

THE OBJECT OF PSYCHOANALYSIS 1965 - 1966

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Seminar 22: Wednesday 15 June 1966

We have heard, I am saying this for those who take part in the closed seminar and who also attend the debates described as *Communications scientifiques* in the Ecole Freudienne, there is here, for example, a large part of the gathering who make up this meeting of a character.

Obviously, we heard a very, very good paper. Moreover, I noted it; but after all it is very, very much to be placed, if you will allow me this thing which is to be taken with a pinch of salt, in what constitutes, for me, the problematic of what is called a paper (*communication*) - you saw earlier that I did not finish - a scientific paper, in psychoanalysis.

This must not be particularly special to psychoanalysis. There must be other configurations in which the same effect is produced. In any case, for psychoanalysis, let us call that that this always turns a little into a conspiracy against the patient!

(2) And this is what falsifies things, and means, after all, that one comes to say things that go a little bit beyond, as I might say, strict scientific thinking, which is the one that one would restrict oneself to if what were in question were real scientific meetings.

Since we are at the end of the year, you will perhaps allow me to open my heart about the reasons that I have to be reticent about this style, in so far as it is the current motor of analytic work, and which is described as meetings where there are papers which are called scientific, and which are really not all that much so.

In consideration of which, on the plane of a clinical description of something centred around the perverse couple, Clavreul, whose absence here today I regret, for I would have reiterated my compliments, gave us something excellent. There we are. The only thing that was missing in it was something that was finally said in the discussion, but that nobody heard because it was not said clearly, which is that, in short, to speak altogether scientifically about perversion it is necessary to start from what is quite simply its basis in Freud.

Someone said, someone brought forward, timidly, these *Three essays on sexuality*, the fact is that perversion is normal.

(3) You have to start from there once and for all, and in that case the problem, the problem of clinical construction, would be to know why there are abnormal pervers.

Why are there abnormal perverts? This would allow us to enter into a whole configuration that on the one hand would be historical, because historical things are not historical simply because an accident happened, they are historical because it was necessary for a certain shape, a certain configuration, to come to light.

It is quite clear that it is the same problem as that of our friend Michel Foucault, who is not here either, he did not think that he was invited to the closed seminar, it is great pity, our friend Michel Foucault, in short, tackles with his excellent books, to which we have referred - you can hear me at the back? Yes? Good - *The History of Madness* or *The Birth of the Clinic*. You will understand why

1. there are normal perverts,
2. there are perverts who are considered abnormal, the least that can be said is that once there are abnormal perverts, there are also people who consider them to be such, unless things happen in the reverse order. But we should not force anything in this direction.

(4) In any case, I regret the absence of Clavreul, because I would have recommended him some reading for this next lecture that he will certainly give us, and one that is even still more excellent, by beginning, as I advised him, from what I highlighted, namely, that his best reference in everything that he told us - let us not forget that his lecture was entitled *The perverse couple*, as if there were pure and simple perverse couples. Precisely, that is the whole drama. Anyway let us leave it.

The remark is the one pinpointed by Jean Genêt, that there is always in the exercise of the perverse act, a place in which the pervert really wants to have put the brand of falsity (*la marque de faux*). I advised him to begin again from there.

Today, I would recommend some reading to him, reading, moreover which should be read by all, that I recommend to all of you, and which will allow you to give a very simple and very convincing illustration of what I am in the process of telling you, that one must begin from the fact that perversion is normal. In other words, that under certain conditions, it may not stand out as a blemish at all. In consideration of which, this book, that I took the trouble to go to the bookshop for, so that you could see that (5) it exists, and I no longer remembered that it had been printed by the Mercure de France, quite recently, moreover, so that as a result you will be able to get it, which is called *Mémoires de l'Abbé de Choisy en femme*, read it, read it and by means of it you will see where to find a sound starting point as regards the register of perversion.

You will see someone who is, not simply completely at ease in his perversion, and this from one end to the other, which did not prevent him from being someone who led a career carried out with general respect, receiving all the marks of public and even royal confidence, and writing with perfect elegance an account of things which, in our day, would literally turn our heads upside-down, and would even push us to do such

extraordinary things as getting a medico-legal opinion, without even counting the discredit that would result for the higher clergy who are, nevertheless, well known for being particularly expert in these practices, while, in our day, they are forced to dissimulate these things which are only the sign of a healthy and normal relationship to fundamental things.

(6) Here then is some reading that I would recommend to you. Naturally, some of the people who are here, or who are not here, will see in this a confirmation of the fact that, as it is put, I am a *bourgeois* from between the two wars. Good God, how small-minded people are! I am a *bourgeois* from before the French revolution, so you can see how far ahead they are putting me.

Anyway, you will be convinced of it after this approbation, this stamp of “book to be read”, that I have put on this book for you.

At this point, today, I would like, since it is not simply a closed seminar but it is the second last one, and that, God knows, in the last one I must put on the appearance of giving a closure to some things, I hesitated about what I would close on.

Perhaps, after all, I could, all the same, restate something which constituted the beginning of the closed seminar this year, namely, the discussion about the articles in which our excellent friend Stein, put forward his positions on the subject of what he called the analytic situation, which he wanted to limit to the conditions at the beginning, namely, what one is engaged on in carrying out analytic sessions; then, after that, he dealt very gently with transference and counter-transference; it is a matter of (7) understanding what he puts under these two rubrics. And, after that, he spoke about the judgement of the psychoanalyst. There was a debate, a debate which I did not attend in its entirety because, for one part, Doctor Irène Perrier-Roublef was kind enough to direct it in my absence. All of this would undoubtedly deserve a complement, a complement and, perhaps, illumination, an illumination, and, perhaps, something more, after all, something more firm, I mean, I mean that perhaps later, we will begin to speak about it, if it works, well, this might also encourage us to ask Stein to come the next time because, moreover, it would not be altogether suitable either that this closure should take place without his presence. Anyway, that will perhaps come up later on. I mean the beginnings of that.

What I would like, and happily what I took care to guarantee, so that I would at least have something to reply to, what I would like is that, after all, after a year in which I told you things of which a large residue must all the same remain in your heads, I said things, some of which were altogether new, at least for some of you, others which (8) were really structured for the first time in a fashion that was not simply absolutely exemplary but rigorous, I also dared to add, taking in this way a sort of definitive commitment, considering, for example, the schema that I gave you about the function

of the look. Well, I would not be unhappy, I would have no regrets, if some people were to pose me questions.

Naturally, the rumour has been confirmed that this is not something to be done, on the pretext that the other day, for example, I seemed to say to Monsieur Audouard who, in short, is the only person who at this level gave me complete satisfaction this year, namely, that he quite simply risked doing what I asked, namely, that someone should respond to me.

Monsieur Audouard, it is true, made a big mistake, a big mistake, in sticking into the schema of perspective the eye of the artist on what one can, in short, call the picture plane, this at the time of the foundation of perspective. Good. It is all the same necessary that you could conceive of the fact, that given that everyone is here with his (9) own little narcissism in his pocket, namely, the idea of not making himself ridiculous, it is all the same necessary to tell you that what Monsieur Audouard did, is very exactly what, with respect to Alberti, I told you that he was in this famous schema of perspective, I drew it on the board, after all, I went to a lot of trouble, in what Alberti founded and that someone named Viator, it was because he was called quite simply Pellerin in French, took up again, well then, the error that Monsieur Audouard made is exactly the error made by Albert Dürer, namely, when one consults the writings of Albert Dürer, one sees very exactly that certain mistakes, a certain displacement of the schema which does not fail to have repercussions elsewhere on the rather upside-down things that you see in the perspectives of Albert Dürer, when you look at them closely, are due, very exactly to an initial error of this kind. You see then that Monsieur Audouard is not in bad company.

I cannot, of course, demonstrate this for you because, because it would be necessary, anyway it is very easy, I can give those of you who are interested the bibliography, there is someone who highlighted this very nicely, an American who wrote some clever little books on art and geometry, and one in particular concerning the status of (10) perspective, in so far as it originates with Alberti, Viator and Albert Dürer. And all this is explained, is explained very well. All this is explained in function of the fact, precisely, that Albert Dürer began to pose the problem of perspective starting from what I would call a radically opposite approach, one which comes from the consideration of the luminous point, and the formation of the shadow, namely, the previous position, the one that I showed you was completely antinomical to that of the construction of perspective, which for completely opposite goals, which are not the goals of the constitution of the illuminated world but the constitution of the subjective world, if you will allow me to make this clear-cut opposition, clear-cut and justified from the whole previous discourse.

It is in the measure that what interests Dürer is the shadow of a cube, that he does not succeed in constructing the correct perspective of the cube.

Good, this having been said, and Monsieur Audouard having been restored to his position, namely, having only undergone the prestige to which people other than us, and, one might say, greater, succumbed, I would all the same like to encourage those who may have some questions to pose about what I have said and, for example, what I (11) said the last time about this schema, which ends up really posing very, very big questions about this schema, which is there at the back, and where we find ourselves, with the subject, in this position in respect to the field of the Other, that everything that concerns his relationship to *jouissance*, has to come to him through the mediation of what is linked to the Other, and which is presented in this way as linked to a certain function which is not without being the since, moreover, what the apparatus illustrated, for example, by *Las Meninas*, from the structure which was produced by Velasquez, demonstrates to us. Let us say that in the apparatus of perspective and of the look, we can conceive, make coexist, not just the reason why this narcissistic register coexists.

My whole first effort of teaching was to detach it from the articulation it has, that not only how they can coexist but how at the level of a certain object, the look, one can provide the key for the other and the look as the effect of to be the true principle, the true secret of narcissistic capture.

Therefore, in this relationship of S to O, we have been able to establish the function of this (o) of which I spoke, if you wish, with a privilege for one of them, the least (12) studied and, nevertheless, the most fundamental for the whole articulation of the thing itself. And then the correspondence in advance or, if you wish, the equivalence that the (-phi), namely, the phallus *qua* the object at stake in the relationship to *jouissance*, in so far as it requires the union of the other in the sexual relation

Ah, good, there you are Stein. Come over here. I was lamenting your absence.

Well then, this obviously poses, seems to me to offer an opportunity for all sorts of questions.

When I say that I re-make the circuit a second time, when I go twice around the Freudian Moebius strip, you should see in it not at all an illustration but the very fact of what I mean in the fact that the drama of the Oedipus Complex, which I think I have sufficiently articulated for you, has another aspect by means of which one could articulate it from one end to the other and make a complete circuit of it.

The drama of the Oedipus Complex, is the murder of the father and the fact that Oedipus enjoyed (*a joui de*) his mother. One also sees that the matter remains in suspense because of an eternal questioning about the law and everything that is (13) generated from it because of the fact that Oedipus, as I often say, did not have an Oedipus Complex, namely, that he did it in all tranquillity. Of course, he did it without knowing it. But one can illuminate the drama in another way and say that the

drama of Oedipus, in any case the drama of the tragedy, is in the clearest fashion the drama engendered by the fact that Oedipus is the hero of the desire to know. But as I already have been saying for a long time now, but I am repeating it in this context, I already said a long time ago what the term of the Oedipus Complex is.

Oedipus, before the revelation, on the torn screen of what there is behind, and with - this was how I described it - his eyes lying on the ground, Oedipus tearing out his eyes, which has nothing to do with vision, which is properly speaking what gives the symbol of this fall into this between-the-two, into this space that Desargues designates by the name of heavens, and that I identify, it is the only identification possible, to what we call the *Dasein*, this is where the look of Oedipus fell. This is the end, the conclusion and the sense of the tragedy, at the very least it is just as permissible to translate this tragedy onto this reverse side as to pose it in front where it reveals to us the generating drama of the foundation of the law. The two things are equivalent for the very reason which ensures that the Moebius strip only really connects up with itself when two (14) circuits have been made.

Good. Well then, this having been brought forward, it will be accompanied by no more than one remark, which is that the consideration of the \mathbf{o} -object and of its function, in so far as this consideration alone leads us to pose the crucial questions which concern the castration complex, namely, how there arises the group - it is necessary to use a mathematical term - which permits the functioning of a certain (-phi), which we have used for a long time but in a more or less specified way, in a logical structure; well then, this is the decisive thing introduced by the \mathbf{o} -object, namely, that through which it will allow us to tackle this properly speaking virgin terrain, virgin for a psychoanalyst, like that, produced (*émis*) in our day, as I might say, namely, the castration complex.

It is quite clear that people never speak about it except in a marginal way, behaving as if we knew what that meant. Obviously, we have a little inkling, because I spoke about it a little here and there. But all the same, after all, not enough for Monsieur Ricoeur, for example, to have brought the slightest fragment of it into his book which provoked so much interest. It is even remarkable that there is not even a trace of it.

(15) It must be then, that people do not speak about it elsewhere either. It would indeed be necessary for one to be able to say something about the castration complex. Now, it seems to me that the last time, I began to say something very firmly articulated on this point. Obviously in the measure that we can at least outline the program, to say that next year, we will speak about this sort of logic which may allow us to situate what, very specifically, re-emerges for the function (- phi) with respect to this first plane that we have assured this year about the \mathbf{o} -object.

There is one thing, in any case, that is certain, since we have spoken about the Oedipus myth. Of course Oedipus is the corner stone, and that if we do not see that

everything that Freud has constructed was around the Oedipus complex, we will never see absolutely anything. Only, it is still not enough to explain the Oedipus complex for you to know what Freud was talking about, unless you know, having been broken to the vocabulary that I unfold before you, that what it is a matter of articulating, is the foundation of desire, and that as long as one does not get that far, one has not even guaranteed the field of sexuality. The Oedipus myth tells us nothing at all about what it is to be a man or a woman.

