Seminar 14: Tuesday 21 May 1974

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

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

To intervene gives rise to the notion of act. It is also essential to think out, this notion of act, and to demonstrate how it can come to consist in a saying. At one time, as they say, I thought I should point out that
the analyst, not only operates by the word alone, but is specified by
only operating with that. Refusing this intervention on the body, for
example, which passes by the absorption, in any form whatsoever, of
(212) substances that then enter into the chemical dynamics of the
body, for example medications, as they are called, good. The point
that I am at in it, is simply something, the circuit, is that not so, it is
the circle that you see drawn here. The fact is that there is a link – but
it is a matter of knowing what one, between sex and the word. It is
clear that sex involves the duality of corporal structure. A duality
which is reflected in a cascade, as one might say, about the duality for
example of the soma and the germen, on the opposition between the
living and the inanimate world, etc.

Is the notion of duality enough to homogenise everything that is two?
You see right away that this is not true. The simple enumeration that I
carried out, is that not so, of the duality of corporal structure, of the
duality of the soma and the germen, of the opposition between the
living and the inanimate world, ought to be enough for you to see that
this polarity, to call it by its name, in no way homogenises the series
of poles that are at stake, is that not so. It does not in any way suffice
to ensure that the notion of world, or universe, is correlated to this
unthinkable thing which is the subject, in so far as it is supposed to be
what? The reflection, the consciousness of the aforesaid world. And
this by reason of what I will call the pathos of meanings. There is no
need to marvel at the fact that there is a being to know what? The
rest, is that not so, and it is obviously from all time that the metaphor
of the sexual relationship has been cherished for this patent duality.
Patent, but specified, local, distinct from other dualities. Hence the
accent given to the word ‘to know’, (connaître), hence also the idea of active and passive, without one being able to know moreover in this polarity described as the subject and the world, where is the active, where is the passive. There is no need for an active for the pathos to subsist and attest itself in our lived experience, as they say, is that not so. We suffer. That is what is at stake when we are dealing with (213) analysis. We act also in order to get out of it, of this suffering, and on occasion, we put a lot into it. It is a matter of knowing what our two persons, as they say, namely, two animals situated by a very specified political organisation that I called a discourse, it is a matter of knowing what is the saying of an exchange ritualised in words, and what is called, what is supposed to be at stake in this exercise, namely, the unconscious.

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

So then what I want to say, is that unconscious knowledge, the one Freud supposes, is distinguished from this knowledge in the Real in such a way, that whatever of it there is, even science manages to make this knowledge providential, namely, something, a subject, guarantees it as harmonic. What Freud puts forward – but I note in passing that it is not all – is that it is not providential, that it is dramatic. Arising from something which starts from a default in being, a disharmony between thought and the world, and that this knowledge is at the heart of this something that we name ek-sistence, because it insists from outside and it is disturbing. It is in this sense that the sexual relationship shows itself in the individual – whom I am not the only one to characterise as a speaking being, is that not so – shows itself to
be disturbed. This in contrast with everything that seems to happen among other beings. It is even from this that there has come the distinction between nature and culture. And very specifically this nature, as I might say, we must indeed characterise as not being as natural as all that. Because from where we are living, nature is not indispensable (ne s'impose pas). For us what is indispensable, is a different mode, a different mode of knowledge, a knowledge which is in no way attributable to a subject who is supposed to preside over its order, who is supposed to preside over its harmony, and it is in this that, first of all, in my first statements, to characterise Freud's unconscious, there was a formula that I find...—that I came back to on several occasions—that I find I put forward at Sainte-Anne, which is the following: that God does not believe in God.

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

The knowledge of the unconscious is completely contrary to instinct, namely, to what presides, in short, not simply over the idea of nature,
but over every idea of harmony. It is inasmuch as, somewhere, there is this break which ensures that the most natural thing, as one might say, the one that appears from our point of view, when we look, indeed animals, are completely differently, objects in the world: we construct on this all the extrapolations that we can. What we note is something which seems to produce something between two bodies which indisputably is completely different, moreover, among most species, than the relationship of the body described as masculine to the one that is acknowledged as feminine. Namely, that there is in sum between these two bodies, I would say very little resemblance, while among animals, what is striking is the degree to which male and female – let us say the word to go quickly and to indicate my thought – are narcissistic.

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

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

So then what is at stake when the last time, I recalled to you the four terms, the four punctuations, the written punctuations of the identification that I would call on this occasion not ‘sexual’ but ‘sexed’, when I recalled that the Borromean knot allowed there to be situated each of these writings in which something that can be mapped out starting from the primal knot. This knot that I showed you as best I could with these rings, the rings of string that I held in my hand, in the four quadrants that they determine, that they determine starting (216) from a first flattening out, and from a first flattening out in that two of these rings must – and I said two and not the same ones, not the same since moreover, if it were the same it would come back to the same place. Namely, that there must be two of them, two different ones for us to be able to reach a quadrant that is homologous to the first that was flattened out. I thought I was able, able at that moment to show you on the board in a way that was obviously risky, since, as
you were able to see – and to my great exasperation – I became entangled in it, is that not so. I became entangled in it because, a curious thing, there is in sum, this is what this experience signifies, there is something of the... of the still not mastered in – you know it, I pointed it out to you, I remind you – of the still not mastered in what is of the order of knots. It is strange, it is singular, even though already something was able to be put forward about it, that the Borromeo knot had been identified to the plait of six movements, six, and not three, as it might seem to be able to appear there. It is already something, and today what I am showing you... to put... to refer to what I already marked for you, already wrote, already wrote as being the simplest form, the simplest form of the Borromeo knot which is very exactly the following, namely, the one where there is nowhere a third ring, the third ring here being represented only by a straight line that you will allow me to suppose to be infinite. It is an altogether capital and even illuminating supposition in itself, I would say. Illuminating in that it is very well known, it is the first remark that any elaboration of knots, that of Artin, for example, whose volume you know perhaps – some of you in any case have surely got hold of it – that of someone like Artin who says the following: the fact is that there is only a single way on a simple line to affirm that the knot (217) cannot be unknotted, it is either one thing or the other: either the two ends in effect stretch to infinity, which makes it impossible not to recognise anything whatsoever that is formed in a knot, or the two ends are connected, in which case it can be checked out whether or not it is indeed a knot.

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

[Diagram: Fig. XIV-2]
straight line, this straight line of which the knot consists, the Borromean one on this occasion, and which is specified by the fact of crossing the knots, I would say, in a way that cuts the first inasmuch as the first cuts the second, which at the same time requires alternation, namely, that it will cut the first and will be cut by the second that it encounters in so far as it is itself within the first ring and that it will then cut the blue ring twice just as it will be cut twice by the green ring, the blue ring and the green ring being distinguished by the fact that it is the blue ring that cuts the green ring.

