].

A sentence like this is very rich. And immediately, in the lines that follow, it appears – despite the little friendly greeting that Freud gives the analyst on the way – that in short there is no *das Analysieren*. We are quite ready here truly to have, it has all the appearances of this function called the analytic act. *Das Analysieren* means nothing other than this term that I used as the title of one of my seminars. The (3) analytic act is supposed to be the third 'impossible profession, *unmöglichen Berufe*' in inverted commas. Freud quotes himself here in making reference to the fact that he is supposed to have already mentioned – where did he say it, perhaps my research is incomplete, perhaps it is in the letters to Fliess that he first used it – the three

professions in question which he calls in this previous passage *Regieren, Erziehen, Kurieren*, which is obviously in agreement with commonplace use. Analysis is new and Freud inserts it into this series by substituting it for healing. The three professions if indeed it really is a matter of professions are therefore *Regieren, Erziehen, Analysieren*, that is governing, educating and analysing. You cannot fail to see the close overlap between these three terms and what I am distinguishing this year as constituting the radicality of three or even four discourses. The discourses in question are nothing other than signifying articulation, the apparatus, whose simple presence, whose existing status, dominates and governs everything that may at a given moment emerge as speech. These discourses, as I said one day, are discourses without words. Words subsequently come to lodge themselves in them. Thus I am able to tell myself, as regards this intoxicating phenomenon called speaking out (*prendre la parole*), that certain reference points in the discourse in which it is inserted would perhaps be of such a nature that, from time to time, you do not speak out without knowing what you are doing.

Given a certain style of speech used in the month of May (*l'émoi*), the idea cannot fail to occur to me that one of the representatives of  $\phi$ , at a level that is not established in historical but rather in pre-historical times, is surely the domestic animal.

One can no longer employ in this case the same letters, but it is quite clear that what corresponds to our  $\$$  - a certain knowledge was necessary in order to domesticate the dog, for instance - is barking. One cannot but have the idea that, if barking is indeed that, is giving tongue, the  $S_1$  takes on a sense that there is nothing abnormal in locating at the level at which we situate it, at the level of language. Everyone knows that the domestic animal is only implicated in language by a primitive knowledge and that it does not have one. It only remains for it to turn over what it has been given that is closest to (4) the signifier  $S_1$ , which is dead meat (*la charogne*). You must all the

same know this, you must have had a good dog whether a watchdog or some other kind, one that you have been on familiar terms with. Dead meat is irresistible to them, they adore it. Look at Madame Bathory, a charming woman in Hungary, who from time to time liked up carving up her servants, which is of course the least one can allow oneself when one is in a certain position. If she ever placed the said morsels a little close to the ground her dogs would bring them back to her straight away. This is a side of dogs that is a little neglected. If you did not stuff them full all the time at lunch or dinner by giving them things they only like because they come from your plate this is what they will bring you.

You have to pay very close attention to the fact that at a higher level – that of an *o*-object of a different kind which we will try to define later, and which will bring us back to this old *astudé* I have already mentioned – speech can very easily play the role of dead meat. In any case, it is no more tempting. This is what has contributed a lot to the fact that the importance of language was poorly grasped. The manipulation of this speech, which has no other symbolic value, has been confused with what was involved in discourse. As a result, it is never in any old way or any old time that speech functions as dead meat.

The aim of these remarks is to awaken some surprise in you, and at least get you to ask yourselves this question about the discourse of the Master – how can this discourse, which is so wonderfully well understood, have maintained its name – as is proven by the fact that whether exploited or not, workers work. Work has never been held in such high esteem since humanity began. It is even ruled out that one should not work! That is a success, surely, of what I call the discourse of the Master. To achieve this it was necessary for it to go beyond certain limits. In a word it comes down to something whose change I have tried to point out to you. I hope you remember it, and if you do not remember – which is quite possible – I am going to recall it to you

straight away. I mean the crucial change which also gives the discourse of the Master its capitalist style.

Why, good God, does this happen, and it does not happen by chance. You would be wrong to think that there are wise politicians somewhere who calculate exactly everything that has to be done. You would also be wrong to think that there are none such – there are. It is not certain that they are always in the place from which one can act appropriately (5) but at bottom this is not what is so important. It is enough that they exist, even in another place, for the order of displacement of the discourse to be nevertheless transmitted. Let us now ask ourselves the question of how this society described as capitalist, can afford the luxury of allowing a relaxation of the University discourse. This discourse is, however, only one of these transformations that I have been presenting to you all along. It is the quarter turn as compared to the discourse of the Master. Hence the question which is worth the effort to envisage: by embracing this relaxation, which, it has to be said, is offered, are we not going to fall into a trap? This is not a new idea. It so happens that I wrote a small article on the university reforms, which I had been explicitly invited to write for a newspaper, the only one to have a reputation for balance and honesty, called *Le Monde*. They had been very insistent that I write this little page about the reorganisation of psychiatry, about the reforms. Now despite this insistence it is quite striking that this little article, which I will publish sometime later, was not allowed through. It was entitled *D'une réforme dans son trou, A reform in a hole*. It was precisely a question of putting up with this whirlwind hole, to take a number of measures about the University. And, good God, to referring correctly to the terms of certain fundamental discourses, you might have certain scruples, let us say about acting, you might look twice before jumping in to profit from the lines that are opening up. It is a responsibility to carry dead meat into these corridors!

This is what our remarks today, which are not the usual line, which are not common, must be articulated with.

$$\frac{S_2}{S_1} \rightarrow \frac{o}{\$}$$

$$\frac{S_1}{\$} \rightarrow \frac{S_2}{o}$$

$$\frac{o}{S_2} \rightarrow \frac{\$}{S_1}$$

agent	labour
truth	production

This is like an apparatus. You should at least get the idea that it can be used as a lever, a pair of pliers, that it can be screwed down, be constructed this way or that.