(16) It is absolutely displayed in Freud. As I said the last time, the fact that he never puts forward the masculine-feminine couple, except to say that one cannot speak about it, precisely, sufficiently proves this kind of limit.

One only begins to pose questions that concern sexuality, masculine as well as feminine, starting from the moment where there comes into play the phallic organ and function. For want of making these distinctions, people are in the most absolute confusion.

It must be said that here there is something which operates, perhaps, at the basis of the fact that Freud did not complete, why would he not himself have completed his second circuit? Why did he leave it to be done by someone else? One could also ask oneself that question.

This is where I am very embarrassed. Experience teaches me, it teaches me at my expense, counsels me never to proceed without very great precautions. In truth, it is not quite in my nature, but others take them for me. In short, since this tightly-knit series of events which culminated one day in making me interrupt at my first lecture a seminar I had announced under the title of *Les noms du père*, will tell you that, for (17) psychoanalysts, it is all the same quite natural to give a sense to events and that, whatever may be the contingent detours, the policies, the little bloomers, which, precisely, brought about that day, the fact that, after all, people, perhaps, more alive to the importance of what I have to say, took very good care that I would keep my word not to say it in certain cases, it is because there was there, all the same, some reason and one which touches, which touches precisely at this delicate point of the limit at which Freud stopped.

If so many things of the order which culminate at these singular rendezvous, of which one cannot say that, of themselves, they are progressive, it is indeed because there is something in Freud that people cannot tolerate. If I take it away from them, what are they going to support themselves with? Those who support themselves, precisely, in short, with what is intolerable (*insupportable*) in this something regarding which we must believe that this was already sufficiently put forward, in a certain sense, because one cannot go any further. So that, in short, it is only in a fashion, a very light touch, and in a way something like a shadow, a negative factor, that I will point out that we (18) owe to Freud, all the same, that up to the end of his life, it appears, a mystery

seems for him to reside in the following question that he expressed thus: “What does a woman want?”. We owe this to an cuntess who reported it to us, and before whom he had, like that, allowed his ventral mug to open. There are moments when even idols exposed themselves. It must be said that, for this to happen, particularly horrible sights are necessary.

What does a woman want? Freud, as Jones put it, had a trait which cannot, all the same, fail to strike, this trait which is only well expressed, which is only really pinpointed in the English tongue, which is called *uxorious*. In French, it is not used very much. We are perhaps not sufficiently uxorious for that. But any way, in one case as in the other, whether one is or whether one is not, it is never anything but the specification of a position that one can boast about on this point. It is no luckier to be it or not to be it. He was uxorious and not with regard to someone indifferent.

“Caesar’s wife must be above suspicion”, we are told. That is used a lot. It is like when one says “the style is the man”, for example. It is an incorrect quotation, but that does not matter.

(19) These are things that always work. Put in the right place, it is not open to discussion. What does it mean? Suspected of what? Of being a real woman perhaps? Freud’s wife who, one can wager everything, was his only woman, cannot be the object of such suspicion. We have in Freud’s writings, after all, all the most extraordinary traces. The use of the term *sich strauben*, to bristle up, in the analysis of the dream of Irma’s injection is, in a way, in this style, this *Umschreibung*, this twisted style, almost the only case where I can reconcile mine with his. He brings us where he wants to go, of course, without telling us; the fact is that, when all is said and done, all of that, a woman *sich straubt*, it is like Mrs Freud and it is, all the same, a little annoying.

Yes, here obviously is a reference point of a kind to give us the feeling of knowing where the problem is posed, where the question is, and where we have got in it, where are, in a way, the structural barriers, inherent to the very structure of the concept brought into play, which explains a lot of things, for example, about about the history of psychoanalysis ever since, and the way in which there have been highlighted in it not alone femininity and its problems, but women themselves.

(20) What one can call the mothers of our psychoanalytic community. They are funny old mothers!

Mme Roublef: We can’t hear.

Dr Lacan: Perhaps its just as well!

So then, on this point I would like some questions to be posed to me. Since, in short, for example, the last time, in posing the subject before, as I might put it, this surface of reflection, that is constituted by the dialectic of the Other, in order to locate in it, in a fashion which requires, here also, a certain order of mirage. The place of *jouissance*, I indicated many things to you, specifically, and settled this question in passing of what I called Hegel's error, that *jouissance* is in the master. One is astonished. If the master has anything to do with the absolute master, namely death, what an extraordinary idea to place *jouissance* on the side of the master. It is not easy to make the agency of death function. No one has ever yet imagined that it is in this mythical being that *jouissance* resides. The Hegelian error is, then, well and truly an analysable error. And here, we put our finger, in the structure here written on the board, written in these little letters in which there lies the essence, the dramatic knot which is properly the one that we have to deal with; how does it happen that it is at this place of O, at the place (21) of the Other, in so far as it is there that signifying articulation is constructed, that there is posed for us the aim of a mapping-out which tends towards *jouissance* and, properly speaking, sexual *jouissance*.

That the (- phi), namely, the organ, the particular organ whose contingency I explained to you, I mean that it is in no way necessary, in itself, for the achievement of sexual copulation, that it took on this particular form for reasons which, until we know how to articulate a little beginning of something in the matter of the evolution of forms, well then, we will content ourselves with taking the thing as it is. As long as we have not substituted for some imbecilic principles this first apperception, that it is enough to look a little bit at the zoological functioning of animals, in order to know that instinct (*instinct*) does not concern only them. What is the living being going to do with an organ? Not only does the function not create the organ, this leaps to the eye, and how can this even be done, but enormous cleverness is required to give a use to an organ. This is exactly what the functioning of things really shows us, when one looks closely at it.

(22) The living organism does what it can with the organs that are given it, and with the penile organ, well then, one can no doubt, but one can do little. In any case it is quite clear that it enters into a certain function, into a role which is a little bit more complicated than that of fucking, which is what I called the other day, to serve as a sample, to create an accord between male *jouissance* and female *jouissance*.

This being placed completely at the expense of male *jouissance*, not simply because the male cannot accede to it, except by allowing the penile organ to fall to the rank of an o-object function, but with this quite special sign which is the negative sign, to which it will be a matter for us, next year, in learned logical researches, to see, to specify what exactly is the function of this (-) sign, with respect to those in use, and which are moreover used, I mean currently, among the majority of people who are here, for example, without at all knowing what one is doing, even though it would be quite simple to refer to excellent little books on mathematics, which now can be found

at every street corner, for all this is now being popularised, thank God, with a 150 year delay, but, after all, it is never too late to do the right thing, but everyone can perceive (23) that the minus sign can have, according to groups, and can bring into play, extremely different senses. It is a matter of knowing, therefore, what it is for us. But let us leave that. Let us take this (-phi) in block, and let us say that the relationship that it is a matter of establishing in sexual union to a *jouissance*, precisely gives precedence to feminine *jouissance*, which would not have this importance at all, if it did not come to be situated, precisely, at the place that I have marked here with an O, the locus of the Other. This does not at all mean, of course, that the woman goes more directly there than we men, for she is exactly at the same place of the S, and both, the poor dear little darlings, as in the celebrated tale of the immortal Longus, are there with this lovely dessert of the (-phi) in their hands, looking at one another, and asking one another what they are to do with it, in order to come to an agreement about *jouissance*.

So then, after that, people would be better off not talking to us about genital maturation, as a given, about the existence of perfect domestic arrangements. Because, of course, oblativity, this sacred oblativity that I end up by no longer talking so much about, and which one must not go on speaking eternally about, one day we (24) must close this parenthesis for good, it must not be believed either that it is a windmill, I have pupils who take it for that, they hurl themselves against it in all sorts of circumstances, in places, what is more, where it does not exist.

It is certain, all the same, that it must be said that there are things that must be said, all the same. The oblative husband exists, for example. There are some who are so oblative that you can scarcely imagine it. You meet people like that! This has different origins. One must not discredit it in advance. It may have noble origins: masochism, for example. It is an excellent position.

From the point of view of sexual realisation, afterwards, I am beginning to have some experience, indeed. Yes I do. Thirty-five years, all the same. It is beginning to add up. Naturally, I have not seen a great number of people, anymore than anyone else. One has so little time. But, all the same, I have only seen it in a woman, that unleashes, properly speaking, you know that, that unleashes very, very curious reactions and abuses which, from the outside, like that, from the moralistic point of view, are altogether manifest.

In any case, a great insistence on the part of the woman, on the *chanterelle* of the castration of the husband.

(25) Which is not something which happens all by itself, which is not implied in the schema, you understand, when I speak about the minus phallus here, as the vibrant sample which ought to permit agreement, that does not mean that castration is reserved to men since, precisely, and this is the whole interest of analytic theory, the

fact is that one perceives that the concept of castration operates in so far as it is brought to bear also on someone who is not by nature castrated, he may even not be so, if it is the penis that is at stake.

It is in this perspective that it would be appropriate, for example, to ask oneself about the extraordinary efficacy as regards sexual revelation, because this exists, this extraordinary efficacy on many woman, or even on the woman, the woman exists, it exists down there, at the level of the *o*-object. The extraordinary value then, for this operation, of what are called feminine men. There is absolutely no doubt about their success. This has always been known and has always been seen. Let a woman who has had this kind of husband, the golden type, carved out with a chisel, take the butcher of *la belle bouchère*, just meet up with a *chanteur à voix*, and strange things are going to happen. It is from these facts, in effect, which are massive, commonly (26) observed, renewed every day, that fill us analysts up, we can see the pleasure that women have with a *chanteur à voix*. It is fantastic, the way they have rediscovered themselves there. I am not telling you that they stay there. They do not stay there because it is too good. The whole problem is posed again about the relationship of desire and *jouissance*, but it is all the same necessary to know from what side *jouissance* is accessible.

I sense that I am entering, very gently, like that, onto the slope of, I do not know, memories of thirty years of psychoanalysis. And then, it is the end of the year, we are already a little among friends. You will forgive me for saying things that are between banality and scandal but, if one forgets them, end up really by being precisely what open the door finally to the most permanent idiocies. Which is all the same, despite everything, despite all my efforts, the one which remains absolutely in use and dominant in this country as in our neighbours, it has to be said.

Well then since I am on this slope, I must all the same ... Ah yes, I spoke about finishing up with ... settling, not to speak any more about this business of oblativity. One must all the same remember, since I spoke about context, the *milieu* in which, in (27) what narrow little circus, this idea made its rounds, namely, put in a few names, it is not for me, all the same to bring them out for you. This did not emerge from anywhere bad. There was someone called Edouard Pichon who had only a single fault, which was to be a Maurassian, and that is irremediable. He is not the only one. Between the two wars, there were a lot of them. He fomented that with a few clinicians, anyway, since it was between the two wars, those who had escaped the first, as you know, were not all that brilliant.

And then, this was taken up again. It was taken up again, I do not know why, yes, but after all, it is not for me to say it to you, in a certain context which is much more recent, and fed on a history which had, in short, nothing to do with oblativity, and which was this very special mode of relationship that arose from a certain analytic technique described as being centred on object relations, in so far as it brought into

play in a certain fashion the phallic phantasy, and the phallic phantasy especially in obsessional neurosis.

There you are. And then, as regards everything that was played out around the phallic phantasy, God knows I spoke enough about it on several occasions in my seminar, (28) came back on it often enough, all the same, in its details, in its technical usage, you have, all the same, clearly seen the mainsprings, the forced points, the unwarranted points, and here, I can really only say, I cannot even say, say something that summarises everything that I showed about it in detail, but which shows what I really think about what is in it.

There is something which found special favour, from the fact that the general sliding, which ensured that the whole theory of analysis no longer took as reference anything but frustration, I mean made everything turn, not around this initial double point of transference and demand, but quite simply of demand.

Since transference effects, of course, were not neglected but simply put in brackets, because people were expecting them, when all is said and done, to go away, and that, on the contrary, demand, especially with this fact that things happen on this point, and in effect, things happen, but they do not happen at all in the way that you say, Stein. But, after all, if you come back the next time, we will talk about it again.

The position of the analyst in the session with respect to his patient is certainly not to be this disturbing pole linked to what you call the reality principle. I believe that it is (29) necessary all the same to come back to this thing which is really constitutive, which is that his position is to be the one who demands nothing. This indeed is what is dangerous, since he demands nothing, and because one knows where the subject is coming from, especially when he is neurotic, one gives him what he does not demand. Now, what is to be given is one single thing and one single *o*-object. There is a single *o*-object which is in relationship with this demand which is specified as being the demand of the other, this object that for its part one also finds in the heavens, in the between-the-two where the look has also fallen, the eyes of Oedipus and ours before the picture by Velasquez when we see nothing in it, in this same space, it rains shit (*il pleut de la merde*). The object of the demand of the Other, we know it by the structure and the history, after the demand to the Other, the demand for the breast, the demand which comes from the Other, and which establishes discipline and which is a stage in the formation of the subject, it is to do that, to do that in time and in the proper form. It rains shit, the expression is not all the same going to surprise psychoanalysts who know something about it. People speak about nothing but that, after all. But, after all, it is not because people speak only about that, that one everywhere perceives where it is. Anyway, the rain of shit, is obviously less elegant than the rain of fire in Dante, but they are not so (30) far from one another. And then again, there is also shit in Hell. There is only one thing that Dante did not dare to put

in Hell, or in Paradise either, I will tell you another time. It is all the same rather striking.

And what is more, huh, the fact that we analysts have to pile it on about the soil-tub, is not, all the same, one of the things that is going to win us any stars! For a whole century, the bourgeoisie considered that this sort of piling on, that I call piling on the soil-tub was exactly what was educative in military service. And that is why they sent their children into it.

