

THE SEMINAR OF JACQUES LACAN

BOOK XXIII

Joyce and the Sinthome

1975-1976

Translated by Cormac Gallagher from unedited French manuscripts

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Seminar 1: Wednesday 18 November 1975

What I announced on the notice was *le Sinthome*. It is an old way of writing what was subsequently written as symptom.

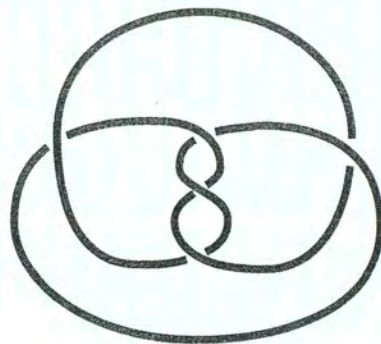


Fig. I-1

If I allowed myself to... this orthographic modification obviously marks an epoch, an epoch that happens to be that of the injection into French, into what I call *lalangue*, my *lalangue*, the injection of Greek. Of this tongue about which Joyce, in *A portrait of the artist*, clearly expressed the wish, no, its not in *A portrait of the artist*, it is in *Ulysses*, in *Ulysses*, in the first chapter, it is a matter of Hellenising, of injecting in the same way the Hellenic *lalangue* into something or other. Since it was not a matter of Gaelic, even though it was Ireland that was at stake, but Joyce had to write in English. That he wrote in English in such a way that – as was said (10) by someone whom I hope is in this audience, Philippe Sollers,

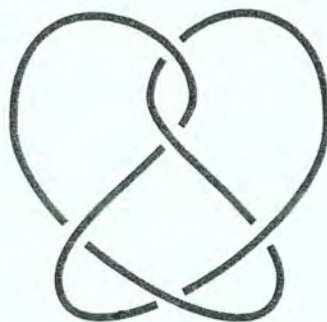


Fig. I-2

in *Tel Quel* – he wrote it in such a way that the English tongue no longer exists. It already had I would say, little consistency. Which does not mean that it is easy to write in English. But Joyce, through the series of works that he wrote in English, added something to it that makes the same author say that it should be written *l'élangues*. That's *l'élangues*. *L'élangues* by which I suppose he intends to designate something like elation. This elation that we are told is at the source of some symptom or other that in psychiatry we call mania.

This indeed in effect is what his last work resembles, namely, *Finnegans Wake* which is the one that he held back for such a long time to attract general attention. The one also in connection with which I put forward at a time, at a time when I had allowed myself to be lured into... by a pressing solicitation, pressing, I should say, on the part of Jacques Aubert here present and still just as pressing, into which I allowed myself to be lured to inaugurate, to inaugurate under the name of a Joyce symposium.

That is why in short I allowed myself to be diverted from my project which was, this year - I announced it to you last year - to entitle this seminar by 4,5 and 6. I have contented myself with the 4 and I am very glad of it, because I would surely have succumbed to 4,5,6. Which is not to say that the 4 in question is any less weighty for me.

I inherit from Freud. Very much in spite of myself. Because I have stated in my time what could be extracted in proper logic

from the babble of those he called his band. I do not need to name them, they are that clique which frequented the Vienna meetings. Not one of them can be said to have followed the path I describe as *properly logical*.

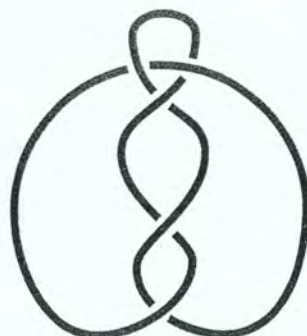


Fig. I - 3

(11) Nature, I will say, to be done with it, is distinguished by being *not-one*. Hence the logical procedure for tackling it. To call nature what you exclude in the very act of taking an interest in something, that something being distinguished by being named, nature, by this procedure, only runs the risk of being characterised as a *pot-pourri* of what lies outside nature.

The advantage of this last proposition is that if you find, in carefully counting it, that to name it is in contrast with what appears to be the law of nature- that there is not in him, I mean in man any naturally (this naturally with every possible reservation) naturally sexual relationship- your are positing logically as proves to be the case that this is not a privilege, a privilege of man.

Be careful however not to go so far as to say that there is nothing natural about sex. Rather try to see what is in question in each case, from bacteria to birds. I have already made an allusion to both. From bacteria to birds because they have names. Let us note in passing that in so-called divine creation - divine only in

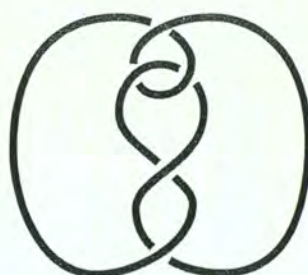


Fig. I - 4

that it refers to nomination - bacteria in not named. Nor is it (12) named when God, fooling around with man, with what is supposed to be the original man, suggests that he begin by saying the name of each little beast. Of what we must call this first arsing around we have no trace unless we conclude from it that Adam was, as his name sufficiently indicates- this is an allusion to the function of the index in Peirce - that Adam was of course, in the joke made precisely by Joyce, a *madame*. And the fact that he named the beasts in her language can be safely assumed because she whom I would call Evie, *l'évie* that I have a perfect right to call such because this indeed is what it means Hebrew - if indeed Hebrew is a tongue- the *mother of the living*, well then, Evie immediately chattered away in this tongue, since after the supposed naming by Adam, she was the first person to make use of it in order to speak to the serpent.

The creation described as divine is thus reduplicated by the chit-chat of the speaking being (*parlêtre*) with which Evie makes the serpent into what you must forgive me for calling an ass-tightener, later described as flaw or even phallus, since one is certainly required to make a *faux-pas*. This is the fault my *sinthome* has the advantage of beginning with, the English sin, that means *péché* means sin, the first sin.

Hence the necessity - I think all the same, seeing you here in such large numbers, that there are some of you who have already heard my old refrains - hence the necessity that the flaw should never cease but always grow unless it submits to the cease of castration as possible. This possible, as I have previously said without you noticing it, because I myself did not note it by not putting in the comma, this possible, I formerly said, is what does not cease to be written, but you have to put in the comma: it is what ceases, comma, to be written. Or rather would cease to take that path if

the discourse I have evoked, which might not be a semblance were at last to arrive.

Is it impossible for truth to become a product of know-how (*savoir-faire*)? No. But then it will only be half-said, incarnated in the signifier S_1 , where there must be at least two of them in order that the unique one, the woman, by always having been mythical in this sense that the myth has made her singular - what is at stake is the Eve of whom I spoke earlier - that the unique one, the woman, by having undoubtedly been always possessed, for having tasted the fruit of the forbidden tree, that of science, Evie, (13) then, is no more mortal than Socrates. The woman in question is another name of God, and this is why she does not exist as I have already said many times.

Here we can note the cunning side of Aristotle, who does not want the singular to play a role in his logic. But contrary to what he admitted in this aforesaid logic, it must be said that Socrates is not a man, because he accepts to die in order that the city may live, because he accepts it is a fact. Moreover on that occasion he does not want a word out of his wife. Hence my formula, which I pick out, rewash [*relave*] as I might say for your use, by making use of the *me pantes* that I picked out in the *Organon* in which moreover I did not succeed in finding it, but in which all the same I am sure I read it, and even to the point that my daughter, here present, highlighted it, and swore to me that she would find the place where this *me pantes* as the opposition dismissed, dismissed by Aristotle from the universal of *pan*, the woman is not all except in the form whose equivocation takes on a piquant quality from the

equivocation in our *lalangue* in the form of *mais pas ça*, as one says anything, *but not that*! This indeed was the position of Socrates. The *but not that*, is what I am introducing under my title this year as the *sinthome*.

There is for the moment, for *The agency of the letter* as it has been currently sketched out - and do not expect anything better, as I said, something that will be more efficacious will not do any better than displace the *sinthome*, indeed multiply it – for the present moment then there is the *sinthome madaquin*, which I write however you like *madaquin* after *sinthome*. [Play on the French form of St Thomas Aquinas)

As you know Joyce had a hard time with this *sinthome*. One should state things clearly: as far as philosophy goes, it has never been bettered. It alone is true. This does not prevent the fact - consult Jacques Aubert's book on this - that Joyce does not find his bearings very well in it concerning something that he values highly, and which he calls the Beautiful. There is in *sinthome madaquin*, something or other that he calls *claritas*, for which Joyce substitutes something like the splendour of Being, which is indeed the weak point of what is at stake. Is this a personal weakness? I do not find the splendour of Being very striking. It is in this respect that Joyce displaces the *Sinthome* from his *madaquinisme*. And contrary to what may appear of it at first glance, mainly his detachment from politics, produces what I would call *sint-home Rule*. This Home Rule which *The Freeman's Journal* depicted rising behind the Bank of Ireland, (14) which makes it, as if by chance, rise in the north west, which is not usual for sunrise. It is nevertheless, despite the grinding that we see on this subject in Joyce, it is all the same indeed the *sinthome-roule*, the *sinthome* on wheels that Joyce marries together.

It is certain that these two terms could be named differently. I named them thus in function of two aspects offered to the art of Joyce, which is going to occupy us this year by reason of what I

said earlier, that I introduced and that I could do no better than to name him, this *sinthome*, because he deserves it, with the name that suits him by displacing in it, as I said the spelling, the two, the two spellings that concern him. But it is a fact that he chooses. In doing so he is like me, a heretic. For *haeresis* is indeed here what specifies the heretic. One must choose the path along which the truth must be taken. And this all the more that once the choice has been made, this does not prevent anyone from submitting it to confirmation, namely, being properly a heretic; the one who because of having well recognised the nature of the *sinthome*, does not spare himself using it logically, namely, to the point of reaching its Real at the end of which he is no longer thirsty. Yes. Of course he did this at first sight. Because you could not have had a worse start than him.

To be born in Dublin, with a drunken and more or less Fenian father, namely, a fanatic, from two families, for this is always how things present themselves for anyone who is the son of two families, when it happens that he believes himself to be male because he has a little bit of a prick. Naturally, excuse my use of this word, something more is needed. But since his prick was a little craven, as I might say, it was his art that supplied for his phallic bearing. And it is ever thus. The phallus is the conjunction of what I called this parasite, which is the little piece of prick in question, it is the conjunction of this with the function of the word. And this is why his art is the real warrant of his phallus. Apart from that, let us say that he was a poor devil and even a poor heretic. There are no Joyceans to enjoy his heresy except in the university. But it was he who deliberately wanted this lot to busy themselves with him. The funny thing is that he succeeded in it. And beyond all measure. It lasts, and it will

continue to last. He specifically wanted it for three hundred years, he said so. *I want academics to be kept busy with me for three*

hundred years. And he will have them, provided God does not blow us to smithereens. This poor devil {*ce hère*} because one can not say *cet hère*, it is forbidden by the aspiration, this does not worry everyone all that much, that it is for that that once says *pauvre hère*, this *hère* is conceived of as a hero. *Stephen Hero*, (15) this is the title explicitly given for the one from whom he prepared *A portrait of the artist as a young man*.

Ah! This is what I would have really wished - I did not bring it, stupidly - what I would have wished you, I would at least have like to have shown it to you, and which being badly informed, I knew that it was difficult, and that is why I am specifying how much you ought to insist. But Nicole Sels, here present, sent me an extremely precise scribble, that's what a letter is called, in which for two pages, she explains to me that it is impossible to get it. It is impossible, at the present time, to get hold of this text and what I called this criticism, namely, that a certain number of persons, all academics, it is moreover a way of getting into the university, the university sucks in Joyceans, but anyway, they are already in the right place, it gives them grades, in short you will not find neither the ..., I don't know how that's pronounced, Jacques Aubert will tell me: is it Beebe or Bibi?

- Ordinarily, one says Beebe.

- You say Bibi? Good, you will not find the Bibi that opens the list with an article on Joyce, that I must say is particularly upper crust, following which you have Hugh Kenner who, in my opinion, perhaps because of the *sinthome madaquin* in question, in my opinion, speaks rather well about Joyce. And there are others up to the end that I regret you do not have at your disposition. In truth, I made a blunder, make no mistake, by putting this little note in small characters, I had them shortened, thank God, that I did this note in small characters. You will have to make arrangements

with Nicole Sels to make a series of photocopies of it for yourselves.

Since I think that, fundamentally, that there are not so many people who are ready, I mean equipped, to speak English and especially the English of Joyce that will only give all the same a small number. But anyway there will obviously be some competition. And, good God, a legitimate competition because *The portrait of the artist* or more exactly *A portrait of the artist*, of the artist that must be written in putting the whole stress on the *the* which, of course, in English is not quite our definite article; but one can trust Joyce, if he says *the*, it is indeed because he thinks that in terms of artist, he is the only one. That in this he is singular.

As a young man, is very very suspect. Because in French, that would be translated by *comme*. In other words what is at stake is the how (*comment*). On this French is indicative. Is indicative (16) because of this, the fact is that when one says *comme*, making use of an adverb, when one says: *réellement, mentalement, héroïquement*, the adjunction of this *ment* is already sufficiently indicative in itself. Indicative of the fact, which is, which is that one is lying (*ment*). There is something of, there is something of a lie indicated in any adverb. And it is not there by accident.

When we interpret, we should pay attention to it.

Someone who is not too distant from me, made the remark in connection with the tongue, in so far as it designates the instrument of the word, that it was also the tongue that carried what are described as taste buds. Well then, I retorted that it is not for nothing that what one says lies - *qu'on dit ment* (condiment). You are good enough to laugh. But it is not funny. Because when

all is said and done, because when all is said and done, that is the only weapon we have against the *sinthome*: equivocation.

I sometimes offer myself the luxury of supervising, as it is called, a certain number, a certain number of people who have authorised themselves, in accordance with my formula, to be analysts. There are two stages. There is one stage when they are like the rhinoceros; they do more or less anything and I always approve them. In effect they are always right. The second stage consists in playing with this equivocation which might liberate from the symptom. Because it is uniquely by equivocation that interpretation works. There must be something in the signifier that resonates.

It must be said that one is surprised, in short, that this has in no way appeared to the English philosophers. I call them philosophers because they are not psychoanalysts. They have a rock solid belief that the word does not have an effect. They are wrong. They imagine to themselves that there are drives, even indeed when they are willing not to translate drive by instinct. They cannot get it into their heads that drives are the echo in the body of the fact that there is a saying. But for this speech to resonate, for it to be consonant with, to use another word of the *sinthome madaquin*, for it to consonate, the body must be sensitive to it. And that it is, is a fact. It is because the body has some orifices of which the most important, of which the most important because it cannot be stopped, be closed, of which the most important is the ear, because it cannot be shut, that it is because of this that there is a response in the body to what I called the voice.

The embarrassing thing is assuredly that there is not only the ear, and that the look is an outstanding rival to it. *More geometrico*, because of the form, so dear to Plato, the individual presents himself as best he can, as a body. And this body has a power of

(17) captivation which is such, up to a certain point, that it is the blind that one should envy. How can a blind man, even if he is able to use Braille, how can he read Euclid? The astonishing thing is something that I am going to state, it is that the form only delivers the sack, or if you wish the bubble. It is something that can inflate itself, and whose effects I have already mentioned in connection with the obsessional who is more set on it than anyone else. The obsessional, I said somewhere, I was reminded of it recently, is something of the order of a frog who wants to make himself as big as an ox. We know the effects from a fable. It is particularly difficult, as we know, to tear away the obsessional from this grip of the look.

The sack, as it is conceived of in set theory, as Cantor founded it, manifests itself, demonstrates itself, if every demonstration is held to demonstrate the imaginary that it implies, this sack, I am saying, deserves to be connotated by something ambiguous between one and zero, the only adequate support for what borders on the empty set that is required in this theory. Hence our notation, capital S index 1, S_1 . I am specifying that that is how it is to be read. This does not constitute the one, but it indicates it as being able to contain nothing, as being an empty sack. It nevertheless remains that an empty sac remains a sac, in other words one which is only imaginable from the existence and the consistency that the body has, that the body has by being a pot. This existence and this consistency must be held to be real, since the Real is to hold them. Hence the word *Begriff* which means that. The imaginary shows here its homogeneity to the real, and that this homogeneity only holds up because of number, in so far as it is binary, one or zero. Namely that it only supports the two from the fact that the one is not zero. That it exists to zero, but in no way consists in it.

Thus it is that Cantor's theory has to restart from the couple, but that then the set is third in it. The junction is not made between the first set and what is the other. This indeed is why the symbol falls back on the imaginary. It has the index 2. Namely, by indicating that it is a couple, it introduces division into the subject whatever it may be from what is stated there in fact (*de fait*). In fact remains suspended on the enigma of stating which is only a fact closing in on itself. *Le fait du fait*, as one writes *le faîte du fait* or *le fait du faîte*, as one says 'equal in fact', equivocal and equivalent and, through this, the limit of the said.

The incredible thing, is that men saw very clearly that the symbol could only be a broken fragment. And that, as I might say, from (18) all time. But that they did not see at that epoch, at the epoch of all time, that this comprised the unity and the reciprocity of the signifier and the signified. Consequently that the signified originally means nothing, and that it is only a sign of arbitration between two signifiers, but by this fact, not arbitrary for the choice of these. There is no umpire to say it in English - this is how Joyce writes it - except starting from empire, from the *imperium* over the body, as all carry the mark from the ordeal [origin?]. Here the one confirms its detachment from the two. It only makes three by imaginary forcing, which requires that a will suggests to the one to molest the other, without being linked to any of them.

Yeah! In order that the condition should be explicitly posited that starting from three rings (*anneaux*) one makes a chain, such that a break in a single one renders the two others, whatever they may be, free from one another. Because in a chain, the middle ring, as I might say, in this abbreviated fashion, brings that about, the freedom of the two others, whatever they may be. It had to be noticed that it was inscribed in the coat of arms of the Borromeans, that the knot, described as Borromean because of

that, was already there without anyone thinking of drawing the consequences from it.

It is indeed here, it is indeed here that there lies the following: that it is an error to think that it is a norm for the relationship of three functions which only exist from one another in their exercise in the being who, by this fact, believes himself to be man. It is not the fact that the Symbolic, the Imaginary, and the Real are broken that defines perversion, it is that they are already distinct (Fig I-5), and that one must suppose a fourth which is the symptom on this occasion. That what constitutes the Borromean link must be supposed to be tetradic, perversion only means turning towards the father, (*version ver le père*) and that in short the father is a symptom or a *sinthome*, as you wish. The ex-sistence of the symptom is what is implied by the very position, the one that supposes this enigmatic link of the Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real.

