

Seminar 1: Wednesday 21 November 1972

I happened not to publish *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*. At the time it was a form of politeness on my part – after you, be my guest, be my worst, please go ahead. [Playing on: *après-vous*, etc)

With time, I began to notice that I could, after all, say a little more about it, and then I realised that what my laborious journeying was about was something of the order of *I don't want to know anything about it*.

That is also no doubt why, with time, I am here again and that you also are here. I am always amazed at it. *Encore!*

What has favoured me for some time is that there is apparently also on your part, in the great mass of you who are here, the same *I don't want to know anything about it*. But that's the point. Is it the same one? Is the: *I don't want to know anything about it* regarding a certain knowledge that is transmitted to you drop by drop really what is at stake? I do not think so and it is precisely because you suppose that I start from elsewhere in this *I don't want to know anything about it* that this supposing binds you to me. So that while it is true when I say that with respect to you I can only be here in the position of an analysand of my *I don't want to know anything about it*, it will be quite some time before you reach the same [position].

And that indeed, that indeed is why it is only when your own seems sufficient to you that you are able, if inversely you are one of my analysands, you are normally able to detach yourself from your analysis.

Contrary to what has been said, there is no contradiction between my position as analyst and what I am doing here with respect to you.

(2) Last year I entitled what I thought I could say to you: *...ou pire (...or worse)*, and then *ça s'oupire* - s apostrophe. That has nothing to do with 'I' or 'you' – I do not worse you, nor do you worse me. Our path, that of analytic discourse, only progresses within this narrow limit, on this knife-edge, which means that elsewhere things can only get worse.

It is this discourse that supports me and to begin it anew this year, I am first of all going to assume that you are in bed. A fully used bed - for two.

Here I have to apologise to someone – a jurist, to place him – who had been kind enough to enquire about my discourse. I felt I could, in order to make him sense what its foundation is, namely, that language is not the speaking being. I told him that I did not feel out of place having to speak in a law faculty, the one in which it is tangible, tangible by what is called the existence of codes, the civil code, the penal code and many others, that language holds good there, it is separate. And that speaking beings, what are called men, have to deal with that as it has been constituted throughout the ages. So then in beginning by supposing you to be in bed, of course, I must apologise to him. Nevertheless I will stick to it today. And if I apologise for it, it is in order to remind him, to remind him that at the basis of all rights there is what I am going to talk about, namely, enjoyment. The law speaks about that. The law does not even fail

to recognise this starting point, this good old common law on which the usage of concubinage is based; this means sleeping together.

Obviously I am going to start from something else, from what remains veiled in the law, namely, what we do with it – embrace one another. I start from the limit, from a limit with which one must indeed start if one is to be serious, which I have already commented on, to be able to establish the series, the series of what approaches it.

Usufruct – that is indeed a notion from law which brings together in one word what I already recalled in my seminar on ethics which I mentioned earlier, namely, the difference that there is between the useful, that there is between the useful and enjoyment.

(3) What purpose does the useful serve? That has never been well defined owing to the respect, the prodigious respect that thanks to language, speaking beings have for the mean. Usufruct means that you can enjoy your means but must not waste them. When you receive an inheritance you have the usufruct of it on condition that you do not use up too much of it. This indeed is the essence of law, to divide up, to distribute, to pay out what is involved in enjoyment.

But what is enjoyment? Here it is precisely what, for the moment, reduces itself for us by a negative example. Enjoyment is what is of no use. Only that does not tell us much more about it.

Here I am highlighting, I am highlighting the reserve that is implied by this field of law, as regards the right to enjoyment. Right is not duty. Nothing forces anyone to enjoy, except the superego. The superego is the imperative of enjoyment. Enjoy (*Jouis*)! It is the commandment that starts from where? This indeed is where we find the turning point analytic discourse interrogates.

It was indeed along this path, at a time, during the *after you* period of time that I let go by in order to show that if analysis allows us to advance towards a certain question, it is indeed because we cannot remain at what I started with, respectfully of course, at what I started with, namely, *The Ethics* of Aristotle to show what slippage had occurred with time. A slippage which is not progress, a slippage which is a circuit, a slippage which, from a consideration in the proper sense of the term, from Aristotle's consideration of being, brought us to the time of Bentham's utilitarianism. To the time of the theory of fictions, to the time of what showed language to have the value of a tool, a use value. Which allows us finally to return to an examination of what is involved in this being, of this sovereign good posited there as object of contemplation and on which it was believed an ethic could be edified.