You must not think that things have changed enormously. Except that now, it is accompanied by kicks in the shin and some other exercises of down-on-your-stomach, applied to the recruit or to the one who subsequently is confided to him, for example, when it is a matter of colonial enterprises. This is a slight complication which people naturally have been legitimately alarmed about, but the basis is that: piling on the soil-tub. I do not see the special merit that analysts introduce into this business. Everyone knew that shit had the closest relationship with every kind of education, even, as you (31) see, that in virility, because after having done that, you come out of the army, a man. What I am in the process of saying, is a matter of theory and some people know very well the one I am aiming at, the fact is that if you read attentively everything that has been said about this phallic dialectic, especially in the obsessional, and about the touching and the not touching, and of the precautions and of the approaches, all of that smells of shit. I mean, that what is involved is an anal castration, namely, a certain function which, in effect, intervenes at the level of the relationship of the demand of the other, or of the anal phase, namely, the first functioning of the passage from one side to the other of the bar which ensures that what is on one side with a positive sign is on the other side with a negative sign. One gives or one does not give one's shit. And thus one arrives or does not arrive at oblativity. It is all made up of gift and of present, as we have always known, since Freud never said anything else; it is never a question of anything, when one gives what one has, than to give shit. This is also the reason that when I tried to define love for you, in a kind of flash, like that, I said that love was to give what one does not have. Naturally, it is not enough to repeat it to know what that means.

(32) I realise that I have left myself go a little down the slope of confidences. And that I am going to close with something which is not inappropriate, is that not so Safouan, after what I have been saying, so that you can give them the little paper that you had the kindness, like that, to put together on the off-chance, right along the line of what you contribute. Will a quarter of an hour be enough for you? If not we can put it off until the next time.

Duquenne: We have time.

Safouan: That depends.

Lacan : How long to you think you have in order to say what you have to say?

Safouan: Twenty minutes.

Lacan : Well then, start right away, it will be five past two, that is the time we normally finish. I am incorrigible.

Monsieur Safouan

(33) The subject of this paper, is the duplication of the feminine object in the love life of the obsessional. It is a subject that I chose precisely because, it leads me to the same questions that Monsieur Lacan announced as being those that he is going to deal with next year, and led me to appreciate the interest and the importance which, for an analyst, is attached to the fact that this question should be treated.

Before subjecting it to an examination, I am going to present you first of all with some material, which is, in effect, rather exemplary to permit an easy mapping-out of the structure underlying this duplication, but whose quite typical character you will certainly not fail to see.

At a given moment of his analysis, a patient falls in love, and this is accompanied with impotence on the sexual plane. “It is as if every part of her body were put in a jewel case”, he says, speaking about the person that he loves. From which I conclude to the presence of a protective intention with respect to the body of the beloved object, but also with respect to his phallus which he does not manage to put to use, and starting (34) from an identification of these two terms.

This, obviously, calls for a lot of details which, precisely, are going to emerge subsequently. Moreover it is perhaps not without interest to underline the fact that the same object which fascinated him, did not fail to inspire in him at times a certain disgust. For example, in noticing a missing fastening at the wrist, which means also that he did not fail to detail this indicative object that his relationship was not at all foreign to the narcissistic dimension. I say, in effect, because this is how he described it himself.

But the important thing is that, parallel to this love that he described himself as narcissistic, he was also linked in a way that he qualified, for his part, as anaclitic to another young woman who, not only put him, but asked him expressly to let himself be put, into an entirely passive position, in order to pour out on him all the perverse excitations he wanted.

So that the totality of the situation was expressed for him in this phantasy, namely, he says, “that he flies towards his beloved, his phallus erect and pointed downwards, but the other interposes herself, catches him in flight, pumps him, and when he arrives, it is flaccid.”

(35) And it is in this context that the patient brought a dream in which he saw his friend whom I will call, let us say, Barot, wearing a nylon stocking, and the sight of his leg and of a part of his thigh clothed in this way put him in exactly the same state of excitation as if he were a woman. And he asks himself: “What is this stocking?” At which point I replied: “It is a jewel-case”.

I leave to one side, for the moment, I leave to one side the subsequent effects of this interpretation, which made him rediscover, for a while, his sexual potency, but the important thing is that, right away, he replied by saying that he was going to launch himself into homosexual affairs, but he perceived that his friend Barot was only involved in the business because of his own name, for example: *Bas barot*, that the knot of the question is in this jewel-case and that there, he really gets very close to perversion. What is this jewel-case and what does he put in it? And if he cannot prevent himself from saying yes, after all why not, because one also puts jewels in a jewel-case and jewels are shit. This is what he connects up with with his stories about masturbation, which he describes as anal.

This is the material. The jewel-case is the curtain, the curtain in the thematic of the (36) beyond of the curtain, which Monsieur Lacan treated in his seminar on object relations, namely, not even $i(o)$, the real image of the body, but $i(o')$, a virtual image.

If I refer, obviously, to the optical schema which appeared in Monsieur Lacan's article in number 6 of *La Psychanalyse*, one thing that deserves to be underlined according to this article, is the fact that it is not the unique, that the most immediate grasp is not of the immediate but of the mediated, and that $i(o)$ is never apprehended outside the artifices of analysis.

I mean by that, that there would not even be assumption, that there would not even be a simple relationship to what, otherwise, would be not only an indigestible contingency, since the notion of contingency already supposes the notion of a network, but what would be rather due to being rejected, namely, the specular image emerges from this mediation of the other, to whom the child turns.

In other words, it is right away as $i(o')$, that the sexual act functioning in the field of the other, that the body image functions, and that a whole procedure, which is really the analytic procedure, puts the subject in a position from which he can see $i(o)$, really.

(37) **Doctor Lacan:** He can never see it, it is constructed in the schema, and then it remains there, it is a construction, $i(o)$.

Monsieur Safouan: Yes. Yes, of course. Precisely, yes. But the content of the jewel-case no longer poses a problem. The content of the jewel-case is found to be sometimes, proves to be sometimes shit, and sometimes the phallus. This phallus

finds itself identified to the beloved object, so that the question is posed: either there is an error of translation somewhere, or a correct translation poses the paradox of this kind, which is probably the case given that, given the experience.

So then, to take up this translation again, this equivalence of phallus = beloved object, phallus = girl, you see that I based it on the presence of a protective intention. Hence the question is posed: from whom is he protecting it? Surely not from the honest girl, but from the other one, the one that he calls perverse. This illuminates a fact that up to now I have not underlined, namely, that all his anxiety was effectively engaged in his relations with his beloved, namely, the one who was a pole of desire, a term which one can see is more adequate than to speak simply about narcissism, as he does for his part, because he does not see that $i(o)$, because nothing is visible, in principle, except the $i(o')$; it is here that all his anxiety was engaged, will he be able, will he not be able, (38) while this anxiety was completely absent in his relationship with the perverse girl, whom one can thus call, designate, as a pole of demand, which one can see is much more adequate than to speak about an anaclitic relationship as he called it himself .

It is therefore necessary to examine more closely the description that he gives of his behaviour and of the latter. What emerges is that she made use of him as a phallus, but that in the sense of an object subject to the exercise of her caprice, and not in the sense of the organ of which he is the bearer, because it is precisely this sense which is excluded from this relationship. She put his real phallus outside the circuit and, no doubt, she uses this castration to guarantee her desire and, no doubt, the exasperation of these perverse exercises come back to the impossibility in which she was of being able to integrate, as I might say, her condition of being really an o -object, namely, an exchangeable object.

For it would also be very difficult, obviously, to quote several observations which would throw light on this state of things, namely, that it is in the very measure that a subject finds it impossible, as I might say, to "*s'avoir*" (to have oneself, to know) as (39) object of *jouissance*, that he thinks he is it, hence, moreover, the paradox of a being whose whole thinking would be necessarily false; naturally, people do not know that this itself is God, it is because one does not know that religion always preserves, and the forms of religious life always preserve, their structural connection with guilt.

Moreover, one can also ask oneself in what measure one might not say that the unconscious is that, namely, this false knowledge whose statement, nevertheless, constitutes the true, and which is situated nowhere except in the gap of this "*s'avoir*" in sufferance, but with all of these considerations, which appear to be philosophical, I am only anticipating the clinical conclusion of this work or of this observation.

To return then to the patient, there is a misunderstanding, or perhaps an understanding, this is where it is difficult for me to decide, just as much a misunderstanding that I would qualify as comic, if the consequences were not so

grave, is going to be set up and mark his relationship to the perverse girl. This is a misunderstanding that can be brought to light. The fact is, that in the measure that there intensified the temptations which would put him entirely at her mercy, at the moment then at which there intensified the temptations, in short, linked to the fact that $i(o')$ attempts, in its mode of (40) exchange, to coincide with ϕ , or more simply with what he perceives as an object which does not calm him, but which calms something in her, he will have no other recourse than to guarantee her castration with his own, without noticing that it has already happened, namely, that he does not notice that not only is this castration the same on one side and the other, but in the sense that it is one and the same object which is lacking to both one and the other, which is obviously not the real phallus, because this is not lacking to him, and, as far as she is concerned, one can say that she does not lack it either, because it is, precisely, what she does not want. But which is the image linked to this organ, namely, the imaginary phallus, which is henceforth to function as $(-\phi)$, and it is from this angle the one can say that the phallic position ensures that the subject is, not neither man nor woman, but one or the other.

In other words, what is involved in the final analysis is the following, it is that the neutralisation and the putting outside the circuit, not of any organ whatsoever, but of his phallus, is going to promote the function of the image which is attached to it as $(-\phi)$. In other words, in other terms, the more $i(o')$ tends to identify itself to ϕ , the (41) more the subject, for his part, tends not to be identified but to sublimise, as I might say, into $(-\phi)$, namely, into a phallus that is always present elsewhere. Starting from which, one sees, not how he identifies the beloved girl with the phallus, for this is not an operation that he accomplishes. It is a matter rather of an operation in which he is caught up, but one sees how by engaging along this path, he only sees narcissism, the remainder, namely the identification of the girl to the phallus being the effect of what the demand of the other already evoked starting from a desire.

It is a curious thing, but this seems to me to merit further examination, or again, I would go more gently, one could say at a push that this $(-\phi)$, which is signified in this statement: "it is as if each part of her body was placed in a jewel-case", where this misunderstanding is going to reverberate necessarily in a mistake, as I might say, which is going to mark his relationship to the beloved girl as a brand of origin.

The mistake, here, does not consist in the fact that the beloved girl is the phallus but, on the contrary, in the fact that she is not it, or, more precisely, in the fact that she is minus ϕ , the guarantee of the castration of the other. The fact is that, in the whole measure that the erotic life of the subject is thus placed under the sign of his dependence on the all-powerfulness of the other, and here I am treating the question, (42) the other question, the other problem which is posed, namely, that if my body were identified to shit, then this becomes clear, I am saying that, starting from this, that in the whole measure that the erotic life of the subject is placed under the sign of

dependency on the all powerfulness of the other, one is not surprised that the same beloved object is also found to be identified to faeces.

The formula which clarifies this state of things, and on which I am going to conclude, is the following: the more the desire of the mother is lured into what is going to function right away in the sight of the subject as $i(o')$, the more the subject not only regresses, but is alienated in a pre-genital object, here the scybalum, which object will only function, nevertheless, in reference to the gap, which in the desire of the other is always signified as castration.

I think that it is starting from there that one can correctly pose the problem of normativising Oedipal castration - I mean castration in so far as it regularises precisely the phallic position, the which phallic position is strictly identical, as has been seen, to imaginary castration. It is starting from there that one can pose the problem of Oedipal castration, and one sees that really, the question of knowing along what pathways there is effected this symbolic castration, can only be resolved by setting up distinctions up to now unpublished, unformulated, concerning negation.

Doctor Lacan

Good. Thank you very much, my dear Safouan. That was excellent. Naturally, as they say, like every text that is read, it is better that it should be re-read. We will see, for example, with Milner whether it could not find a place in *Les Cahiers*, in that way everyone will be able to get to know it.

I am going, all the same, to conclude Safouan's contribution, to tell you something which has come to my mind, as they say, nevertheless.

You will have understood that immediately after his double commitment with these two objects which are so differentiated, he had this dream about the leg of his friend in a stocking, and it is around that that everything turns, the whole phenomenology of castration, that you presented so subtly, Safouan. That reminded me of what Napoleon said about Talleyrand: a stocking full of shit.

Green: A silk stocking.

Lacan: Yes. But this poses some problems. Napoleon knew something about the leg, as regards what concerns things associated with love. He said that the best thing was to take to one's heels (*prendre les jambes à son cou*). The only victory in love is flight. He knew how to make love. We have proof of it.

On the other hand, it is obvious that shit had a very large place in Talleyrand's politics. In any case, he also had some relationships with the all-powerful. And that his desire found its way rather well there, is something that is not in doubt.

It is necessary also, therefore, to distrust the following, the object of the desire of the Other: what is it that leads us to think that it is shit? In the case of Napoleon, there may be a little problem about Talleyrand who, in the last resort, defeated him.

There you are. This was simply an order of reflection that I wanted to propose to you, and which comes as a codicil to what I told you about the \mathbf{o} -object today.