There are several terms. If I have only given these little letters here, it is not by chance. It is because I do not want to put in things that look like signifieds. I do not want them to signify at all but to authorise them. It is already a bit more to authorise them than to write them. I have already spoken about what constitutes the places where these signifiers are inscribed and I have already given a destiny to the agent. This term underlines a sort of riddle in the French tongue – the agent is (6) not at all necessarily the one who does, but the one who is made to act. So that as you may already suspect, it is not at all clear that the master functions. That defines, in all probability, the place of the master. It is the best thing one can ask oneself about him, and naturally you have not had to wait for me to do it. Someone called Hegel had a go at it, but you have to look a little bit more closely at it. It is very annoying to think that there are perhaps not five people here who have truly read, since I have been talking about it, *The phenomenology of spirit*. I do not want to ask them to raise their hands. It really pisses me off that I have until now seen only two people who have read it completely, since I too, I have to confess, have



not been into every corner of it. The two are my master, Alexander Kojève, who proved it a thousand times, and another person of a kind you would not believe. He has truly read *The phenomenology of spirit* in an illuminating manner, to the extent that everything in Kojève's notes that I took and that I passed on to him was truly superfluous. What is astounding is even though I killed myself at one stage making people aware that *The critique of practical reason* is manifestly a book of eroticism, extraordinarily more amusing than what is published by Eric Losfeld, this produces no results. And that if I tell you that *The phenomenology of spirit* is madly humorous, well then, it will not fare any better. And nevertheless this is what is at stake. It is truly the most extraordinary thing. It is also a cold, not to say black humour. There is something you can be absolutely convinced of, which is that he knows perfectly well what he is doing. What he is doing is a sleight of hand and he takes everyone in. This, on the basis of the fact that what he says is the truth. There is obviously no better way to pinpoint the master signifier  $S_1$ , which is there on the board, than by identifying it with death. And so what is at stake? It is to show in a dialectic, as Hegel puts it, the zenith, the highpoint, the thought of the function of this term. What in short is meant by the coming into play of this brute, the master, in the phenomenology of spirit as Hegel puts it? The truth of what he articulates is positively seductive and sensational. We can really read it in front of our eyes provided we let ourselves be taken in by it, because I for my part am articulating precisely that it cannot be read head on. The truth of what he articulates is this: the relationship to this real, in so far as it is properly speaking impossible. It is not at all clear why a master should emerge from the struggle to death for pure prestige. And this despite the fact that Hegel himself says that he would result from this strange initial set up.

(7) To crown it all, Hegel finds the means – true, in a conception of history that looks a little odd in terms of what emerges from it, namely, the succession of phases of dominance, of composition of the operations of the mind, which is situated right through this thread that

is no small thing, which is what was called in his day, or up to his day, philosophical thought – Hegel finds the means of showing that what results from this is that in the end it is the slave, through his work, who reveals the truth of the master by pushing him underneath. By virtue of this forced labour, as you can see from the beginning, the slave arrives, at the end of history, at this term which is called Absolute Knowledge. Nothing is said about what happens then, because in truth, in the Hegelian proposition, there were not four terms, but first of all the master, and then the slave. I call the slave  $S_2$ , but you can just as well identify him here by the term of enjoyment, which firstly he had not wished to renounce and, secondly, he really wanted, because he substituted one for the other worth, which is not all the same its equivalent. [?] Thanks to what? Thanks to a series of dialectical mutations, to the ballet, to the minuet that is established starting with this initial moment, and which it traverses from one end to another, from one thread to another, the whole development of culture. Anyway, history rewards us with this knowledge that is not described as complete – there are many reasons for that – but absolute, incontestable. And the master only now appears to have been its instrument, the magnificent cuckold of history. It is sublime that this very remarkable dialectical deduction was undertaken, and that it was, as one might say, successful. Right along – let us take for example what Hegel says about culture – it is swarming with the most pertinent remarks as regards the operation of the incidences and the exercises of the spirit. I repeat, there is nothing funnier.

The ruse of reason is, he tells us, what has directed this whole operation. This is a very lovely term which has all its value for us analysts and we can follow it at the level of an a,b,c that is reasonable or not, because we have to deal with something very clever in the word, when it is the unconscious that is at stake. Only the highpoint of this ruse is not where you think. It is no doubt the ruse of reason, but you have to recognise the ruse of the reasoner, and take his hat off. If it had been possible at the beginning of the last century, at the time of

the Battle of Iena, for this extraordinary piece of trickery called *The phenomenology of the spirit* to subjugate someone, it would probably have been successful. It is quite obvious, in effect, that we cannot hold for a single instant that we are getting close in any way whatsoever to the ascension of the slave. This unbelievable way of attributing to him – attributing to his work – any progress whatsoever of what is (8) described as knowledge, is really extraordinarily futile.

But what I am calling the ruse of the reasoner, is there to make us see an essential dimension that we have to be careful about. If we designate the place of the agent – whatever it may be, it is not always that of the master signifier, because all the other signifiers are going to pass there in their turn – the question is the following. What is it that makes this agent act? How can there be produced this extraordinary circuit around which there turns something that merits properly speaking to be signalled by the term of revolution? We rediscover here, at a certain level, the term of Hegel, of restoring work to the world. What is the truth? Here indeed is where it is placed, with a question mark. What inaugurates, what brings into play this agent, because after all, it has not been that way for all time, it is there since historic times began. It is a good thing to notice, in connection with such a brilliant, such a dazzling case, that because of this precisely you do not think, you do not see – Hegel is the sublime representative of the discourse of knowledge, and of university knowledge. We in France, the only philosophers we ever have are people who are always on the road. Little society members of provincial societies like Maine de Biran, or again fellows like Descartes, who wandered across Europe. You must all the same know how to read him too, and understand his tone – he speaks about what he was expecting from his birth. You see the type of chap he was. Nevertheless he was no fool, far from it. In our country, it is not in the universities that one finds philosophers. That could be put down as an advantage for us. But in Germany, it is at the university. And people are capable, at a certain level of university status, to think that the poor pets, the little dears,

those who at this moment are only just entering the industrial era, into the great era of drudgery, of exploitation to the death, are going to be caught by the revelation of this truth, that they are the ones who make history and that the master is only the fife player who was necessary to start the music at the beginning. This remark has its value, and I want to underline it with energy because of the sentence of Freud, that the analytic relation ought to be founded, *gegründet*, on the love of truth. Freud really was a charming chap. He really was full of fire, full of flame. He also had his weaknesses. His relationship with his wife, for example, is something unimaginable. To have put up with such a wagon for his whole existence, is surely something. Anyway you should be convinced of this – if there is anything that ought to inspire you with the truth if you want to sustain the *Analysieren*, it is certainly not love. Because truth, on occasion, is what gives rise to the signifier (9) of death. And even, to all appearances, if there is something that gives a completely different sense to what Hegel put forward, it is indeed what Freud had nevertheless discovered at that epoch, and that he described as he could, as death instinct, namely, the radical character of repetition, this repetition that insists, and which characterises psychic reality, if it exists, because it is inscribed in language. Perhaps the truth has no other face. This is not enough to make one mad about it. In truth, this is not correct either. Truth has more than one visage. But precisely the first line of conduct for analysts, is to be a little bit mistrustful, not to become all of a sudden mad about a truth, about the first pretty face met at a street corner. It is precisely here that we encounter this remark of Freud's in which, accompanied by this *Analysieren*, we find reality: *dass heisst auf die Anerkennung der Realität*. This is enough to make us say that, in effect, there might be, like that, a quite naïve real – and this in general is how people speak – that passes itself off as truth. The truth is experienced. This does not mean at all, for all that, that it knows more about the real, especially if one speaks about knowing, if we remember the features of what I indicate on the real. It is at the stage where it was found defined as impossible to prove the register of symbolic