(4) I am leaving you then on this bed, to you own inspiration. I go out, and once again I will write on the door - so that as you go out you may perhaps take note of the dreams that you will have pursued on this bed - the following sentence: *the enjoyment of the Other*, of the Other with – it seems to me that given the time, huh, it ought to be enough for me to stop there, anyway I have sufficiently pounded your ears with this capital O that comes after, and since nowadays this O can be found everywhere, put before the other, more or less advisedly moreover! This is printed without rhyme or reason – *the enjoyment of the Other, of the body of the Other that symbolises it, is not the sign of love.*

I write that, and after it I do not write *the end*, nor *amen*, nor *so be it*. It is not the sign; it is nevertheless the only response. What complicates matters, is that the response, is already given at the level of love, and that because of this enjoyment remains a question. A question in that the response that it may constitute is not necessary at first. It is not like love. Love, for its part, constitutes a sign and, as I have been saying for a long time, is always

reciprocal. I put that forward very gently in saying that feelings are always reciprocal. It was so that it should come back to me, huh!

- So then, so then, and love, and love, is it always reciprocal?
- But yes, but yes!

This is even why the unconscious was invented. It is so that we might see that the desire of man is the desire of the Other. And that love is a passion which may be the ignorance of this desire, but which nonetheless leaves it its full import. When it is looked at more closely we see its ravages.

So then, of course, this explains that the enjoyment of the body of the Other, for its part, is not a necessary response. This even goes (5) further. It is not a sufficient response either, because love for its part, demands love. It does not cease to demand it. It still demands it. *Encore* is the proper name for this gap from which in the Other the demand for love starts.

So then from where does there start, from where does there start, this something that is certainly capable, but in a non-necessary, non-sufficient way of responding through enjoyment, enjoyment of the body, of the body of the Other?

This indeed is what last year, inspired in some way by the chapel at Sainte-Anne which was getting on my nerves, I let myself go and called *l'amur*. *L'amur* is what appears in bizarre signs on the body and which comes from beyond, from outside, from this place that we believed, like that, that we could ogle with a microscope in the shape of the germ cell. And I would point out to you that one cannot say that this is life because moreover it carries death, the death of the body; that it reproduces it, that it repeats it, that it is from there that there comes the *encore* – *the en-corps*.

It is wrong to say: *separation of the soma and the germ*, since in bearing this germ, the body carries its traces. There are traces on *l'amur*. The being of the body is undoubtedly sexed, but it is secondary, as they say. And as experience shows, it is not from these traces that there depends the enjoyment of the body inasmuch as it symbolises the Other. This is what is put forward after the simplest consideration of things.

What then is at stake in love?

As psychoanalysis puts forward with an audacity that is all the more unbelievable as its whole experience goes against it, that what it demonstrates is the contrary, love is to make One. It is true that people talk about nothing but that for a long time, about the One. Fusion, Eros, is supposed to be a tension towards the One.

There is something of the One. It is on this that I supported my discourse last year, and certainly not to contribute to this original confusion, that of desire which only leads to aiming at the gap in (6) which it can be shown that the One only stems from the essence of the signifier.

If I examined Frege at the start, it was to try to show the gap there is between this One and something which depends on being, and behind being, on enjoyment.

Love. I can all the same tell you through a little example, the example of a parakeet that was in love with Picasso. Well then, that could be seen from the way he nibbled on the collar of his shirt and the flaps of his jacket. This parakeet was in effect in love with what is essential to man, namely, his attire. This parakeet was like Descartes for whom men were clothes walking about (*en promenade*), if you will allow me. Naturally, it is *pro*, that promises the *maenad*, namely, when you take them off. But it is

only a myth, a myth that has converged with the bed mentioned earlier. To enjoy a body when there are no more clothes is something that leaves intact the question of what constitutes the One, namely, of identification. The parakeet identified with the clothed Picasso.

It is the same for everything involved in love. In other words, the habit loves the monk because it is through it that they are all one. In other words, what is under the habit and what we call the body, is perhaps only in the whole affair this remainder that I call the little object. What holds the image together is a remainder. And what analysis shows is that love in its essence is narcissistic, that the yearns about the objectal is something whose substance it knows how to expose precisely in what is the remainder in desire, namely its cause, and what sustains it, in its dissatisfaction, indeed its impossibility.

The impotence of love, even though it is reciprocal, depends on this ignorance of being the desire to be One. And this leads us to the impossibility of establishing the relation between them (*la relation d'eux..*) the relation between them to what? The two (*deux*) sexes.