THE OBJECT OF PSYCHOANALYSIS 1965 - 1966

- 1 December 1965 (I) Science and truth
- 8 December 1965 (II) The subject and lack
- 15 December 1965 (III) Topology and the subject
- 22 December 1965 (IV) A Green on the \mathbf{o} -object
- 5 January 1966 (V) The \mathbf{o} -object
- 12 January 1966 (VI) Subject of science and of psychoanalysis
- 19 January 1966 (VII) Mirror stage and the Divine Comedy
- 26 January 1966 (VIII) Discussion on Conrad Stein's work
- 2 February 1966 (IX) Pascal's Wager I
- 9 February 1966 (X) Pascal's Wager II
- 25 February 1966 (XI) LACAN ABSENT
- 23 March 1966 (XII) Lacan on America
- 30 March 1966 (XIII) Topological discussions
- 20 April 1966 (XIV) Summary of Crucial Problems; Jouissance
- 27 April 1966 (XV) Jones' Female sexuality
- 4 May 1966 (XVI) Visual structure of the subject
- 11 May 1966 (XVII) Perspective: Las Meninas I

- 18 May 1966 (XVIII) Michel Foucault: Las Meninas II
- 25 May 1966 (XIX) Summary of Object of psychoanalysis; Las Meninas III
- 1 June 1966 (XX) Re-thinking Freud; Las Meninas IV
- 8 June 1966 (XXI) Jouissance and castration
- 15 June 1966 (XXII) o-objects; Safouan's case

Seminar 2: Wednesday 8 December 1965

The last time you heard from me a sort of lecture which was not like the others because, as it happens, it was entirely written out. It was entirely written out so that it could be printed in roneotyped form as quickly as possible so that you could have it as a guide as regards my teaching.

Some people have expressed a certain regret, let us say, a disappointment. It is worth while pausing on this. In order to put a little humour into things, I would say that the way in which this disappointment was expressed was something like the following - I am forcing things a little - people preferred this sort of struggle, it appears, that is represented by being present - I scarcely dare to say it - at the birth of my thinking.

Do you really think that my thinking is coming to birth when I am here - in the process of wrestling with something which is far from being exactly that.

(2) Like everyone else it is with my speech (*parole*) of course that I explain things. Moreover you have perhaps heard that my *cogito*, which does not mean, moreover, that it is in any way in contradiction with the *cogito* of Descartes, might be perhaps rather: "I think, therefore I cease to be". So then, since I do not cease to be, as you can clearly see, that proves that I have less reason than others to believe in my thinking.

Nevertheless, it is quite certain that this is what we have to deal with. This is what does not make any easier relations with those to whom it is very particularly addressed, namely, the psychoanalysts.

And the fact that the earlier remarks came to me, I repeat, with a hint of humour, very specially from them, proves well, confirms, that it is also they who prefer what I would call the show-biz aspect of this display. This does not make relations any easier.

It is also indeed from this point of view that there should be understood the fact that I believed I should, on several occasions in my last presentation, allude to what constituted a certain moment in my relations with the psychoanalysts and for example that I spoke (3) about what I call the Freudian thing, or one or other analogous point.

It is not a question here of what I have heard qualified as useless recollections about the past, which is quite curious for analysts because, moreover, this past forms part properly speaking of a history in the sense that I tried the last time to specify what is involved for us in history, what we bring to it in terms of an essential contribution by showing what is involved in the fracture, the trauma, in something that is specified by the moments of the signifier, and it would really be to overlook completely the function that I give to the word, and what I very specially affirmed the last time, if I did not attempt, in some way or other, to include in what I am teaching about it, what I note and record about the effects of my word and very specially what happens to those to whom it is addressed.

That is why, in the measure that we are advancing this year around a more radical point, this cannot fail to end up by highlighting something which must give the key to the passage or not of my teaching to where it ought to have its impact. There must be some very close relationship between what we could call these phases or these very difficulties, to call things by their name, and what precisely I was able to say and put forward (4) about the subject in so far as it is divided between truth and knowledge.

The last time, I did not, for all that, entitle this discourse: *A courteous debate between truth and knowledge*. I spoke about the subject of science and not that of knowledge. It is indeed here that there lies something of which I also said that there is something not quite right, in other words something that does not fit together in a way that is altogether adequate or comfortable.

This indeed is why, moreover, that the real title of this lecture, this presentation, is the subject of science but as he ought to be put on sale, the law of an object that can be sold is what the label covers, what I would call the merchandise and since it obviously involves, on the inside, science on the one hand and truth, on condition that you put the and in the brackets that it deserves, namely that it is a term which does not at all have a univocal sense, that it may well, moreover, include the asymmetry, the oddity that I spoke about earlier, *Science and truth* will be the title of this presentation. Or indeed if you wish, *Science, truth*.

What there is in this presentation is just as important for what it leaves blank as for what it contains. In the enumeration of the different phases, of the different moments of the truth as cause, you will see that there are put forward in it the aspects described as efficient causes and final causes, I left in the discreet suspense of what is going to be called (5) henceforth the debate between psychoanalysis and science, the interplay of the relationships between material causes and formal causes. This is what we are going to approach today.

In what is obtained as an effect of what I teach, in the practice of those who receive it, I can note a certain tendency, a certain aspect which is the one, a curious consequence of the particularly strict form that I try to give to the term of subject, and which culminates in a singular laxity, properly speaking the one that could be qualified from the outside and according to the ordinary usage of these terms, as subjectivism. Namely, that each one in turn and, what is more, following some *up to date* style or other, which may be fashionable, for example, by being a little bit behind the fashion, people have successively used as a reference point for the position they take in psychoanalytic activity, being and having, desire and demand - I am not saying them in the order that I produced them - indeed even the final term, of knowledge and truth.

This is one of the ways of escaping, as I might say, - I hope that it is only mythical, approximate, that I am only designating and highlighting here a tendency - this is indeed one of the most radical ways of escaping from what I am trying to obtain, since what sense (6) would there be to the formulation that I give of the function of the subject as cut, leaving perhaps a certain indetermination in its choice at the origin, but is afterwards an absolutely determining fact, if it were not a question, precisely of obtaining a certain accommodation of the position of the analyst to this fundamental cut which is called the subject. Here, here alone, as identical to this cut, the position of the analyst is rigorous. Of course it is not tenable. I am not the one who first said this, it is Freud who had no doubt about it. This indeed is the reason why in holding their place, the analysts indeed do not hold it.

There is, properly speaking, no way of remedying this but there is knowledge which may be a way of getting round it. Here there is uncovered the difference between *Wirklichkeit*, namely, the possible realisation of my relationships with the psychoanalyst in so far as he leaves me at the place where I am and where I try to circumscribe a certain type of formula, and *Realität* which is beyond in so far as being impossible, it is what determines our common failure (*échec*).

This is why every failure is not as has been taught and as people continue to believe, namely, at the most rampant level of psychoanalytic thinking, every failure is not necessarily a negative sign. Failure can precisely be the sign of a break which marks the closest relationship with reality.

(7) This is what motivates and justifies, I am going to say it rapidly in two words, this is why, I have to close half of these Wednesdays. What does that mean? And why have I taken the responsibility this year to choose myself the persons who will be invited to participate in them, it is for this very simple reason that in the study of this *Wirklichkeit* there is an aspect traced out, an aspect of direct exchange, an aspect that involves the passing of the ball of the word which can only be realised in certain conditions of choice, of blending between the different types of participants, those who have to make an analytic usage of my word, and those who show me that one can very easily follow it in all its consistency and rigour wherever it goes, which of course is to be expected, if analytic praxis merits this name of praxis it is inserted into a structure which is valid even outside its current practice.

It is necessary therefore for there to be established a possibility of exchange at the level of which, for example, there can be studied these terms which clear the way, which facilitate at this level of common knowledge, the usage of certain terms essential for this part of our praxis which is called theory, and, for example, that something - I am not saying, I have no preconceived idea about what could be put on the agenda here - which for example, shows (8) us the way in which the Stoics may have already approached our truth since they happen, on the one hand, to have contributed to us at the level of logic, essential references, which have the interest for us of being a common branch for the most modern usage that is made of logic on the one hand, and on the other hand, as will appear in my lectures this year, and which is not a novelty for the analyst, except for the fact that this is not at all the way that he formulates it, what is implicated in terms of the corporeal in this logic.

For it is not enough to remember that we speak in analysis about the body image. What sort of image? An uncertain, bladder-like image, a ball that one catches or does not catch. Precisely, the body image only functions analytically in a partial fashion, namely, implicated, cut up, in the logical cut. So then it might be interesting to know that for the Stoics, God, the soul even, and what is more everything in the world, including the determinations of quality, everything was corporeal. Here we have logicians for whom everything is body. I am not telling you that this is a study to which one might not prefer another better one. One might also study why Aristotle completely bungled the question of the material cause. Why matter, when all is said and done, for him, is not a cause at all because it is a purely passive element.

(9) You can take things up where you wish. If one has a praxis like ours, one must always come up against the vital points. Only this choice, then, can only be done in common because it is a very special choice and because I do not want it to get around - which would not fail to happen given the taste for labels - that I am preaching a Stoical psychoanalysis to you.

We will try then to organise these things by a common choice in order to work effectively. I think that the best system is that a work should emerge from it which

can be communicated to all, to all of those who here will do me the honour, I hope, of continuing their regular attendance on the first two Wednesdays.

Having finished these remarks, which moreover are not without interest for the points which may emerge in my discourse, this reminder of a certain question about the cause or about what must be understood by matter, I take up again the following, which is that if my teaching has a sense and if it is consistent with the structuralism that it highlights, if it was able to be pursued and be built up from year to year, it seems to me that it is rather normal to consider that it found favour in the fact that in order to ground the structuralism formulation - let those who can remember my first graph constructed during a whole year, (10) patiently, remember this first graph, this network relationship of the determining functions of the structure of language and of the field of the word - if this network structure for example has one advantage it is precisely that of belonging - almost to the first word, world but I use it quickly to make myself understood - to a topological world, which means that the connections are not lost because the shape is distortable, flexible, elastic. That is not new. Even the most rebellious people understood very well what was involved.

In such a way that this is what ensures that the edifice does not collapse, does not crumble, is not torn apart because of the modifications of proportion in the measuring of the whole when I contribute new terms, and that as I evoked it earlier, after being and having, I speak about desire and demand, it is a matter of seeing where the structure connects these four terms with one another. And it does not seem to me that it is, properly speaking, impossible.

There is here on the right the reminder of four of these structural networks, first of all under the name of the hole, which designates what I am going to speak about today.

You have the graph, the two storied graph and the function of the word in so far as there is differentiated in it the enunciating and the enunciated.

(11) To the right of this, something like a square piece of cloth, a field where those, who are not so rare, who read me, even though I never learn anything about it, were able to pick it out at the beginning of an article that is called: *A question preliminary to any possible treatment of psychosis.*

It is really very striking that ever since the time, it is already four years ago, that I wrote on the blackboard, for my audience, a psychoanalytic one precisely, the year of my seminar on *Identification*, that I wrote on the board, vectorialised, the topological schema of what is called the projective plane of what I introduced under the term of cross-cap at that moment of my teaching, that it never came into anybody's head to see that the Moebius strip, in so far, - we will come back to it later - as it is cuttable in this projective plane with a remainder - we will say what one - that the Moebius strip is inscribed there that it was waiting for you for a long time, it has to be said, but after

all, one cannot reproach anyone for not having guessed it, nevertheless the letters that I had written: (I), (M), (i), (m); it is not simply for the pleasure of making *mimi* that I put them there. They might perhaps make you suspect something, namely this application function that I give to the Moebius strip in order to make you grasp what is involved in the constituting cut of (12) the function of the subject.

There is, right at the bottom, I pointed out in passing for those who might like to copy it today, a new little graph which I am giving you as an object of reflection which is properly speaking useful in order to grasp the relationships of what I called and continue to make function as the signifier with what will be very especially useful for us to consider this year, its functioning in what is not simply language regarding which I told you the last time that there is no meta-language which implies that henceforth, whatever of course presents itself as such, logic - what is logic if not precisely an attempt at meta-language - that logic is only a shoot (*chute*), and that it can only be conceived, Bertrand Russell (*prend et recèle*), by being considered as such. That is why in the schema at the bottom, you have at the right-hand point, something that I have written as phon or phoneme, the properly phonematic element of the signifier. It is formed by something which appears at the two upper and lower poles as an indicative symbol that I can put forward now since last year I was able to show you what is involved, in its central function, for this indicative term. The typical example is the shifter. What is essentially indicated is always more or less the hole of the subject, of the enunciating subject.

(13) At the lower edge, the symbol - but perhaps the term is going to surprise you, and it is precisely because I can only introduce it in all its crudity at this point of elaboration, because then it does not dominate everything, it does not carry everything before it - the imitative symbol.

This is something which is in agreement with the phoneme, and the phoneme refers you on to the pole of logical combination which is to be grasped at the end of the horizontal line, on the right.

The relationship of this logical resultant to the index and the lexical terms regarding which I can henceforth very easily admit that they contain elements of imitation, their relationship is the whole business of logic in so far as a logic is constitutive of science. This changes nothing about the fact that there is no meta-language.

The little schema on top is to remind you that at the beginning of an article which is called *The purloined letter* you have a certain number of concatenations concerning the signifying chain which perhaps will become a little clearer, but which I cannot say for the moment are very illuminating, which will become a little bit clearer because of what we are going to advance into later.

So what? It is a matter of starting from the subject, from the subject of science as we (14) were able to highlight it in this experiment of Descartes, the sign of a fainting point, but also indeed in the logical effort of Frege by which he designates for us where the one must emerge if we want to give it a purely logical foundation, namely, properly at the level of the zero object.

Are not these two reminders from last year enough to make astonishing and significant the reaction I encountered that someone, one of the best, found himself surprised at the accent that I put, during my last presentation, on the subject of science.