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

On the other hand, it is enough for this infinite straight line to be joined end to end in a ring, to express ourselves in a way that does not imply any geometrical shape but simply a consistency, for us the very fact that we give it the consistency of a ring, there appears something which is of the order of orientation, not on what I called just now this straight line that all of a sudden I turned into a ring, but in the knot itself, for you see – marked it for you each time by a correspondence – (218) that it is by the fact that the individual specified here as being orange or yellow, it is by the fact that it is flattened out in the form of
a ring, it is by this fact and by none other, that there appears here this orientation that I can call laevogyratory. If I force myself to follow the direction that each of the three indicates to me, outside of a knot that they make, while from the other side, the rings appear quite differently namely, here dextrogyratory. It is in so far as here we have the things under this form that we can say that what, in the other, is presented under a certain mode is precisely, in the other form, inverted.

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

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

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

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To illuminate very quickly, as best I can, no more, this lantern, I would say that the Symbolic, I would put forward that the Symbolic is of the order of the One, this One that, the last time, I already put forward to you as constituting in the logical order that our friend Boole tries to construct as being the universe. I pointed out to you at the same time that there is something disputable in this; for to make (220) the universe something of One is already to posit a hypothesis over against this and along the very line that Boole proceeds in posing the formula:

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

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

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

In other words, that if there is signifier – and signifier is not sign. The signifier is distinguished from the sign in the fact that we can make the sign circulate in an objective world. The sign is what goes from the emitter to the receiver and which to the receiver gives a sign of the
emitter. But it is quite otherwise in the form of what I called the message received in an inverted form that the signifier is posited as what it is in so far as it has a relationship to another signifier that it gives rise to a subject, namely, in its configuration. What is suggested by this, is that in so far as something which is designated in Boole by an \( x \), something is precipitated as signifier, this signifier is in a way stolen, subtracted, borrowed from phallic enjoyment itself. And it is in so far as the signifier is the substitute for it that the signifier itself is found to create an obstacle to there ever being written what I called the sexual relationship, I mean something which was the supposed to be able to be written \( xR \) and then \( y \). Namely, that in no way can there be written in a mathematical way what is involved in what is presented as a function with regard to the phallic function itself. I mean that it is in so far as what is written is:

\[
\exists x . \overline{\Phi} x
\]

negation of the phallic function itself and completely opposite that there is no such thing, namely,

\[
\overline{\exists x . \overline{\Phi} x}
\]

that there does not exist an \( x \) to deny the function of \( x \), to be opposed to it, and that inversely I introduce at the level of the Universal this something which, sticking to the phallic function, is characterised on the one hand by a universal quantifier, an inverted capital \( \forall \) – you know that this is how it is written:

\[
\forall x . \overline{\Phi} x
\]

but in the other, it puts a negative bar, namely, it says that there is somewhere a function that is distinguished from it by being ‘not-all’ (\( \text{pas-toute} \)).

\[
\overline{\forall x . \overline{\Phi} x}
\]

Not all, what does that mean? The least that can be said is that there are two of them. It is in the measure where at the level where there is articulated this ‘not all’, there is not only one enjoyment. Here do not go too quickly, here do not go too quickly and do not start supposing
that what I am distinguishing, is something or other like that which sexually would correspond to this so called division of enjoyment called clitoral from an enjoyment called vaginal. That is not what is at stake. What I am talking about is this distinction that must be made between phallic enjoyment in so far as in the speaking being it predominates and that it is from there that there has been stolen the whole function of significance. That there is a distinction to be made between this prevalent enjoyment in so far as it creates an obstacle to what is involved in the sexual relationship, that there is a distinction to be made between this enjoyment and that which, alongside – I introduced it to you the other day, I think sufficiently with what was involved in the tree, the tree described as that of science, of the science of Good and Evil – there is the fact that undoubtedly the animal, the animal is distinguished by subsisting not simply in a body, but that this body as such is only identified, only has identity, not as (222) has been said from all time traditionally, of thought, of this something or other which by the fact that it thinks would make it be, but from the fact that it enjoys itself. I mean that there is not only this apperception, apprehension, sensation, pressure, touch, sight, or any other mode of appropriation through the senses, it is only in so far as it consists and that it consists in a body, what is at stake is an enjoyment and an enjoyment which is found according to our experience to be of a different order than what is involved in phallic enjoyment.

This is how I began from the beginning of my teaching by authenticating, by making original from the imaginary relation, made reference to what I would call the homology, the resemblance, precisely this part which is so hesitant, when it is the speaking being that is at stake, the homology of bodies. That in the animal we must clearly note that phallic enjoyment whatever it may be does not have the same prevalence, does not have the same weight, the same weight in a way of opposition that it has with respect to enjoyment in so far as two bodies enjoy one another. This is the break through which there is damaged, as one might say, in analytic experience everything that is
organised about love. That if one speaks as I said, I recalled it earlier, if one speaks about the knot, it is to make an allusion to the embrace, to the hug. But very different is the way in which there irrupts into the life of each one this enjoyment which, either belongs, as one might say to one of the bodies, but to the other only appears in the form, as I might say, of reference to another as such, even if something in the body can give it a slight support, I mean at the level of this organ which is called the clitoris.

It is in so far as we must conceive of the Symbolic as stolen, subtracted from the order One of phallic enjoyment and in so far as the relationship of bodies qua two, by this very fact, cannot but go by way of the reference, the reflection onto something which is different to the Symbolic, which is distinct from it, and it is to know what here and now appears of the three in the slightest writing. What language in a way sanctions, is the fact that in its formalisation it requires something other than the simple homophony of the saying. The fact is that it is in a letter, and that is why the signifier shows, shows this precipitation through which the speaking being can have access to the Real. It is inasmuch as from all time every time it was a matter of (223) configuring something which is supposed to be in a way the encounter of what is emitted, of what is emitted as a complaint, as a statement of the truth, every time it is a matter of everything that is involved in this half-saying, an alternating, contrasting, half-saying, an alternating chant of what leaves the speaking being separated in two halves every time this is what is at stake, it is always, it is always from a reference to writing that what can be situated in language finds its Real, and it is inasmuch as I will try to push further for you this reference to the Real, to the Real as third, that I will leave that for today, apologising for not having been able to advance further.
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Seminar 5: Wednesday 8 January 1974

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

So then let us start from this, let us start from something that I do not hold to particularly: namely, that words have a meaning, and that it is a fact, whatever the problem may be, starting from this fact, of knowing where to lodge them. This indeed is what I have done, lodge these words of course, I must all the same chew things for you, this indeed is the effort that I made, that I made the last time, starting from
(78) love. It is a fact that I started from the fact that the word exists.
And this is why the thing, the thing is to be conceived as possible.
Which is expressed in my saying (mon dire) by the fact that the thing,
the love thing, is founded, that it is only founded — since it is simply a
matter of its possibility — it is founded as I said by ceasing to be
written. Namely, on what remains from the fact that it ceases to be
written. What remains of it, I articulated since the time, since this
almost infinite time for me, that I have been repeating myself, namely,
the letter d'(a)mur. The letter d'(a)mur in so far as, in fact, it
constitutes nothing other than a pile (tas). A little pile, a petit a of
habits, not much more. At least this is how I read, translated into
Italian, my famous object with which this petit a of the letters
d'(a)mur has only of course the slightest of relationships.