articulation true, that the real finds its place, if the real is defined as impossible. Here is something that can be of use to us to measure our love for the truth – and also which can allow us to put our finger on why governing, educating, analysing also, and why not ‘making desire’, to complete by a definition what is involved in the hysterical discourse, are operations that are properly speaking impossible. These operations are there, they hold up bloody well, and pose us the question of what is involved in their truth, namely, how there are produced these mad things that are only defined in the real by being only able to be articulated when one approaches them as impossible. It is clear that their full articulation as impossible is precisely what gives us the risk, the chance that is glimpsed that their real, as one might say, might explode. If we are forced to muse so long in the corridors, the labyrinths, of the truth it is because there is precisely something that ensures that we do not reach it. And why should we be surprised at that when what is at stake are those discourses that are for us completely new? It is not that we have not had already a good three quarters of a century to envisage things from this angle, but sitting (10) around in armchairs is perhaps not the best position for getting a grip on the impossible. In any case, the fact that we are always turning round and round in the dimension of the love of truth, while everything indicates that it makes slip between our fingers the impossibility of what is maintained as real, very precisely in the discourse of the master, as Hegel said – this is what requires the reference to what analytic discourse fortunately allows us to glimpse, and to articulate exactly. And that is why it is important for me to articulate it. I am persuaded that there are five or six people here who could very well displace what I am stating in such a way that it has an opportunity to re-emerge. I am not saying that it is Archimedes’ lever. I am not telling you that it has the slightest pretension to renew the system of the world, or the thinking of history. I am simply indicating how analysis puts us on a footing to receive, in chance encounters, a certain number of things that may appear illuminating. In my case for example, I might very well never have met Kojève. If I had never met

him, it is fairly probable that like every Frenchman educated throughout a certain period, I would perhaps never have suspected that the *Phenomenology of the spirit* was something important. It would be no bad thing if analysis allowed you to see the source of the impossibility, namely, what sets up an obstacle to the circumscribing, to the grasping of what alone may perhaps in the final term introduce a change, namely, the naked real, not the truth. Only there you are, between us and the real there is the truth. The truth, I already stated one day in a lyrical outburst that it was the dear little sister of enjoyment. I hope that it has come back into the mind of at least some of you, at the moment when I am going to emphasise, in each of the four formulae that I have given you, the contrast between the first line and the second. The first line involves a relation which is indicated here with an arrow, a direction, is always defined as impossible. In the discourse of the master, for example, it is in effect impossible for there to be a master who is able to make his world work. To make people work is even more exhausting than to work oneself, if one really had to do it. The master never does it. He makes a sign, the master signifier, and everyone runs away! It is from this that one should start, something that is in effect quite impossible. You can put your finger on it every day. It is a matter of seeing now how the impossibility written on the first line is already indicated by the place given to the term truth, whether it is not on the second line that one would have the final word. Only on the second line, there is no arrow at all. And not only is there no communication, but there is something that blocks it. (11) What is it that blocks it? This is what results from labour. And the discovery of someone called Marx is really to have given its whole weight to a term that was known before him, and which designates what labour works at – this is called production. The essential thing to see is that whatever may be the signs, the master signifiers that come to be inscribed at the place of the agent, production has not in any case any relationship with the truth. You can do whatever you want, you can say whatever you want, you can try to connect this production with needs, which are needs that are forged, there is nothing to be done.

Between the existence of a master [human existence?] and the relationship of a production with the truth, there is no way out. In every impossibility, whatever it may be, the terms that we bring into play here are always articulated around the following: if it leaves us breathless around its truth, it is because something is protecting it that we call impotence. Let us take for example, in the University discourse, this first term, the one that is articulated here under the term of  $S_2$  and which is in this position, insanely pretentious, because of having as production a thinking being, a subject. As subject, in its production, there is no question of him being able to grasp himself for a single instant as master of knowledge. This can be touched here in a tangible way, but it goes back further, in the discourse of the master that, thanks to Hegel I allow myself to presuppose, because, as you are going to see, we only know it now under a considerably modified form. This surplus enjoying that I articulated this year and that I put at the beginning as a support, is a construction and even a reconstruction, but it seems to me to be important. It is a truer support. But let us be careful, this indeed is what makes it dangerous, but all the same, it really derives its force from being articulated in this way, as can be seen in reading people who for their part had not read Hegel, and principally Aristotle. In reading Aristotle, we have a sense that the master's relation to the slave really posed a problem for him. He searched for its truth, and it is really magnificent to see the way he tries to extricate himself in the three or four fascinating passages where he deals with it – he only takes one path, that of the difference in kind from which the slave's good would emerge. He was not a university professor. He was not a clever little fellow like Hegel. He really senses that when he states this, it slips away from him, it slides all over the place. He is neither very sure nor very attached to it. He does not impose his own opinion. But in any case, he feels that this is the quarter where there well could be something that justifies the relationship between the master and the slave. Ah! If they were not of the same sex, if they had been man and woman, this would have been truly sublime, and he hints that there would be some hope.

Unfortunately that is not how it is, they are not different sexes, and his (12) head drops. We can see clearly what is at stake, it is to know what in terms of surplus enjoying the master receives from the slave's work. This might seem to be self-evident. And what is astounding is that nobody seems to notice that there is precisely a lesson to be learned from the fact that it is not self-evident. Here the problems of ethics start to crop up everywhere. The *Nicomachean Ethics*, the *Eudemian Ethics*, and several other works of moral reflection. There is no way out. This surplus enjoying – nobody knows what to do with it. What does it mean? In order to have managed to put a sovereign good at the heart of the world, it was really necessary to be as embarrassed as a fish with an apple. And yet the surplus enjoying that the slave brings us is within hand's reach. What is proved, what is attested by the entire thought of Antiquity and what Hegel makes us revisit thanks to his wonderful sleight of hand and other acts including the politicised masochism of the Stoics, is that to calmly set oneself up as the master's subject cannot be done as surplus enjoying.