These are not vain remarks to study what is involved in certain deafnesses, which are only momentary precisely because they are Freudian, we are absolutely not satisfied with the term of scotomisation, namely, that for us, the hole, and for the best of reasons, cannot be in the perception, this is properly speaking a stupidity on which, moreover, much has been constructed.

The whole of English psychiatry, for many years, has spoken about nothing but negative hallucinations. The fact that it is structured differently and that to realise this it is enough to read the article that Freud wrote quite intentionally to show it, which is called *Fetishism*, what is involved in the *Spaltung*, the division of reality itself in the subject who is described as perverse on this occasion. This indeed is the reason why it is interesting to (15) highlight such remarks, such accidents, in so far as I have the good luck, after all - this did not appear to be luck to my dear dead friend Maurice Merleau-Ponty, who rather indeed, at the thinking that I received on the very afternoon of the day that I expressed myself at that time in Sainte-Anne, I received the different forms of disarray from my own listeners

I see in this, for my part, on the contrary, for them and for me, many advantages.

So then, let us now begin again from the hole. It is a long time, a very long time since I have given to the hole the essential function as regards the functioning of the symbolic order. Do I need to recall a certain meeting, congress, gathering, whatever you want to call it, which happened at Royaumont and where, having given a report on the direction of the treatment and everything that follows from it, the principles of its power, I spoke to them about nothing, because I had to change the record because the discourse was already in print, I spoke to them about nothing, to the stupefaction of a journalist who had entered there by I do not know what door, I spoke to them about nothing but the mustard pot, starting from this fact of experience, which had once again been confirmed at lunch, that the mustard pot is always empty. There is never a case that one opens a mustard pot and finds mustard in it.

(16) This mustard pot is the symbolic creation *par excellence* and everyone has known this for a long time. If there were not a being who speaks, there would be perhaps

hollows in the world, pools, depressions, things which retain, there would not be a vase.

One would be wrong to believe that it is of no consequence that this forms part, for us, of the first essential reliefs to be found of civilisation. Ceramics, then bronze vases, the prodigious quantity of these things that we find when nothing else remains, ought all the same make us prick up our ears a little, and many other things also. After all it is not enough to prick up your ears to make it understood, you have to believe.

Obviously there were other things before. The first historical stratum, has a pretty Danish name but I am incapable of pronouncing it, it is the piles of rubbish, so then in that case we have the **o**-object.

And the vase is not an **o**-object. It has served for a very long time to express something. What? Is it a lecture on theology? You know: God, the great worker, “just as,” we are told in the catechism, “one needs a potter to make a pot, in the same way

Have we not better profited from it! For this does not at all say what it is trying to (17) convince us of. What does this say to us? “..... and what follows *ex nihilo*”. What does that mean? That means that he makes the vase around the hole. That what is essential is the hole. And since it is essential that there should be a hole, the Jewish enunciation that God made the world from nothing is properly speaking, as Koyré thinking, taught and wrote, what opened up the path to the object of science. People have become bogged down, or remained stuck on all sorts of qualities, whatever they may be, from force, impulsion, colour, anything you wish, in short to perception, to the piece of chalk to which Socratic progeny remains stuck like flies on fly paper for two thousand years, namely Lagneaux and also Alain, have speculated on appearance. So then this appearance? Well then we must manage to see how it is also reality.

It is with this that philosophy and science have taken off at a tangent with respect to one another. So what? I think that I am in a position to tell you right away. The piece of chalk becomes an object of science at the moment and from the moment that you begin from this point which consists in considering it as lacking.

This is what I am going to try to make you sense right away.

(18) But for the moment, I do not want to lose the opportunity of adding in passing what is meant by the material cause, because if you are a philosopher, Aristotle, I will tell you that matter is the mustard, namely, what fills the void. Aristotle who was nevertheless so well orientated in his conception of space, is very far from this terribly slippery extension which is a veritable problem, always to be reposed, in the mathematical-physical sciences. He had very well seen that the locus (*le lieu*) was what allowed there to be given a conception of space which would not expand

indefinitely, which would not put to us the question of this false infinity. Only then, after having begun so well by defining the locus as the final container, the last one being that which is *non ens*, well then, because he was a Greek and because he had not read the Bible, he was not able to admit that there was a void separating objects. So then, he filled the mustard pot and it is because of this that we remained there for a certain number of centuries.

Does that mean that the material cause is the pot, an incontestably divine creation like every creation of the word and to which there can be strictly reduced what is said in the text of Genesis.

Not at all. And this is the remark that I wanted to highlight in passing. We find piles of (19) pots, I told you earlier and in tombs, everywhere where there reign what are called primitive cultures. Well then, with a very particular intention, namely, so that future collectors would not be able to give them as flower pots to their girl friends, which would have meant that all the pots would have been destroyed long ago, with the simple intention of preserving these pots, the people who put them in the tombs made a hole in the centre. Which proves to you that it is indeed from the angle of the hole that you have to seek the material cause. Here is something which causes something, a hole in the vase. This is the model.

If you take the high point of scientific development, what in it is at once the keystone and the essential hinge, you obtain what? Energetics is not what it is believed to be by an author who opposes it, as a complement, to my structural theory of psychoanalysis. He imagines no doubt that energetics is what pushes. You see the level of culture among philosophers!

Energetics, if you refer for example to someone as authorised, all the same as Feynman whom I did not wait to open, you may well believe, until he won the Nobel prize, in a two volume treatise which is called *Lectures in physics* and which, for those who have the time, I could not recommend anything better to read because it is a two year course that is (20) absolutely exhaustive. It is altogether possible to cover the whole field of physics at its highest level in a certain number of lectures which, after all, do not weigh more than one and a half kilos.

In the third chapter, or the fourth, I do not know which, he gives the reader or the listener, I do not know which, a whiff of what is involved in energetics. I am not the one then who invented that to support my theses. I remember that I had read that when I had the book, that is to say a year and a half ago. I would ask you to consult the first paragraph of chapter four: *The conservation of energy*.

What is the best thing he finds to give an idea of it to listeners who are supposed to be relatively uninformed about what is involved in physics, since up to then they will only have been taught by incompetents.

He imagines a highly strung little individual whom he calls *Denis the menace*, Denis, a danger to the public. He is given twenty eight little blocks, but since he is a savage, they are in platinum, indestructible, uncuttable, incapable of losing their shape. The question is to know what Mammy is going to do every time that, in a properly discreet way, namely, not an American Mammy, comes into her child's room and sometimes finds only twenty three blocks, sometimes twenty two.

(21) It is clear that these blocks will always be found, either in the garden, because they have been thrown out the window, or in the difference of weight that one may notice in a box which, of course, is not opened; or because the water in the bath has risen slightly, but since the water in the bath is too dirty for the bottom to be seen it is by means of this slight raising of the level that one comes to know where the blocks have gone. I am not going to read the passage for you. I do not have the time. It is sublime.

The author points out that one will always find the same constant number of blocks with the help of a series of operations which consists in adding together a certain number of elements, for example the height of the water divided by size of the bath, by adding this curious division to something else which might be, for example, the total number of blocks that remain. I hope you are following. Nobody is making faces. Namely, to do this thing, I tell you in passing, which is included in the least scientific formula which is that, not alone does one add but one subtracts, that one divides, that one operates in all sorts of ways with what? With numbers thanks to which one adds, and without which there would be no possible science, one adds all together the towels and the serviettes, the pears and the leeks, is that not so?

(22) And what does one teach children when they begin to enter - I hope this is no longer the way now but I am not so reassured - precisely in order to explain things to them, one tells them the opposite, namely, that one does not add together the towels and the serviettes, or the pears and the leeks which means, naturally, that they are definitively barred from mathematics.

Let us come back to our Feynman. This parenthesis will only lead you astray. Feynman concludes: "Here is the example. One number is always going to emerge as a constant: twenty eight blocks. Well now, he says, energetics is like that. Only there are no blocks."

This means that this constant number which guarantees the fundamental principle of the conservation of energy - I mean not simply fundamental but of which a simple shakiness at the base is enough to throw any physicist into an absolute panic, this principle must be preserved at any price, therefore it will necessarily be so since it will be at any price, it is the very condition of scientific thinking. But what does the constancy mean here, that one always finds the same number? Because that is the whole point. It is not simply a question of a number. That means that something

which is lack as such - there is no block - is to be found elsewhere, in another kind of lack. The scientific object is passage, (23) response, metabolism (metonymy if you wish, but be careful) of the object as lack. And starting from there many things are clarified. We will refer to what last year we were able to highlight about the function of the one. Does it not seem to you that the first emergence of the one concerning the object, is that of the cave man, to please you, if these sorts of images still please you, who comes home where there is a little bit of food or a lot, why not, and who says: "there is one missing". This is the origin of the unary trait: a hole.

Of course one could take things much further and we will not fail to do so. Note that this proves that our cave man is already at the high point of mathematics. He knows set theory. He connotes: there is one missing. And his collection is already made. The truly interesting point is obviously the "one" which denotes. Here the referent is necessary. And the Stoics will be of service to us.

It is obvious that the denotation, here, is what? His word, namely the truth which for its part opens up for us the hole, namely, why "one"? For what this "one" designates is always the object as lacking. And what would then be the fecundity of what we are told is the characteristic of the object of science which is that it can always be quantified.

(24) Is it simply the fact, that from a prejudice which is really unbelievable, we choose among all the qualities of the object simply the following: its size, to which we subsequently apply measurement and people then ask where this comes from. From Heaven, of course. "Everyone knows that number," this at least was the way Krodker [?] expressed it, if I remember correctly "except for the whole number which is a gift of God."

Mathematicians can allow themselves humorous opinions like that. But the question is not there. It is precisely by remaining stuck at this notion that quantity is a property of the object and that one measures it, that one loses the thread, that one loses the secret of what constitutes the scientific object. What is measured by the ell of something which is always something else, in the dimensions, and they can be multiple, of the object as lack.

And the thing is so little a simple one that what we have to see is that the true experience that one has, on this occasion, is the following: namely, that number in itself, is not at all a measuring apparatus and that the proof of this was given immediately after the Pythagorean inspirations; it was seen that number could not measure what it itself allowed (25) to be constructed, namely that it is not in a position to give a number, a number which is expressed in any kind of commensurable way, for the diagonal of a square which would not exist without number.

I am only evoking this here because what is interesting is that if number, for us, is to be conceived as a function of lack, this, this simple remark that I made about the incommensurable diagonal indicates to us what richness is offered to us starting from there.

For number furnishes us, as I might say, with several registers of lack. I specify, for those who are not particularly interested in this question: a number described as irrational, which is nevertheless, at least since Dedekind, to be considered as a real number is not a number which consists in something which can be indefinitely approached. It can only be plunged into the series of real numbers, precisely, by making intervene a function which, not by chance, is called the cut.

This has nothing to do with a goal which keeps retreating as when you write 0.3333....., which is for its part a perfectly commensurable number. It is a third of one. As regards the diagonal, it is known since the Greeks why it is strictly incommensurable, namely, that (26) not one of its numbers is predictable up to the very end.

The only interest of this is to allow you to envisage that, perhaps, numbers will furnish us with something very useful in order to try to structure what is involved for us, namely, the function of lack.

Here we are then before the following position: the subject can only function by being defined as a cut, the object as a lack. I am speaking about the object of science, in other words, a hole, things going so far that I think I have made you sense that only the hole, in the final analysis, can act as what, effectively is important for us, namely, the function of material cause. Here are the terms between which we are going to have to tie a certain knot.

Since I was not able, today, to advance my remarks as far as I had hoped because of the fact that things were not written out and since also, I cannot hope in a week, to make at my discretion the necessary choice, I will conduct on the third Wednesday of this month, exceptionally, the same open seminar to which you are all invited.

In order to punctuate, to highlight what is going to be involved I will make an opposition. What relationship can be conceived between this **o**-object in psychoanalysis and this object of science as I have been trying to present it to you?

(27) It is not enough to speak about the hole, even though all the same, of course, it seems to me, at least for the sharpest among you, that the solution ought already to be appearing to you, it has to be said, on our horizon. The function of lack - I did not say the idea, be careful, we know how this idea caught Plato by the ankle and that he never freed himself from it - we see the function of lack emerging, undergoing the necessary escape (*fuite*) through the fall of the **o**-object and this is what these drawings

that I brought today, and that I will bring back again the next time, are designed to let you put your finger on. Such a structure is necessary for a cut to determine the field, on the one hand of the subject as it is necessitated as subject of science and on the other hand, the hole where there originates a certain style of the object, the only one to be retained, the one which is called the object of science and as such can be a sort of cause over which I left a question mark the last time, is such, as it appears only the form of laws. Or again, where can there be connected up this manifestly materialist aspect, through which science precisely can be designated. It is indeed in this knot of the function of lack that there lies and there is concealed here the turning point of what is in question. And what are we going to have at this point which is a point of gap?

(28) We saw it last year in connection with the Fregian genesis of the number one. It is in order to save the truth that it must function. Saving the truth, which means not wanting to know anything about it.

There is another position which is to enjoy (*jouir de*) the truth. Well then, that is the epistemological drive. Knowledge as *jouissance* with the opacity that it brings with it in the scientific approach to the object, this is the other term of the antinomy. It is between these two terms that we have to grasp what is involved in the subject of science. It is here that I intend to take it up again in order to take you further. By this you should understand, to speak about this radical function. I have made nothing emerge yet about what is involved in the \mathfrak{o} -object, but you ought to sense that the same schema, precisely, that I have not reproduced here, the schema with two circles at the time when I depicted for you the function of alienation as such, remember the example: “Your money or your life, liberty or death?” As I explained to you, the schema for alienation is a choice which is not really one in this sense that one always loses something in it. Either the whole, you enjoy the truth but who enjoys because you know nothing about it? Or you have, not knowledge but science and this intersection-object which is the \mathfrak{o} -object escapes you. That is where the hole is. You have this amputated knowledge. This is the point on which I will stop today.