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

What does decanting (décantage) mean on this occasion? It is
properly — and this is why the metaphor of decanting can be sustained
here — it is properly about the condensation of what, in terms of
meaning, is concentrated by this discourse from the fact that meaning
— the meaning of words — are only a garb (appareil) for what we will
call if you don’t mind nothing more than sexual coitus. This is what is

Cardinal = The measure of the size of a set that does not take into account
the order of its members.

Ordinal = A set if which every member is also a subset (a transitive set) that
contains only itself and elements
new in analytic discourse. And this indeed is what must be said, if indeed it is what, from this discourse is necessary, it is only necessary in this – and that is why I inflect in this way the meaning of necessary – that its characteristic, in this discourse, is that this discourse does not cease to write it.

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

And in this way it can be glimpsed, at the limit, that language for its part is not made of words; for it is the link by which the middle establishes this unity between the first and the last which only has to be broken for the meaning to disappear; this indeed is what shows that language is not made of words, and how what is called – for it is this and nothing more that is called a proposition – a proposition is at least a relative effacing – I am saying that: ‘at least relative’, to facilitate your access to things – it is the effacing of the meaning of words. Which is not true of the tongue, la langue as a jingle, you know that I write it in word, la langue if it, is made up of meaning, namely, how,
through the ambiguity of each word, it lends itself, it lends itself to this function that meaning trickles down in it. It does not trickle down in your sayings. Certainly not. Nor in mine either. This indeed is why, this indeed is why meaning is not reached so easily. And this trickling down of which I speak, how imagine it? Make no mistake. How imagine it if it is a trickling that little cups finally bring to a halt? For the tongue is that. And this is even the meaning to give to what ceases to be written. It would be the very meaning of words, which in this case is suspended. This is how the mode of the possible emerges from it. That when all is said and done, something which has been said ceases to be written, this indeed is what shows that at the limit everything is possible with words, precisely on this condition that they no longer have a meaning.

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

It is obvious that the (aiman) in it, if I may express myself thus, is the love of the neighbour in so far as it is sustained by emptying love of its sexual meaning. It is in ceasing to write the sexual meaning of
the thing, that one makes it, as is tangible, that one makes it possible. Namely, in so far, it must indeed be said, as one ceases to write it. Once the thing, love, has happened it is obvious that it is starting from there that it imagines itself necessary. This indeed is the meaning of the love letter, which does not cease to be written but only in so far as it preserves its meaning, namely, not for long.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

You must clearly sense that it is by ranking them in threes, qua cardinal number - I beg your pardon for the aridity of what I have to say to you today - this, which is proper to the three, implies no

CARDINAL NUMBER: 1. A NUMBER of the form of a set that does not take into account the order of its members. Cf. ONE, 2820

AND INDEX NUMBER ARE CARDINALS.

3. Namely, the smallest ordinal number that is exponent to a power set.
ordination. No matter how it seems to you, namely, that 1, 2, 3, begins with 1 – no matter how it appears to you, it is not possible to (83) properly order 1, 2, 3 on this simple condition that it is repeated, and this is what happens in the Borromean knot. But it is not simply because of the Borromean knot, it is because of the cardinal numbers 1, 2, 3 whether they are knotted or not.

What does that mean, what I have just said?

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

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

I turn this knot over. What is that going to give us? What is proper to a knot, when it is flattened out, an essential dimension. Because the Borromean knot, I think I pointed it out to you when I showed you a
little construction in cubes that I brought I no longer know what time, the last time or perhaps the second last time – is made like that: and to avoid the headache of making these little interruptions it should be noted that it is completed by this, this is what constitutes it, it has in, let us say, the three planes on which my little construction was situated, it has on the three planes, complete symmetry, you see

(84) clearly that here this one is to be put, to make clearly sensed as being underneath the one that cuts it, it is from a flattening out that there comes from the other writing that I gave of the Borromean knot. What is to be said of it from the moment when, having flattened it out, I turn it over? There must be by the simple fact linked to the fact that the writing implies that the ‘over-crossing’ [English], the croyement supérette should be written in this way, namely, that it cuts what is the ‘under-crossing’ the croyement par en dessous, what is that going to give if we turn it over? What was not underneath comes on top. Well then, I think that it will not be necessary for me to complete, to complete these three strokes, for you to clearly see that, by turning over the knot, the Borromean knot, what you are going to find when all is said and done, is something which is distinguished from the fact that it is not its mirror image, that you are going to find, of course, as it would be, for example, for the orientation of each of these circles, if you orientate them, I am not going to go into it yet, if you orientate... any circle whatsoever, if you turn it over, what you have is its mirror image. Far from it, when you turn over the Borromean knot,
(83) you have a... a completely different aspect which in no case represents the mirror image of the first aspect. Far from the direction, the orientation as it is defined, for example very simply, by a watch, make no mistake, the clockwise direction, if you turn over the watch, become the inverse direction, namely, the mirror image. On the contrary, Borromean knot remains what it is when it has been turned over, namely, that the second image, the turned-over image, is exactly in the same direction as the first, namely, laevogyratory. You clearly count on the fact that there can be another direction, namely, this one, which would be dextro, namely, the clockwise direction.

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

Since I use the word quality which is a feminine noun, should I say that their quality is une, it would be a good opportunity to set out here around this one what is involved in terms of une if we take it as

qualificative. Does lalangue, lalongue in so far as it has a meaning, does lalongue allow un and une to be considered equal? Is une not a different mode of un? It must be said that this would be a rather comic angle to make duality re-enter at the level of the one. Yad'hir, I said, but also when I said it that it is that with which there is founded what? Uniquely – it was the meaning of what I put forward at the end of my seminar last year – uniquely the numerable, namely, \( x_n \), and nothing more, namely, what says it is a One, but in so far as saying 'it is a One', is to cut it off from any ordination. It is to take it – and this is what only Cantor permits – under its purely cardinal aspect.

Certainly, you will tell me, it can only do it – if in fact you were to say something to me – it can only be done by alienating its unity in the set, as a result of which the elements preserve nothing more of this unity, except that of being open to the fact that one can count them, namely, subjective computation: which does not prevent the objectivity of the one, I will say, only giving rise to a question by the fact that it is surely not without an answer. And this answer is precisely why I state that it is in the three.
What does the 3 make of the 1, if there is no 2? Is it simply because there are 3 of them, $X_e$ is already there? It is certain that if I state that there is no 2, because this would be to inscribe at the same time in the Real the possibility of the relationship as it is founded from the sexual relationship, is it not only through the three and as I wrote it the other time on the board by the difference between one and three that there proceeds this 2, is it – all of this brings us to asking the question – it was required, for us to take this step, that $X_e$ ceased not to be written? In other words that it is contingency, the happening of Cantor’s saying that alone allows us to have a glimpse of what is involved, not in (87) number, but of what constitutes in its ternarity the relationship of the Symbolic, the Imaginary and the Real. Must we then from the contingency of this saying of Cantor go to the necessary of the fact that this $X_e$ no longer ceases to be written, that it no longer ceases henceforth to be written in order that there should subsist what? Nothing other than a notion of truth.