Let us now take the discourse of the Hysteric as it is articulated – put the \$ on the top left hand corner, the  $S_1$  on the right, the  $S_2$  underneath, the  $o$  in the place of truth. It cannot be either that the division, the symptomatic tearing apart of the hysteric, is justified as production of knowledge. Her truth is that she must be the  $o$ -object in order to be desired.

The  $o$ -object is a bit thin when all is said and done although, of course, men are mad about it and they cannot even imagine going along another path – another sign of the impotence covering the most subtle of all impossibilities. Let us move on to the level of the discourse of the analyst. Naturally, nobody has made the remark – it is rather curious that what it produces is nothing other than the Master's discourse, since it is  $S_1$  that comes to occupy the place of production. And as I was saying last time as I was leaving Vincennes, perhaps it is from the discourse of the Analyst, if you make these three quarter



turns, that there can emerge another style of master signifier. In truth, whether it is another style or not, it is not tomorrow or the day after you will know what it is, and at least for the moment, we are completely impotent as regards putting it in relation with what is in operation in the analyst's position, namely, this seduction of truth that it presents, in that it is supposed to know something about what it (13) represents in principle. This is what I am stressing by putting into relief, the impossibility of the situation, in so far as the analyst puts himself in the position of representing, of being, the agent cause of desire. Here then there is outlined the relation between these four terms. The one I have not named is the unnameable one because it is upon its prohibition that the entire structure is founded – namely enjoyment. This is where the view, the little skylight, the look that analysis has contributed, introduces us to what may be a fruitful step, not of thought but of act. And it is in that this step is revolutionary. This is not situated around the subject. Whatever the fruitfulness shown by the questioning of the hysteric which, as I have said, introduced it for the first time in history, and although the entry of the subject as agent of discourse has had very surprising results, the first of which is that of science, it is not here, for all that, that the key to everything is to be found. The key lies in the questioning of what enjoyment is about. Enjoyment is limited by natural processes. But to tell the truth we know nothing about these natural processes. We simply know that we have ended up by considering as natural the mollycoddling in which a more or less organised society maintains us, except that everyone is dying to know what would happen if it really hurt. Hence this sadomasochistic obsession that characterises our pleasant little sexual ambience. This is completely futile, even secondary. What is important is that whether natural or not, it is well and truly in so far as it is bound up with very origin of the coming into play of signifiers that it is possible to speak of enjoyment. No one will ever know anything about what the oyster or the beaver enjoys because without the signifier there is no distance between enjoyment and the body. The oyster and the beaver are at the same level as the plant,

which after all perhaps does have an enjoyment at this level.

Enjoyment is very precisely correlative to the initial form of the coming into play of language, of what I call the mark, the unary trait, which is a mark of death, if you want to give it its sense. Observe that nothing takes on any sense except when death comes into play. It is on the basis of the cleavage, of the separation between enjoyment and the henceforth mortified body, it is from the moment that there is an operation of inscriptions, the mark of the unary trait, that the question is raised. There is no need to wait until the object has revealed itself well hidden at the level of the truth of the master. The division of the subject is without doubt nothing other than the radical ambiguity that attaches itself to the very term truth.

It is in as far as language, everything that sets up the order of (14) discourse, leaves things in a gap that in short we can be sure that in following our thread we are always doing nothing other than following a contour. But there is something more that it brings us, and it is the least we should really know in order to reply to the question with which I began, namely, what is currently taking place in University discourse. It is necessary to begin by seeing why the Master's discourse is so solidly established, to the extent that few of you, it seems, can measure the extent to which it is stable. This stems from what Marx demonstrated – without, I have to say, throwing it into relief - about the production which he calls surplus value and not surplus enjoyment. Something changed in the Master's discourse at a certain moment in history. We are not going to bore ourselves finding out if it was because of Luther, or Calvin, or some traffic or other of ships around Genoa, or in the Mediterranean Sea, or somewhere else, because the important point is that from a particular day on, surplus pleasure can be calculated, can be counted, totalised. Here what is called 'the accumulation of capital' begins.

Do you not feel, in relation to what I stated earlier about the impotence to connect surplus value with the master's truth, that we are gaining

ground here? I am not saying that the latter is decisive but the impotence of this junction is all of a sudden emptied out. Surplus value combines with capital – no problem, they are homogeneous, we are in the field of values. Moreover, we are all swimming in it, at this blessed time in which we live. What is striking and what no one seems to see is that from that moment on, by virtue of the fact that the clouds of impotence have been aired, the master signifier only appears even more unassailable precisely in its impossibility. Where is it? How can it be named? How can it be located, except, of course through its murderous effects. Denounce imperialism? But how can this little mechanism be stopped?

How do things now stand with the University discourse? There cannot be any possibility anywhere else to make things turn a little. How? I reserve the right to point it out to you later since as you can see I am going slowly. But I can already tell you that in the University discourse the *o*-object comes to occupy a place that is in operation every time things shift, that of more or less tolerable exploitation. The *o*-object is what makes it possible to introduce a little bit of air into the function of surplus enjoying. The *o*-object is what you all are in your serried ranks – so many miscarriages of what has been, for those who engendered you, the cause of desire. And this is where you have to resituate yourselves in it, as psychoanalysis teaches you. Please do not (15) bore me by telling me that I would do well to point out to those who are agitating here and there that there is a world of difference between the miscarriage of the upper bourgeoisie and that of the proletariat. After all, the miscarriage of the upper bourgeoisie, *qua* miscarriage, is not obliged constantly to drag around its incubator with it. There remains the claim to situate oneself at a point that is supposed to be all of a sudden illuminated, illuminating, and which could manage to budge these relations. It should not all the same be raised to the point to which a person – a little memory that I pass on to you – pushed things, a person who kept company with me for two or three months of what is customary called the madness of youth. This

ravishing person told me, "*I am of pure proletarian stock*". We will never entirely finish with segregation. I can tell you that it will only start up again even stronger. Nothing can function without it – what is happening here, the *o* in a living form, miscarriage that it is, manifests that it is the effect of language.

This is a parenthesis.