If you find somewhere, I already drew it, something which schematises the relationship of the Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real, *qua* separated from one another, you have already, in my previous figurations, with their relationship flattened out, the possibility of linking them by what? By the *sinthome*.

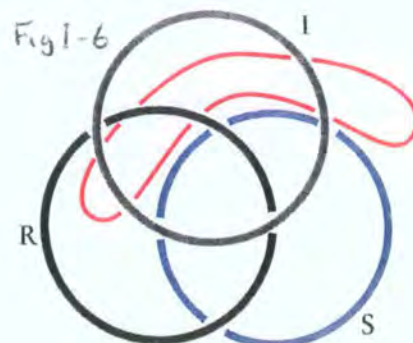
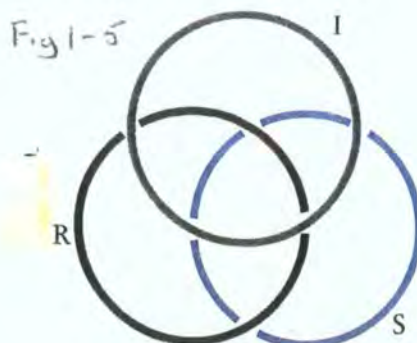
If I had a piece of coloured chalk here.

- What colour do you want?

- What?

- What colour?

- Red. If you don't mind. You are really too kind. You should have this (Fig. I-6 and I-7).



The fact is that by folding back this capital S, namely, what is affirmed by the consistency of the Symbolic, by folding it back, as is plausible, I mean open to us, by folding it back in a way that is traced out thus, you have, if this figure is correct, I mean that sliding under the Real, it is obviously also under the Imaginary that it ought to be found, except for the fact that here, it is over the Symbolic that it must pass. You find yourself in the following position, the fact is that starting from four, what is figured is the following (fig I-7), namely, that you will have the following relationship. Here for example, the Imaginary, the Real and the symptom that I am going to image by a sigma and the Symbolic, and that each one is interchangeable with the others. Explicitly,



Fig. I-7

(20) that 1 to 2 can be inverted into 2 to 1, that 3 to 4 can be inverted into 4 to 3. In a way that, I hope, will appear simple to you (fig I-8).

But because of this we find ourselves in the following situation, the fact is that what is 1 to 2, indeed 2 to 1, since it has in its middle, as one might say, the sigma and the S, must ensure – and this is precisely what is figured here – must ensure that the symptom and the symbol are caught up in such a way – I would have to show it to you by some simple figuration – in such a way that there are, as you see below, that there are four which are, as you see here (fig I-9), there are four which are drawn by the capital R and here, it is in a certain way that the I is combined, by passing above the symbol, figured here, and underneath the

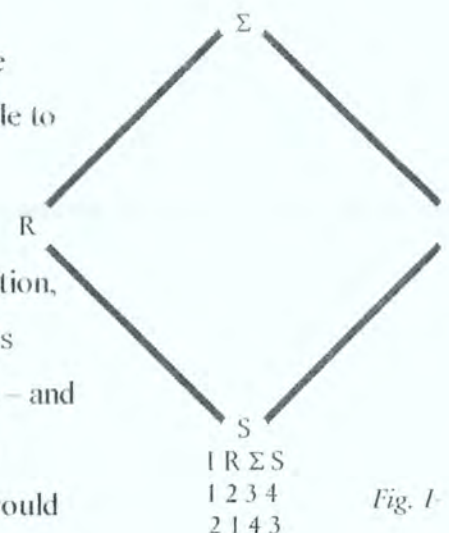


Fig. I-8

symptom. It is always in this form that there is presented the link, the link that I expressed here by the opposition of R to I.

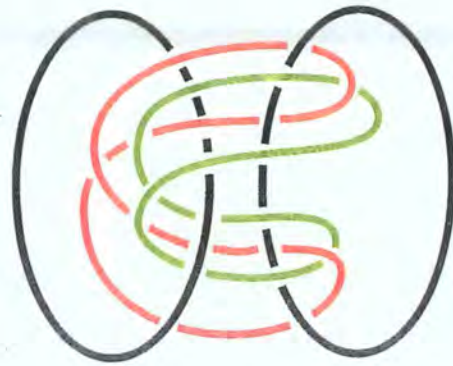


Fig. I-9

In other words, the two symptom and symbol are presented in such a way that here, one of the two terms takes them altogether, while the other passes, let us say, over this one which is below [probably an error by Lacan, immediately rectified] above, and (21) under this one which is below. (fig I-10).

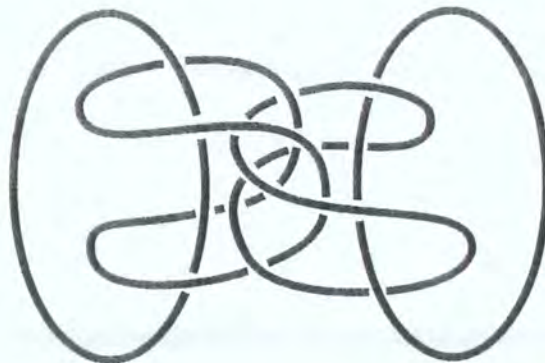


Fig. I-10

This is the figure that you obtain regularly in an attempt to make the Borromean knot of four and it is the one that I have put here on the extreme right.

The Oedipus complex, as such, is a symptom. It is in as much as the name of the father is also the father of the name that everything is sustained, which does not render the symptom any less necessary. This Other that is at stake, is this something which, in Joyce, is manifested by the fact that he is, in short, charged with the father. It is in the measure, as is established in

Ulysses, that he must sustain this father for him to subsist, that Joyce, by his art, his art which is always that something which, from the earliest times, comes to us as a product of the artisan, it is by his art that Joyce does not simply enable his family to subsist but makes it illustrious it, as one might say. And at the same time renders illustrious what he calls somewhere my country. The uncreated spirit, he says, of his race, that is how *A portrait of the artist* finishes, this is the mission that he gives himself.

In this sense, I am announcing what is going to be, this year, my questioning about art: how can artifice explicitly aim at what is presented at first as a symptom? How can art, the artisan, undo, as one might say, what is imposed in terms of symptom, namely, what? What I already figured in my two tetrads: the truth (fig I – 11).

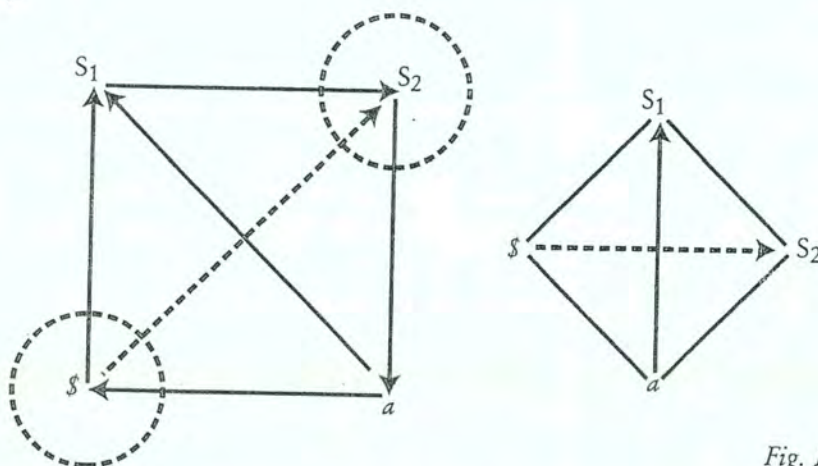


Fig. I-11

Where is the truth of this occasion? I said that it was somewhere in the discourse of the master, as supposed in the subject. In so far as it is divided, it is still subject to the phantasy. It is, contrary to (22) what I first imaged, it is here, at the level of the truth that we must consider the half-saying. Namely, that the subject, at this stage, can only be represented by the signifier index 1, S_1 . That the signifier index 2, S_2 , is very precisely what is represented by the ..., to figure it as I did earlier, by the duplicity of the symbol and the symptom.

S_2 , here is the artisan: the artisan in so far as by the conjunction of two signifiers, he is capable of producing what, earlier, I called the little o -object (fig I-12).

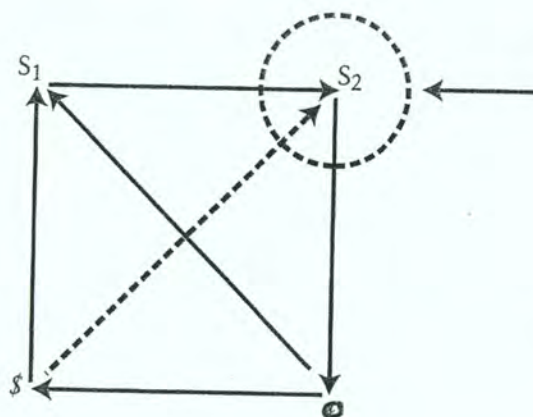


Fig. I-12

Or more exactly I illustrated it by the relationship to the ear and to the eye, even evoking the closed mouth. It is indeed in so far as the discourse of the master reigns, that the S_2 is divided. At this (23) division, is the division between the symbol and the symptom.

But this division between the symptom and the symptom, is, as one might say, reflected in the division of the subject. It is because the subject is what one signifier represents for another signifier that we are necessitated by its insistence to show that it is in the symptom that one of these two signifiers, the Symbolic, takes its support. In this sense, one can say that in the articulation of the symptom to the symbol, there is, I will say, only a false hole.

If we suppose the consistency, the consistency of any one at all of these functions, symbolic, imaginary and real, if we suppose this consistency as making a circle, this presupposes a hole. But in the case of the symbol and of the symptom, it is something else that is at stake. What makes a hole, is the totality, it is the totality folded over of one onto the other of these two circles (Fig I-13).

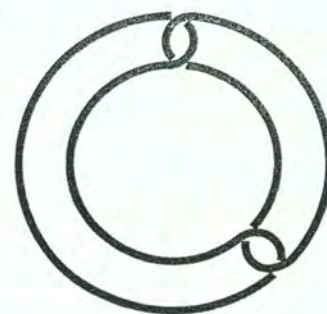


Fig. I-13

Here, as has been rather well figured by Soury - to call him by his name, I do not know whether he is here - it must be framed by something that resembles a bubble, what we call in topology a torus. Each of these holes must be circumscribed by something which makes them hold together, in order for us to have here something that can be described as a true hole (fig I - 14).



Fig. I-14

This means that we must imagine, in order for these holes to subsist, to be maintained, simply suppose here a straight line, this will fulfil the same role, a straight line provided it is infinite. We (24) will have to come back in the course of the year to what this infinite is. We will have to speak again about what a straight line is, how it subsists, how, as one might say, it is akin to a circle. A circle, I will assuredly have to come back to it, will I not; this circle has a function which is well known to the police. The circle is used for traffic and that is why the police have a support that does not date from today or yesterday. Hegel had very clearly seen, in short, what was its function. And he had seen it in a form which is assuredly not what is at stake, what is in question. For the police it is simply a matter of the turning around continuing.

The fact that we can, in this false hole, make the addition, the addition of an infinite straight line and that, just by itself, this makes of this false hole a hole which subsists in a Borromean manner, this is the point on which I will end today.

Seminar 2: Wednesday 9 December 1975

It can't go on like this!

I mean that there are too many of you. There are too many of you for me, in short, to hope all the same to get from you what I got from the public in the United States, where I have just been. I spent 15 full days there and I was able to become aware of a certain number of things. In particular, if, if I properly understood, in short, a certain lassitude experienced there, principally by analysts.

I was, my God, I cannot say that I was not very well treated there, but that is, it is not, that is not saying too much, is it. For myself, I rather felt myself there, to employ a term which is the one I use for what concerns man, sucked in. Or again, if you don't mind hearing it, sucked up, sucked up into a sort of whirlwind, which obviously can only find its warranty in, in what I bring to light by my knot.

In effect it is not by chance, is it? It is only little by little that you have seen, in short, those who are here for some time, that you have been able to see, namely to understand step by step, how I have come to express by the function of the knot what I had first of all put forward as, let us say, the triplicity, of the Symbolic the Imaginary and the Real.

The knot is made in the spirit of a, of a new *mos*, mode, is it not, or *moeurs*, of a new *mos goemetricus*. We are in effect, at the start, always captivated by something which is a geometry that I qualified, the last time, as being comparable to a sack, namely, to a surface.

It is very difficult - you can try it for yourselves - it is very difficult to think - something which happens most often when your eyes are shut - it is very difficult to think about the knot. You cannot find your bearings in it. And I am not all that sure, even though to my eyes it has all the appearance of it, of having correctly put it before you. It seems to me that there is a mistake. There is a mistake here. There you are. Error is also something that we should try to eliminate.

It is a knot which starts from something that you know well, namely, namely, what ensures that in a Borromean knot you have this shape which is such that on occasion it is reduplicated and that you have to complete it by two other rings (fig II-2).

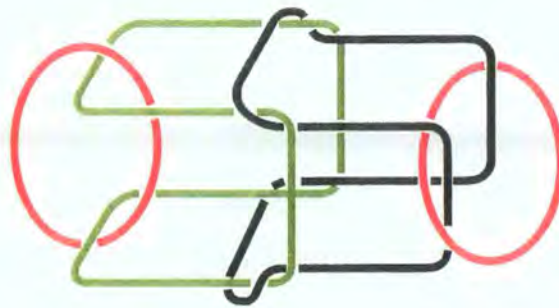


Fig II-2

There is another way to reduplicate this folded form, in short, you see that I am trying to confront you with the fact, this folded form, (27) this linked form which are hooked onto each other (fig II-3).



Fig.II-3

There is another way which consists in using what I already showed you once, on one occasion, namely this (Fig II-4). Namely this, which does not work without constituting in itself a closed circle.

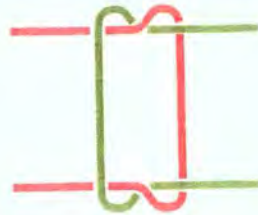


Fig.II-4

On the other hand, in the following form (Fig II-2), you see that the two circuits can be manipulated in such a way that they can be freed from one another. That is even why the two circles, marked here in red, can make of it a knot which is properly speaking Borromean, namely which, from the fact of cutting any one of them, liberates all the others.

(28) Analysis is, in short, the reduction of initiation to its reality, namely, to the fact that properly speaking there is no initiation. In it every subject betrays the fact that it is always and ever only a supposition.

Nevertheless, what experience shows us, is that this supposition is always open to what I will call an ambiguity. I mean that the subject as such is always, not simply double, but divided. What is at stake is to account for what, from this division, constitutes the Real.

How did Freud - since we must come back to him, he was the great ground-breaker in this way of looking at things - how did Freud, of whom in short, if I read it correctly, I think moreover I read it correctly, if I am to believe the last Erich Fromm that you can easily get, if I remember correctly, at Gallimard, and which is entitled something which, at least on the back of the volume, is stated as psychoanalysis apprehended through its errors. A source of unfindable referrals [?], namely, by Freud. How then, if I read it

correctly, did Freud, a bourgeois, and a bourgeois stuffed with prejudices, how did he reach something which gives to what he says its proper value? And which is certainly no small thing, which is the aim of saying the truth about man. To which I contributed this correction which has not been for me without trouble, without difficulty: that the only truth is one that can only be said, just like the subject that it comprises. That only half of it can be said. That can only, to express it as I have stated it, be half-said.

I start from my condition which is that of bringing to man what Scripture states as, not a help for him, but a help *against* him. And, from this condition, I try to find my bearings. This indeed is why I was truly, in a way that is worth remarking, why I was led to this consideration of the knot. Which, as I have just told you, is properly speaking constituted by a geometry that one may well say is forbidden to the imaginary, which can only be imagined through all sort of resistances, indeed of difficulties. This is properly speaking what the knot, in so far as it is Borromean, substantifies.

If we start, in effect, from analysis, we affirm, it is something different to observing, one of the things that most struck me when I was in America, was my encounter which was certainly not by chance, which was altogether intentional on my part, it was my encounter with Chomsky. I was properly speaking, I will say stupefied by it. I told him so. The idea that I realised he held, is in short one that I cannot say can in a way be refuted. It is even (29) the most common idea, and it is indeed what before my very ears he simply affirmed, which made me sense the whole distance that I was from him. This idea, which is the idea, that in effect is common, is this, which appears precarious to me. The consideration, in short, of something that presents itself as a body, a body provided with organs, which implies, in this conception, that the organ is a tool, a tool for gripping, a tool for apprehending.

And that there is no objection in principle to the tool apprehending itself as such, that, for example, language is considered by him as determined by a genetic fact, he expressed it in these very terms before me; in other words, language itself is an organ. It seems quite striking to me, this is what I expressed by the term *stupefied*, it seems quite striking to me that from this language, a return can be made back on itself like an organ.

If language is not considered from the angle, that it is, that it is linked to something which, in the Real, makes a hole, it is not simply difficult, it is impossible to consider how it can be handled. The observation method cannot start from language without admitting this truth of principle that in what one can situate as Real, language only appears as making a hole. It is from this notion, function of the hole that language puts into operation its hold on the Real. It is of course not easy for me to make you feel the whole weight of this conviction. It appears inevitable to me from the fact that truth as such is only possible by *voiding* this Real.

Language moreover eats this Real. I mean that it only allows this Real to be tackled, this genetic Real, to speak like Chomsky, in terms of sign. Or, in other words, of message which starts from the molecular gene by reducing it to what brought fame to Crick and Watson. Namely, this double helix from which there are supposed to start these different levels that organise the body throughout a certain number of stages. First of all the division of development, of cellular specialisation, then subsequently this specialisation of starting from hormones which are so many elements on which there are conveyed, as many sorts of messages, for the direction of organic information.

This whole subtilising of what is involved in the Real by so many of these aforesaid messages, but in which there is only marked the

veil drawn over what is the efficacy of language. Namely, the fact that language is not in itself a message, but that it is only sustained (30) from the function of what I called the hole in the Real.

For this there is the path of our new *mos geometricus*, namely, of the substance that results from the efficacy, from the proper efficacy of language, and which is supported by this function of the hole. To express it in terms of this famous Borromean knot in which I put my trust, let us say that it is entirely based on the equivalence of an infinite straight line and a circle.

The schema of the Borromean knot is the following (Fig II-5).