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

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

**NODALITY**

1. A point at which two or more branches of a graph meet.
2. Another word for a vertex of a tree, network or digraph.
Seminar 6: Wednesday 15 January 1974

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

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

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

Only there you are. The originality only displaces the order, namely, that what ex-sists, is what is supposed to be original. It is starting from existence that we find ourselves questioning again what is involved, what is involved in supposition. A simple displacement, in short. And what I am trying, what I am trying to, what I am trying to do, this year, huh, with my non-dupes, is to see what one must, in short, be a dupe of for all of that to hold together, and for it to hold together in a consistency. And that is why I am introducing this ternary, or more exactly that I notice that by starting, because of having started from this ternary, of the Symbolic the Imaginary and the Real, I ask a question, or more exactly, since for every question, for every question it is from the answer that it started...from the answer which, in maintaining, in maintaining as distinct, the Real, makes us ask the question: where is this knowledge situated, this unconscious knowledge that...which we are worked over by in the analytic discourse. It is quite certain that it is the discourse that makes us stick, the psychoanalytic discourse, that makes us stick to this knowledge in a way that has no precedent, has no precedent in History.
Dementia does not close to the written

clear not to be written

The care bears the danger. There on the centripet
... here... personal attention...
(However, it's either that, or the hope for the
greatest break through in the 19th century)

The kinds of... are to
- Darwin
- Darwin...

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

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

$$\exists f. (x, y)$$

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

In stating that, I must all the same take off from something which is

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

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

For it to have ceased not to be written, it must be possible, and up to a certain point it remains so, since what I am putting forward, is that it has ceased to be written. Why would that not begin again? Not only
is it possible, it is possible that one might write \( f(x,y) \) but it is clear that people have not deprived themselves of it. To demonstrate the impossible then, one must take one’s foundation elsewhere. Elsewhere than in these precarious writings since after all, they have ceased, and that from the moment they have ceased, one might believe that it can start up again. This indeed is the relationship between the possible and the contingent.

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

Since as regards what is involved in order, well then one can say that it is indeed what, up to the present, has not been lacking, namely, that it is in order to establish order that people support everything that has been able to be put forward about the relationship described as sexual. It is true that as regards this order, people have got their paws in a bit of a tangle in it, and that it is certain that it is not the same, it is not the same order, in any case, that is established, that is established by what analytic discourse puts forward, or appears to put forward, about what concerns the sexual relationship. The order 1, 2, 3, well, there is a 1 that comes first, and it is not by chance – we do not know moreover which comes first – it is not by chance that it is the 1, since the second (93) seconds it and that the third simply results from their addition. This gives a sequence that has been qualified as natural. Which leaves us something to ponder on. Which leaves us something to ponder on all the more because the last time I remarked to you that in writing them in a sequence, the privilege of these first three, in fact it is enough to take them in reverse for every order to be possible. It is enough in effect that there should be 1, 2, 3, or 1, 3, 2, this is what I mean by taking them in reverse, for the six other ways of arranging the 1, 2, 3, to be possible.
The idea of a successor, is that not so, and that, in terms of successor there is only one, only one in the natural sequence of numbers, this is an idea that was only separated out rather late, which is rather curious, because it really seemed it was the most tangible, the most real thing there is about the natural sequence. Why should there not be a multitude of successors? It is not self-evident. We have a crowd of examples, that of the tree in particular, of the tree that we encounter everywhere, towards our descendants as towards our predecessors, why should the idea of a successor be inherent to a privileged sequence of successors being founded on the fact that there is only one of them?

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

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

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

These are also images. But it must be said, they are less well grasped. The fact that I talk about grasping, Begriff, begrifflich implies a (95) reference to what is well grasped, namely, solid. The supple is less well grasped, if you take it in your hand. The idea, the idea that grounds topology, mathematically defined, is to tackle what is involved from the fact that it supports, it is topology which, here, supports, it is not a subject that is supposed to it; what topology supports, the idea, is to tackle it without an image, not to suppose to them, not to suppose to these letters, as they ground topology, not to suppose to them anything but the Real. The Real in so far as it does not add... - do you notice that this term is still excessive, since it evokes addition – as it does not add, to what we are able to distinguish as the Imaginary, this suppleness linked to the body, or as Symbolic, the fact of denominating the neighbourhood, the continuity, that it only adds something, the Real, and not from the fact that it is third, but from the fact that all of them make up three. And that this is all the Real they have, nothing more. I mean each and every one. It is the only Real they have. This does not seem much, but it is not nothing.

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

You are the patients, first of all, because, it is already in the tongue. There is no tongue in which the three is not stated. It is in the tongue, and it is also in the functioning that is called language, namely, the logical structure such that, quite naively, in fact, the first one who began in that, for example – the first as far as we know, of course – the first as far as we know, namely, Aristotle, in fact, the one whose writings we have precisely, he had to manipulate the thing with little letters, and it cannot be manipulated without there being three of them. Apart from the following, of course, apart from the fact of course that there remained something of the supposition of the Real, and that he did not believe he could support this Real by any other thing than the particular, the particular which he imagines is the individual, while precisely, in situating it in logic as particular, he clearly shows that of the individual, he only had... a quite imaginary notion. The particular is a logical function and that he gave it as a support to the individual body is very precisely, in fact, the sign that he needed a supposition. A saying that supposes nothing, except that the triple is the Real, I said triple, namely, three, not third, it is in this that there consists the saying that I am constrained to put forward through the question of non-relationship, of non-relationship in so far as it specifically touches what is involved in the subjectifying of the sexual. My saying consists in this Real, in this Real which is what the three insists on, insists to the point of being marked in the tongue.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Even Aristotle did not object to that! First of all how could he, huh? To say no man is a woman would have been really cheeky, especially in his time! So then he didn’t do it... if he had said every man is not a woman... Huh? Well then you see, huh, you see the meaning that takes on: that of an exception, there are some of them who are not. It is as all that he is not a woman. Here, the \( \forall \) of the quantifier, huh, the quantifier of \( x \), full stop, and \( y \) barred:

\[
\forall x. \bar{y}
\]

(All \( x \) is not \( y \)\) or \( x \) not \( y \) and \( x \) woman)

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

\[
\exists x. \bar{y}
\]

(There does not exist an \( x \) so that there is no \( y \))

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

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

(99) So then this unconscious knowledge is not supported by the fact that it insists, but by the traces that this insistence leaves. Not of the truth, but of its repetition in so far as it is qua truth that it is modulated. Here I must introduce what grounds neighbourhood as such. Neighbourhood as such is founded on the notion of open. Topology immediately plays this card. It is on sets as open that it is founded. And this indeed is why it tackles, it tackles from the correct angle the fact that the class does not close. Namely, that it accepts the paradox, the paradox which is only a paradox because of predicative logic, namely, that if logic simply renounced being, namely, if propositional logic were purely and simply crossed out, there would be no problem, the problem, if there is one, the problem designated as paradox, being simply this: that the class Man is not a man. All the paradoxes come down to that.