Be that as it may, there is in every case a level at which things do not work out, the level the effects of language have produced, since no child is born without having to deal with this traffic through the mediation of those dear people called his progenitors who were caught up in the whole problem of discourse, they too, with the previous generation. And it is at this level that things would have to be questioned. If you want something to work – of course in the final term things never work, as I have emphasised often enough – it is certainly not by being progressive, it is simply because things cannot stop working. If they do not work there is a creaking where things raise questions, namely, at the level of the putting into place of something that can be written as *o*, over against something described as 'to educate'. Has that ever existed? Yes, no doubt, and it is the ancients who after all give us the best proof of it, and subsequently over the course of ages, the formal, classical things, in some way copied from them. For us, at the level at which things are happening at the moment, what can be hoped for by this point of auscultation, everything that in the body remains alive, remains as knowledge, this nursing, why not, this look, this cry, this squawking, this bark – what can it do?

I will try to tell you the next time what 'the strike of culture', as I call it, signifies.

**Seminar 15: Wednesday 17 June 1970**

It has to be said: dying of shame is an effect that is rarely produced. Nevertheless, it is the only sign - I have been speaking to you for some time about how a signifier becomes a sign - the only sign whose genealogy we can be certain of, namely, that it is descended from a signifier. Any sign after all can always fall under the suspicion of being a pure sign, that is to say obscene; *vinscène*, dare I say, a good example that will make you laugh.

Dying of shame then. Here, the degeneration of the signifier is certain - certain of being produced by a failure of the signifier, that is being (*l'être*) for death, in so far as it concerns the subject - and who else could it concern? Being for death, that is, the visiting card by which a signifier represents a subject for another signifier - you are beginning to know that off by heart I hope. This visiting card never reaches a safe haven, the reason being that since it bears the address of the dead person this card has to be torn up. *It's a shame (un honte)*, as they say, which should produce a *hontology* [*hontologie*], to finally give it its correct spelling.

Meanwhile, to die of shame is the only affect of death that deserves - deserves what? Deserves it. People have kept mum about it for a long time. To speak about it, in effect, is to open up this retreat, not the final one, the only one on which there depends what can be said honestly about honesty, the honesty that stems from honour - all that is

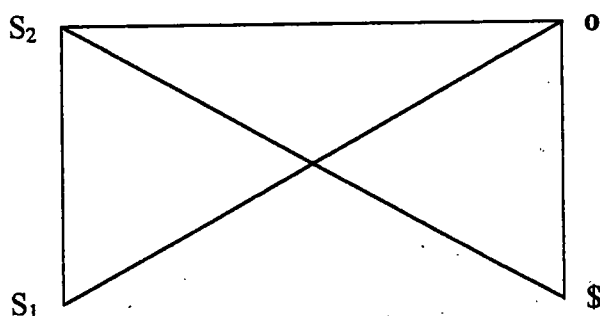
shame and companion of not mentioning shame. Precisely because for the honest man to die of shame is impossible. You know from me that this means the real. *That does not deserve death!*, people say about anything and everything, thus reducing everything to futility. Said in that way, with that aim in mind, it elides the fact that death may be deserved. Now, in fact, it should not be a matter of eliding the impossible, but of being its agent. To say that death is deserved – the time at least to die of shame that there is nothing doing, that it is (2) deserved. If this happens now, well then, it was the only way to deserve it. It was just your luck. If it does not happen, which, given the preceding surprise, is bad luck, then you are left with life as a shame you have to swallow because it is not worth dying for it. It is worthwhile my speaking about it in this way, when as soon as you speaks about it, the *vingt-scènes* I mentioned above are only waiting to take it up again in the form of buffoonery. Vincennes, precisely. It appears they were happy there with what I said, happy with me. It was not reciprocal. I was not very happy with Vincennes. Despite one nice person trying to fill up the front row, *faire Vincennes*, there was obviously no one from Vincennes there, or very few, only the ears most worthy of awarding me good marks. It was not quite what I was expecting, especially since my teaching had been, it appears propagated there. There are times when I am aware of a certain hollowness. But anyway there was nonetheless just what was needed to show the point of agreement between *Minute* and *Les temps modernes*. I only mention it because, as you will see, this touches on our topic today – how to behave with regard to culture? Sometimes a tiny thing is enough to throw a glimmer of light, here a memory that I do not know how I myself became aware of. Once you remember the publication of a certain tape-recording in *Les temps modernes*, the relationship with *Minute* is striking. Try it, it is fascinating, I have done it. You cut out paragraphs in the two journals, you stir them around a bit, and you pull them out. I assure you that except for the paper, you will not be able to find your bearings so easily.

This is what allows us to take up the question in a different way than on the basis of the objection that I made earlier in touching on things in a certain tone, with a certain word, for fear they might be carried away by buffoonery. Let us start rather from the fact that buffoonery is already there. Perhaps by mixing in a little shame, who knows, we may be able to hold it back. In short, I am playing the game that you understand me because I am addressing you. Otherwise, there would rather be an objection to your understanding me, since in many cases, it prevents you from hearing what I am saying. And this is a pity, because the young among you, at least, have moreover for quite a while now been well able to say it without me. For that, all you are lacking precisely is a bit of shame. That may come. Obviously it is not found under a horse's hoof, and still less under that of a hobbyhorse, but the furrows of the *alethosphère* that, as I said, take (3) care of you, and even *Soyuz* you alive as you are already, would perhaps already be enough shame to take on board. You should recognise why Pascal and Kant fluttered around like two valets playing Vatel to you. Truth has been missing up above for three centuries. The meals have nevertheless arrived, reheated a go-go, even a musician from time to time, as you know. Do not look so sour, you have been served, you can say that there is no longer any shame. These pots which made you wonder what I was at, when I said they had no mustard in them – well then, quickly, make provision in them for enough shame, so that when the festivities begin, there will be no want of seasoning. You will tell me: *What is the benefit of shame? If that is the reverse of psychoanalysis it is of very little use to us.* My reply to you is: *You have enough of it to give it away.* If you don't know it yet, do a *tranche*, as they say. You will see this stale air of yours, at every step, coming up against the shame of upper-crust living. That is what psychoanalysis discovers. With a bit of seriousness you will see that this shame justifies itself by not dying of shame, that is, by maintaining with all your energy a perverted discourse of the Master, which is the University discourse.