(7) Assuredly, as I have said, what appears on these bodies in these enigmatic forms of sexual characteristics – which are merely secondary – doubtless make sexed beings. But being is the enjoyment of the body as such; that is as a - put it where you wish – a-sexual. Because what is known as sexual enjoyment is marked and dominated by the impossibility of establishing as such anywhere in what can be stated, this sole One that interests us, the One of the relation sexual relationship. That is what analytic discourse demonstrates precisely as regards one of these beings *qua* sexed, the man in so far as he is endowed with the organ described as phallic – I said *described as* – the sex, the corporal sex, the sexual organ of the woman – I said *of the woman* whereas in fact

there is no such thing, there is no such thing as *the* woman, the woman is not whole – woman's sexual organ is of no interest to him except via the enjoyment of the body.

What analytic discourse demonstrates – allow me to put it this way – is that the phallus is the conscientious objection made by one of the two sexed beings to the service to be rendered to the other.

And do not talk to me about the woman's secondary characteristics. Because until further notice it is those of the mother that take precedence in her. Nothing distinguishes the woman as a sexed being except precisely her sexual organ.

That everything turns around phallic enjoyment is very precisely what all analytic experience bears witness to, and bears witness to in the fact that the woman is defined by a position that I highlighted as not all (*pas-toute*) with respect to phallic enjoyment.

I will go a little further. Phallic enjoyment is the obstacle owing to which man does not manage, I would say, to enjoy the woman's body, precisely because what he enjoys is this enjoyment, that of the organ. And that is why the superego as I highlighted it earlier by Enjoy! is a correlate of castration which is the sign with which there is decked out the avowal that the enjoyment of the Other, of the body of the Other is only promoted from infinitude. I will say (8) which, that which neither more nor less is supported by the paradox of Zeno himself

Achilles and the tortoise, such is the schema of enjoyment for one side of the sexual being. When Achilles has taken his step – has got it off – with Briseis, she like the tortoise also advances a little, this because she is not whole, not wholly his. Something remains. And Achilles must take a second step, and as you know, so on and so forth. This is even why in our day, but only in our day, people have

managed to define number, the true one, or to put it better the real. Because what Zeno had not seen, is that the tortoise is not preserved from the destiny of Achilles; the fact is that as its step gets shorter and shorter, it will never arrive at the limit either.

And this is how a number, whatever it may be, is defined, if it is real. A number has a limit and it is in that measure that it is infinite.

It is quite clear that Achilles can only overtake the tortoise, he cannot rejoin it. But he can only rejoin it in infinitude.

Only here is what can be said as regards enjoyment, in so far as it is sexual. Enjoyment is marked on the one side by this hole which only assures it of a path other than that of phallic enjoyment. On the other side, cannot something be reached which would tell us how what up to now is only a flaw, a gap in enjoyment, might be realised?

This is something that oddly, cannot be suggested by strange glimpses. *Etrange*, is a word that can be broken down. *L'être-ange* is indeed something against which we are warned of by the alternative of being just as stupid (*bête*) as the parakeet mentioned earlier. But nevertheless, let us examine closely what is suggested to us by the idea that in enjoyment, in the enjoyment of bodies, sexual enjoyment has this privilege of being able to be questioned as being specified at least by an impasse. This means taking in this space, the space of enjoyment, something limited, closed off; it is a (9) locus, and to speak about it is a topology. If we are guided by what, in something that you will see coming out as the high point of my discourse last year, I believe I demonstrated the strict equivalence between topology and structure, which distinguishes the anonymity of what is spoken about as enjoyment, namely, what is organised by law. A geometry precisely; the heterogeneity of the locus, the fact is that there is a locus of the Other, of this locus of

the Other, of one sex as Other, as absolute Other. What does the most recent development of this topology allow us to put forward? I will put forward here the term *compactness*. There is nothing more compact than a flaw since it is quite clear that somewhere it is given that the intersection of everything that is enclosed in it, being accepted as existent in a finite number of sets, what results - it is a hypothesis – what results is that the intersection exists in an infinite number. This is the very definition of compactness. And this intersection of which I speak is that which I put forward earlier as being what covers, what creates the obstacle to the supposed sexual relationship. Namely, to what I state: that the advance of analytic discourse depends precisely on the fact that what it demonstrates is that since its discourse is only sustained from the statement that there is not, that it is impossible to posit the sexual relationship, it is through this that it determines what is really also the status of all the other discourses.

This is how there is named the point that covers, that covers the impossibility of the sexual relationship as such. Enjoyment *qua* sexual is phallic. Namely, it is not referred to the Other as such.