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

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

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

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

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

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

It is a curious thing, the plait, is only produced from the fact that it imitates the male speaking being, because it can imagine him, it sees him strangled by these three categories that suffocate him. He is the
only one who does not know it up to then. She sees him imaginarily, but it is an imagination of his unity, namely, of what the man identifies himself with. Not of his unity as unconscious knowledge, because unconscious knowledge remains rather open. So then, with this unity, she completes a plait. To make a Borromean knot, as I told you, six gestures are necessary and six gestures thanks to which, thanks to which they are in the same order, except for the fact that precisely, nothing allows them to be recognised. That indeed is why one must make six of them, namely, exhaust the order of permutations two by two, and know in advance that one must not make more, otherwise one makes mistakes. This indeed is why, in fact, a woman is not at all necessarily trained (dressée), so that it is not at all necessarily with the same element that she completes the round when all is said and done. That is even why she remains a woman, among others, because she is defined by the plait that she is capable of, well then, this plait, it is not at all inevitable that she knows that it is at the end of six that it holds together to make a Borromean knot. It is not at all sure that... she knows either that the three has a relationship to the (101) Real, she may lack the distinction, so that it makes a knot, as I might say that is still more knotted, from a unit still more one. In the best case, huu, in the best case, it may be that... it only makes one, of cord, of ring of string when all is said and done. It is enough for you to imagine, is that not so, that the 1, 2, 3 joins up with 2, 3, 1. This will make a still more beautiful (beau) knot, if I can express myself thus, is that not so. I mean that everything is continued in everything, and after all, it nonetheless remains a knot, because if you have made a plait, that inevitably gives something, something which knots inevitably at least two, and if two of the strands join up, well then, that will make something that will be knotted or not knotted to the third. That is not where the question lies. The failure, as I might say, of this affair, namely, that by which the woman does not exist, is indeed how, the very thing by which she manages to succeed the sexual union. Only this union is the union of one with two, or of each one with each one, each one of these three strands. Sexual union, as I might say, is
internal to its threading (filage). And this is where she plays her role, by clearly showing what a knot is, it is that by which man for his part succeeds in being three. Namely, because the Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real are only distinguished by being three, quite crudely. Namely, that... without her subject discovering itself, it is starting from this triplicity by which a woman, sometimes, reaches her success by failing it, namely, by which she is satisfied as realising in herself sexual union, it is starting from there that the man begins to grasp, by a little common sense, the idea that a knot is of some use.

I told you that the hysterics make the man. But it is as formed by the hysterics that man starts from the idea, the first idea, the right one, the one that leaves him a little chance, starts from the idea that he knows nothing. Which is moreover her own case, because she makes the man. She does not know that sexual union only exists in her and by chance. She knows nothing, but the man finds himself due to the backlash noticing this knot. And that gives in him a second result which is quite different in short: it is that by refusing his open knowledge, at the same time, he closes it. He constitutes the correct Borromean knot. He accedes to the fact that the only Real is the 3, he knows, he knows that, he knows that when he speaks to say nothing, but to obtain effects, that he imagines with all his force that these effects are effective, even though they go round in circles, and that he supposes the Real, as is appropriate, since supposing it involves (102) nothing, nothing except preserving his mental health. Namely, to be in conformity with the norm of man, with the norm of man which consists in the fact that he knows that there is something impossible and that, as was said by this charming woman, in fact, that I quoted for you already: 'Nothing is impossible for man, what he cannot do he leaves'. This is what is called mental health. In particular never to write the sexual relationship in itself, except in the lack of his desire, which is nothing but its squeezing in the Borromean knot. This is why I expressed for the first time, some time ago, but there are people that have only noticed it now, I was able to affirm – it
is true that it is someone who, who only had notes, anyway to inform himself: ‘I ask you to refuse what I offer you because it is not that’.

Not what I desire that you to accept, nor to arrive at anything whatsoever of this kind, because I am only dealing with this knot itself.
Seminar 7: Wednesday 12 February 1974

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

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

So then now, I am going to talk to you a little, today, trying to remain on the note of what I was hoping. What I was hoping to tell you, was in short, it was something, let us say, in general, like that, whose aim, anyway, you can give it the title that you wish – whose aim was to tell you, to tell you the difference (this is what appeared to me, this is what appeared to me important in what I am trying to bring you this year) to tell you the difference between the true and the Real.

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

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

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

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

It would be good if someone, if someone managed to make the effort,
in short to read, to read for example, just this, which is the second
volume of this Organon, to read what is called – what is called, it is
because it has been entitled that, it is also a title that came later, it is
called Prior analytics – managed to read, not of course in a first
impression, because someone who might read it in a first impression, simply, will not understand it any more than on the whole, anyway you understand what I am talking about, namely, not a lot... The thing that someone must absolutely manage to do some day, is precisely to get to know well enough the difference between what Aristotle said and what has been transmitted. In fact, those who have sifted out the thing to see well enough in it the difference by seeing the degree to which Aristotle opened things up and how he opened things up and why not, even the places where he slipped up, where he twisted his ankle, where... it's a whole world! Yeah...

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

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

And what renders it tangible, what renders it tangible, is that it is... these compartments, is that not so, these... that he fills as he can with these, for example these three words that I have just said: man,
animal, and living being, is that not so, he can moreover put anything whatsoever, is that not so, the swan, blackness... in fact anything else, the white... the white is found everywhere, we do not know what to do with it; it is made manifest in what I called his clearing of the ground, that these terms, his whole effort, is precisely to be able to do without them. Namely, that he empties them of meaning, and he empties them of meaning in this way that he replaces them by letters, namely, α, β, γ, for example, instead of my first three terms, there that I extracted for you, which are in Aristotle... he says is that not so, it only begins to take shape starting from the moment when he will announce that all β... all α is β, all γ is β... no, all β is γ, as a result of which everything will be γ. In other words, he proceeds by way of being able to qualify two of these terms, those that make the connection, of middle, as a result of which he will be able to establish a relation between these two extremes. That is why at the start, from the start, it can be felt that it is not the true that is at stake. Because it matters little that such an animal should be white or not, everyone knows that there are black swans – des cygnes c-y-g-n-e-s - the important thing is that something should be articulated thanks to which there is introduced the Real as such.

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

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

(108) Aristotle what? Shows clearly that the true, is not at all what is in operation. Thanks to the fact that he clears the ground, that he opens up the business of his science that I am calling the Real, of the
Real, namely, of the three, at the same time he demonstrates that he only gets to the three by opening things up by means of writing, namely, that from the first steps in the syllogism, it is because he empties these terms of all meaning by transforming them, by transforming them into letters, namely, into things which of themselves mean nothing, this is how he takes the first steps in what I called the science of the Real.