Seminar 3: Wednesday 15 December 1965

Today you are not being spared drawings and cuts. To be strict even, I was careful to put on the board on the top left-hand side the one which corresponds to the reminder

that I gave the last time of what I had given at the end of my first year here as the schema for alienation.

Let us say that alienation consists in this choice which is not really one and which of two terms forces us to accept either the disappearance of the two or a single one mutilated.

To enjoy the truth, I said, is the true aim of the epistemophilic drive in which there escapes and vanishes all knowledge as well as the truth itself. To save the truth, and in order to do this not to want to know anything about it, is the fundamental position of science and that is why it is science, namely, a knowledge in the middle of which there is displayed the (2) following hole that the o-object, here marked by taking support from an Eulerian convention as representing the field of intersection of truth and of knowledge. It is clear that I raised more than one objection to these Euler circles on the plane of their strictly logical utilisation and that in fact, here, their usage is in a way metaphorical.

These are precautions that should be taken. You must not think that I think that there is a field of truth and a field of knowledge. The term field has a precise sense that we will perhaps have an opportunity of retouching today.

This use of the Euler circles is therefore to be taken with reserve. I note this because over against this reserve that I have just made, you are going to see me today taking support from, to say certain shapes does not really express what is involved, cut is closer; signifier, this is what is involved, writing, why not?

In advance then I ask you to note that their decisive importance is to be taken in a quite different sense to a sense of meaning, as what represents the circle in the Euler sense here which, in short, is designed to show us how there is included a certain extensive and comprehensive conceptualisation in what I am showing you in the centre of these figures that I brought along for you today, something which has been traced out by a Buddhist (3) monk who is called by the name that I put there on the board in its Japanese phonetics, since Jiu Oun was Japanese.

Jiu Oun, as one of my faithful friends here today was kind enough to tell me, Jiu Oun lived between 1714 and 1815. He entered a Buddhist "order" - as I might put it - at the age of fifteen years and you see that he remained there until an advanced age. His work is considerable, and I will not tell you about the original foundations which still carry his mark; in order to give you an idea, for example, of his activity, it would be enough to evoke, for example, that a Sanskrit study manual, considered today to be fundamental, comes from him, even if not entirely from his hand and that it contains no less than a thousand volumes. Which means that he was not a lazy man.

But what you see here is typically the trace of this something which, I would say, is the high point of a meditation and is not unrelated at least in appearance to what is obtained from some of these exercises, or rather of these encounters, which are staged out on the path of what is called Zen.

I would have some scruples in advancing this name here, namely, before an audience a part of which I cannot be sure of as regards the way in which I may be understood, to (4) advance without any precaution a reference to something which is certainly not a secret, which is everywhere to be found and which one hears being spoken about everywhere. Zen does not represent something which can go so far as a betrayal of confidence in the true sense, I cannot advise you too much to distrust all the stupidities which are piled up under this heading. But after all no more than about cybernetics itself.

I am forced all the same to say that this, which is traced in a brush stroke of which no doubt it is not sure that we can appreciate the particular vigour which is, nevertheless, for an experienced eye rather striking, this brush stroke is what is going to be important for me, it is on it that I am going to fix your attention to support what I have to advance today along the path that we have opened up. There is no doubt that it is here in the proper position that I define as being that of the signifier. That it represents the subject, and for another signifier, is sufficiently assured by the content of the writing which is here aligned and read like the Chinese writing that it is, this is written in Chinese characters: I will pronounce it for you, not in Japanese but in Chinese: Chi yen che [?], which means: “In three thousand years how many men will know? “

(5) Will know what? Will know who has made this circle. Who was this man whose range I thought I ought first of all indicate to you between the most extreme, the most pyramidal of science and a mode of exercise which we cannot fail to take into account here as a background to what it allows us to describe here.

“In three thousand years, how many men will know” What is involved at the level of this traced-out circle. I allowed myself in my own calligraphy to respond: “In three thousand years, well before, men will know”..... Well before three thousand years, and after all it can begin today, men will know, they will remember, perhaps, that the sense of this drawing deserves to be inscribed in this way.

Despite the apparent difference, it is topologically the same thing. Imagine that this is round, that what I called a circle is a disc. What I traced out here by hand is also a disc even though it is in the shape of two lobes, one of which covers the other, the surface is all of a block, it is limited by an edge which, by continual distortion can be developed so that one of these edges overlaps the other, the topological homeomorphism is obvious. What is meant by the fact, then, that I traced it out in a different way and that it is to this that I now have to draw your attention?

(6) A drawing which I called a circle and not a disc leaves in suspense the question of what it limits. In order to see things where they are traced out on a plane, what it limits is perhaps what is inside, it is also perhaps what is outside.

In truth, it is here that we have to consider what may be original in the function of writing. Let us leave for a moment what we have here before our eyes and which undoubtedly I propose rather as an *experimentum mentis*, as an exercise of the mind which has an intuitive adhesion. For if I lead you into the field of topology, it is in order to introduce you to a sort of flexibility (*mentis*), of mental exercise concerning figures which are not, no doubt, incapable of being grasped in some intuitive way but regarding which it will be sufficient, at least for someone who is less prepared to follow me, for, let us say the effects that I will try to demonstrate to you in it by tracing certain cuts. You will see immediately that you will have enough trouble with these extremely simple things here, this agent prepared for your use in what I have to tell you today, so that you will be able to grasp that it is, no doubt, not for nothing that these constructions which are called - I already introduced all of them and I have already even used and abused them sufficiently, but not without my needing today to gather together what concerns them - these figures called the (7) Klein bottle, the projective plane, the torus find themselves, as compared to what is the structure of our habitual co-ordinates of intuition, in such an upsetting position that it is really necessary to practice them, to apply oneself to them in order to find one's way around them easily.

This is why - I apologise to those mathematicians who may be in my audience for having to explain things by oppositions that are, in a way, gross and which allows there to escape a part of the rigour of what would be a present-day presentation of what is involved, for example, in the chapter where these figures appear in a modern book of topology, but after all, I do not have to apologise either, for if these difficulties that are described as intuitive difficulties concerning the field of topology have been, in a way, radically eliminated from the properly speaking mathematical presentation of these things, if they do not enter in even for a minute, given the very assured combinatorial formula in their premises, in their original axioms, in the laws which are advanced, it remains, nevertheless, that something retains its value in the very difficulty that these things present by being decanted, ending up by finding their mathematical-logical status, and that it is too easy to rid oneself of them by saying that they contain remainders of intuitionist impurities, that it (8) is all in the fact, for example, that people allowed themselves for too long a time be encumbered by a point of view which is, in a way, linked to the experience of a three-dimensional space, that it was necessary to come to be able to think it, to construct it, starting from this data of experience, by varying, by constructing, by building up a generalised combinatorial.

People are satisfied with this criticism and this reference. But I think that there is something missing in it. If the negative number, to keep to one of the historic aporias

that are really now for us, which appear to us to be completely elementary - who torments himself today about the existence of the negative number? And this tranquillity that we have as regards the negative number, besides the fact that it does not cover over anything good, is all the same quite useful, as regards what is involved in not posing oneself useless questions, this tranquillity with respect to the negative number only dates from scarcely a century ago. I was speaking again recently to a very erudite mathematician who knows his history of mathematics extremely well. Even in Descartes' time the negative number, this magnitude below zero tormented them. They were not at ease about it. Numbers increase and also decrease. And when they go beyond the limit below the bottom of the bottom where do they go?

(9) After all, it is legitimate enough for him to be tormented if he puts things forward in these terms.

I am only evoking this simple example: you can well imagine that it would be easy for me to evoke others; the irrational number, the number that is called imaginary, the famous root of minus one. Here again mathematicians forget a little easily what the imaginary number was for centuries, about five or six centuries, you know that it made its appearance in connection with a root outside the field of the conceivable, in terms of a very simple second degree equation, from that time up to the beginning of the nineteenth century the imaginary number caused lots of problems, people did not know what to make of it, what to make of it conceptually, and if now things are assured starting from the foundation of the complex number, the extension of numerical groups to which one has ended up by giving its status, it nevertheless remains that it is easy enough for mathematicians and too easy not to remark that, of course, the term imaginary remains attached to it but that it is just as good a number as any other, that this notion that I have just brought into play of numerical group is sufficient to cover it and that it is no more imaginary than any other one.

Well then, it is at this point that I will put forward an objection. For it seems to me that everything which has thus constituted a stopping point, a point of scansion, the (10) progressive mastery of the conquest of certain structures that I have evoked just now under the term of numerical sets, the obstacle, the obstacle is not to be put under the heading of intuition, of this veil, of this closing down which would result from the fact that it is not possible to visualise some support for what is involved in the combinatorial. I hold on the contrary that we are led to something more primitive which is nothing other than what we are trying to grasp as the structure, as the constitution of the subject by the signifier.

It is in so far as these diverse forms of numerical expression are reproduced at different moments of scansion, I am saying that in reproducing temporally we are not even sure that it is the same circuit that is involved in this reproduction: we will have to see. In other words, there are perhaps structural forms of this constitutive lack of the subject which differ from one another, and that perhaps it is not the same lack

which is expressed in this negative number in connection with which one can indeed say that the introduction by Kant of this number into the field of philosophy is really, and when one returns to it, of a really heart-breaking character. Perhaps it is a great merit that Kant tried such an introduction. The result is an unbelievable mess.

(11) Thus it is perhaps not the same moment of the structural lack of the subject which is supported, I am not saying here is symbolised, here the symbol is identical to what it causes, namely the lack of the subject. I will come back to it. At the level of lack there has to be introduced the subjective dimension of lack and I am astonished that no one has remarked in the article by Freud on fetishism the use of the verb *vermessen* and one can see that in its three uses in this article he designates the lack in the subjective sense, in the sense that the subject misses out.

We are brought then to this function of lack in the sense that it is linked to this original thing which, being called the cut, is situated at a point where it is writing that determines the field of language.

If I was careful, I mean, to write *Function and field of speech and language* it is because function refers to the word and field to language. A field has an altogether precise mathematical definition. The question was posed in the first part of an article which appeared this week, I believe, in any case it was this week that I received its delivery by someone who is very close to some of my listeners and who introduces with a vivacity, a crispness, a vitality which really gives it an inaugural importance this question of the (12) function of writing in language. He highlights in a fashion which I must say is definitive, irrefutable, that to make of writing an instrument of what is, of what lives in the word is absolutely to fail to recognise its true function.

That it must be recognised elsewhere is structural to language because of something that I indicated sufficiently myself, if only in the predominance given to the function of the unary trait in identification so that I do not have to underline my agreement on this point.

Those who attended my former seminars, if they still remember something about what I said, may remember the value given to something, something in appearance so out of date and uninterpretable as the discovery made by Sir Flinders Petrie about predynastic potsherds, namely, long before the foundation of the Phoenician alphabet, precisely of the signs of this alphabet which is supposed to be phonetic which were there obviously as a trade mark. And on this point I stressed the fact that we must at least admit, even when it is a question of writing that is supposed to be phonetic, that the signs came from somewhere, and certainly not from the need to signal, to code phonemes. Indeed everyone knows that even in a phonetic writing they code nothing at all.

(13) On the contrary, they express remarkably well the fundamental relationship that we put at the centre of phonematic opposition in so far as it is distinguished from

phonetic opposition. These are crude things, which are really way behind when compared to the precision with which the question is posed in the article that I told you about.

It is always very dangerous moreover to give references. You have to know to whom. Naturally those who will read this will see put in question certain oppositions such as that between the signified and the signifier. It goes as far as that and they will see there perhaps some discordance where in fact there is none. On the other hand, who knows, it may encourage them to read one or other earlier or later article. There is always something very delicate in this always fundamental reference that a signifier refers on to another signifier.

To write and to publish is not the same thing. That I write even when I speak is not in doubt. So then why do you not publish more? Precisely because of what I have just said. One publishes somewhere. The fortuitous, unexpected conjunction of this something which is a writing and which has thus close relationships with the *o*-object gives to every disunited conjunction of writing, the appearance of a dust-bin. Believe me, at the early morning hour that I come home, I have a considerable experience of dust-bins and of those who busy themselves with them. There is nothing more fascinating than these nocturnal individuals who snatch something or other whose usefulness it is impossible to (14) understand. I have been asking myself for a long while why such an essential utensil had so easily kept the name of a prefect, to whom the name of a street had already been given and which would have been quite enough to commemorate him. I believe that if the word dust-bin (*poubelle*) has come to fit in so well with this utensil, it is precisely because of its relationship with publication (*publication*)

To come back to our Chinese, you know, I do not know whether it is true but it is edifying, one never puts in the dust-bin a piece of paper on which a character has been written. Pious people, who are supposed to be cheerful because they have nothing else to do, collect them and burn them on a little *ad hoc* altar. It is true. *Si non e vero e bello*.

But altogether essential to delimit this sort of trap-door of exteriority that I am trying to define with regard to the function of the dust-bin in its relationships with writing.

This does not imply the exclusion of all hierarchy. Let us say that among the reviews that we are surrounded by, there are more or less distinguished dust-bins. But in looking carefully at things I have not seen any tangible advantages in the dust bins of the rue de Lille as compared to those of the surrounding area.