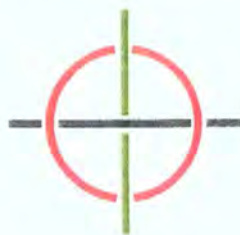


Fig. II-5

I mean, to mark this just as much as my ordinary drawing, the one that is articulated thus (Fig II-6), this in so far as the ordinary drawing is properly speaking a Borromean knot. By this fact, by this fact, it is equally true that this is one (Fig II-7).



Fig. II-6

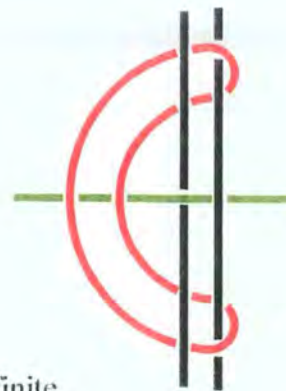


Fig. II-7

I mean that in substituting the couple of a supposedly infinite straight line and a circle, you get the same Borromean knot. There is something that corresponds to this figure three, which is the dawn, as I might say, of a requirement, which is properly speaking the requirement proper to the knot. It is linked to this fact that in

(31) order to account correctly for the Borromean knot, it is starting from three that a requirement especially originates.

It is possible, by an extremely simple manipulation, to make these three infinite lines parallel (Fig II-8). It will be enough, for that, to make more supple, I will say, what is involved in the already folded false circle, the circle in red, on this occasion. It is starting from three that we must define what is involved in the infinity point of the line as not lending itself, not lending itself in any case to making a mistake in what we call their concentricity (Fig II-9).

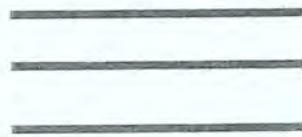


Fig.II-8



Fig.II-9

I mean that these three points at infinity, let us put them here, for example, must be, in whatever form we may suppose them, and we can moreover invert these positions, I mean ensure that, that this first line at infinity, as one might say, is enveloping with respect to the others instead of being enveloped. It is a characteristic of this point at infinity, not to be able to be situated, as one might express it, on any side.

But what is required starting from the number three, is the following. It is that in order to display it in this imaged way (Fig II-10), one must state, specify, that of these three lines, completed by their point at infinity, there will not be found one - you clearly sense that if there I put all three in red, there are reasons why I

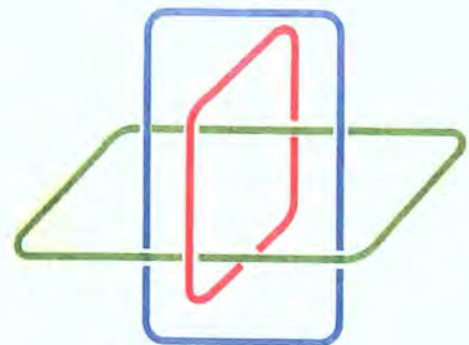


Fig.II-10

had to trace them out here in a different colour - there will not be (32) one of them which, because of being enveloped by another, will not find itself enveloping with respect to the other. For this is properly speaking what constitutes the property of the Borromean knot.

I have on many occasions familiarised you with the fact that the Borromean knot, as one might say, in the third dimension, consists in this relationship which ensures that what is enveloped with respect to one of these circles is found to be enveloping with respect to the other. This is why something that you ordinarily see in the form of the armillary sphere is exemplary. The armillary sphere used, that is used because it has sextants, is always presented as follows (Fig II-11). Namely, that in order to trace it out in a clear way, the blue circle is always going to be reduced in the following way around the circle that here I have drawn in green. And that finally the red circle, in accordance with the reduction of the interaxis (*l'entraxe*) must be like that. I said it earlier. There you are.

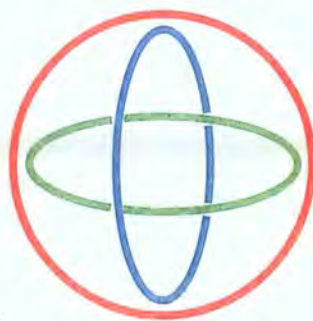


Fig. II-11

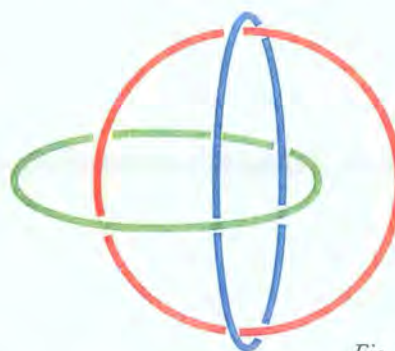


Fig. II-12

On the other hand, the difference between this circle and its ordinary arrangement in any manipulation of the armillary sphere, will find itself distanced if, let us say, for this circle which appears here in the middle there is found, for this circle there is found substituted the following arrangement (Fig II-12). Namely, that it cannot be reduced because it will be enveloping with respect to the red circle, and enveloped with respect to the green circle.

I am drawing again what is involved (Fig II-13), you see that here the green circle is thus found situated with respect to the blue circle and the red circle. Here even my hesitations are significant. They

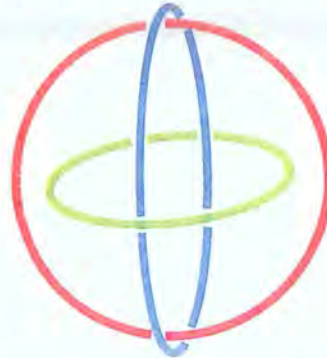


Fig.II-13

manifest the awkwardness with which the Borromean knot, the very type of the knot, is necessarily manipulated.

(32) The fundamental character of this utilisation of the knot is to allow there to be illustrated the triplicity that results from a consistency which is only affected from the Imaginary, from a hole as fundamental which emerges in the Symbolic. And on the other hand, of an ex-sistence, written as I write it ex-sistence, which for its part belongs to the Real which is its fundamental character.

This method, since what is at stake is a method, is a method which presents itself as hopeless. Without hope of in any way breaking the constitutive knot of the Symbolic, the Imaginary and the Real. In this regard, it rejects there being constituted, it must be said, and in an altogether lucid way, a virtue, a virtue even described as theological, and that is why our apprehension, our analytic apprehension of what is involved in this knot is the negative of religion.

People no longer believe in the object as such, and that is why I deny that the object can be grasped by any organ. Since the organ itself is perceived as a tool. And that being perceived as a tool, as a separate tool, it is, in this respect, conceived as an object. In Chomsky's conception, the object is itself only tackled by an

object. It is by the restitution as such of the subject, in so far as it can only be divided, divided by the very operation of language, that analysis finds its diffusion. It finds its diffusion in the fact that it puts science as such into question. Science in as much as it makes of an object, that it makes of an object a subject, while it is the subject which is of itself divided. We do not believe in the object, but we affirm desire and from this affirming of desire, we infer the cause as objectivised.

(34) The desire to know encounters obstacles. It is to incarnate this obstacle that I invented the knot and one must break oneself into the knot. I mean that it is the knot, the knot alone which is the support, the conceivable support of a relationship between anything whatsoever and something else. If on the one hand the knot is abstract it must be thought of and conceived of as concrete.

The reason why, since today, as you clearly see, I am very weary, very weary from this American ordeal where, as I have told you, I was certainly recompensed, because I was able, with these figures that you see here more or less substantialised, substantialised in writing, in drawings, I was able to create with them what I will call agitation, emotion. The sensed as mental, the sentimental is weak-minded. Because it is always from some angle or other reducible to the Imaginary. The imagination of consistency goes straight to the impossible of rupture, but this is why the rupture can always be the Real. The Real as impossible and which is no less compatible with the aforesaid imagination and even constitutes it.

I have no hope, in any way, of escaping from what I signal as the weak-mindedness of this debate. I can only escape from it, like anyone else, according to my means. Namely, as if marching on the spot, sure of not being assured of any verifiable progress except in the long term.

It is in a fabulatory way that I am affirming that the Real - as I think it in my *pen-se* in my *pen-se léger* - does not work without really comprising, the Real effectively lying, without really comprising the hole that subsists in it because of the fact that its consistency is nothing other than that of the totality of the knot that it makes with the Symbolic and the Imaginary. The knot qualifies as Borromean. In other words uncutable without dissolving the myth that makes of the subject, of the subject not supposed, namely as real, no more diverse than anybody that can be signalled as *parlêtre*: a body which has a respectable status, in the common sense of the word, only from this knot.

So then after this exhausting attempt, since today I am very weary, I am waiting from you what I received, what I received more easily than elsewhere in America, namely, that someone would ask me, in connection with today, a question, whatever it may be. Even if it should show that in my discourse, my discourse today, a discourse that I will take up the next time in tackling the fact that Joyce finds himself in a privileged way to have aimed by his art at the fourth term, the one that in different ways you see figured there (Fig II-2). Whether it is a matter of the red ring which is at the very end, on (35) the right, or whether it is a matter moreover of the black ring here, or whether it is a matter again of this (Fig II-14), which you

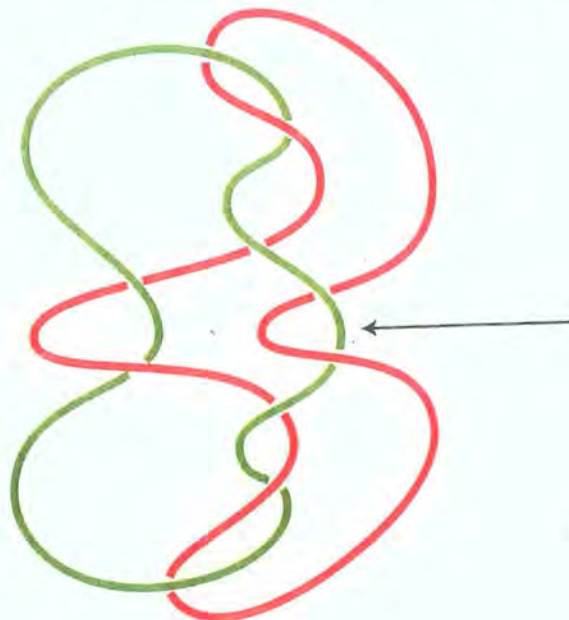


Fig.II-14

see is again in a particular fashion, particular in that it is always the same folded circle that is found here, in a special position, namely bent twice. Namely taken, taken in a corresponding way, that is imaged more or less in this way, taken four times, as one might say, with itself. This effectively permits it to be seen that just as here each of these circles corner (*coincent*) twice the buckle figured by this folded circle, here, on the other hand, this little circle, or the green circle, for example, the one here, or the blue circle [probably red] corners it four times. Since moreover, what is essentially at stake is cornering.

It is then about Joyce that this fourth term, this fourth term in so far as it completes the knot of the Imaginary the Symbolic and the Real, that I would put forward that by his art, and that is the whole problem: how can an art aim in an explicitly divinatory way at substantialising in its consistency, its consistency as such, but moreover its ex-sistence and moreover this third term which is the hole, how by his art, could someone have aimed at rendering as such, to the point of approaching it as closely as possible, this (36) fourth term, the one that today I simply wanted to show you as essential to the Borromean knot itself? I am waiting then for some voice or other to be raised.

QUESTIONS

J. Lacan - So then! What appears to you to be disputable in what I put forward today?

Mr X - ...

J. Lacan - Pardon?

Mr X - It is not a question about the knot itself – it is rather a historical question. What first led you to believe that you would find something in Chomsky which would mean something to you or recall something to you. For my part it is something that would never have crossed my mind.

J Lacan - Well! That indeed is why I was flabbergasted to be sure. Yes. But that does not mean that I did not ... - one has always this sort of weakness, is that not so - and there are remnants of hope. I mean that since Chomsky busies himself with linguistics, I might have hoped to see a glimmer of apprehension of what I am showing about the Symbolic, namely, that it preserves, even when it is false, something about the hole. It is impossible for example not to qualify describe as this false hole the totality constituted by the symptom and the Symbolic. But on the other hand, it is in so far as it is hooked onto language that the symptom subsists, at least if we believe that by a manipulation described as interpretative, namely, playing on the meaning, we can modify something in the symptom. This assimilation in Chomsky of something, which, to my eyes, is of the order of symptom, namely, that confuses the symptom and the Real, is very precisely what flabbergasted me.

Mr. X - Excuse me. It is perhaps an idle question [*une question oisive*] about...

J. Lacan - What? For you it is...

Mr. X - ... *une question peut-être oisive about...*

J. Lacan - *oiseuse?*

Mr X - *Oisive*. Thank you. Being an American...

J. Lacan - Yes! You are American. Thank you. Only I find that once again, is that not so, there is only an American to question me. Anyway, I cannot say how happy I was, as I might say, by the fact that, in America, I had people who had, who bore witness to me in whatever way, that I had, in short, that my discourse had not been in vain, is that not so.

Mr X - Why yes, for me, try to understand the possibility of several discourses in Paris it seems to me impossible that someone should have been able to conceive that Chomsky, educated in the new tradition born of mathematical logic which he got from Quine and Goodman, at Harvard...

J. Lacan - But Quine is no dope, huh!

Mr X - No, but neither is he, it seems to me... Quine and Lacan, are two names that I would have not found. But as regards a reflection on the subject, this is French, which to find something of, to find a lot of images... I miss a thinking like that...

J. Lacan - can I expect from someone French something which, anyway which...

R.C. - I would like to question you about something... it is in connection with the alternation finally of the body and the word as you are in the process of experiencing it today...

J. Lacan - About the alternation...?

R.C. - It is in connection with the alternation of the body and the (38) word. Because there is something that escapes me a little in your discourse, it is the fact that you effectively speak for an hour and a half and that subsequently you have the desire to have a contact, finally, that is more direct with someone. And I asked myself whether, in a more general fashion, in your theory, here, you are not speaking strictly about language, but without thinking about it of these moments when the body also serves as an exchange, and effectively, at that moment, the organ, it is not clear but... the organ can serve to apprehend the real, in a direct way without discourse. Is there not an alternation of the two in the life of a subject? I have the impression that there is a disincarnation of discourse. The discourse being always referred...

J. Lacan - What are you saying? A disincarnation...

R.C. - Of discourse, of the body, that is what I mean. Is there not simply effectively an interplay of alternation between the two?... Without language, would not the hole exist because of a direct physical engagement with the real? I am talking about love and of enjoyment.

J. Lacan - That indeed, that indeed is what is at stake. It is all the same difficult not to consider the Real, on this occasion as a, as a third. And let us say that that what I may seek as a response belongs to something which is an appeal to the Real, not as linked to the body, but as different. That far from the body, there is a

possibility of what I called the last time a resonance, or consonance. And it is at the level of the Real that there can be found this consonance. That the Real, with respect to these poles constituted by the body and on the other hand language, that the Real is here what brings about harmony (*accord- à corps*). Can I expect something from someone else?

Mr Z - you were saying earlier that Chomsky made an organ out of language, and you spoke about the stupefying effect it had on you...

Lacan - I spoke about?

Mr Z - A stupefying effect. It stupefied you. And I was asking (39) myself if this might not come from the fact that you, what you say, what you make into an organ is the libido. I am thinking about the myth of the *lamelle*, and I wonder whether this is not the angle from which there can be asked, here, precisely, the question about the soul. Because to put aside the idea of putting a gap between language and the organ, this cannot be recouped in the sense of an art unless one... I think that one must cut the organ at the level of the, where you put it, of the libido. I mean it is not simple because the libido as organ is not... and I think on the other hand, what is astonishing is that...

J. Lacan - The libido as its name indicates, cannot but participate in the hole, just as much as the others, as the other modes in which there are presented the body and the Real on the other hand, is that not so. Yes...

Mr Z - What is very curious, is that when you speak...

J. Lacan - It is obviously through this that I am trying to rejoin the function of art. It is in a way implied by what is left blank as the fourth term, is that not so. And when I say that art can even reach the symptom, this is what I am going to try to substantialise and you are quite right to evoke the myth described as the *lamelle*. This is just the right note, and I am grateful to you for it. It is along this line that I hope to continue.

H. Cesbron-Lavau - I would like to ask a little question: when you speak about libido, in this text, you say that it is remarkable because of a to and fro trajectory of invagination. Now this image today, seems to me to be able to function like that of a chord which is caught up in the phenomenon of resonance and which undulates. Namely, which makes a bulge that dips and rises and knots. I would like to know whether...

J. Lacan - No, but it is not for nothing that, in a chord, the metaphor comes from what constitutes a knot. What I am trying, is to find what this metaphor refers to, is it not. If in a vibrating (40) chord there are bulges and knots, it is in as much as it is to the knot that one refers. I mean that one uses language in a way that goes further than what is effectively said. One always reduces the import of the metaphor as such, is that not so. Namely, one reduces it to a metonymy, is that not so.

H. C-L. - When you go from the Borromean knot of three: Real, Imaginary, Symbolic to that of four in which the symptom is introduced, the Borromean knot of three as such disappears. And...

J. Lacan - That is quite correct. It is no longer a knot. It is only held together by the symptom.

H. C-L - In this perspective, let us say of... the hope of a cure in terms of analysis seems to run into a problem, since...

J. Lacan - There is no radical reduction of the fourth term. Namely that even analysis, since Freud, we do not know along what path, in fact, could state, there is an *Urverdrängung*. There is a repression which is never cancelled, is that not so. It is of the very nature of the Symbolic to comprise this hole, is that not so. And it is this hole that I am aiming at when I ... that I recognise in the *Urverdrängung* itself.

H. C-L: On the other hand you speak about the Borromean knot in saying that it does not constitute a model can you specify that?

J. Lacan - It does not constitute a model in the sense that it has something that makes imagination fail when it gets close to it. I

mean that it properly speaking resists as such the imagining of the knot. Its mathematical approach in topology is insufficient. I, I can all the same tell you, in short, can I not, my experience during this vacation. I persisted in thinking about the way in which this (Fig II-6) which constitutes a knot, not a knot between two elements, because as you see, there is only one of them. How, this knot described as a knot of three, the most simple knot, the knot that you can make, is the same as this one, the knot that you can (41) make with any piece of chord, even the simplest. It is the same knot even though it does not have the same appearance. I applied myself to thinking about this whose discovery let us say I had made, namely, that with this knot, as it is shown there, it is easy to demonstrate that there ex-sists a Borromean knot.