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

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

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

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

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

If some of you remember what I put forward, structured, as the discourse of the master, they can read in it, if they are capable of reading something, they can read in it that the truth of the master, is nothing other than the subject. For the deaf I recall that the discourse of the master is this: with here two arrows and here two arrows like that, and here nothing at all: $S_1 \rightarrow S_2$

\[
\begin{array}{c}
S \\
\uparrow \\
S \\
\downarrow \\
o
\end{array}
\]

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

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

For that, it must be that the $S_2$ has nothing to do with the true saying.

In other words: that $S_2$ is Real. And if you are following me in what I tried to open up, in my first stammerings in this seminar, you will

$S_2$ is knowledge - it is a figure that we should call knowledge the real $S_2$ is knowledge (in contrast) as opposed to scientific knowledge.
conceive that $S_2$, this is what I wrote in my schema of the analytic discourse, that $S_2$, namely, knowledge *qua* unconscious, is what flows in the groove of the true saying. What I am in the process of telling you does not mean nothing! It means that it is a Real, there is some knowledge that even if there is no subject who knows it, remains being of the Real. It is a depot. It is a sediment that occurs in everyone when he begins to tackle this sexual relationship to which of course he will never get, whatever education he is given, because if there is indeed something which will in no way improve the situation, the situation of the relationship, it is indeed everything that you can bullshit them with on the subject of what this relationship might supposedly be.

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

There will all the same be something that will be imprinted, namely, not three, because the three is always veiled from some side, the three steals away, the three is the support, there will be $S_2$, $S$ *index* 2, 2 S’s, two signifiers $S$ which will be imprinted, and which will give along
the path of pure chance, namely, of that which, above all, was missing in the relationships with those who were there to preside over what is called his education, his formation, he will form this knowledge, this indelible and at the same time absolutely not subjectivised knowledge, he will form for himself this Real knowledge, imprinted there somewhere, imprinted just like in Aristotle, the α, the β and the γ, and this is what will be the unconscious and there will be nothing else, huh, as was said by the character going through customs: “That’s food for my goat”. To which the customs man says: “Listen, that’s amazing, because they are braces (bretelles), no?” The other answers: him: “Anyway, that’s how it is, and if she didn’t have that, she would have nothing else...” It is the same for unconscious knowledge: as truth, there will be nothing other than these braces.

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

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

So then, because in some cases unconscious knowledge is lame – not only is it lame, but it clearly creates an obstacle for the sexual
(113) relationship being established. So then, in those cases, one is
dealing with the necessity of going by way of the analytic discourse,
namely, one has the need to speak true, and especially to suspect a
little what bad company speaking true keeps. Namely, that everything
that comes to muddy, disturb, good God, the calm and tranquil
discourse that we usually have to deal with, which grounds the
normal, namely, that what comes to muddy these perfectly well
established discourses, never brings out anything except cases, cases
where there is a need, in short of a psychoanalysis, namely, the cases
of truth.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

And then in connection with this he says something true: but, if I may say so it is indeed a risk, you are going to see what he says about the true,
...the object of supposition is not the genus of the object of opinion and to say the object of opinion is not identical with a certain object of supposition (for the meaning is the same in the two judgements), instead of the expression that has been stated, it would be better to posit as terms...

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

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

What is the object of opinion?

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

In the order of the Real we are all the time forced to suppose. We are forced to suppose, in fact those crazy things: spirit, matter too, sometimes, and even some other things of the same kind, is that not so, which are luckily a little bit closer to us, but which are nonetheless suppositional. Here I am trying to proceed along a path where I am not making suppositions, where I do not suspect anything of being suspect. Since supposition, has that aspect. Yes.......in Aristotle, he called that *hupokeimenon* sometimes, but there, in that case it is something that can only be translated into Latin by *suspicabile*, it is to *hupolepton*, it is the suspect (*la soupçonnable*).
Of course, the suspect is very respectable, like the rest, is that not so, this is what we must suspect as being Real, and that takes us very far, that leads to all sorts of constructions. The important thing would perhaps be to remain with simply what the science of the Real allows there to be affirmed, namely, that the kernel of all of that is above all logic, namely, what has never succeeded in advancing by a step, by a quarter of a step, by the tip of its nose, huh, except by writing. Which is already something.

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

It is presented decently because it has the place to be deployed but that does not prevent it easily being the object of all sorts of deviations. You will note in it for example, that it is very easy to find in it, for example the three planes of reference of Cartesian co-ordinates. And this indeed is what is fallacious about it. Because the Cartesian co-ordinates, are all the same something quite different, they are something which by the very fact that they imply the surface as existent, is that not so, are at the source of all sorts, of all sorts of fallacious images: the *more geometrico* which sufficed throughout the centuries to guarantee many things a supposedly demonstrative character, comes entirely from that.
(116) The fact that, the fact that the fallacious character of the surface, is that not so, is demonstrated by the fact that when you try to join it up with this apparatus here, you obtain, what constitutes the – for some time, anyway, I think for you – the sigilum of what is involved in the Borromean knot, namely, the joining at which the three rings are knotted together. And where they are knotted, in fact, in a way which is properly speaking concise, namely, the one, the way, which allows it for example to be seen that that is how it is squeezed, in fact, huh. And there you are: that is how you must conceive that the...that the knots are connected up to define this something which is a completely definition of the point: namely, the point where the three rings are squeezed together.

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

There is a thing somewhere, I must find that for you, I am going to find it for you right away, at...at page 68 still the page number of the manuscript... There is something unbelievable. I note – I spoke to you earlier about...about 'all A is B', 'all B is γ' and about what is

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deduced from it that 'all A is γ'. He questions himself apparently about what results from that, by inverting the conclusion, namely, for example to say that 'all γ is α'. He shows its overwhelming consequences, namely, that the conclusion must be put at a different place, namely, at the place of a major or of a minor in order for it to culminate properly speaking at a conclusion that is the one that inverts one of the premises. Good. All that seems to be unimportant and nevertheless it certainly is not unimportant, because it is on this occasion that there begins to emerge something else, namely, the qualifications that are applied to every kind of being.

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

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

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

So then, Δ what have we said, that, that the... what?... ah! yes!

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

Good, so then it is obvious that α namely, to be disposed, which
stands in Aristotle for loving him, is that not so – it is obvious that the
object of love A, is to be loved, is to be disposed to grant his favours
to him, this is what, in Aristotle, is perfectly well designated in this
text (I would ask you to consult it), is described as *philesthai*.

Good, to love, is then *philein*.