So then let us take up our hole again. Everyone known that a Zen exercise has something to do, even though people do not know very well what that means, with the subjective realisation of a void.

(15) And we are not forcing things in admitting that anyone, the average contemplative, will see this figure, will say to himself that there is something like a sort of high point which ought to have some relationship with the mental void that it is a matter of obtaining and that this singular high point will be obtained in an abruptness, succeeding a wait which is sometimes realised by a word, a sentence, an ejaculation, even a rudeness, a cocking of the snoot, a kick in the backside. It is quite certain that these kind of pantalooneries or clowning have no sense except with respect to a long subjective preparation.

But again. At the point that we have got to, if the circle, however empty it may be, is to be considered by us as defining its holding value, if finding favour in it to depict what we have approached by all sorts of convergences, about what is involved in the *o*-object; that the *o*-object is linked *qua* fall (*chute*) to the emergence, to the structuring of the subject as division is what represents, I must say, the whole point of the questioning. What is involved in the subject in our field is this hole, this fall, this *ptose*, to employ here a Stoic term the quite insoluble difficulty of which for the commentator when it is confronted with the simple *catagoren* seems to me is this with respect to a *lecton*, another mysterious term, let us translate it (*produisons-le*) with all sorts of reservations and in the crudest fashion (16) which is certainly inexact by meaning, incomplete meaning, in other words a fragment of thought.

One of these possibilities, fragment of thought is Commentators, of course, caught by the incoherence of the system do not so much miss the relationship by translating it as subject, logical subject, since it is a matter of logic at this level of Stoic doctrine, they are not wrong. But we can recognise in it the trace of this articulation of something which falls with the constitution of the subject. Here is something that I believe we would be wrong not to be comforted by.

So then are we going to be content with this hole? A hole in the real, that's the subject. A little facile. We are still here at the level of metaphor. We might find here however, by pausing for a moment, a precious indication, notably something that is altogether indicated by our experience which could be called the inversion of the function of the Euler circle, we would still be in the field of the operation of attribution. We would rejoin here the necessary path to what Freud defined as the *Bejahung* first of all which alone makes the *Verneinung* conceivable, there is the *Bejahung*, and the *Bejahung* is a judgement of attribution. It does not prejudge anything about existence, it does not tell the truth about the truth. It gives a start to the truth, namely something that will develop as for (17) example, the qualification, the quiddity which, moreover, is not quite the same thing.

We have an example of it in psychoanalytic experience. It is primary for our object today. It is the phallus. The phallus, at a certain level of experience, which is properly speaking the one analysed in the case of Little Hans, the phallus is the

attribute of what Freud calls living beings. Let us leave this to one side, if we do not have a better designation. But note that if this is true, which means that everything that develops in the register of animism would have had as a beginning an attribute which only functions by being placed in the centre, by structuring the field at the outside and by beginning to be fruitful from the moment that it ,namely, when it can no longer be true that the phallus is the attribute of all living beings.

I repeat, if I put forward this schema, I only did so in parenthesis. Let it be said in passing that if my discourse unfolds from the parenthesis, from suspense and from its closure, then from its often very embarrassed resumption, you should recognise there, once again, the structure of writing.

Is this then, do we have here then, one of these summary reminders to which there would (18) be limited the exhaustion of what we are trying to do. Certainly not. For it is not a matter for us of knowing at the point to which we take the question, how the signifier colours the real. That one can colour any map whatsoever on a plane with four colours and that this is enough, even though this theorem is up to the present still verified, even though it has not been proven.

This is not what interests us today. It is not a matter of the signifier as a hole in the real. It is a matter of the signifier as determining the division of the subject. What can give us the structure of it?

No void, no fall of the \circ -object that a primordial anxiety is able to account for, and I am going to try to make you sense it by topological considerations. If I proceed in this way, it is because there is a quite striking fact which is that, as long as scribblers have been around, and God knows that it is quite a while ago, even if one believes that writing is a recent invention, there is no example that everything that is of the order of the subject and of knowledge, at the same time, cannot always be written on a sheet of paper. I consider that this is a fact of experience that is more fundamental than the one that we have, that we might have, that we believe we have, of three dimensions. Because we have learned to make these three dimensions vacillate a little, it is enough for them to vacillate a little bit for them to vacillate a lot.

(19) In the place where, perhaps, people still write on a sheet of paper and where there is no need to replace it by cubes, it has still not vacillated. There must then be something here as regards which I am not in the process of saying that it must be concluded that the real has only two dimensions. I undoubtedly think that the foundations of the transcendental aesthetic are to be taken up again, that the bringing into play, even if only for probative purposes, of a two dimensional topology for what concerns the subject, would in any case already have this reassuring advantage, if we continued to believe *mordicus* in our three dimensions which, in effect, we have many reasons for marking our attachment to, because this is where we breath. This would at least have the reassuring advantage of explaining to us the way in which what

concerns the subject belongs to the category of the impossible. And that everything that comes to us through it, through the real, is inscribed first of all in the register of the impossible, of the realised impossible. The real, in which there is carved out the pattern of the subjective cut, is this real that we know well because we find it reversed in a way in our language every time that we really want to circumscribe what is involved in the real, the real is always the impossible. Let us take up again then our sheet of paper.

(20) We do not know what our sheet of paper is. We know what the cut is and that the one who has traced out this cut is suspended on its effect. "In three thousand years, how many men will know?"

It would be necessary to know what condition a sheet of paper must fulfil, what is called in topology a surface, there where we have made holes, in order that this hole should be a cause, namely, has changed something.

Note that for what we are trying to grasp in what is involved about the hole, we are not going to suppose another one. This one is enough for us. If this hole has had as an effect to make fall a shoot, a fragment, well then it is necessary that what remains is not the same thing, because if it is the same thing, it is exactly what is called a hole or a sword-thrust in the water.

Well then if we trust the most accessible, the most familiar, the most fundamental intuitive support, which it is not a matter moreover of deprecating either in terms of its historical interest or its real importance, namely a sphere - I apologise here to the mathematicians - it is to intuition that I am appealing here because we only have a surface into which one cuts and that I do not have to appeal to something which is plunged, precisely into three dimensional space, namely,

(21) What I simply mean in asking you to evoke a sphere, is to think that what remains around the circle has no other edge. You can intuit this in the present state of things only in the shape of a sphere, a sphere with a hole. If you reflect on what a sphere with a hole is, it is exactly the same thing as the lid that you have just dropped. The sphere has the same structure.

The fall that is in question in this fundamental drawing has no other effect than to make re-emerge in the same place what has just been ablated. This does not allow us in any circumstance to imagine something which is structural with respect to the subject which interests us, is structural.

Since I must advance, I will only make a rapid allusion to the fact that Mr Brouwer, a considerable personality in the modern development of mathematics, demonstrated this theorem topologically, which, topologically, is the only one to give us the true foundation of the notion of centre, a topological homology. There are two figures,

whatever they may be, provided they have an edge, can, by a distortion of this edge be proved to be homeomorphic. In other words if you take a square, it is topologically the same thing as this circle because you have only to blow, if I can express myself in this way, inside the (22) square and it will swell up to be a circle. And, inversely, you give some hammer blows to this circle, to this two-dimensional circle, you give a two-dimensional blow of a hammer also and it will become a square. It has been proved that this transformation, however it may be carried out, leaves at least one fixed point. Where? A more astute thing that is less easy to see immediately - even though already the first thing is not so easy - or an odd number of fixed points. I shall not go any further into this.

I want simply to tell you that at this level of the structure of the surface, the surface is, as one might say concentric. Even if we go by the outside, I mean intuitively, to see what is connected up at the level of this edge, what is involved is a concentric structure.

I said a long time ago, I am still more inclined to say it, but nevertheless I will not say why, that Pascal was a very bad metaphysician. This "*world of two infinities*", this literary fragment which has been giving us a headache almost since we were born, appears to me to be the most out of date thing that one could imagine. This other anti-Aristotelian *topos*, where the centre is everywhere and the circumference is nowhere, appears to me to be the most inexact thing possible, except for the fact that I will easily extract from it Pascal's whole theory of anxiety.

(23) I will do it all the more easily because, in truth, I believe if I can believe the stylistic remarks which were brought to me by this great reader of mathematical material who asked me to consult the text of Desargues, who was a much greater stylist than Pascal, in order to see what we know very definitely from other sources, the importance that the references to Desargues may have had for Pascal, which would change the whole sense of his work.

In any case, it is clear that on this concentric, spherical structure, if the circle can be everywhere, undoubtedly the centre is nowhere. In other words, it is obvious to anyone that there is no centre for the surface of a sphere. This is the inconsistency of Pascal's intuition.

And now the problem is posed for us of whether there cannot be, in order to explain ourselves in terms not of images but perhaps of ideas, and which give you an idea of where I am guiding you from, if at the outside of what I very intentionally called the circle, and not the circumference, the circle means what you would ordinarily call in geometry circumference, what one usually calls circle I will call disc or flap (*lambeau*), like earlier. What must there be on the outside in order to structure the subject, in other words, in (24) order that the cut from which there results the fall of the \bullet -object should make appear, on something which was completely closed up to

then and where then, nothing could appear in order to make appear in what we require for the constitution of the subject, the subject as fundamentally divided. It is easy to make this appear, for it is enough for you to look at the way in which this circle is arranged, the way that I have retraced it, in order to see that if you conceive of this outline as empty, as I taught you to read this one as empty, it becomes very simply, and this is obvious, I think all the same that I have spoken to you sufficiently up to now about the Moebius strip for you to recognise it, it is the mounting, the framework, what allows you to see sustained and immediately intuitable, a Moebius strip.

You see it here. Join, as I might say, with a thread, each of its edges. You will see it being reversed and see being stitched at the level of the back what was at first its front. The Moebius strip has numerous properties. There is one major, capital one that I have, I think, sufficiently represented in the preceding years, even to the extent of having a pair of scissors here myself, I demonstrated to you, namely, that a Moebius strip has no surface, (25) that it is a pure edge. Not only is there only a single edge to this surface of the Moebius strip, but if I split it in the middle there is no longer a Moebius strip, for it is the stroke of my cut, it is the property of division which establishes the Moebius strip. You can extract from the Moebius strip as many little fragments as you wish, there will always be a Moebius strip as long as some of the strip remains, but it will still not be the strip that you hold. The Moebius strip is a surface such that the cut which is traced in its centre is itself the Moebius strip.

The Moebius strip in its essence is the cut itself. This is how the Moebius strip can be for us the structural support of the constitution of the subject as divisible. I am going to put forward here something that is strictly speaking incorrect from the point of view of topology. Nevertheless, this is not going to worry us for I am caught between explaining something to you in an incorrect fashion or not explaining it to you at all; here we have a tangible example of one of these subjective impasses which are precisely what we base ourselves on.

Therefore I advance, having sufficiently warned you that in strict topological doctrine this is incorrect. You can remark that my Moebius strip - I am speaking about the one which is drawn on the mounting of this \circ -object, this mounting, as I told you, is exactly a (26) spherical flap which is in no way distinguished from what I demonstrated earlier in connection with the hole of Jiu Oun. For it to serve as a mounting for a Moebius strip, the fact is that a Moebius strip radically changes its nature as a flap or little portion by soldering itself to it.

What is involved is a text, tissue, coherence of a fabric, of something which is of such a kind that having made in it the trace of a certain cut, two distinct heterogeneous elements appear, one of which is a Moebius strip and the other is this flap equivalent to any other sphere. Let us foment this Moebius strip in our imagination, it will come in this line necessarily (if the thing is plunged into three dimensions, this is my

incorrectness), but it is an incorrectness which is not enough to set aside the problem of this fact that something which is indicated in the three dimensions by a re-crossing, an intersection which finally gives to the total figure of what is commonly called a sphere topped by a crossed bonnet or a cross-cap which gives what is drawn in red here, namely, what you can always imagine, of course in an incorrect fashion, plunged into the third dimension, as having at the bottom, and at the level of this base, of this chiasma, of this intersection, having the same cut.

(27) Every cut which goes to the level of what, schematically, is represented as this line of crossing over, every closed cut which passes by this crossing-over, is something which dissipates, as I might put it, instantly the whole structure of the cross-cap, the *chapeau croisé* or again, the projective plane - as against the sphere which does not lose its fundamental concentric structure as regards with any cut or closed edge that you may describe on its surface. Here the cut introduces an essential change, namely, the apparition of a Moebius strip and, on the other hand, this flap or little portion.

And, nevertheless, what I have just said to you is that the stroke drawn here in black, which is a simple stroke, a closed edge, of the same type as the one the drawing of Jiu Oun reduced, as I told you, entirely to this little portion. So then, what is the riddle? I think that you must remember still what I told you earlier, namely, that the cut itself is the Moebius strip. As you can see in this second outline that I made on the same figure, next to it, a figure which is schematised in something, a bladder in which I am trying to help you to intuit what is involved in the projective plane, if you separate the edges, as I might say, which result from the cut here traced in black, you obtain a gap which is constructed here like a Moebius strip.

(28) The cut itself has the structure of the surface called Moebius strip. Here you see it pictured by a double stroke of the scissors that you can also do, in which you would effectively cut the total figure of the projective plane, or of the cross-cap as I called it, in two parts: one Moebius strip on the one hand, here it is supposed to be cut, all on its own, and on the other hand a remainder which is what plays the same function of hole in its primitive shape, namely, of the hole that is obtained on a spherical surface.

This is fundamental to consider and you have to see in it another figure in the schematised shape, and one more properly topological which is the following one whose complement I have written on the blackboard where I think you can see it.