For this it is enough to think that you can make underlie on a surface which is this double surface without which we would not be able to write anything whatsoever about knots, on this underlying surface then, you put the same knot. It is very easy to produce, I mean by a writing, the following, that making pass in succession, I mean at every stage, a third knot of three, in succession and this is easy to imagine. This can be immediately imagined since I had to discover it. To make a homologous knot pass under the underlying knot, and on, at each stage, the knot that I will call here underlying. This then easily produces a Borromean knot.

Is there a possibility, with this knot of three, of realising a Borromean knot of four? I spent almost two months racking my brains about this object. Make no mistake. I did not succeed in demonstrating that there exists a way of knotting four knots of three in a Borromean way. Well then, that proves nothing. That does not prove that it does not exist.

Last night again, it was the only thing I was thinking about. Whether I could manage to show it to you, to demonstrate that it exists; the worst thing about it, is that I did not find a provable reason for the fact that it does not exist. I simply failed. For, even the fact that I cannot show that this knot with four knots of three, *qua* Borromean, ex sists, that I cannot show it proves nothing. I would have to prove that it cannot exist. Why from this Impossible, a Real will be assured. The Real constituted by the fact that there is no Borromean knot that is constituted of four knots of three. That would be to touch a Real.

To tell you what I think about it, always with my way of saying that it is my *pen-se*, I believe that it ex-sists. I mean that it is not there that we come up against a Real. I do not despair of finding it... but it is a fact that I can do nothing about it. Because once it has been proved, it will be easy to show it to you. But there is also a fact, that I can do nothing such in terms of showing it to you. The relationship of showing and proving is there clearly separated.

(42) Miss X - You said earlier that in Chomsky's perspective...

J. Lacan – What's that?

Miss X – You said earlier that in Chomsky's perspective, language may be an organ. You spoke about the hand. Why this word hand? Under this word hand is there a reference to something of the order, which has a relationship to an object which is not yet technical in the Cartesian sense of the term? Namely, a technique that ignores language, which no longer speaks about a technique in the Cartesian sense of the term. Namely, a technique which ignores language, which no longer speaks about a technique linked to language, to designate the relationship of the subject to language, is there to show the necessity of a different theory of technique than the one that takes place, perhaps, in Chomsky.

J. Lacan - Yes. This is what I am claiming, is it not. Despite the existence of handshakes, the hand in the shake, in the act of shaking, does not know the other hand.

Someone is waiting for a class, excuse me.

Seminar 3: Wednesday 16 December 1975

If as much seriousness was put into analyses as I put in to the preparation of my seminar, well then, it would be so much the better. It would be so much the better, and it would surely have better results. For that, for that one would have to have in analysis, as I have, as I have, but this is part of the senti-mental of which I spoke the other day, the sentiment of an absolute risk.

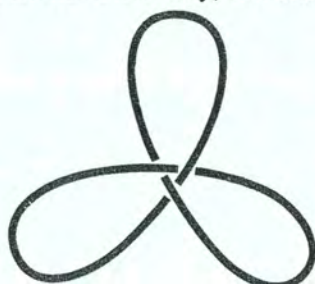


Fig III-1

There you are. The other day, I told you that the knot of three (*à trois*), the knot of three that I draw like this (Fig III-1) and which you can see is obtained from the Borromean knot by rejoining the cords at these three points that I have just marked, I told you that as regards the knot of three, I had made the discovery that they were knotted together in threes, in a Borromean way. I also told you why, as one might say, this was quite justifiable by an explanation.

I told you that I had striven for two months to make ex-sist, for this simplest knot, a Borromean knot of four. I also told you that the fact that I had not managed to make it exist proved nothing;

(44) apart from my clumsiness. I believe, I am even sure, I remember, I believe I told you that I believed that it must exist.

I had that very evening the pleasant surprise of seeing appearing - it was late, I would even say that I had gone out rather late, given my obligations - I saw then appearing on my doorstep someone called Thomé, to give him his name. He was coming to bring me, and I greatly thanked him for it, he was coming to bring me, as a fruit of his collaboration with Soury - Soury and Thomé remember those names - he came to bring me the proof, the proof that the Borromean knot of four, consisting of four knots of four, did indeed exist. This assuredly justifies my stubbornness; but does not render by incapacity any less deplorable. Nevertheless I did not welcome the news that this problem had been resolved with mixed feelings. A mixture of my regret at my impotence with that of the success that had been obtained. My feelings were not that. They were purely and simply of enthusiasm. And I think I showed them something of this when I saw them, some evenings later, an evening when, moreover, they were not able to give me an account of how they found it. In fact they had found it, and I hope I have not made a mistake in transcribing as I did on this central paper the fruit of their discovery. I reproduced it more or less. I mean that it is, make no mistake, *textually* what they developed, apart from the fact that the trajectory, the flattened-out trajectory is only slightly different. If this flattened-out trajectory is as I presented it to you, it is so that you will be able to feel, sense perhaps a little better than in the complete figure, that you will sense perhaps a little better how it is done (Fig III-3).

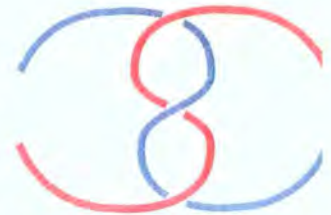
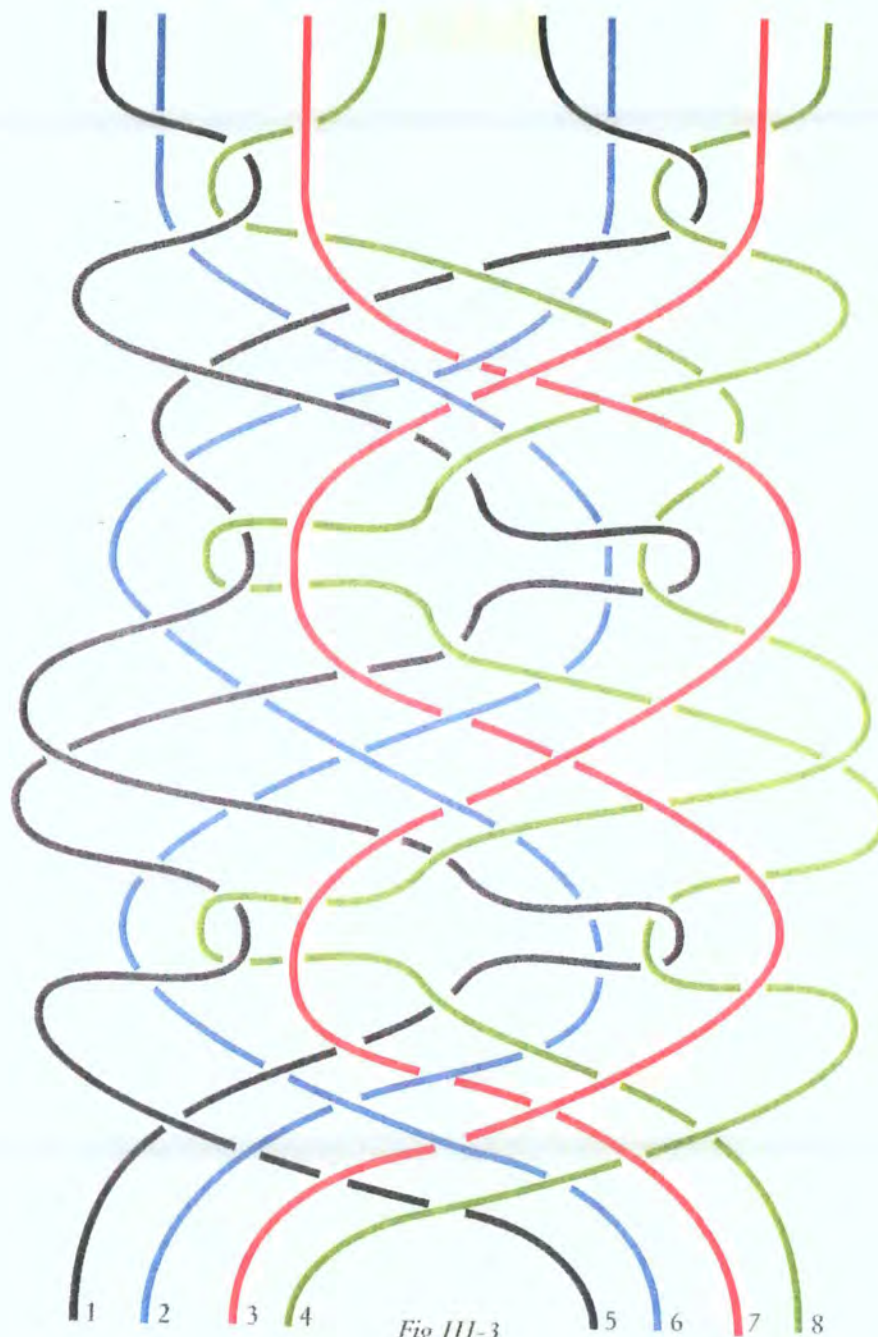


Fig III-2

I think that, at the sight of this figure, I hope, everyone can see, see that, if we suppose for example that the knot of three here, in black, the black triple knot being elided, it appears quite clear that the three other knots of three are free. It is quite clear, in effect, that the green knot of three is under the red knot of three; that it is



enough to take this green knot of three out of the red, in order that the brown knot of three, here, also shows itself to be free.

I saw Soury and Thomé for a long while. As I told you, they did (46) not confide in me how they had got it. I think moreover that there is not just one way. That there is not just this one. And perhaps I will show you the next time how, again, one can obtain it. I would like all the same to commemorate this tiny event, an

event moreover that I consider not to be tiny, and I am going to tell you why afterwards, in other words why I was searching, I want to commemorate our encounter a little more.

I believe that the support for this research is not what Sarah Kofman in a book, in a book, in a remarkable article in which she contributed, a remarkable article that she calls *Vautour Rouge* and which is nothing other than a reference to the *Devil's Elixir* celebrated by Freud. A reference that she takes up again, that she takes up again after having already mentioned it once in her four analytic novels, a book, an entire book by her. This does not prevent me recommending you to read this *Mimesis* which appears to me, with her five other collaborators, to realise something remarkable.

I must tell you the truth, I only read the article of the first, the third and the fifth, because by reason of the preparation for this seminar, I had other fish to fry. I believe nevertheless that *Mimesis* is very much worthwhile reading. The first article which concerns, which concerns Wittgenstein and, let us say, the fuss his teaching has created, is altogether remarkable. I read that one from beginning to end.

Nevertheless, I should say that this geometry which is that of knots, which I told you manifests an altogether specifically original geometry, is something that exorcises this uncanny. There is here something specific. The uncanny unquestionably pertains to the Imaginary. But that there should be something which allows it to be exorcised is assuredly strange of itself. To specify where I would put what is at stake, it is somewhere around there [Fig III-4, first double stroke indicated by the arrow].

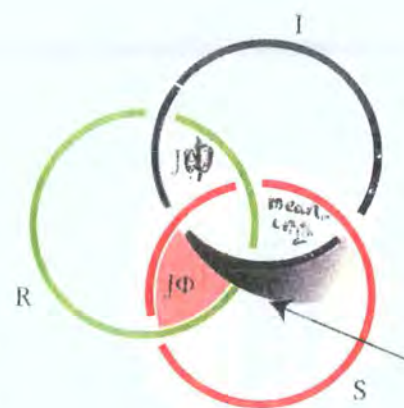


Fig III-4

(47) I mean that it is in as much that the Imaginary is deployed in the style of two circles, which can also be noted by a drawing, and I will say that a drawing notes nothing, in so far as the flattening-out of it remains enigmatic. It is in as much as here, joined to the Imaginary of the body, something like a specific inhibition which would be characterised especially by the uncanny that, provisionally, at least, I will allow myself to note what is involved, as regards its place, in the aforesaid strangeness. The resistance the imagination experiences in thinking about what is involved in this new geometry is something that strikes me, since I have experienced it.

The fact that Soury and Thomé should have been - I am daring to say it, even though after all, I have not had this testimony from them - should have been especially captivated, it seems to me by what in my teaching, was led to explore, to explore under the influence, under the impact of what was imposed on me by the conjunction of the Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real, that they should have been very specially caught by what must indeed be called this lucubration of mine, is something which is certainly not pure chance. Let us say that they are gifted for this type of thing.

What is strange, what is strange and it is on this point that I am allowing myself, finally, to betray what they have confided in me, what is strange it seems to me, is the fact that - and that gripped me given that you know what I put forward - the fact is that they told me that them made progress in it by talking among themselves. I did not make this remark to them immediately, because, in truth, this confidence seems to me to be very precious. But it is certain that people do not usually think à *deux*. The fact that it should be by talking about it among themselves and that they arrive at results that are not remarkable simply by this success. For a long time what they compose about the Borromean knot seems to me to be more than, more than interesting, seems to

be an achievement. But this discovery is certainly not its crowning glory. They will make others. I will not add what Soury in particular told me about the way in which he thinks about teaching. This is a business where I think that in following my example, the one that I qualified earlier, he will certainly acquit himself just as well as I am able to do. Namely, in the same risky way. But that this should have been conquered by such a discovery - I do not know moreover if it is especially this discovery that was conquered in dialogue - that dialogue should have proved to be especially fruitful in this domain, is altogether, I (49) may say, what confirms that I was lacking it. I mean that throughout these two months that I unceasingly worked at finding this fourth knot of three and the way in which it could be knotted in a Borromean way, I repeat, to two others, to three others, it is assuredly because I was alone in the search. I mean putting my hope in my cogitating. What matter, I will not insist. It is time to say why this research was important to me.

This research was extremely important to me for the following reason: these three circles of the Borromean knot have this something which cannot fail to be retained, which is the fact that they are, all three equivalent as circles. I mean that they are constituted by something that is reproduced in the three.

It is not by chance that I especially support by the Imaginary - it is the result let us say of a certain concentration - that it should be in the Imaginary that I place the support of consistency. In the same way that it should be from the hole that I make the essential of what is involved in the Symbolic and that, by reason of the fact that the Real, precisely from the liberty of these two from the fact that the Imaginary and the Symbolic - this is the very definition of the Borromean knot - are freed one from the other, that I support what I call ex-sistence, especially from the Real. In this sense that in-sisting outside the Imaginary and the Symbolic, it knocks, it

operates very specially in something which is the order of limitation. The two others, from the moment that they are knotted in a Borromean way, the two others resist it. Namely, that the Real only has ex-sistence, and it is quite astonishing that I should formulate it like that - only has ex-sistence by encountering the arrest of the Symbolic and the Imaginary.

Naturally, this is not a fact of simple chance. The same must be said of the two others. It is in as much as it ex-sists to the Real that the Imaginary encounters also the shock that here is better felt. Why then do I put this ex-sistence precisely there where it seems to be most paradoxical? It is because I must indeed distribute these three modes, and that it is precisely from ex-sisting that the thinking about the Real is supported.

But what results from this? If not that we must conceive of these three terms as joined to one another. If they are so analogous, to employ this term, can we not suppose that it is from a continuity? And this is what leads us directly to making the knot of three. For there is no need to commit a lot of effort in order that, from the way in which they are in equilibrium, are superimposed on one (49) another, to join the points of what is flattened-out which will make a continuity of them.

But what then results from this? What results from it for that which from the knot, something that must indeed be called of the order, of the order of the subject - in as much as the subject is never but, but supposed - that which, of the order of the subject, in this knot of three, finds itself, in short, supported? Does it mean that if the knot of three is itself knotted in a Borromean way, at least in threes (*à trois*), that this is enough for us?

My question bore precisely on this point.

In a figure, a Borromean chain, does it not appear to us that the minimum is always constituted by a knot of four?

I mean that it is by pulling this green cord in order for you to see that the black circle, here knotted to the red cord will be, by being pulled by this blue chord, will be, will manifest the tangible shape of a Borromean chain (Fig III-5).

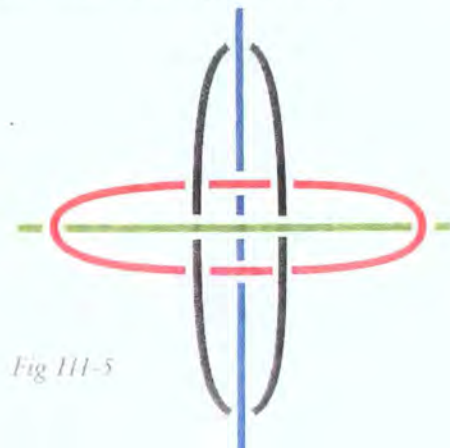


Fig III-5



Fig III-6

It seems that the least that one can expect from this Borromean chain, is this relationship of one to three others. And if we suppose, and we have the proof of it here, if we effectively think that a knot of three, for this here (Fig III-6) is no less a knot of three - that these knots will be arranged in a Borromean way with one another, we will have, we will touch on the fact that it is always from three supports that we will call, on this occasion (50) subjective, namely personal, that a fourth will be propped up. And if you remember the way in which I introduced this fourth element, each one of the others is supposed to constitute something personal with respect to these three elements, the fourth will be what I am stating this year as the *sinthome*. It is not for nothing that I wrote these things in a certain order: RSI, SIR, IRS, is indeed what my title last year corresponded to.

RSI
SIR
IRS

sinthome

It is moreover the same people, the same Soury and Thomé, I already made an allusion to it, explicitly in this seminar, highlighted that, as regards what is involved in knots, the Borromean knots in question, starting from the moment when they

are orientated and coloured, there are two of them of a different nature. What does that mean?

In the flattening out, already, it can be highlighted. Here I am abbreviating. I am simply indicating to you the sense in which one can test it. I told you about the equivalence of these three circles, of these three rings of string. It is remarkable that it is only by the fact that, not between them, there is marked the identity of any one. For the identity would be to mark them by the initial letter. To say R, I and S, is already to entitle each one, each one as such, as Real, as Symbolic and as Imaginary. But it is notable that it appears that the efficacious thing that is distinguished among them in the orientation is only locatable from that which by the colour marks their difference. Not from one another, but as I might say their absolute difference in that it is the difference common to the three. It is in order that there should be something which is one, but which, as such, marks the difference between the three, but not the difference in two's, that there appears in consequence the distinction of two structures of the Borromean knot. Which is the true one? Is the true one with respect to what is involved in the way in which the Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real are knotted together, in what supports the subject?

Here is the question that deserves to be examined. You should refer to my preceding allusions about this duality of the Borromean knot in order to appreciate it. Because today I was only able to evoke it for an instant.