I say: *Rehegellate yourselves!* Last Sunday I returned to this blessed lampoon called *Phenomenology of spirit*, wondering whether I had not misled you the last time in dragging you through the reminiscences that I was enjoying myself with. Not at all. It is mind-blowing. You will see there, for example – vile consciousness is the truth of noble consciousness. And it is delivered in such a way as to make your head spin. The more ignoble you are – I did not say obscene, there has been no question of that for a long time – the better it will work. That really clarifies the recent reform of the university, for instance. Credits (*unités de valeur*) for everyone! Having the baton of culture, of a bloody marshal too, in your rucksack, plus some medals, like beasts at a show, will pinpoint you as having what is boldly called mastery. Wonderful! You will have it in bucket loads! To be ashamed for not dying of it would perhaps lend it a different tone, that it involves the real. I said the real and not the truth, because as I already explained to you last time, it is tempting to suck the milk of truth, but it is toxic. It sends you to sleep, and that is all that is expected of you. I advised a charming person to re-read Baltasar Gracian, who, as you know, was a Jesuit living at the cusp of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century. He wrote his great works at the start of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. In fine, it is here that the view of the world that we are used to came to birth. Even before science climbed to our zenith, its coming was sensed. It is curious, but that is how it is. It should even be recorded for any truly experimental appreciation of history, that the baroque which suits us so well – and (4) modern art, whether figurative or not, is the same thing – began before, or just at the same time as, the initial steps of science. In the *Criticon*, which is a sort of apologue in which the plot of Robinson Crusoe, for example, can already be found – the majority of masterpieces are the crumbs of other unknown masterpieces – in the third part, on the descent into old age – since he takes this graph by ages – in the second chapter we find something called *the truth in labour* (*la vérité en couches*). Truth is in labour in a town that is inhabited only by beings of the greatest purity. This does not prevent them from taking flight, in a blue funk, when they are told that truth is



child's work. I wonder why I am asked being to explain this, when it was someone else who found it for me – for, in truth, I was not the one who located it – unless you did not come to my last seminar, because this is precisely what I was saying at it. It is here that one has to hold fast, because, if you want your remarks to be subversive, take care that they do not get bogged down too much on the path of truth. What I wanted to articulate the last time, by putting on the board these things that I cannot keep drawing every time, is that the  $S_1$ , the master signifier that constitutes the secret of knowledge in its university situation, is very tempting to stick to. You remain caught up in it.



What I am telling you, and perhaps this is all some of you will be able to retain from this year, is to focus on production – on the production of the university system. A certain production is expected of you, and it is a matter, perhaps, of obtaining the effect of substituting a different one for it. On this point, simply by way of a stage, of a relay, and because I put them down as a marker of what I had stated before you last time, I am going to read three pages to you. I apologise to those people on whom I have already tested this. These three pages are a reply to this curious Belgian who asked me questions that held my interest sufficiently for me to wonder whether I had not dictated them to him myself without knowing it. He certainly deserves credit for that. Here then is the charmingly naïve sixth one, *In what respect are knowledge and truth* – everyone knows that I have tried to show how these are stitched together, these two virtues – *incompatible?* I say to him, *To express myself as it comes to me, nothing is incompatible with truth: we piss on it, we spit on it. It is a place of passage, or to put it*

*better, of evacuation, of knowledge, like everything else. One can stick to it permanently, and even be infatuated with it: there are some depraved people. It is worth noting that I warned the psychoanalyst (5) about connoting as love this locus he is engaged to through his knowledge. I am telling you straight away: you do not marry the truth, there can be no contract with her, and even less an open liaison. She does not tolerate any of that. Truth is firstly seduction, and that in order to screw you. In order not to be taken in, you have to be strong – which is not the case with you. Thus shall I speak to psychoanalysts, this ghost that I hail, even that I haul, to the joy of all of you who throng in here at an invariable hour and day, for as long as I have been sustaining for you the wager that the psychoanalyst understands me. It is therefore not you that I am warning; you do not run the risk of being bitten by the truth; but who knows, if my phantasy comes alive, if the psychoanalyst takes up my baton, at the limits of the hope that this does not happen, I warn him; this commonplace that you have everything to learn about truth destines you to get lost in it. Everyone knows something about it, that will do, and he would do well to stick with that. It would even be better to do nothing with it. There is no more treacherous instrument. We know how a – not the – psychoanalyst ordinarily gets out of it; he leaves the thread of this truth to the one who is already concerned with it and who, in this capacity, truly becomes his patient, in return for which he worries about it as if it were a hex. Nevertheless, it is a fact that some people, for some time, have made a whole business of feeling themselves more concerned by it. This is perhaps my influence. I have perhaps played some part in this correction. And it is precisely what makes it my duty to warn them not to go too far, because if I have got it, it is by seeming not to touch it. But this is precisely what is serious, moreover, of course, people pretend to be somewhat terrified by it. It is a refusal. But a refusal does not exclude collaboration. A refusal itself can be such.*

With those listening to me on the radio and who do not, as I was saying before, have any obstacle to understanding what I say, which is to hear me, I now go further. That is why I am reading it to you, because if I can say it from a particular level of the mass media, why not also make the attempt here? And then, these initial responses that have so bewildered you here, and which, it seems, got across much better than people think on the radio, have confirmed the principle I adopted, and which is along the line of things that today I would like to bequeath you. It is one of the methods by which one can act on culture. When one is caught up by chance in a large audience, one of these masses that a type of medium gives you, why not precisely raise the level, in proportion to the presumed ineptitude – which is pure presumption – of this field? Why lower the tone? What sort of mob are you trying to (6) gather? The game of culture is precisely to engage you in this system, namely, if the goal is reached, a cat will no longer be able to find its kittens. Here then, and even though it can be quite well said in this room, I am saying how remarkable it is that there has not been noticed my formula of the supposed subject of knowledge, which is put at the source of transference.