What is at stake for him is to demonstrate the following: after this
passage concerning the whole conversion, and quite especially the
conversion of predicates which concerns every being – what is at
stake is that if one starts from that, is that not so, that the conjunction
of this A with this B, namely, to be loved by the partner – a partner
who does not grant you his favours – if one posits that this is
preferable to the contrary combination, is that not so, namely, that he
grants his favours without for all that loving you, he demonstrates
that, if one posits this – it is the object of his demonstration – there
results from that at the end love, A, is something, if one posits it here,
is that not so, the result is, what seems in effect inevitable to be
admitted, that the *suneinai* is worth less than the *kharixesthai* namely,
this good disposition which testifies to being loved. The emergence, in this place, and in a way that is all the more problematic in that it is absolutely characteristic of love as homosexual, is a quite striking thing, concerning, as I might say the eruption in the middle of what I defined as being articulated as the science of the Real, as the eruption (119) at a certain point, a point which, I repeat is at 68b to which I would ask you to refer in the Prior analytics, a thing which is truly the irruption of the true, and of the true which is precisely a true to which there is only, when all is said and done, the approach, since the problem we are dealing with is precisely that of a love which, when all is said and done, is of concern only by the mediation of enjoyment, of the suneinai that is at stake, namely, a perfectly localised homologous, homogeneous, enjoyment, in fact, the one that ensures that when all is said and done, if there is, in effect, something that allows the non-existence of the sexual relationship as such, it is very precisely that the homoties is assuredly something like a step in it no doubt, but a step, in a way, that confirms, that supports the non-existence of the relationship [or: that the non-existence of the relationship confirms, supports].

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

But for a woman, things must be taken from a different angle, is that not so. If for a man it goes without saying because enjoyment covers
everything, including precisely that there is no problem concerning what is involved in love, the enjoyment of the woman – and it is on this that I will end today – the enjoyment of the woman for her part, does not go without saying, namely, without the saying of the truth.
Seminar 8: Wednesday 19 February 1974

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Necessary that $p$ does not cease to be written $p$</th>
<th>Possible to cease to be written $(p \lor \neg p)$</th>
<th>Necessary that $\neg p$ does not cease to be written $\neg p$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contingent that $p$ ceases not to be written $p$</td>
<td>Impossible not to cease to write $(p \land \neg p)$</td>
<td>Contingent that $\neg p$ ceases not to be written $\neg p$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Does not cease not to be written

The Real: $p \quad \neg p$

Both are logically unverifiable

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

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

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

That makes a verb, huh: *joue*, you *jouez*, that continues, that holds up to *il joue* and then afterwards it becomes uncertain. We *jouons*, or the verb *jouer* does not hold up. That proves that
one only *joule*’s in the singular. In the plural, it is doubtful, the
*joule* cannot be ‘conjugated’ in the plural. And the fact that there
is no plural does not prevent there being several people all the same
in the singular. There are precisely three of them. This is how there is
recognised the three of the Real, as I have already... tried to get you to
sense: it is three (*trois*), huh, and even *étroit* like *la porte*... So then,
what I did the last time shifted something. What? What I am
claiming, precisely, is that it does not shift the not-all (*pas-tout*).
(123) Something, this not-all. This is even why I am lucky to be
serious... lucky to be serious, because the serious does not squeeze
(*serre*) all. It squeezes the series closely. What I put forward, is the
fact that there is already a logic. And this is even something that may
surprise you. If Aristotle had not begun it, it would not be there
already.

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

Because the funny thing, huh, it is really amusing: no one has ever
asked what knowledge was! Ah! Me neither. Except the first day
when like that, held by the arm, in fact, in this thesis, in this thesis that
between ourselves, huh — where is Francois Wahl? I don’t know but
anyway whatever matter, he is there perhaps, he is perhaps not there, but anyway, if he is there I point out that I promised one day publicly, like that, yielding to a, a tender pressure, that I would re-publish this thesis. I said it, this was enough for them, for Seuil. In order to publish it... naturally they never stopped snapping at my heels at the start, when I brought out the *Ecrits*, so that I would re-publish, this thesis, I said at that time that I did not want to, I have changed my mind, but now they are not in a hurry. In short, after all, what matter, I promised, but if it does not happen, huh, it is obviously not my fault. Anyway, that is all the same how I was nibbled by something, by something which made me slide like that gently... towards Freud. It was something which had here and now, the closest relationship with the question, indeed, that I am formulating today.

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

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

In any case, conscience-less science then, there is someone who said one day – he was called Rabelais, like that he was someone particularly astute, and it is enough to read what he wrote to perceive it. To write what Rabelais wrote, that is why I say: it must be made done (il faut le faire). ‘Science without conscience’, he said, ‘is but the ruin of the soul’. Well then, it is true. Only it is to be taken not as the priests take it, namely, that it works havoc in this soul which as everyone knows does not exist, but that it brings the soul down to earth (ça fait l’âme par terre)! No doubt you do not see that, that I am saying that this brings the soul down to earth, namely, that it renders it completely useless, is exactly the same thing as I have just said to you in saying to you that to reveal the truth to the world, is to reveal the world to itself. That means that there is no more a world than there is a soul. And that consequently, in fact, every time one starts from... from the state of the world, as they say, to highlight the truth in it, you stick your finger in your eye! Because the world, well then, if it is already enough to affirm it, it is a hypothesis that sweeps away all the rest. Including the soul. And that is clearly seen in reading Aristotle; *On the soul*. Just like Hintikka, I strongly advise you to read it.

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

\[ S(a, \alpha) \]

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

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

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

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

There is something in Freud that lends itself to this confusion that was created, when all is said and done, by translating Trieβ as ‘instinct’.

Everyone knows that instinct is... is a knowledge, like that, that is supposedly natural. But there is something all the same which takes a trick, in Freud’s case, which is the death instinct. Naturally, I took a little step further than him. But it is in the wrong direction. He turns around it. He, he for his part is well aware of it. For that you have to read the famous Beyond, yes, by instinct. Everyone knows that instinct is... is a knowledge, like that, that is supposedly natural. But there is something all the same which takes a trick, in Freud’s case, which is the death instinct naturally, I took a little step more than him. But it is in the wrong direction. He turns around it. He, he for his part is well aware of it. For that you have to read the famous Beyond, yes, Beyond the pleasure principle, as it happens. In this Beyond, in short... he worries himself about, how something whose module is to remain at a certain threshold; the least possible tension, that is what suits life, as he says. Only he notices in practice that this does not work. So then he thinks that it goes lower than the threshold.

Namely, that this life that maintains tension at a certain threshold, starts to slacken all of a sudden, and that beneath the threshold, we see it succumbing, succumbing to the point of rejoining death. That is how when all is said and done, he makes this thing acceptable. Life is, it is something that arose one day God knows why, make no mistake, and then which only asks to go back like all the rest. He confuses the inanimate world with death. It is inanimate, that means that it is supposed to know nothing. That means nothing more for whoever gives to the soul its sensible equivalent. But this fact that it knows nothing, does not prove that it is dead. Why should the inanimate world be, why should it be a dead world? That certainly
does not mean very much, but to ask the question has in any case a meaning...