There is something remarkable, which is that the knot of three, on the other hand, bears no trace of this difference. In the knot of three, namely, in the fact that we put the Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real in continuity, it is not surprising that we should see in (51) it that there is only a single knot of three. I hope that there

are enough people here taking notes. Because this is important. Important to suggest to you to go and verify what is at stake. Namely, specifically that as regards the knot of three that homogenises the Borromean knot, there is on the other hand, only one kind.

Does that mean that it is true?

Everyone knows there are two knots of three. There are two depending on whether it is dextrogyratory or laevogyratory. This is then a problem that I am putting to you: what is the link between these two kinds of Borromean knots and the two kinds of knots of three?

In any case, if the knot of three is indeed the support for every kind of subject, how can it be examined? How can it be examined in such a way that it is indeed a subject that is at stake?

There was a time when I was advancing along a certain path, before I had got onto the path of analysis, it was that of my thesis: *Paranoid psychosis in its relationships*, I said, *with the personality*. If I resisted the republication of my thesis for so long, it is simply for the following reason: the fact is that paranoid psychosis and personality, as such, have no relationship; simply because of the fact that it is the same thing. In so far as a subject knots together in three, the Imaginary the Symbolic and the Real, it is supported only by their continuity. The Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real are one and the same consistency. And it is in this that paranoid psychosis consists.

To clearly understand what I am stating today, one could deduce from it that to the paranoid three there could be knotted, under the heading of symptom, a fourth term which would situate as such, as personality, in so far as it itself would be distinct with regard to

the three preceding personalities and their symptom. Does that mean that it would also be paranoid? Nothing indicates it in the case, the case which is more than probable, which is certain, in which it is from a certain indefinite number of knots of three that a Borromean chain can be constituted. Which does not prevent that, with respect to this chain, which henceforth no longer constitutes a paranoia if only because it is common, with regard to this chain the possible flocculation of fourth terms, in this braid which is the subjective braid, the possible terminal flocculation of fourth terms leaves us with the possibility of supposing that on the totality of the texture, there are certain elective points which, are found to be (52) the limit of this knot of four. And it is indeed in this properly speaking that the *sinthome* consists. And the *sinthome* not in the phase that it is personality, but with respect to three others, it specifies itself by being symptom and neurotic. It is in as much as the *sinthome* specifies it, that there is a term that there is more specially attached to it which, with regard to what is involved in the *sinthome*, has a privileged relationship. Just as here in the knot of three knotted in a Borromean way of four, you will see that there is a particular response from the red to the brown, just as there is a particular response from the green to the black. It is in as much as one of the two couples are distinguished from this specific knot by a different colour, to take up the term I used earlier, it is in so far as there is a link of the symptom to something

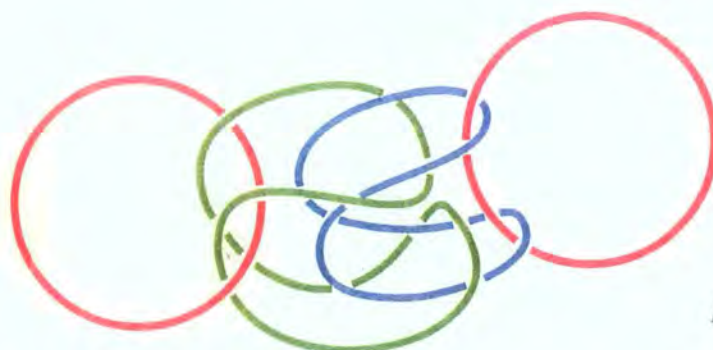


Fig III-7

particular in this set of four, it is, in a word, in as far (Fig III-7) — we do not know if it is this one or that one — it is in as much as we have a red-green couple here on the left, a blue-red here on the

right, that we have a couple. And it is in as much as the *sinthome* is linked to the unconscious and that the Imaginary is linked to the Real that we are dealing with something from which the *sinthome* emerges.

These are the difficult things that I wanted to state to you today.

Assuredly this deserves a complement, the complement of the reason why here I opened up in a way the knot of three. Why did I give it the shape that you see here, which is not the circular one that is found drawn in the way that you see at the bottom (Fig II-6).

It results from the fact that with regard to this field, that I already, here noted as $J\bar{O}$, what is at stake is enjoyment (*jouissance*), the enjoyment not of the Other, because of the fact that I stated that (53) there is no Other of the Other, that there is nothing opposite the Symbolic, locus of the Other as such. That there is no enjoyment of the Other because there is no Other of the Other, and that this is what this $\bar{O}$ means. The result is that here $J\bar{O}$, this enjoyment of the Other of the Other which is not possible for the simple reason that there is not, once what results from this that there remains only what is produced in the field, in the flattened-out field of the circle of the Symbolic with the circle of the Imaginary which is meaning (fig III-8). And that on the other and what is here indicated, figured, is the relationship, is the relationship of the Symbolic to the Real in as much as from it

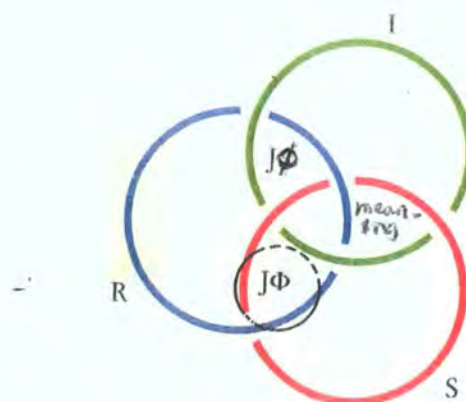


Fig III-8

there emerges what is described as the enjoyment of the phallus. This is certainly not, in itself, enjoyment that is penile as such, but if we consider what it becomes with respect to the Imaginary, namely, the enjoyment of the double, of the specular image, of the enjoyment of the body *qua* Imaginary, is the support of a certain number of gaps, and properly speaking constitutes the different objects that occupy it.

On the other hand, the enjoyment described as phallic is situated there, at the conjunction of the Symbolic with the Real. It is in as much that in the subject which is supported by the *parlêtre* in the sense that this is what I designate as being the unconscious, there is – and it is in this field that phallic enjoyment is inscribed – there is the power, the power in short summoned, supported, the power of marrying what is involved in a certain enjoyment which, by the fact, by the fact of this word itself, marries an enjoyment experienced, experienced by the fact of the *parlêtre*, as a parasitic (54) enjoyment, and which is the one described as of the phallus. This indeed is the one that I inscribe here as a balance to what is involved in meaning, it is the locus of that which, through the *parlêtre*, is designated in conscience as power.

What dominates, to conclude with something that I suggest you should read, is the fact that the three rings participate in the Imaginary as consistency, in the Symbolic as hole, and in the Real as ex-sisting to them. The three rings then imitate one another. It is all the more difficult to do this in that they do not imitate one another simply. That by the fact of the said, they are arranged in a knot of three. Hence my concern, after having made the discovery that this knot of three was knotted in threes in a Borromean way, I affirmed that if they have preserved themselves free among themselves, a knot of three, playing in a full application of its texture, ex-sists, which is well and truly the fourth, and which is called the *sinthome*. *Voilà*.

Seminar 4: Wednesday 13 January 1976

Voilà.

One is only responsible in the measure of one's know-how (*savoir-faire*).

What is know-how? Let us say that it is art, artifice, what gives to art, to the art that one is capable of, a remarkable value. Why remarkable? Because there is no Other of the Other to carry out the Last Judgement. At least, that is the way I state it. This means that there is something that we cannot enjoy. Let us call that the enjoyment of God, with the sense of sexual enjoyment included within it. Does the image that we have of God imply or not that he enjoys what he has perpetrated? Admitting that he does ex-sist. To reply to this that he does not exist, settles the question in restoring to us the charge of a thinking whose essence is to be inserted into this reality – a first approximation of the word Real which has a different meaning in my vocabulary – into this limited reality which attests to the existence written in the same way, ex, hyphen s, of the ex-sistence of sex.

There you are. This is the type of thing that when all is said and done, I am bringing to you at the start of this year. Namely, what I will call, it

is no bad thing, like that, to start off a year, what I will call first truths. Not of course that in the interval which has separated us now for something like three weeks, not that I have not been working. I worked on these things, a sample of which you see there on the board (IV-1).

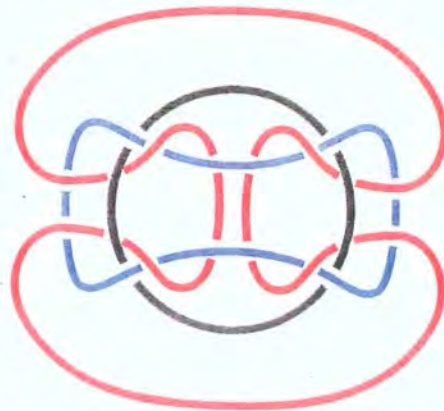


Fig IV-1

(56) This as you can see, is a Borromean knot. It does not differ from the one that, I remind you, I usually draw, which is made like that (II-6). It only differs from it by something which is not negligible, which is that this one can be distended in such a way that there are two rings as extremes and that it is the one in the middle that makes the connection (IV-2).



Fig. II-6

The difference is this: suppose that it is three elements like this one, the median, which are united in a circular way. You can see clearly, I hope, how that can be done. There is no need for me to trace the thing (57) out on the board. Well then this is simplified like that (IV-1), like that or like that (IV-3), because it is the same.

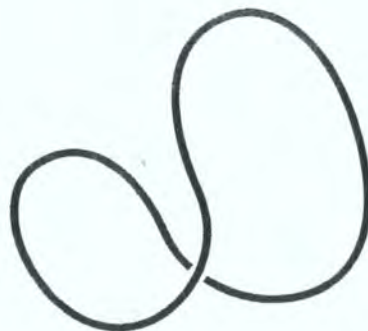


Fig. IV-2

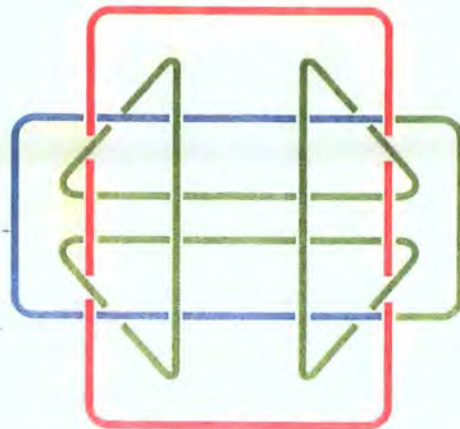


Fig. IV-3

Naturally, I am not satisfied with just that. I spent my vacation lucubrating many others of them, in the hope of finding a good one of them which would serve as a support, I mean as an easy support for what I began today to tell you as first truth.

Well then, a surprising thing, it is not all that simple. Not that I believe that I am wrong to find in the knot what supports our consistency. Only it is already a sign that I can only deduce this knot from a chain; namely, from something which is not at all of the same nature. Chain or *link*, in English, is not the same thing as a knot.

But let us take up the drone of what are called first truths. Called such by me. It is clear that the very outline of what is called thinking, everything that produces meaning once it shows the tip of its nose, involves a reference, a gravitation towards the sexual act; however little that act is in evidence. The very word act implies the active-passive polarity. Which is already to engage oneself in a false meaning. This is what is called knowledge (*connaissance*), with this ambiguity that the active is what we know, but that we imagine that in making an effort to know, we are active.

Knowledge then, from the start, shows itself for what it is: deceptive. This indeed is why everything should be taken up again from the start.

starting from sexual opacity. I am saying opacity in that the fact is, firstly, we do not see that from the sexual there can be in any way be grounded any relationship whatsoever. This implies, at the whim of (58) thinking, that there is no responsibility – in the sense that responsibility means non-response or a response wide of the mark – there is no responsibility other than sexual. This is something that everyone, when all is said and done, has a feeling for.

But on the other hand what I called *know-how* goes well beyond and adds to it the artifice that we impute to God quite gratuitously, as Joyce, as Joyce insists, because this is something that tickles somewhere what is called his thinking. It is not God who has perpetrated this thing called the Universe. We impute to God what is the business of the artist of which the first model is, as everyone knows, the potter and who is said – with what moreover? – to have moulded, like that, this thing that is called, not by chance, the Universe. Which only means a single thing, which is that there is something of the One. *Yadlun*, but we do not know where. It is more than improbable that this one constitutes the Universe.

The real Other of the Other, namely impossible, is the idea that we have of artifice, in so far as it is a doing, *faire*, do not write it *fer*, a doing that escapes us. Namely, which far exceeds the enjoyment that we can have of it. This altogether slender enjoyment is what we call wit (*l'esprit*).

All of this implies a notion of the Real, of course. Naturally we must make it distinct from the Symbolic and the Imaginary. The only problem, make no mistake, you will see later why, is that the Real makes sense in this affair. While if you thoroughly explore, in short, what I mean by this notion of the Real, it appears that it is inasmuch as

it has no meaning, that it excludes meaning, or more exactly that it is deposited by being excluded from it, that the Real is founded.

There you are. I am telling you that as I think it. I am saying it to you so that you should know it. The form most devoid of meaning of what, nevertheless, is imagined, is consistency. Nothing forces us, would you believe, huh, to imagine consistency.

Yes. I have here a book called *Surface and Symbol* which adds that it is a study, this is something you should know – for without this subtitle how would one know it? – which adds *The consistency of James Joyce's Ulysses* by Robert M. Adams. There is here something like a presentiment of the distinction between the Imaginary and the Symbolic. As proof, a chapter where having entitled the book *Surface and Symbol*, a whole chapter which examines, I mean puts a question (59) mark after *Symbol or Surface?*.

Consistency, what does it mean here? It means what holds together. And this indeed is why it is symbolised, on this occasion, by the surface. Because, God help us, the only idea we have of consistency is a sack or a floor cloth. It is the first idea that we have of it. Even the body the way we feel it is like skin, retaining in its sack a pile of organs. In other words this consistency is threadbare (*montre la corde*). But the capacity of imaginative abstraction is so weak that from this cord – this threadbareness as a residue of consistency – that from this cord, it excludes the knot.

Now it is to this, perhaps, that I can contribute the only pinch of salt for which, when all is said and done, I recognise myself as being responsible. In a cord, the knot is all that ex-sists in the proper sense of the term, as I write it, is all that properly speaking exists. This is not

without good reason. I mean that it is not without a hidden cause that I had to arrange an access for this knot. Beginning with, with the chain where there are elements that are distinct. Elements which consist then in some form of the cord; namely, either in so far as, as it is a straight line that we must suppose infinite in order that the knot should not unknot itself, or indeed as what I called a ring of *string* (*rond de ficelle*). In other words: a cord which is knotted together or more exactly is connected by a splice so that the knot, properly speaking, does not constitute its consistency. Because we must all the same distinguish between consistency and knot. The knot ex-sists, ex-sists by the cord element, the consistency cord.

A knot, then, can be made. That indeed is why I took the laborious path of elementary joinings. I proceeded like that because it seemed to me that it was the most didactic way. Given the mentality! No need to say any more! The senti-mentality proper to the speaking being (*parlêtre*), the mentality, in so far as, since he senses it, he senses the burden of it. The mentality in so far as he lies (*ment*). It's a fact!

What is a fact?

It is precisely he who makes it. There is no fact except by the fact that the speaking being says it. There are no other facts than those that the speaking being recognises as such by saying them. There is no fact except from artifice. And it is a fact that he lies. Namely, that he accords recognition to false facts. This because he has mentality. (60) Namely, self love. This is the principle of imagination. He adores his body. He adores it. Because he believes he has it. In reality he does not have it. But his body is his only consistency – mental, of course. At every moment his body clears off. It is already miraculous enough that it subsists for a time. The time of this consummation

which is, in fact, from the fact of saying it, inexorable. Inexorable in that nothing is done in it because it is not resorbative.

It is an established fact, even among animals, that the body does not evaporate. It is consistent. And this is what is antipathetic about it for mentality. Uniquely because it, it believes it has there a body to adore. This is the root of the imaginary. I think, *panse* it, namely, I make a paunch of it, then I suffer it (*je l'essuie*). That is what it comes down to. It is the sexual that lies therein by talking too much about itself.

For want of the imaginary abstraction described above, that which is reduced to consistency, for the concrete, the only one that we know, is always sexual adoration. Namely, misunderstanding (*méprise*). In other words contempt (*mépris*). What one adores is supposed, c.f. the case of God, to have no mentality. Which is not true for the body, considered as such, I mean adored, since it is the only relationship that the speaking being has to his body. To the point that when he adores that of another, another body, it is always suspect. For this entails the same veritable contempt, since it is truth that is at stake.

What is truth, as someone or other has said? What does it mean to say – as throughout the beginnings of the time that I was bullshitting, I was reproached for not saying – what is it to say the true about the true? It is to do no more than, than what I effectively did: to follow the trace of the Real. The Real which only consists, which only ex-sists in the knot.

A function of haste, huh! I must make haste, huh! Naturally I will not get to the end even though I have not been dawdling. But tying the knot carelessly, that simply means going a bit fast. The knot perhaps that I am making, here, the one on the right (IV-1) or the one the left

(IV-4) is perhaps a little insufficient. That is even the reason that I looked for where there were more crossings than that.

But let us stick to the principle. To the principle that must indeed have been found. I was led to it by the sexual relationship. Namely, by hysteria, in so far as it is the final perceptible reality, as Freud saw very well, the final *usteron*, the reality about what is involved in the sexual (61) relationship precisely. Here is where Freud learned the abc of it. Which did not prevent him from posing the question:

W w d W

Was will das Weib?

W w e W

He was making a mistake. He thought that there was *das Weib*. There is only *ein Weib*:

W w e W.

So then now, all the same, I am going to give you, like that, a little piece to nibble on. There you are. I would like to illustrate that. Illustrate that by something which acts as a support and which is indeed what is at stake in the question.

I already spoke at one time about the riddle (*l'énigme*). I wrote that E index e, E_e. It is a matter of the stating and the stated (*énonciation*, *énoncé*). A riddle, as its name indicates, is a stating whose statement cannot be located.

In the book that I spoke to you about earlier, that of R M Adams, easier, I hope, to find than this famous *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, that you can find all the same, on the single condition of not requiring to have at the end the whole criticism that Chester Anderson took care to add to it. *Surface and Symbol* is published by the Oxford

University Press, it is easy to get. Oxford University Press also has an office in New York. Good.