*The supposed knowledge from which, I say, the psychoanalysand constructs the transference, I did not say that the psychoanalyst is supposed to know the truth any better. Think about it, and you will understand how adding this complement to it would be fatal for the transference. But equally, do not think about it, if understanding it, precisely, would prevent its effect from remaining true. I take on board the indignation at the fact that someone dresses up what I am exposing about the little knowledge out of which transference does the work. It is up to her to furnish it with something other than the armchair that she says she is ready to sell if I am right. She leaves no way out, simply because she does not limit herself to what she has at her disposal. The psychoanalyst only holds up by not having the slightest flaw in his being. The famous non-knowledge that people mock us over is dear to his heart only because he, for his part, knows nothing.*

*He will have nothing to do with the way of unearthing a shadow in order to pretend it is dead meat, by having himself classified as a hunting dog. He is penetrated by his discipline by virtue of the fact that the real is not initially there to be known – it is the only dike that can contain idealism. Knowledge is added to the real; this indeed is why it can bring the false into being, and even into being a bit there. I Daseine with all my might on this occasion, we need help for this. To tell the truth, it is only when it is false that knowledge is preoccupied with truth. Any knowledge that is not false could not care less! In being established itself there is only its form as a surprise, a surprise of dubious taste, moreover, when by the grace of Freud, it speaks to us of language, since it is only a product of it. Here is where the political incidence occurs. There, what is at stake, is the question: out of what knowledge does one make law? When you discover it, it may happen that it changes. Knowledge falls to the rank of symptom, seen from another angle. And that is when truth arrives. For the truth, one fights, which all the same only happens because of its relationship with the real. But the fact that it happens is much less important than what it produces. The effect of truth is only a fall of knowledge. It is this fall that constitutes production soon to be taken up again. The real for its part is neither better nor worse off as a result. In general it shakes itself off until the next crisis. Its momentary benefit is that it has re-found its lustre. This might even be the benefit that could be expected from any revolution - this lustre that would shine in this long-time, always murky, locus of truth. Except that here you have it, people have always been hoodwinked by this lustre.*

This is what, the day after the last seminar, I had thrown into a corner – for you obviously, since it is no longer a question of adding it to my (7) little radiological raft. In this respect what has to be understood is the following: what is appalling about truth is what it puts in its place. If you look at my little four-lettered schema, the locus of the Other is designed, as I have always said, for truth to be inscribed there, that is to say, everything that is of that order, the false, even the lie – which

does not exist except on the foundation of truth. This, in the free operation of speech and language. But what about truth in this quadrupedal structure which presupposes language, and takes discourse as structured, namely, conditions any speech that may be produced therein. What does it put in its place, this truth that is at stake, the truth of this discourse, namely, what conditions it? How is it that the discourse of the master holds fast? It is the other face of the function of truth, not the open face, but the dimension in which it is made necessary as a debt for something hidden. Our furrows of the *alethosphère* are traced out on the surface of the long deserted heavens. But what is at stake, is what I one day described, using this word that has tickled enough of you for you to wonder what came over me – the *lathouse*. I was not the one who invented this dimension of truth, that it is hidden, that it is *Verborgenheit* that constitutes it. In short, things are such, that it makes us think that it has something in its belly. Very soon, there were clever little creatures who noticed that if that came out it would be terrible. It is probably, moreover, so that it looks better on the landscape. Now, it is equally possible that this is where the entire thing is, that it would be terrible if it got out. If you spend your time waiting, then you are done for. In short, you must not tease the *lathouse* too much. To engage oneself in it is always to guarantee what? What I spend myself explaining to you – guarantee the impossible, in that this relationship is effectively real. The more your quest attaches itself to the side of truth, the more you uphold the power of the impossibles, which are those that I respectively enumerated for you the last time – governing, educating, analysing in this case. For analysis, in any case, it is obvious. The supposed subject of knowledge scandalises people when I simply approach the truth. My little quadrupedal schemas – I tell you this today as a warning – are not the turntable of history. It is not necessary for it always to pass by way of them, and for things to turn in the same sense. They are only an appeal to you to take your bearings in relation to what can be called radical functions, in the mathematical sense of the term. As regards functions, the decisive step is taken somewhere around this epoch that

I designated earlier as regards what is in common between the initial step of Galileo, the emergence of integrals and differentials with Leibniz, and then the arrival of logarithms. A function is something (8) that enters into the real, which had never entered there before and which corresponds, not to discovering, experimenting, circumscribing, detaching, extracting, but rather to writing – writing two orders of relations to exemplify what logarithms come from. In one case, the first relation is addition. Addition is all the same intuitive. There are things here, things there, you put them together, and you get a new set. The multiplication of the loaves is not the same as putting the loaves together. It is a matter of one of these relations being applied to the other. You invent the algorithm. It starts to run wild in the world, according to little rules that seem to be unimportant, but do not believe that the fact that they exist leaves you, any of you who are here, in the same state as before they emerged. Their presence is what is important.

Well then, I am telling you that these more or less winged terms,  $S_1$ ,  $S_2$ ,  $o$ ,  $\$$ , can be used in a very large number of relations. You simply have to familiarise yourself with the way they are handled. For example, starting from the unary trait, in so far as you may be happy with it, you can try to question yourself about the functioning of the master signifier. Well, it is all together usable, if, by simply properly grounding it structurally, you notice that there is no need to rely on any of the great comedy of the struggle to death for pure prestige and its outcome. Contrary to what has been concluded by questioning things at the level of true nature, there is no contingency in the slave's position. There is the necessity that, in knowledge, something is produced that plays the function of master signifier. You cannot of course prevent yourself dreaming, or trying to find out who was the first to do it, and then, one finds the beauty of the ball going back and forth between master and slave. But it was perhaps simply someone who was ashamed, who pushed himself forward, like that. Today, I brought you the dimension of shame. It is not easy to put forward. It

is not one of the easiest things to speak about. That is perhaps what it really is, the hole from which the master signifier springs. If it were, it would perhaps be of some use for measuring how close you have to get to it if you want to have something to do with the subversion, indeed even just the circulation of the Master's discourse. Be that as it may, one thing is certain, you have this introduction of the  $S_1$  within your reach in the least discourse – it is what defines its readability. There is, in effect, language and speech and knowledge, and all that seems to have worked in the Neolithic era, but we have no trace that any dimension called reading existed. No need yet for any writing or any (9) impression, not that it was not there for a long time, but in some way, by a retroactive affect. How is it that we can always ask ourselves, in reading any text, what distinguishes it as readable? We have to look for the joint in terms of what makes the master signifier. I would point out to you that in works of literature, you read nothing but incredible things. Why then do they hang together? I do not know. It happens in my last *faux pas* – I adore them. I happened to read *The reverse side of contemporary life (L'Envers de la vie contemporaine)* by Balzac. That is really is something incredible. If you have not read it, it does not matter that you have read everything on the history of the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup>, the French Revolution to call it by its name. You may even have read Marx, you will understand nothing about it, and there will always be something that escapes you, which is to be found only there, in this story that will give you the sweats, *The reverse side of contemporary life*. Please consult it. I am sure that not many of you have read it. It is one of the least read of Balzac's works. Have you read it, Philippe? You haven't read it. Neither have you! You see! It's crazy! Read it, and do some homework. Do exactly the same as what about a hundred years ago, I tried to get the characters I was speaking to at Sainte-Anne to do about the first scene of Act One of *Athaliah*. All they heard were the quilting points (*points de capiton*). I am not saying that it was an excellent metaphor, in fact it was this  $S_1$ , the master signifier. God only knows what they made of this quilting point, they even took it off to *Les*