In any case, correlative to this question of the Beyond of the pleasure principle, Freud is at sea in something which is much closer to the question of death, namely, of what it is; he starts, he starts and then he lets the thing drop, and it is very annoying. He starts from the question of the germ and the soma. He attributes it to Weismann. I cannot develop this. This is not quite what Weismann said. The person who started from the separation between the germ and the (127) soma, is a chap who lived a little earlier, and who was called Nussbaum. Moreover, for what you make of it, let us stay with that, it does not have any great importance.

What is important, and what Freud touched on, on this occasion, is that there is only death where there is reproduction of the sexual type. That's all.

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

Where the break is shown by its consequences, is that it is in this connection that Freud, under the pretext that there is something in the world which shows that life sometimes goes towards death, he marries, he marries to it something that is all the same difficult to, to eliminate from sex, which is enjoyment and that, making the slip that he would not have made if he had firmly held in his hands the Borromean knot, he designates as masochism the supposed conjunction of this enjoyment, sexual enjoyment, and death. It is a collapse. Yeah.
If there is a place where the clinic, practice, clearly shows us something — and that is why I congratulated, like that in passing, someone who has since taken the wrong road — if there is something that is quite obvious it is that masochism is a sham (du chiqué). It is a knowledge, certainly, a know-how even! But if there is then a knowledge in which we can put our finger on the fact that that is invented, that it is not within everyone’s reach, it is indeed there! It must be said that the person in question there that I congratulated in passing, was not a clinician, but he had simply read Sacher-Masoch. If it is here that it can be seen, in short, that masochism is invented, and that it is not within everyone’s reach, that it is a way of establishing a relationship there where there is not the least involved between enjoyment and death, it is quite clearly manifested by the fact that, all the same, huh, one only puts the tip of one’s little finger into it, huh, one does not let oneself be seized like that into the machine.

Good.

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

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

Not only does it not make it more sure, but it spoils it. In a world that is neither made nor to be made, a totally enigmatic world, once one tries to bring in this something which is supposed to be modelled on logic, and on which there is supposed to be grounded that in the species described as human one is either man or woman. This is very especially what experience rises up against – and I do not need to go far, someone reported to me, no later than a few hours ago, his encounter with a taxi driver – they’re all over the place, huh, make no mistake – as regards whom not only was it impossible for the person who was speaking to say whether it was a man or a woman, but that she had even asked and he was not able to answer her. When I say that you find that everywhere, huh, all the same, it is no small thing! And it is even from there that Freud starts.

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

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

While on the other side it is about the saying, the formal saying, even though the saying of a non-existent person $x$. Namely, that it is only for every other that the function $\Phi x$ is denied, that negation, let us say, to illustrate, is left, I am not all the same going to say to God, because that pisses us off, this business, this sticking of the Other onto God, but all the same, for anyone who Realises this sort of universality that there is no negation of the function $\Phi x$, and it is the only form of universality of the saying of a woman, whoever she may be. It nevertheless remains – I think that you remember all the same what I wrote on the board, and that I am not going to be required to rewrite here – it nevertheless remains that in this set, it is not every saying that formulates the function $\Phi x$. In other words, that what must be substituted for my little bar that I put over the inverted $A$, the sign of the universal quantifier, the little bar by which I inscribe the not-all, what must be substituted, is the sign of the denumerable, namely, $\aleph_0$, aleph zero.

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

So then, so then. What is involved in knowledge?

Naturally, I have not managed at this time, namely, 1.20, or something like that... 24, I have not managed at this hour, to tell you even a quarter of what I should get into your guts, because that is the function of the saying. If I do not say it to you it is not enough for me to write it, but I am all the same going to give you a little sample of what can be written. Because without this reflection on writing, without what ensures that the saying comes to be written, there is no way for me to make you sense the dimension in which unconscious knowledge subsists. And what you must do as a supplementary step, is to notice that if I make you sensitive by telling you that the unconscious does not discover anything, because there is nothing to discover, there is nothing to discover in the Real, since here there is a hole. If the unconscious, here, invents, it is all the more precious for you to notice that in logic it is the same thing, namely, that if Aristotle had not invented it, the first clearing of the way, namely, to make the saying go into this grinder of being thanks to which he makes syllogisms — naturally syllogisms were made before him, simply people did not know that they were syllogisms. In order to notice it, it must be invented: to see where the hole is, the edge of the Real must be seen.
And since we are already far gone, and I have not managed to say a quarter of it for you — it will have to be ‘too bad’, it will ornament, (131) anyway, what will come subsequently — I must all the same make you sense the import of a certain way in which I open up modal logic.

The best part about it, huh, is that naturally, that as regards constructing, as regards inventing — and you can see there all the intuitionist echoes you wish, if indeed you know what that is. One day I translated the necessary for you, huh, by what does not cease to be written. Good. You should know, there is a trace in Aristotle, that propositional logic, namely, that something is true or false, what is marked as zero or one, according to the case, there is a little trace, there is a spot where Aristotle skids off — I will show you that whenever you like — into the peri hermenetas, as it happens, On interpretation, for those who do not hinder it: there is a spot where it is fused, that propositional logic is just as modal as the others. It is true that if it is true that this is only situated where I am telling you, namely, where contradiction is only when all is said and done an artifice, a deputising artifice, but which for all that remains no less true, the true playing here the role of something from which one starts in order to invent the other modes. Namely, that ‘necessary that: p’ whatever truth it may be, can only be expressed by this ‘does not cease to be written’. Everyone sees between this fact, this fact that something does not cease to be written — you should understand by this that it is repeated, that it is always the same symptom, what always falls into the same fold. You see clearly that between the ‘does not cease to be written: p’ and the ‘does not cease to be written: non-p’ we are here in the artefact that is testified to precisely, and which bears witness at the same time to this gap concerning the truth and that the order of the possible is as Aristotle indicates, connected to the necessary. What ceases to be written is p or non-p. In this sense the possible bears witness to the break of the truth. Except for the fact
that there is nothing to be drawn from it. There is nothing to be drawn
from it and Aristotle himself bears witness to it. He bears witness
there to his confusion at every instant between the possible and the
contingent. What is written here my T towards the bottom: (A)
because after all, what ceases to be written can in short cease not to be
written, namely, come to light as the truth of the business... It can
happen that I love a woman like any one of you – these are the sort of
adventures into which you may slip – this however does not give any
assurance about the sexual identity of the person that I love any more
than of mine. Only there is something that, among all these
contingencies, may well testify to the presence of the Real. And this
(132) is indeed what only advances from the saying inasmuch as it is
supported by the principle of contradiction. Which of course,
naturally, is not the current saying of every day. Not only do you
ceaselessly contradict yourselves in the current everyday saying,
namely, that you do not pay any attention to this principle of
contradiction, but it is truly only logic that raises it to the dignity of a
principle, and allows you, not at all of course to assure any Real, but
to find your bearings in what it might be when you have invented it.

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

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