So then, there, in this R M Adams, you will find something of value. Namely, that in the first chapters of *Ulysses*, when he goes to teach this common people that make up a class, if I remember correctly, at Trinity College, Joyce, that is to say, not Joyce, but Stephen, Stephen, namely the Joyce that he imagines. And since Joyce is no fool, since he does not adore, far from it, it is enough for him to speak about Stephen for him to snigger. It is not too far from my position, all the same, when I speak about myself. When I speak in any case about what I rabbit on about to you.

So then what does the riddle consist of? It is an art of what I will call between-the-lines to make an allusion to the cord. Why should not the lines of what is written, not be knotted by a second cord.

(62) I started dreaming like that, and I must say that everything I was able to consume in terms of the history of writing, indeed of the theory of writing. There is someone called Février who has done a history of writing. There is someone else called Guelb who composed a theory of writing. Writing interests me, since I think that, like that, that historically, historically it is by little, by little bits of writing that we have entered into the Real, namely, that we have ceased to imagine. That the writing of little letters, that the writing of little mathematical letters, is what supports the real.

But, good God! How is that done?

I made a breakthrough, like that, in something which, which seems to me let us say likely. I said to myself that writing may have always something to do with the way in which, in which we write the knot. It is obvious, that a knot is usually written like that (IV-4). That already gives an S. Namely, something which has all the same a considerable relationship with *The agency of the letter*, as I support it. And then, and then that gives a body, like that, a likely body to beauty. Because it must be said that there was someone called Hogarth who questioned himself a great deal about beauty, and who thought that beauty, always has something to do with this double inflection. This is feckology, of course. But anyway, this would tend to attach beauty to something other than the obscene, namely, to the Real. In short, the only beautiful thing would be writing. Which...why not? Good.



Fig. IV-4

But let us come back to Stephen, which also begins with an S. Stephen is Joyce in so far as he is deciphering his own riddle. And he does not get very far. He does not get far because he believes in all his symptoms. Yeah! It is very striking.

He begins with...he begins! He had begun long before. He had sputtered out some little pieces, anyway, even poems. The poems are (63) not what he did best. He believes in things, faith. He believes in the uncreated conscience of his race. That is how *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* ends. It is obvious that this does not go very far.

But anyway it ends well. Yes. There is 27th April: old Father...this is the last sentence of the *Portrait of an Artist – of the Artist*. You see I made the slip, huh! *Portrait of an Artist – as a young man*; while he

believed himself to be *The artist*. 'Old Father, old artificer, stand me now and ever in good stead'. Keep me warm from now on and forever. It is to his father that he addresses this prayer. His father who precisely distinguishes himself by being, bof! What we can call, in short, an unworthy father, a deficient father; the one that, in the whole of *Ulysses*, he will set about looking for under the species that he will not find him, to any degree. Because there is obviously a father somewhere, Bloom, a father who seeks a son, but Stephen places in opposition to him a 'not much of a one'. After the father I had, I've had a bellyful! No more father. And especially since this Bloom, this Bloom in question is not very tempting.

But anyway it is curious that there is this gravitation between the thoughts of Bloom and of Stephen who pursue one another throughout the whole novel. And even to the point, that this Adams whose, whose name breathes more Jewishness than Bloom, than Bloom, that this Adams, that this Adams should be very struck. Should be very struck by certain little indices that he discovers. That he curiously discovers as being far too unlikely to attribute to Bloom a knowledge of Shakespeare that he manifestly does not have. A knowledge of Shakespeare which moreover is not, is not at all necessarily the right one. Even though it is the one that Stephen has. Because it involves supposing that Shakespeare has relations with a certain herbalist who lived in the same corner of London as Shakespeare. And that despite everything, this is, this is truly pure supposition. That such a thing should come to Bloom's mind is something that Adams underlines, underlines as going beyond the limits, the limits of what can be precisely imputed to Bloom.

In truth, there is a whole chapter, a whole chapter that I have spoken to you about, *Symbol or surface*, there is a whole chapter where strictly

speaking nothing is dealt with but that. To the point that it culminates in a Blephen, since earlier I made a slip, Blephen and Stoom, Blephen and Stoom who meet in the text of *Ulysses*. And which manifestly (64) shows that it is not simply of the same signifier that they are made. It is truly of the same material.

Ulysses, bears witness to the way in which Joyce remains rooted in his father even as he disowns him; and it is this indeed that is, that is his symptom.

I said that he was the symptom. His whole *oeuvre* is one long testimony of it.

Exiles, is truly the approach of something which is, for him, in short, the symptom. The central symptom in which, of course, what is at stake is the symptom constituted by the deficiency proper to the sexual relationship, but this deficiency does not take on just any old form. This deficiency must indeed take on a form. And this form, is the one that knots him to his wife, to the aforesaid Nora, to the aforesaid Nora during whose reign he lucubrates *Exiles*, *Les Exilés*, as it has been translated, even though this may just as well mean *Exils*. *Exils*, there could be no better term to express non-relationship. And it is indeed around this non-relationship that everything in *Exiles* turns. Non-relationship is indeed the following, it is that there is truly no reason why he should hold One woman among others to be his woman, that One woman among others is moreover one who has a relationship with any other man whatsoever. And it is indeed this any other man whatsoever that is at stake in the character that he imagines, and for whom at this date of his life, he knows how to open up, to open up the choice of the One woman in question, who is none other, on this occasion, than Nora.

The portrait, the portrait that he completed at the time, the one I evoked in connection with the uncreated conscience of his race, in connection with which he invokes the artificer par excellence which his father is supposed to be; while it is he who is the artificer. That it is he who knows, who knows what he has to do. Who believes that there is an uncreated conscience of some race or other. Which is where there lies a great illusion. That he also believes that there is a 'book of himself'. What an idea to make oneself be a book! This could truly only come to a stunted poet. To a pig of a poet.

Why does he not rather say that he is a knot?

Let us come to *Ulysses*. That it can be analysed is no doubt what is realised by a certain Chechner; like that, while I was dreaming, I believed he was called Checher, it was easier to write. No, he is called Chechner, which is a pity. He is not *Chécher* at all. He imagines that he is an analyst. He imagines that he is an analyst because he has read (65) a lot of analytic books. It is a rather widespread illusion, precisely among analysts. And then, he analyses *Ulysses*. This gives, this makes an absolutely terrifying impression. Contrary to *Surface and Symbol*, this analysis of *Ulysses*, an exhaustive one naturally because one cannot stop when one analyses a book, can one...Freud all the same only wrote articles about this, and limited articles, is that not so. Moreover, apart from Dostoyevsky he did not properly speaking analyse a novel. He made a little allusion to Ibsen's *Rosmersholm*. But anyway he restrained himself. This truly gives the idea that the imagination of the novelist, I mean the one that reigns in *Ulysses* can be thrown in the wastepaper basket. This is not at all, moreover, something that I feel. But one must all the same oblige oneself to go collecting in this *Ulysses*

some first truths. And this is what I was tackling in connection with the riddle.

Here is what our dear Joyce, Joyce under the species of Stephen, proposes to his pupils as a riddle. It states something:

*The cock crew
The sky was blue:
The bells in heaven
Were striking eleven.
Tis time for this poor soul
To go to heaven.*

You will never guess the key, the answer. It is the one that of course after the whole class has given up, Joyce provides.

The fox burying his grandmother under the bush (sic)

(66) This looks like nothing at all. But it is incontestable that alongside the incoherence of the stating which, I point out to you, is in verse; namely, that it is a poem, that it is connected up, that it is a creation. That alongside that, this fox, this little fox who buries his grandmother under a bush is truly something miserable, huh!

Yes.

What kind of an echo might this have, for I will not of course say for the people who are within these walls, but for those who are analysts.

The fact is that analysis is that. It is the response to a riddle. And a response, it must be said, from this example, that is quite especially

stupid. That indeed is why we must hold onto the cord. I mean that if one has no idea about where the cord ends up, at the knot of the sexual non-relationship, one runs the risk, one runs the risk of talking nonsense.

Meaning! Ah! I must show you that. Meaning results from a field (IV-5) between the Imaginary and the Symbolic. That of course is self-evident. Because if we think that there is no Other of the Other, at least no enjoyment of this Other of the Other, we must make a suture somewhere. Here specifically between the Symbolic which alone extends there (1), and this imaginary which is here. Of course, here, the small $\circ$, the cause of desire. Yes.

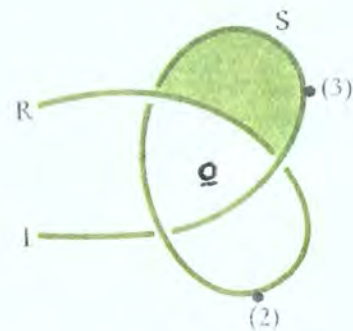


Fig. IV-5

Yes. We must indeed make the knot somewhere. The knot between the Imaginary and unconscious knowledge, that we make here, somewhere, a splice (3). All that to obtain a meaning; which is the object of the analyst's response to the presentation by the analysand all along of his symptom.

When we make this splice, we make another one at the same time, this one here, between precisely what is Symbolic and the Real (2). Namely, that from some angle we teach him to splice, to make a splice between his sinthome and this parasitic Real of enjoyment. And what is (67) characteristic of our operation, to render this enjoyment possible, is the same thing as what I will write: *j'ouis-sens*. It is the same thing as to hear a meaning.

Analysis is a matter of suturing and splicing. But it must be said that we should consider the agencies as really separated. Imaginary, Symbolic and Real are not confused.

Finding a meaning implies knowing which is the knot. And to stitch it up properly thanks to an artifice. To make a knot with what I will call a Borromean *chaî-noeud* [chain-knot?], is this not an abuse? It is on this question, that I will leave hanging, that I am leaving you.

I have not left time for our dear friend Jacques Aubert, whom I had hoped would monopolise the conversation for the rest of the session, to speak to you now; it is time for us to part. But next time, given what I have heard from him, since he was good enough to call me on the telephone last Friday, given what I have heard from him, I believe that he will be able, on what is involved in the Bloom in question - namely, my God, someone who is not any worse placed than another to cop onto something about analysis, since he is a Jew - that, on this Bloom and on the way in which there is experienced the suspension between the sexes which means that the aforementioned Bloom can only question himself about whether he is a father or a mother. This is something that makes Joyce's text. What assuredly has a thousand radiations in this text of Joyce, namely, that with regard to his wife, he has the feelings of a mother, he believes he is carrying her in his belly and that here indeed in fine, when all is said and done is the worst aberration of what one can experience *vis-à-vis* somebody one loves. And why not! Love indeed must be explained and to explain it by a sort of madness, is indeed the first thing within hand's reach.

It is on this that I leave you, and I hope that for this first session of the New Year, you have not been too disappointed.

Seminar 5: Wednesday 20 January 1976

It must appear to you, I suppose, if you are not too backward, it must appear to you that I am embarrassed by Joyce like a fish with an apple.

This is obviously linked – I can say it because I am experiencing it these days on a daily basis – this is obviously linked to my lack of practice, let us say, to my inexperience of the tongue in which he writes. Not that I am totally ignorant of English. But precisely, he writes English with these special refinements which means that he disarticulates the tongue, the English one on this occasion. You must not think that, that that begins with *Finnegans Wake*. Well before *Finnegans Wake*, he has a way of, of mangling sentences, particularly in *Ulysses*. It is truly a process by someone who is working in the sense of giving to the tongue in which he is writing a different usage. A usage in any case which is far from being ordinary. This forms part of his know-how and, on this, I already quoted Soller's article. It would be no bad thing, anyway, for you to take the measure of its pertinence.

So then, the result is that this morning, I am going to allow someone to speak whose practical experience goes well beyond mine, not simply of the English tongue, but of Joyce, particularly of Joyce. The person concerned is Jacques Aubert. And so as not

to go on and on, I am going immediately to let him speak, since he has kindly offered to take over from me. I will listen to him with the whole measure that I have been able to take of his experience of Joyce. I will listen to him. And I hope that the little reflections, is that not so – I am not advising him to abbreviate, far from it – the little reflections that I will have to add to it will be made, in (70) short, with all the respect that I owe him for the fact that he introduced me to what I called, Joyce the Sinthome.

Come, my dear Jacques. Stand there. Off we go.

Jacques Aubert's intervention

Last June, Lacan announced that Joyce was to feature on his laborious path. The fact that I am here today in no way signifies that I find myself on this royal road. I must immediately specify, must I not, that I am rather on the verges, and in general you know why verges are indicated, and that what you are going to hear are rather the remarks of a road mender (*la cantonnier*).

I must thank Jacques Lacan for having invited me to put forward a rather slapdash piece of work. Slapdash (*bâclé*), I specify then, a work that is not tied up, not tied up at all (*bouclé*), not well done and not, let us say, too well articulated as regards what is involved in knots. On the other hand, I would like to indicate that what I am going to say to you starts from a certain feeling that I had of something that threads its way through the texts of Joyce, certain texts of Joyce. In certain points, what was at stake, it seemed to me, was something that Joyce was tacking on; and this consciousness of a tacking thread leads me precisely not to insist on what on the contrary might make up a definitive piece.

To situate the point from which I started, by accident, I must say that it is a matter very didactically, I am saying very didactically,

that what is at stake is a little piece of Circe. A little part of an exchange in Circe, this chapter that was called *à posteriori* 'the Circe of Ulysses', and which is the chapter, it is said, about hallucination, whose art, it is said, is hallucination, is magic, but the category: hallucination.

Elements whose status it is too early to assign reappear from earlier chapters. They can be objects. They can be characters, of course, who are true or fictitious. They can be objects. They can be signifiers. But what is also interesting, is the manner in which they turn, the manner in which this, manifestly, is related to the word, with a word. This is signalled from the beginning, since the first two characters, as I might say, are THE CALLS and THE ANSWERS which clearly mark this very dimension, a dimension (71) which is developed, in the form, as I might say, of the chapter, by a writing that is ostensibly dramatic. So then, a dimension of the word and, definitively, kinds of establishing of locuses from which it speaks. (*d'où ça parle*).

The important thing is that it speaks, and this heads off in every direction, that everything can be impersonated there to take up a term that we will later encounter, everything can personate in this text. Everything can be the occasion for voice effects through a mask.

It is one of its functions, the detail of one of its functions, let us say perhaps simply the functioning, the functioning of one of its functions, that I believed I could distinguish quite close to the beginning of the chapter, in an exchange between Bloom and the one who is supposed to be his father, Rudolph, who has been dead for eighteen years.

So then I will read you the passage, the brief exchange in question. It is found in the French edition on page 429, in the American

[Penguin] edition on page 569. Rudolph has first emerged as an elder in Zion. He has the face which is that of, we are told in a stage direction, that of an elder in Zion. And after various reproaches, some reproaches to his son, he says the following:

-What are you making down this place? Have you no soul?

He is supposed, precisely, not to handle the English tongue well; coming from Hungary, he is supposed not to be able to handle the English tongue.

With feeble vulture talons he feels the silent face of Bloom. 'Are you not my son Leopold, the grandson of Leopold? Are you not my dear son Leopold who left the house of his father and left the God of his fathers Abraham and Jacob? (569)

So then, what is happening here at first sight, for the reader of *Ulysses*, is a phenomenon described several times by Bloom himself, by the expression *retrospective arrangement*. This is a term that returns rather often in the, let us say, thoughts of Bloom, right throughout this book. So then the reader cannot fail to be sensitive to this retrospective arrangement. He cannot fail to be sensitive to the fact that it deals with an arrangement that starts from a favourite quotation of the father, a quotation from a literary text that had had, to all appearances, certain effects on him.

(72) And this text is to be found on page 93 of the Penguin edition:

-Nathan's voice! His son's voice! I hear the voice of Nathan who left his father to die of grief and misery in my arms, who left the house of his father and left the God of his father.

We see that what returns here is slightly different. But before separating out this difference, I would like to indicate what

appears to me to be the effects on Bloom of this return with a difference. What does he answer? What does he answer in the Circe episode? He responds as follows. I am giving you first the paraphrase, in French: 'Bloom, prudent: I think that is so, father. Mosenthal. All that remains to us of him'. And then I am going to write the English text of this sentence:

I suppose so, father. Mosenthal. All that's left of him.

Bloom being prudent, the English text says: *with precaution*, this is precisely a function of Bloom, described throughout, anyway in a large part of *Ulysses*, as the prudent one. The prudent one, is the side of him, the side which is half Ulysses, because Ulysses is not simply that. And he is described on several occasions, in slightly Masonic language as: *the prudent member*. And it is in his function of prudent member that we find him here. And the prudent member says: *I suppose so*, and not: 'Je crois que oui' as the French translation says. 'Je sous-pose ainsi', I sup-pose so. I suppose something to answer this question, is that not so: are you not my son?

So then, I sup-pose something of the kind, which in principle refers back to what the father says, but which, all of a sudden, if one follows the text, takes on a different appearance. For immediately, we have this pause, this pause marked by what the English, the Anglo-Saxons, call a period, something which makes a complete sentence, a point not of suspension, but of leaving something in abeyance, and a point starting from which Mosenthal emerges. Once again punctuated, once again placed as a complete sentence.

(73) Around this proper name, precisely, something is articulated, and is disarticulated at the same time. Something is articulated and is disarticulated about the sup-position that has been

announced. What then is this instrument, what is then more clearly, this function of sup-position, this instrument (*suppôt*) of Mosenthal?

Here, in this context, it refers, this signifier has the function of referring the word of the father to the author of a text. To the author precisely of the text that has just been evoked by the father. But, one can clearly see that, in its brutality, this signifier creates more opacity than anything else. And one is led, the reader is led to isolate, to rediscover the thought that this refers back to. By what displacement, in what displacement this signifier is implicated.

One of these displacements is obvious, the fact is that in the text, the first text let us say, that of the Lotus Eaters, is that not so, that of page 93, the name in question, the name of the author, features before the quotation: here it is in the position of a signature. It is in the position of a signature and it is also in the position of an answer. It is very tempting, it is very nice because it is Moses, is that not so, so that gives pleasure. But if one has in mind - as always, is that not so, one always has that in mind because one spends one's time rereading it - the place of Mosenthal in the first text, one finds that there it was a displaced answer to a question about the existence of the true name. A question which itself could only manage to be formulated in an eloquently vacillating manner. And, I must write here another sentence which is precisely the question to which Mosenthal answered, is supposed to have answered:

What is this the right name is? By Mosenthal it is. Rachel, is it?
No.