*temps modernes* – which is, all the same, not *Minute*. It was something of a master signifier. It was a way of asking them to give an account of how something that is spread throughout language like a trail of powder, is readable, that is to say that it catches on, creates a discourse. I still maintain that there is no metalanguage. Everything you may think is of the order of seeking the meta in language is always simply a question about reading. Let us suppose, pure supposition, that I am asked for my advice on something in which I have only been involved with from my position in this place – it has to be said a rather peculiar one, and it would astonish me if this were to make an open book of my place with respect to the university. But anyway, if others, wherever they come from, and for reasons that are not at all negligible, but which appear all the more clearly when you refer to my little letters, find themselves in the position of wanting to subvert something in the order of the university, where can they look? They can look in that quarter where everything happens under a little baton, where their little (10) crowd can be put, and then others are dominated, which is in the nature of the progression of knowledge. Here it can be glimpsed that there might be a knowledge of how to live with it. Since that time it has been like a myth. I am not here to preach that to you. I have spoken to you about the shame of living.

If they look in that quarter, they may find that with my little schemas they can justify the fact that it is not out of place for the student to feel that he is a brother, as they say, not of the proletariat but of the sub-proletariat. The proletariat is like the Roman *plebs* – they were very distinguished people. The class struggle perhaps contains this little source of error at the start that it absolutely does not happen on the plane of the true dialectic of the Master's discourse. Class struggle is to be situated on the plane of identification – *Senatus Populusque Romanus*. They are on the same side. And the whole Empire includes the others into the bargain. What is at stake is to know why students feel that they belong with *all the others*. They do not seem to be able to see clearly at all how to get out of it. I would like to point out to



them that an essential point of the system is production – the production of shame. That can be translated – it is impudence (*impudence*). That is the reason why it would not be a very bad thing not to go in that direction. In effect, to designate something that is very easily inscribed in these little letters, what is produced? Something cultural is produced. And when you follow the university route, what is produced is a thesis. This order of production is always related to the master signifier, but not simply because you are awarded it, quite simply because it forms part of the pre-suppositions that everything of this order is related to the name of an author. It is very refined in the university. There is a sort of preliminary approach which is on the threshold of the university. You will have the right to speak there, subject to this strict convention that you will always be pinpointed by your thesis. This gives your name its weight. Nevertheless, you are in no way bound afterwards to what is there in your thesis. Usually moreover you are satisfied with it. But it does not matter, you can say whatever you want once you have made your name. It is what plays the role of a master signifier. Can I say – because I would not like to give too much importance to what I have done – that this is how the idea came to me of a thing that you have not heard much about for some time, *Scilicet*. Some people all the same were struck by the fact that I said that it would be a place where things would be published unsigned. You must not think that mine are either. Look at what I wrote there – it sings all alone about a painful experience, the one I had with what is called a school, to which I had contributed some propositions so that something would be inscribed in it, which moreover has not failed to be inscribed, some effect of catalepsy. The fact that it is signed by me would only be of interest if I (11) were an author. I am not at all an author. Nobody dreams of this when they read my *Ecrits*. It had for a very long time remained carefully confined to an organ that had no other interest than to be as close as possible to what I am trying to define as a calling into question of knowledge. What sort of disaster does analytic knowledge produce – that is what was in question, what has been in question as long as

they did not get the itch to become authors. It is very curious that the non-signed appears paradoxical, whereas all the same, over the centuries, every decent man that has ever existed behaved, at least, as if someone had torn his manuscript from him, as if someone had played a dirty trick on him. He was not expecting to be sent congratulatory notes when it came out!

In short, if something could come out of a serious calling into question of the knowledge that is lavished and propagated in the established framework of the university, there is no reason why it cannot be done in a little shelter, a place like this, that would adopt the same law for itself, namely, not to present something so as to give someone importance, but so as to say something structurally rigorous, whatever may become of it. This could have a greater impact than one might initially expect from it. Someone called Diderot brought out *Le neveu de Rameau*, allowed it to fall out of his pocket, someone else took it to Schiller, he knew very well it was by Diderot. Diderot never worried about it. In 1804 Schiller passed it on to Goethe, who immediately translated it, and up to 1891 – I can tell you, because here is the volume, which I searched out in my library – we only had a French re-translation of the German translation by Goethe, who had moreover completely forgotten it a year after it had appeared, and who perhaps had never seen it, for they were in the middle of a Franco-Prussian row, and people did not take well to this revolutionary intrusion. In short, this translation went unnoticed. Goethe himself was no doubt unaware that it had come out, and this did not all the same prevent Hegel from making it one of the sinews of this booklet so full of humour to which I have referred lately, *The phenomenology of the spirit*. So as you see, there is no need for you to worry that what comes out of you, carries the label of what you are concerned with. This is a damned awful obstacle, I assure you, to the publication of something decent – if only because of the fact that even within what (12) you may be naturally interested in, you feel obliged, in the name of the laws of the thesis to refer it to the author: he is talented, it is far

fetches, he has no ideas, what he says is not totally stupid. And if he has contributed something important that in no way concerns him, you are absolutely required to think that he has a great brain. That sort of thing can screw you up for a long time. As for psychology, it is striking that there is no shadow of it in things that are enlightening, like *L'envers de la vie contemporaine* that I was telling you about earlier. It is a little *montage* that gets its value from its master signifiers, which is worthwhile because it is readable. No need in the least for psychology. To spell it out for you, to get myself out of jail, what saves the *Ecrits* from the accident that befell it, namely, that it was immediately read, is that it is all the same a "worst-seller".

I am not going to prolong any further today, in this heat, this discourse which is the last that I will give this year. It is clear that there are a lot of things missing in it but it is surely no harm to specify the following: if, to talk like Hegel, there are, for your presence here, in such numbers, which has so often perplexed me, reasons that are less than ignoble, this is obviously a question of tact, as Goethe would say. I do, it would seem, not too much but just enough – if this phenomenon takes place, which is frankly incomprehensible, given what I put forward, for the majority of you, it is just that: I manage to make you ashamed, not too much but precisely enough.