Let us follow here the complement of this hypothesis of compactness.

A formula is given to us by what I described as the most recent topology. Namely, from a logic constructed, constructed precisely from the examination of number and of what it leads towards, from a restoration of a locus which is not that of a homogeneous space, (10) the complement of this hypothesis of compactness is the following. In the same limited, closed off, supposedly established space, the equivalent of what earlier I put forward about the intersection passing from the finite to the infinite is the following. It is that if we suppose this same limited, closed space covered by open sets, namely, of what is defined as excluding its limit, of what

is defined as greater than one point smaller than another, but in no case equal either to the starting point nor to the arrival point – to give you a rapid image of it. The same space, then, being supposed covered by open spaces, it is equivalent – that can be proved – to say that the totality of these open spaces always allows an uncovering of open spaces, all constituting a finitude. Namely, that the sequence of the aforesaid elements constitutes a finite sequence. You may note that I did not say that they are countable. And nevertheless this is what the term *finite* implies.

In order to be countable an order must be found in them, and we must pause a little before supposing that this order can be found.

But what is meant in any case by the provable finitude of these open spaces capable of covering this limited, closed space in this case of sexual enjoyment, what it implies, in any case, is that the aforesaid spaces – and since what is at stake is the other side, let us put them in the feminine – can be taken one by one or rather *une par une*.

Now this is what happens in this space of sexual enjoyment which thereby proves to be compact. These *not-all* women as they are isolated in their sexual being, which then does not pass by way of the body but through what results from a requirement in the word, from a logical requirement and this, very precisely in that logic, the coherence inscribed in the fact that language exists, that it is outside these bodies that are stirred by it, the Other, the Other with a capital O, who is now incarnated, as one might say, as sexual being, requires this *une par une*.

(11) And it is in this indeed that it is strange, that it is fascinating – make no mistake – a different fascination, a different *fascinum*, this requirement of the One, as Parmenides was able to make us foresee as already strangely One, it is from the Other that it emerges.

Where there is being, there is a requirement of infinitude.

I will comment on, I will come back to what is involved in this locus of the Other. But right away to give an image and because after all I may well suppose that something in what I am putting forward may be tiring you, I am going to illustrate it for you.

We know well enough how analysts have amused themselves with Don Juan of whom they have made everything possible, including - and this beats all - a homosexual. Have I not, in centring on what I have just imaged for you, with this space of sexual enjoyment, to be covered from the other side by open sets and culminating in this finitude, I have clearly marked that I have not said that it was number. And nevertheless of course that this happens, finally they are counted. What is essential in the feminine myth of Don Juan is indeed that, it is that he has them one by one, and that is what the other sex, the masculine is, as regards women.

This indeed is why the image of Don Juan is of capital importance. It is in what is indicated by the fact that after all he can make a list of them, and that once there are names, they can be counted. If there are *mille e tre*, it is indeed because they can be taken one by one and that is the essential.

As you can see, we have here something quite different to the One of universal fusion. If the woman were not *not-all*, if in her body it were not the *not-all* that she is as sexed being, none of all of that would hold up.

What does that mean?

That I have been able in order to image facts which are the facts of (12) discourse this discourse with which we solicit in analysis an exit in the name of what? Of letting go everything that is involved in other discourses, the apparition of something in which the subject manifests himself in his gap, in what causes his desire. If that were

not the case, I could not make the joint, the seam, the junction which comes to us so much from elsewhere, a topology of which nevertheless we cannot say does not arise from the same source. Namely, from a different discourse, from a discourse that is so much more pure, so much more manifest from the fact that there is no genesis except from discourse. Is not the fact that this converges on an experience to the degree that it allows us to articulate it, not also something designed to make us come back and justify at the same time that which in what I put forward, is supported, *se s'oupire*, by never having recourse to any substance, of never referring to any being. And by this fact breaking with anything whatsoever that is stated as a philosophy. And that it is not justified, I suggest – later I will take this further - I suggested from the fact that everything that is articulated about being, everything that, the fact of refusing the predicate – to say *man is* for example without saying what - that the indication is given to us by this that everything involved in being is closely bound up precisely to this sectioning of the predicate. And indicates that nothing in fact can be said, except by these dead-end detours, by these demonstrations of logical impossibility which means that no predicate is enough. And that what is involved in being, a being that would posit itself as absolute is never anything but the fracture, the break, the interruption of the formula *sexed being* in so far as the sexed being is involved in enjoyment.