So then for good measure, I included what follows which all the same has perhaps also a certain interest. Mosenthal, even if a

German speaker who knows his slang, hears something else in it, except for a dieresis, Mosenthal, is the name of a play, the name of the author of a play that Bloom tries to remember by retranslating the original German title which is in fact a woman's name, a Jewish woman's name. A name that had not been kept in English, it is a curious idea, we are dealing with a melodrama whose German title was *Deborah* which had been translated into English under the name of *Leah*, and this is what Bloom is trying to recall. So then he tries to retranslate the original title, which is a woman's (74) name. And that for him takes on the form of this search, and one obviously sees the game of hide and seek between the author's name and that of his creature at the level of art. This brings into play with insistence both being, the *is* insists, and the sexual problematic, a patronymic coming in the place of the name of a daughter.

Here then the reader who, from whom nothing in *Ulysses* has escaped, says that that makes him think of something else in *Ulysses*, something that happens to have a relationship with Bloom himself. With Bloom himself, and here I will give you again, I will give you then - I am very sorry to be doing it in little fragments, but I am simply following what was my own approach - I give you again the passage, the first passage in which there were written all these beautiful things:

Mr Bloom stood at the corner, his eyes wandering over the multicoloured hoardings. Cantrell and Cochrane's ginger ale (aromatic). Clery's summer sale. No, he's going on straight. Hello. Leah tonight: Mrs Bandman Palmer. Like to see her in that again. Hamlet she played last night. Male impersonator. - a transvestite, and then, this is where there begins precisely a little passage on the problematic of sexes, the English expression is male-impersonator, is it not, an author who had taken then the persona, did he not, the male actor, the male impersonator, but

which can just as well be applied to one of the plays, *Hamlet*, as to the other, *Leah*. It is around this that it is going to turn.

Transvestite. Perhaps. She played *Hamlet* last night. Male-impersonator. *Perhaps he was a woman. Why Ophelia committed suicide?* (93)

So then there is at a certain level the fact that Hamlet, the role of Hamlet was very often played by women. And it so happens that an Anglo-Saxon critic had had the fantasy of analysing *Hamlet* in terms precisely of cross-dressing, by in a way taking transvestism seriously. And in this saying that if Ophelia committed suicide, it was because she realised that Hamlet, in fact, was a woman.

Perhaps he was a woman. Now I am not invoking this critic by chance, I am invoking him by, I mean in the name of my Shakespearean and Joycean knowledge, simply because this (75) reappears elsewhere in *Ulysses*. I am trying to limit external references as much as possible. Is that why Ophelia committed suicide? The English statement is slightly different: *Why Ophelia committed suicide?* Or indeed: is this the reason why Ophelia committed suicide? This obviously does not get across in the French translation. And I think that it is all the same important enough to note. And what comes afterwards?

Poor papa! How he used to talk about Kate Bateman in that! Outside the Adelphi in London waited all the afternoon to get in. Year before I was born that was: 65. and Ristori in Vienna.

So then here is where the title begins: *what is this the right name is?* Etc. Anyway, I will spare you a translation; anyway everyone, I believe, can make it up. Not me.

By Mosenthal it is. Rachel is it? No. The scene he was always talking about where the old blind Abraham recognises the voice

and puts his fingers on his face. Here then: Nathan's voice! His son's voice! Etc. Every word is so deep...then after the passage:

Nathan's voice! His son's voice. I hear the voice of Nathan who left his father to die of grief and misery in my arms, who left the house of his father and left the God of his father.

Every word is so deep, Leopold.

Poor papa! Poor man! I'm glad I didn't go into the room to look at his face. That day! Oh dear! Oh dear! Ffoo! Well, perhaps it was the best for him (93)

In this passage there, it happens then that in reality a whole series of questions are in play. Questions then about existence, not (76) simply about being and the name, but about existence and suicide. The question about the name - and here, I must, I am going to come back to this point - about the name which is in fact just as much the name of the father, of his father, as the name of the play, of the author of the play, let us say, of the central character of the play. And finally the question about the sex that *personates*, which is what within, causes *per-sonnation*.

The name, then, behind the question of the name, is found the suicide of the father who has this other characteristic, which is precisely that he has changed his name. This is indicated to us in another passage, the one that then is presented in a way which, in itself seems curious to me. In a pub people are questioning one another, a certain number of pillars of the house are questioning themselves about Bloom: *He's a perverted Jew*, says one of them. And in English you say pervert. Perverted Jew. And the word pervert, in English, signifies *renégat*. This is not at all an invention of Joyce's, a piece of cleverness, that's how it is. Moreover, you find it at the end of the *Portrait*, *are you trying to convert me or to pervert me?* Convert, pervert, that is how it functions in English.

He's a perverted Jew... from a place in Hungary and it was he who drew up all the plans according to the Hungarian system. (this is about the business of the political plans of Sinn Fein)... He changed [his name] by deed poll, the father did. (438)

So then it appears that the father had changed name. And he changed it in a way which is rather interesting: according to a legal formula, which is called *deed poll*. Deed, namely an act, an act but *poll* evokes, describes in a way what the act is, from the point of view of the document. It is a document that is cut back. It is cut back, this poll describes what is cut back, and also describes what is beheaded, is that not so, what is decapitated. A pollard, an tree that has been treated like that is polled. And poll can also designate the head. So then, the deed poll, is the type of particular act which is cut back. It has this characteristic of only comprising one part. It is an act which is - that is why one says 'by 'decree' is that not so, it has been decreed that - and this is opposed to, this is distinguished at least from an indenture, which is an act that is torn apart, precisely in accordance with an indentation, to be confided to the parties, is that not so, to the two (77) parties, to two or several parties. This is we are told, Joyce tells us, the way in which the father has changed his name. And he has changed names. What name has he changed?

-Isn't he a cousin of Bloom the dentist? Says Jack Power.

-Not at all, says Martin. Only namesakes. His name was Virag. The father's name that poisoned himself. (ibid.)

In French that is: *c'est le nom du père qui s'est empoisonné.*

And one could understand almost that it is the name that has poisoned itself, is that not so. *The father's name*, there is a kind of play on the genitive, which means, as regards the position of the name of the father, which means that it is the name which seems

to have been poisoned. Virag. Virag reappears. He is evoked on several occasions in *Ulysses*, he reappears in Circe but what reappears in Circe first of all is a virago, designated as such, Virago. So then it is here that one can, perhaps, remember what a Virago is. Namely, the name which, in the Vulgate, in the translation of the Bible by St. Jerome, serves to designate the woman, from the point of view of Adam. In *Genesis*, the man is led to name the woman: 'You will name her woman'. He calls her Virago. Because she is a little bit of a man. She is *fomme*, if you wish. Except for a rib.

Having got to this point in my lucubrations and my flounderings in, between, the lines of *Ulysses*, I would like to distinguish in these intertwinings what looks like a hole. Because obviously, for an interpretation, with interpretation in mind one is tempted to use a schema which might be drawn from suicide, from change of name, from the refusal by Bloom to see the face of his dead father. Obviously, it would be very nice and very obliging if all of this were precisely to reappear in Circe in hallucination. Only there you are, it is perhaps not quite sufficient even if there is some truth in it, not quite sufficient to put the text to work. For example, to account for the passage, *Poor papa! Poor man!* Does he not, in (78) the first passage, he said after *every word is so deep*, Leopold, reporting the father's commentary on the play: *Poor papa! poor man!* Which was perhaps not very nice either to the remarks of papa. *I'm glad I didn't go into the room to look at his face. That day! Oh dear! Oh dear! ... Well perhaps it was the best for him.* Anyway in short there are a lot of things like that that one would also have to account for. And one would above all have to manage to account for the effects produced in the dramatic redistribution constituted by Circe. For it holds together, it works, for all the same things happen, precisely alongside what looks like a hole.

And I think precisely that Joyce's knack consists, among other things, in displacing as I might say the area of the hole so as to allow certain effects. We notice for example the disappearance of the voice of the son, in the quotation given; the son's voice is not mentioned, any more than the father's death. But on the other hand, an effect is produced by this voice of the son displaced into a reply, but a son's voice precisely bearing a certain know-how about the signifier. This precaution, this skill in speaking, in supposing, in sup-posing, is seen to spread itself, we see that it spreads itself in accordance with a logic which is indeed quite eloquent. I spoke about the eloquence of *Mosenthal* which is very rhetorical, in complete sentences, and then also by the articulation, *Mosenthal*, *all that's...* is that not so, I am fed up with him, marabout, *all that's left of him*.

So then I must give you here the English sentence, what Rudolph says in *Circe*, is, because he was repeating himself: *Are you not my dear son Leopold who left the house of his father and left the God of his fathers Abraham and Jacob?* Who left, who quitted, who abandoned then *all that's left of him*, everything that is, everything that remains of him, everything that is abandoned of him - it is all the same already not bad - all that is abandoned of him, and remains of him and then also, *all that's left of him*, everything that is on his left.

So then obviously, if one thinks of what is indicated in the Credo, about the respective places of the father and the son, on high, this says a lot about the respect implied in it. Everything that remains of him, good, a name, an author's name, everything that is on his left then, in any way, something which is not in any case a true son.

(79) I don't know where to stop in all of this, I tremble, it would be better for me to stop. What is certain is that this gives pleasure

to Bloom, to him also - it gave me pleasure for my part when I saw that - that gives him pleasure, this is certain and this is agreed. That is agreed, and how can that be seen? Because papa is far from happy. The reply following that begins by: *Rudolph: (severely) one night they bring you home drunk*, etc... severely, in other words: please, no out of place humour, let us talk rather about your own transgressions.

So then this jubilation of Bloom who prudently, has said the things he had to say, they are things which then give everyone pleasure. But then, in this series of effects, some of which I have just isolated, there is a sort of cascade. A sort of cascade because there develops another effect which is in a way structural, as compared to the preceding one, a sort of result of preceding effects.

This kind of interplay with respect to the father, about all of these things, I cannot get over it, seems to lead to a sliding towards the mothers side. This kind of father, challenged in different ways, is that not so, leads to a mother, and to a mother who is, let us say to simplify, is on the side of the imaginary. For then, Rudolph evokes a transgression of the son, who has come home, who has come home drunk, who has spent his money and who has come home covered in mud. *Mud*. But the reader, good, he made, this was a nice spectacle for his mother, he says, *nice spectacles for your poor mother!* Is that not so, huh, it's not me, it is she who is unhappy. But the way this comes about, the way in which it is palmed off on the mother, by the mud, is rather funny because *Mud* those of you who have read the *Portrait* in English, one can note that at a certain moment, *Mud* is a sort of familiar form for mother. And here, it is around pages ..., I don't know, in the first, generally in the first two chapters, I believe it is at the beginning of the second chapter. And there is question, it is associated with pantomime. Where is it? Well then, hold on, after all I have it

here, I will try to find it for you. But perhaps I do not have the time. What time is it?

There you are. Good, in this edition, in the Viking edition it is on page 67 and it is a little light-weight playlet of the epiphany kind, I don't know how one should say that, I am using the term a little provocatively because I have... good. Ugh!

(80) -**J Lacan**: That sounds bizarre ... is it Joyce's term?

J Aubert: Epiphany? Yes-yes. But here, one could perhaps debate. let us say, its pertinence, perhaps. It forms part of a series of little playlets that Joyce placed, then, in one of the first chapters of *Ulysses*, of, of the *Portrait* and in which the child, the young Stephen is in the process of finding his way about Dublin, starting from a certain number, let us say, of points, of scenes, of places, of houses. He was there, sitting in a house. In general, it begins like that. And we see him sitting on a chair, in his aunt's kitchen, and his aunt is reading the evening paper and admiring *the beautiful Maybel Hunter*, a beautiful actress. And a little girl arrives, with ringlets, she is on her tiptoes to look at the picture, and says softly.

-*What is she in, mud?*

-*In a pantomime, love* (*Portrait*, 67)

Now as it happens this passage of Circe slides through the mud, does it not, since that returns, the signifier returns three or four times in that passage, slides from the mud to an emergence of the mother: *nice spectacles for your poor mother!*, says Rudolph and Bloom says *Mamma!* Because she is about to appear at that very moment.

As soon as certain, certain words, certain signifiers appear in Circe, the object, as I might say, surfaces. And surfaces in what

way? Dressed as a pantomime dame, in crinoline and bustle, with window Twankey's bodice. She appears as a pantomime dame, namely, following the logic of the English pantomime: a man disguised as a woman, is that not so. The pantomimes put on in particular around Christmas, which are evoked here, imply an overturning of dress codes and a generalised cross-dressing. Pantomime, is that not so. So then, from a certain point of view, this would mean then, good, feminine clothing.

But what functions anew here, immediately functions, it goes off in two directions. It goes off in two directions because from the beginning of *Ulysses*, the mother had been evoked in connection with pantomime, the mother as having, as having laughed, is that not so, at the pantomime, the pantomime of Turko the terrible. In the Penguin edition it is on page 10. In a sort of, in an evocation of his mother Stephen says, after having evoked her as dead he says:

Where now?

(81) Her secrets: old feather fans, tasselled dance card, powdered with musk, a gaud of amber beads in her locked drawer. A birdcage hung in the sunny window of her house when she was a girl. She heard old Royce sing in the pantomime of Turko the terrible and laughed with others when he sang:

*I am the boy
That can enjoy
Invisibility.*

Phantasmal mirth, folded away: muskperfumed. (10)

So then what reappears in this, is then a phantasmatic ensemble linked to the mother, but linked to the mother via Stephen, with all the same a radical ambiguity; what was she laughing at? At old Royce singing, at what he was saying, at... good, at the tricks of his voice, God knows what...

And so then this mother, this very mother, this problematic mother is dressed the way the mother of Aladdin is dressed in the pantomime: *widow Twankey's blouse*, then, the mother of Aladdin in the pantomimes. Aladdin's mother who obviously understood nothing about what her son was doing, except that by well polishing the lamp, he made the genie inside speak. I will rest there on this point, to pass on to another aspect about the functioning of the text.

Ellen Bloom who has just emerged is not at all like papa on the side of the elders of Zion but, listening to her, she is rather on the side of the Catholic, Apostolic and Roman religion. For what does she say when she sees him all covered in mud:

Oh blessed redeemer, what have they done to him!... sacred heart of Mary, where were you at all at all?

This is moreover rather curious, because Sacred Heart of Jesus is (82) rather what should have come to her mind. This indicates a certain style of her narcissistic relationship to religion. She is quite clearly Catholic in the way in which one could be, particularly in the nineteenth century, is that not so, and it is this whole dimension which, in fact, I think deserves to be underlined once one is speaking about Joyce. Once one speaks about Joyce even if one goes looking for him in the more benign texts. Even if one goes looking for him in the texts of *Stephen Hero*. Even if you go looking for him in the texts of *Dubliners*. An imaginary relationship to religion is what is first perceived behind the mother, in Joyce's mother, in Joyce's work.

First of all, I would like to signal this in connection with the epiphany. What is called the epiphany, signifies a whole lot of things that are really rather diverse. There is only one place where Joyce defines it, it is in the *Portrait of the artist* in the- there it is -

in *Stephen Hero*, Stephen the hero, it is the only place that he uses the word and people have obviously slightly distorted what he said. He had the good fortune to give a definition. By epiphany, he meant a sudden spiritual manifestation whether in the vulgarity of speech or of gesture or in a memorable phase of the mind itself. Good. Something well polished, very didactic and Thomas Aquinas-like. But how does that all come about? It comes after, it comes in a text which in two pages, makes us pass from a dialogue with the mother, in which the mother reproaches Stephen for his unbelief. By invoking who then? The priests. Saying: the priests... the priests... the priests... And Stephen, at once breaks with her on this plane, and in another sense, skirts around the problem, sets about evoking precisely, slips over to the relationship woman-priest, then slips towards his beloved and all of a sudden starts to say, uh! I don't have the text here unfortunately, because I did not think I would be invoking it, but anyway, you will find it easily enough in *Stephen Hero*, if you're interested. He says immediately afterwards, a Dublin scene, ah yes, that's it: *a trivial incident set him composing some ardent verses*. Then nothing more about the poem, and he reports the dialogue that he had heard, which is a dialogue between a young woman and a young man. And one of the rare words which appears in it, is the word chapel. Apart from that there is practically nothing but points of suspension in this dialogue.

So then this dialogue, where there is nothing, makes him write a poem. And then, on the other hand, he baptises it, in the lines that follow, epiphany. This is what he wanted to do, to record scenes, (83) these realist playlets which tell so much. A double then, a kind of redoubling of the experience a kind of redoubling on the one hand of, of a realist aspect let us say, to simplify, on the other hand, in a way poetic and, a kind of liquidation, of censoring in the text of *Stephen Hero*, of what was in fact the poetic aspect. And we see that the poem in question is entitled the *The villanelle*

of the temptress, is that not so. But precisely this emerges, this emerges in a certain discourse which implies precisely the mother, and the mother in her relationship to priests.

So then, this... the relationship, the relationship that I roughly define and you will excuse me for this, as an imaginary relationship to religion, is found in another way in the *Portrait of the artist* with, for example, the sermons on hell which are very sadistic and Kantian and which are in fact, which aim at representing in detail the horrible tortures of hell. And which aim at representing, at giving precisely *in praesentia* an idea of what hell is.

And in the same order of functioning: the confessor. The confessor as being the one who listens, but also answers. Answers what? Says what? It is precisely around that that it revolves. It is around that that there turns, among other things, Stephen's Easter duties, the confession of his turpitude and then also, the artist, the function of the artist.

I will evoke here two passages, two texts, one which is found near the beginning of *Stephen Hero* where he says that in writing his poems, he had the possibility of fulfilling the double function of confessor and confessing subject. And then, the other text the other passage, is found towards the end of *The portrait of the artist* and it is the moment when, mortified at seeing his beloved pricking up her ears and smiling at a well washed young priest, he says, hm, good. He for his part had rejected being a priest, there was no problem, the matter is settled, he is not on their side. And all the same he says it is chaps like that who tell them things in the shadows, is that not so. And I - I am embroidering, huh, but anyway, you can look at the text, huh, it exists, more or less- that he would like to have got there before she engenders someone of their race. And that the effect of what would happen, the effect of

this word, is that not so, would all the same ameliorate a little this rotten race, is that not so. This indeed is perhaps related to the famous uncreated conscience. It passes through the ear, does it not. The famous conception through the ear that we rediscover moreover in Circe, is that not so, evoked of course...

(84) **J Lacan:** That is found in?

J. Aubert: In Circe among other things.

J. Lacan: And that Jones, on which Jones insisted a great deal, Jones, Freud's pupil.

J. Aubert: Yes, that's it.

No, because there is also a Jones who, Professor Jones who in *Finnegans Wake*, hm, rabbits on endlessly. He is one of those who have a whole lot of things to say about the book itself, is that not so. In *Ulysses*, the chap who has this function, is called Matthew, sometimes, anyway, he is among those who... good, anyway, in any case, there had to be names that travel well. Jones travels well.

Another thing concerning this imaginary dimension of religion, at bottom, is summarised in *Ulysses* in the famous passage in which there are opposed what we can call the Trinitarian and problematic conception of theology as opposed to the Italian Madonna-like conception, is that not so, which obviously fills in all the gaps with an image of Mary. And then, you may have noticed in *Ulysses* how he says that fundamentally the Catholic church did not handle things all that badly by placing the incertitude of the void, is that not so, at the foundation of everything. Here again I am embroidering.

So then the functioning of this text, of these texts, one of the things at least, a certain number of things that make it work, are obviously the names of the father at multiple levels. One can

clearly grasp that in the two passages that I have hooked onto, it is the function that is in question, is that not so, it is the function that appears through the forebears, throughout the depth accorded to all that. But in Circe and in *Ulysses* as a whole what makes things move, what creates the artifice, is this hide and seek with the names of the father. Namely, that alongside of what appears as a hole, there are displacements of holes and there are displacements of names of the father. We have glimpsed in passing in no particular order: Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Virag. We also see Dedalus. And then we see one of them who is quite funny, because in an episode which is rather central, rather central because there is one eye, it is the Cyclops, there is a character called J.J. J.J. whom we remember, if one has a good memory, (85) we encountered in a preceding episode under the name of J.J. O'Molloy, that is descendent of the Molloys, huh. So then here one must listen carefully. A J.J. son of O'Molloy. But here in the Cyclops he appears under that name. So then this guy has a rather curious position. Because in principle he is a lawyer, I would not even say one who has collapsed, but is in decline. We are told, and here again the English words are interesting: *practice dwindling*. (159) And what is happening for this lawyer whose practice is clearing out? He is involved in gaming, *gambling*. Gaming replaces in a way his practice. Good, there would be a certain number of things, obviously, to elaborate, starting from that no doubt.

What I would simply like to point out, is the function of this perfectly false father, whose initials are both those of James Joyce, of John Joyce, papa, the papa of Joyce. The talk of this J.J. O'Molloy is particularly about other fathers. He is the one who in a certain passage, links back to the riddle quoted last week by Lacan. He is the one who turns to Stephen, in the episode taking place in the office, turns towards Stephen to give him a fine piece of rhetoric. This is interesting because we know that, first of all,

the O'Molloy in question, has turned to gaming. And then all the same in order to survive also, he does literary work in the newspapers. He does literary work in the newspapers, namely, something that may refer you back in the work of Joyce to *The dead*, the last story in *Dubliners*, is that not so, the chap who writes stories in the ... who writes in the papers, reviews, we don't know what exactly. This also reappears in a different way in *Exiles*, is that not so. What kind of literature? Is it literature that remains, does it deserve to survive? Good, so then the O'Molloy in question, the J.J. in question, we are told that he turns towards Stephen, in the editorial office, and presents him with a beautiful specimen of legal eloquence. That can be found, where can we find that? - In the Penguin edition page 176:

*J.J. O'Molloy turned to Stephen and said quietly and slowly:
-One of the most polished periods I think I ever listened to in my life fell from the lips of Seymour Bushe. Who obviously, to the nearest letter, signifies then the bush, but here it is perhaps too early to indicate it - it is also the sexual hair, if you wish.*

(86) ...Seymour Bushe. It was in that case of fratricide, the child's murder case. Bushe defended him.

Here then a little Shakespearean interpolation:

And in the porches of mine ear did pour (Hamlet)- by the way how did he find that out? He died in his sleep. Or the other story, beast with two backs?

That, it is Stephen then that is thinking of that.

-What was that? The professor asked. There is always one like that, huh! ITALIA, MAGISTRA ARTIUM. This is the title, one of the headlines punctuation the newspaper office episode.

-He spoke on the law of evidence... here I refer you to the English text... the law of evidence, if you wish, but certainly the testimony. The law of testimony. Not exactly testimony before the law, etc.

... On the law of evidence- the law of bearing witness- J.J.
O'Molloy said, of Roman justice as contrasted with the earlier Mosaic code, the *Lex Talionis*. And he cited the Moses of Michael Angelo in the Vatican.

- Ha!

- A few well chosen words, Lenehan prefaced, who is a ...
Good, I am skipping over certain sentences which would obviously deserve no doubt being dwelt on, but anyhow I don't have the time.

J.J. O'Molloy resumed moulding his words:

- He said of it: that stony effigy in frozen music, horned and terrible, of the human form divine, that eternal symbol of wisdom and prophesy which if ought that the imagination or the hand of sculptor has wrought in marble of soul transfigured and of soul transfiguring deserves to live, deserves to live. (177)

You have followed that, of course! So then here, the O'Molloy in question having begun by making himself an echo chamber of knowledge about the law, is that not so, having set out the laws, the laws relating to evidence, relating to witnessing - go and find that - having done this, he is the one who makes Bushe speak, does he not. He is the one who makes the bush speak. He is the one who makes him speak, who makes him bear a rhetorical witness on art, on art as grounding the right to existence, *deserves to live*, founding the right to existence of the work of art. You see (87) the echo that this has as compared to, good, the literature of newspapers, what it means, how is it situated with respect to that *deserves to live*.... And thus founding in law the bearer of the law,

Moses, since he will remain, perhaps not *qua* Moses, but the Vatican Moses. That is how it is described. The Vatican Moses. Which is obviously rather interesting when one has in mind what the Vatican represents from the point of view of *Ulysses*.

So then, this *deserves to live* insists, since it reappears by means of rhetoric in the form of insistence, *deserved to live*, *deserves to live*. It reappears with insistence, but it is marked, it is countersigned, by its effects on the one to whom the period was destined, namely, Stephen. J.J. O'Molloy had turned towards him, and what happens, is that: *Stephen, his blood wooed by grace of language and gesture, blushed*. And curiously, curiously Stephen's blushes, are in a series with respect to other texts by Joyce, I think in particular, of this text of the *Portrait* that you may have noticed during his visit to Cork with his father.

Stephen goes with his father into an amphitheatre, an amphitheatre in the school of medicine where his father had spent some time, little time it seems, and the father is looking for his initials. They look for the initials carved by papa. These initials obviously, he does not think that they are also his own: Simon Dedalus. These are the initials of Stephen Dedalus. But what Stephen comes across is the word *foetus*. And this has an astounding effect on him. He blushes, pales, etc. etc. (Portrait 92). There again, related to the initial, in a different relationship obviously, but related to the initial, precisely, the deserving to exist. And in that connection, I redo, I complete the series of deserving to exist by referring to another passage which is in *Dubliners*, in *The dead*, the dead that might well be translated as *Le Mort*, is that not so. It is impossible to decide, to settle it.

The character, one of the central characters, Gabriel Conroy, is going to make a speech, the traditional speech, is that not so, of the family reunion. He is the one who is there, always there, to

write in the newspapers or make little speeches like this and, people have just been talking at table, precisely, about artists whose name has been forgotten, or those finally who have left nothing, except a quite problematic name:

-His name, said aunt Kate was Parkinson. I heard him when he was in his prime and I think he had then the purist tenor voice that was ever put into a mans throat. (Dubliners 228)

(88) So then that makes him think, and this is what he talks about; this is what he starts from, and he starts by concluding his first sentence, one of his first sentences on two things: the echo of a song called *Love's old sweet song* which evokes a lost paradise in its first lines and the other thing, with which he finishes his sentence, is a quotation from Milton, not of *Paradise Lost*, but of Milton, in which Milton says more or less the following - obviously, it is truncated in Joyce, Milton says more or less the following: *I would like to be able to leave to future centuries an oeuvre which they will not willingly let die.* So then there are joined together in Joyce's discourse, the question precisely of the right to existence, that of the right to creation and that of validity and that also of certitude.

What I would like to add. I would like to add on a first thing about Bush. Bushe, as you see is constructed from a sort of series from Bush starting from the *holy bush*, from the eloquent Bushe who speaking about Moses, also speaks about a *holy bush*, is that not so. The eternal says to Moses that the ground he is walking on before the burning bush is *holy*. The holy bush, is a holly bush, a bush which reveals itself as having a certain relationship to the fox. For when O'Molloy reappears in Circe, when J.J. reappears in Circe, he assumes the... *foxy moustache and proboscidal eloquence of Seymour Bushe*, the lawyer Bushe. The fox, to the fox that, that for its part also, has been noticed more than once in

the *Portrait*, for example. It appears there of course because it is, Fox is one of the pseudonyms of Parnell, linked a little to his fall. But it is also a sort of signifier going back to dissimulation. *He was not foxing*, says the young Stephen when he is in the infirmary and when he is afraid of being accused of faking it. And then a little later, when he has renounced entering into holy orders, when he has seen his visiting card, The Reverend Stephen Dedalus, S.J., he evokes the face that may well be on it, is that not so, one of the things that comes back to mind is: *Ah yes! The face of a Jesuit called by some Lantern Jaws, and by others Foxy Campbell.*

There is thus this series *bush, fox*, but there is also, but there is also, and this for its part works, the interplay of Molloy, Moly, which links up with Holy. We have Holly, Holy, Moly, Molloy and another word which does not appear in *Ulysses*, but of which Joyce says - now this is something that I was keeping up my (89) sleeve, rather the letters of Joyce, but after all the letters are things that he wrote, yes - when he indicates, he gives the name of something which is supposed to make function, come into the functioning of Circe. It is this plant, golden garlic that Hermes gave to *Ulysses* so that he could escape from Circe's clutches; and this is called *Moly*. The funny thing about it, is that there is between the two, between *Moly* and *Molly*, a difference which is of the order of phonation. Which is voiced, I do not know how it should be said, in *Ulysses*, it is Molly with a simple vowel and the *Moly* he is talking about, is a diphthong, a *ditongue*, as was formerly said. And the *ditongue* is transferred, is transformed in consonance, with at the same time as the diphthong, the *ditongue* is transformed into a simple vowel, there is a consonatic redoubling, a redoubling of consonance and it is this consonance that appears in *Ulysses* under the form of Molly. It is too good to be true. So then what he says about Molly, excuse me, about Moly, about this plant, are curious things, he says different things about it. There is

one that I believe Lacan will analyse, another that I will be content to point out.

It is then the gift of Hermes, God of public highways, and it is the invisible influence, in parentheses, prayer, chance, agility, presence of mind, power of recovery, which saves in case of accident. It is then something that confirms Bloom in his role of prudence, is that not so. He is the prudent one. He is the one who answers quite well to the definition that I found in a note of Lalande about this question of prudence - Lalande is curiously disappointing about the question of prudence, probably because it is above all St. Thomas who speaks about it. There is a little note without an author's name, a quotation which says the following: *prudence, aptitude in choosing the means to obtain the greatest wellbeing for oneself* and, it is in this way precisely that you support yourself, it seems Bloom would say.

The second thing that I would like to add before shutting up, is simply to underline that what is at stake in all these things is, in particular, certitude. Certitude and how one can ground it. Certitude reappears precisely in connection with the famous Virag. Since I did not tell you everything, I paused at the quotation, the famous quotation where they were talking about Virag, where they were talking, where the others, O'Molloy, tells what was involved in Virag. *Ulysses*, 331. Yes.

(90) *His name was Virag. The father's name that poisoned himself. He changed it by deed poll, the father did.*

-That's the new messiah for Ireland! Says the citizen. Island of saints and sages!

-Well they're still waiting for their redeemer, says Martin. For that matter so are we.

-Yes, says J.J., and every male that's born they think it may be their messiah. And every Jew is in a tall state of excitement I believe til he knows if he is a father or mother. (438)

So then, on this I will be brief, simply indicating what appears perhaps beyond the humour which is, which constitutes one of the functionings of this text of Cyclops; bar room humour but a humour which indeed is there. A humour which moreover should be attached to other problems around anti-Semitism, and I do not have the time to go in to it here.

An imaginary identification which, I believe, also situates the problem of the problematic of succession. The problem of the word of the king grounding legitimacy. The king's word which is what allows, even if the belly of the mother has lied, is that not so, things to be set right by legitimization. It is the problem of legitimization, namely, of the possibility of bearing the mark of the king, the crown, *Stephanos*, something like that in Greek. Or indeed to carry the mark of the king, as it appears in Circe in connection with Virag who falls down the chimney, the grandfather, with the label -huh, label comes right away like that - basilicogrammate, with the king's gramme.

This problematic of legitimacy which is revealed as the problematic of legitimization, has a dimension, may perhaps take on the figure here of imaginary dimension and its recuperation. It seems to me that Joyce uses this certitude, stages it in its relationships with the effects of voice. Even if a word, a paternal word is contested *qua* word in terms of what it says, it seems to me that something, he suggests, gets across in personation, in what is behind personation, is what is on the side of phonation, perhaps, on the side of what is also something that deserves to live in melody. In melody, and why? Perhaps precisely because of something which has effects, despite everything, on the mother,

(91) through melody. Gaiety, *phantasmal mirth*, the phantasmatic gaiety of the mother which is evoked at the beginning, on page nine of *Ulysses*, has to do precisely with the pantomime and old Royce, old Royce singing. So then, something gets across through melody. Perhaps not simply sentimentality, since Irish culture, at the turn of the century, is in large part made up of Moore's melodies, that in *Finnegans Wake* Joyce calls *Moore's maladies*. This was the triumph of papa Joyce, of John Joyce. But it is perhaps precisely the case that in this art of the voice, in this art of phonation, enough of him got across for the son.

So then, if certitude, as regards what is fabricated, has always something to do with the mirror, with these mirror-effects that one, that should be enumerated, this has to do also with the voice-effects of the signifier. And I would simply recall the famous short story *The dead*, with which Joyce tied up *Dubliners*, is that not so, at an absolutely crucial moment of his poetic production, at a moment when things in a certain way came unblocked, began to operate. Some people say that *The dead* came to him when his brother spoke to him about a particular interpretation of one of Moore's melodies about ghosts, that brings ghosts into play and a dialogue between ghosts and the living. And Stanislaus had said to him, the chap who sang that sang it in a very interesting way, in a way precisely that said something. And as if by chance, Joyce set about writing *The dead* starting from that, excuse me, at that very moment. And at the centre, one of the centres, at the very least of this short story, is the moment when the wife of the hero is petrified, frozen like the other Moses there, in hearing a completely hoarse singer singing this famous melody. And what effect does that have on the hero? It symbolises his wife for him. He says at that moment, he sees her at the top of the stairs, he asked himself *what is a woman standing on the stairs in the shadow, listening to distant music a symbol of* (*Dubliners* 240). He describes her in realist terms, does he not, vaguely realist, but

he says at the same time: what does that symbolise? It symbolises a certain listening, among other things.

So then, this certitude, this certitude and these problems of certitude and of its foundations with respect to the effects of voice on the signifier, Joyce had wished to state its rules in an aesthetic science. But he realised little by little that it was less linked to science than that. And that it was precisely a know-how linked by a practice of the signifier. And obviously, here, what I have very (92) present to my mind, what forces itself on me through that which, beyond what Aristotle says about *praxis* in the *Poetics*, is Lacan's definition, is that not so. A concerted action by man, and then concerted, obviously, prepares us for what makes us capable of treating the Real by the Symbolic. And the question of measure, well then, is seen very precisely in Circe, at the moment when Bloom entering the brothel is seen by Stephen as he turns. And this evocation of measure is, as if by chance, also a quotation from the *Apocalypse*. So then I will stop, before this becomes far too apocalyptic.

J. Lacan: I am going to say a word in conclusion.

I thank Jacques Aubert for getting his feet wet. For it is evident that, like the author of *Surface and Symbol*, whose name I gave you the last time, it is evident that the term that this author uses to express, to pinpoint the art of Joyce, that what is at stake there are inconceivably *private jokes*.

In the same text there appears a word that I had to look for in the dictionary, *eftsooneries*. I don't know whether this word is common. You don't know it? *Eftsooneries* doesn't mean anything to you? Namely, *eftsoon*, *eftsooneries*, in things that are put off until soon. That's all it means. Not only are these effects put off until soon, but they very often have a disconcerting effect.

This is obviously the art, the art of Jacques Aubert who made you follow one of his threads, so that he held you breathless. All of this obviously does not go without grounding what, what I am trying to give consistency to, and a consistency in the knot.

What is it that in this sliding of Joyce, to which I have realised I referred in my seminar *Encore*. I am stupefied at that. I asked Jacques Aubert if this were a starting point for his invitation to speak about Joyce. He affirmed to me that at that time the seminar *Encore* had not yet appeared, so that it could not have been that that invited him to present me with this hole into which I risk myself through, no doubt, through some prudence; prudence as he has defined it. But the hole of the knot nonetheless remains a question for me. If I am to believe Soury and Thomé, since moreover it is to them that I owe the mention of something which no doubt, which no doubt I had glimpsed, of course. If the knot, if (93) the properly speaking Burrmean knot, which is not a knot but a chain, if one can locate the duplicity of this knot, I mean that there are two of them, only because the circles, the rings of string are coloured. If they are not coloured, which means that something distinguishes them - something, the coloured quality - distinguishes each one from the two others, it is only with the help of this messing that we carry on with, that there are two knots. Since this is equivalent to the fact that if they are uncoloured, if in other words nothing distinguishes them, nothing distinguishes either one from the other. You will tell me that when they are flattened out, there is one which is laevogyratory and the other which is dextrogyratory, but it is precisely here that there lies the whole putting in question of flattening out. Flattening out implies a point of view, a specified point of view. And it is no doubt not by accident that the notion of right and left cannot in any way be expressed in the Symbolic.

As regards the knot, this only begins to exist beyond the triple relation. How does it happen that this triple relation should have this privilege? It is precisely the question of this that I would like to strive to resolve. There must be something there which should not be unrelated with this isolating that Jacques Aubert carried on for us of the function of phonation precisely in what is involved in supporting the signifier.

But this indeed is the core point on which I remain in suspense: namely from what point on is significance (*la signifiante*) in so far as it is written distinguished from the simple effects of phonation? It is phonation that transmits this proper function of the name and it is from the proper name that we will start again, I hope, the next time we meet.