Now, the way in which the first hole, the spherical hole, the one that I called concentric, is sutured, topology reveals to us that nothing is less concentric than this form of centre contiguous with the function of the first flap. Because in order to close the hole on the sphere, it is enough to have a simple cut which connects the two pieces in the way, simply, in which a dressmaker would darn something for you. Having established the cut, if you take things in the inverse sense for the Moebius strip

implies an order, and it is really here that we have our third dimension which is what justifies us having introduced earlier a (29) false third in order to make you sense the weight of these figures.

This dimension of order, in other words, representing a certain temporal base, implies that to realise this hole, this second hole whose topological properties I am explaining to you, there is an order necessary which is a diametrical order, diametrical, that is apparently spatial, founded in accordance with the median stroke, gives you the figured support in which properly speaking it can be read that this sort of cut is precisely the one that we were waiting for, namely, it can only be realised by having at the same time to be divided, in other words, if it is not in an intuitive and visual fashion but in a mental fashion that you try to realise what is involved starting from the moment that you think that the A, the point A on the circle is identical to the point A that is diametrically opposite it, which is the very definition which was introduced in a quite different context, in metrical geometry by Desargues, in other words, the projective plane, and God knows that Desargues, in writing it, himself underlined how paradoxical, bewildering, even crazy such a conception was which proves very well that the mathematicians are themselves well able to imagine the points of transgression, of going beyond the limit, in connection with the setting up of one or other structural category. If they did forget it, moreover, there would always be their colleagues to remind them by telling them that they understand nothing about what (30) they were saying, something which happens at every turn, and especially what happened to Desargues when the walls of Lyon were covered with posters in connection with things that as you see were very exciting. What a lovely time! What a marvellous epoch!

The A and the A are the same what does that mean if not that, even if we consider this as the hole, the conjunction of the edges cannot be carried out except by dividing this hole, by managing to pass it in the movement, as one might say, of its conjunction.

We find here the model of what is involved in the subject in so far as it is determined by a cut. It ought necessarily to be presented as divided in the very structure.

I was not able, of course, to take any further today the point that I wanted you to arrive at. You should simply know that in referring ourselves to two other topological structures, which are respectively the Klein bottle, in so far as I already showed you that it is made up, composed, by the sewing together of two Moebius strips. As you will see, this is not at all enough to allow us to deduce its properties by simple addition.

On the other hand, the torus, which is still another structure. We can, starting from these primary definitions about the \$ conceive of what use there could be to us these two other (31) structures of the Klein bottle and the torus in establishing fundamental

relationships which will allow us to situate with a rigour which has never been obtained up to now in ordinary language, in so far as ordinary language ends up with an entification of the subject which is the veritable knot and key to the problem.

Every time that we speak about something which is called the subject we make a “one” of it. Now what it is a matter of conceiving, is precisely the following, it is that the name of the subject is the following. The one to designate it is missing. What replaces it? What comes to fulfil the function of this “one”? Several things, undoubtedly, but if you only see several very different things, the \circ -object on the one hand, for example, the proper name on the other fulfilling the same function, it is quite clear that you can understand nothing either about their distinction - for when you see that they fulfil the same function one believes that it is the same thing - or about the very fact that they fulfil the same function.

It is a matter of knowing where there is situated, where there is articulated this $\$,$ the divided subject as such. The torus on the one hand, a figure so exemplary that already in the year of my seminar on identification that, except for the fresh ears who came that year, nobody listened to what I was in the process of saying, because people had other worries.

(32) In my seminar on identification, I showed the exemplary value that the torus has in linking, in a structurally dogmatisable way, the function of demand and that of desire properly speaking at the level of the Freudian discovery, namely, of the neurotic and of the unconscious. You will see its exemplary functioning.

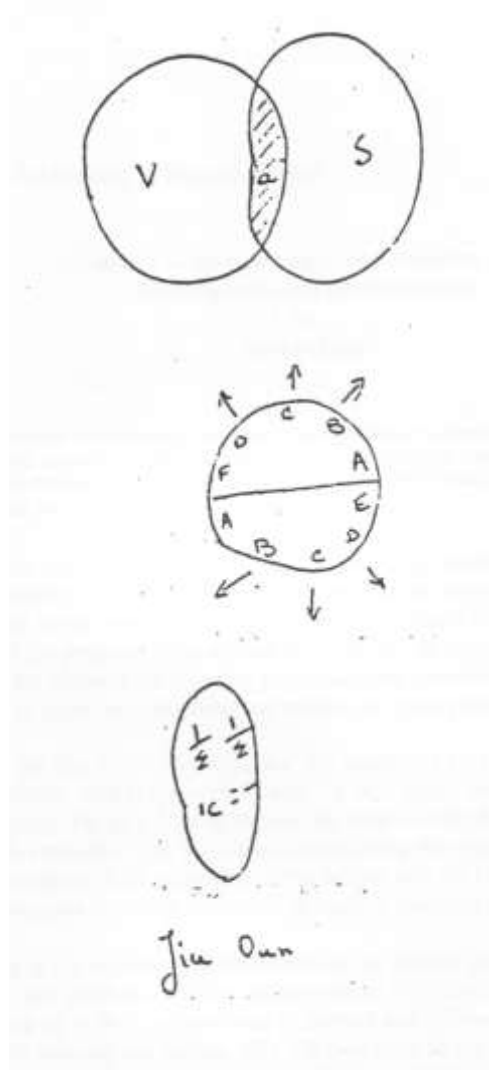
..... what can be structured of the subject is entirely linked, structurally, to the possibility of the transformation, of the passage of the structure of the torus into that of the Moebius strip, not the true of the subject, but the Moebius strip in so far as it is divided, in so far as once it is cut through the middle it is no longer a Moebius strip. It is something which has two faces, a front and a back, which roll up upon themselves in a funny way, but which, as in the model that I brought you today to enable you to see it in a tangible fashion, becomes applicable onto this thing which is usually called a ring and which is a torus.

This structural connection allows there to be articulated in a particularly clear and obvious fashion certain relationships which ought to be fundamental for the definition of the relationship of the subject of demand and of desire. In the same way it is only at the level of the Klein bottle that there can be defined the original relationship that is established starting from the moment there enters into function in language the word and the (33) dimension of truth. The non-symmetrical conjunction of the subject and of the locus of the Other is what we can illustrate, thanks to the Klein bottle. With these simple indications, I will leave you and give you an appointment for the first Wednesday in January.

For the fourth Wednesday of this month, I would urgently ask anyone in this assembly who in whatever manner is interested in the progress of what I am trying to make advance here, to kindly, whatever may be the fate that I may reserve for the information sheet that he will have to fill up, namely, that whether I invite or do not invite him to the fourth Wednesday to consider that it is not because of his merits or his lack of merit that he is invited or not.

People are or are not invited for reasons which are the same as those that Plato defined for the functioning of politics, namely, which have nothing to do with politics but which are rather to be considered as those of the tapestry worker. If I have to have the threads of one colour and different threads of another colour to produce a certain weave on that day, let me choose the threads. That I should do that this year as an experiment on each of the fourth Wednesdays is something that the totality of my listeners and all the more so in that they are the most faithful and all the more so that they may be really interested in what I am saying, ought in a way to leave to my discretion.

(34) You will allow me then for the next fourth Wednesday to invite whomever I please in order that the subject, the given subject of discussion, of dialogue which will function on that day should be carried out in the best conditions, namely, among interlocutors expressly chosen by me. Those who are not part of these on that Wednesday should in no way take offence.



Seminar 4: Wednesday 22 December 1965

*J Lacan's o-object, its logic, and Freudian theory
(convergences and interrogations)*

by
André Green

[When this translation was made I was unaware of the existence of another translation made for *Interpreting Lacan* edited by J Smith and W Kerrigan and published by Yale University Press. This translation is

attached but my - unrevised - translation may still be of some interest. The remarks of Lacan, Conté and Melman are not contained in the Yale translation.]

To speak about the object of psychoanalysis immediately gives rise to a question. It leads us to question ourselves as to whether one is going to treat the object of psychoanalysis in the sense that one speaks about the object of a science - what the approach and the progress of the science is aiming at - or whether one is going to speak about the status of the object as psychoanalysis conceives of it. The surprising thing will be to show here that these two senses are closely linked and interdependent.

Littre points out that at the word "subject" the *Académie* says: natural bodies are the subject of physics. And at the word "object", it says again: natural bodies are the object of physics. Far be it from us to pick out here a contradictory reduplication or one too easily reducible. Nor will we join brandishing this example, to the chorus of those who denounce in the separation of the subject and the object the cause of all the theoretical impasses for which traditional thought is rendered responsible.

Encountering at the beginning the linked fate of the subject and the object is not to affirm either their confusion or their independence. It is to calculate that we are going to have to face up to the confrontations of identity and difference, of conjunction and disjunction, of suturing and cutting. We will then have to ask ourselves if the object of psychoanalysis - I am speaking now about what it is aiming at - can be content with this coupled limitation to which many contemporary disciplines, and indeed the most advanced, limit themselves.

I - JACQUES LACAN'S OBJECT: A RAPID REMINDER

To examine the role of the **o**-object in the theory of Jacques Lacan will help us kill two birds with the one stone. It will lead us - this at least is our project - to specify its content in the conceptual framework which is proper to him on the one hand, and on the other hand to mark the limits of agreement of this thinking - and no doubt of all psychoanalytic thinking - with modern structuralism.

A - The (o), mediation between the subject to the Other

The (o) - I am not saying yet the **o**-object - is present in Lacan's oldest graph when he starts from the theorisation proposed in *The mirror stage* (1936-1949). (o) can be understood then in its relationship to o' (which will have the closest relationships with the future i(o) namely the specular image) as an element of the indispensable mediation which unites the subject to the Other. It is clear that this situation of the mirror stage - which is less important to date as a stage than to designate as a structuring situation - can only be understood if one specifies that it is not psychology

that is in question here (whether we are talking about Preyer or Wallon) but psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis which gives to the child which has emerged from his mother a meaning which weighs on all his development: namely that he is the substitute for the penis of which the mother is deprived and only accedes to his status of subject by taking his place there where he is lacking to the mother on whom he depends. This substitute is the locus and the bond of exchange between the mother and the father who even though he has a penis cannot for all that create it (because he has it).

The relationship (o) to i(o) is going to reduplicate the relationship that we have just described.

B - The (o), mediation between the subject to the ego ideal

There then comes the quadrangle called the schema R. Here again there are opposed the couple of tensions between the systems of desires (iM) and the system of identifications (eI). The (o) is inscribed on the line (iM) which starting from the subject S and going towards the primordial object M (the mother) is constituted through the figures of the imaginary other. On the contrary the o' is inscribed on the line which goes from the subject S towards the primordial object M (the mother) by way of the figures of the imaginary other. On the other hand o' is inscribed on the line which goes from the subject to the ego ideal through the specular forms of the ego. It can be seen how the quadrangle derives from the Z by joining the points which in the first graph are only reached by a round-about journey. One might point out here that in the field of the imaginary the two directions of the subject go either towards the object, or towards the ideal. One also knows that in Freudian thought this orientation is closely dependent on narcissism. One notes then that the Other which has come to the locus of the Name of the Father, situated only in the field of the symbolic, at the opposite pole to the subject here identified to the phallus, can only be reached by the two paths that we have just described above, the object or the narcissistic, but never in a direct fashion.

The field of the real is comprised in the tension of two couples eIxiM whose meaning we have specified. But it is only in the symbolic field that there appears the third term which is indispensable for the structuring of the process.

[Foot note

1. It is not out of season to make two remarks here:
 - a - In French psychoanalytic work the notion of object relations has developed a good deal (Bouvét) imported from Anglo-Saxon authors (M Klein especially, after Abraham). Lacan is opposed to it underlining the absence of any references to elements of mediation in these conceptions. Especially - which amounts to the same thing perhaps - he will condemn this view-point in so far as it ends up at a Real-Imaginary opposition which crushes the Symbolic.

c - The opposition between the ideal ego and the ego ideal (Nunberg-Lagache) serves as a platform for the theoretical developments of Lacan which are inserted in the perspective of the relationship to the Other.]

C - The o, object of desire

In effect, Lacan postulates the existence of an ideal ego as a precocious form of identification of the ego to certain objects which operate both as love objects and objects of identification, but in so far as they are extracted, cut out, taken from a series which makes the lack appear. I who am speaking identify you to the object which you yourself are lacking, says Lacan. The relationship between (o) and O is therefore clearly shown. If O only reaches its full meaning by being sustained by the Name of the Father which is not, is it necessary to specify, either a name or a God, it passes as we have seen through the maternal defile and is only reached when the cut between the subject and maternal object irremediably separates him from the aforesaid object. Or again when there is revealed the lack which affects the primordial object, in the experience of castration. The series of castrations postulated by Freud: weaning, sphincter training, castration properly speaking, renders this experience in its repetition, in its recurrence, signifying and structuring.

The o-object will then be that which through these experiences, is going to fall, as Lacan says, from its position of being “exposed to the field of the Other” but in order to attain the status of object of desire. The tribute paid to this accession is to exclude the desiring subject from saying, from naming the object of desire.

Having being situated in the field of the Other now allows there to be conceived the function of mediation such an object plays less between the subject and the Other but in their relationship: my desire enters the Other where it is expected from all eternity in the form of the object that I am in so far as it exiles me from my subjectivity by resuming all the signifiers to which this subjectivity is attached.

We know that phantasy allows the establishment of this formula of relationship, in so far as it reveals here the subject in effacing his trace. The phantasy as a structure constitutive of the subject, where the latter is imprinted in the hollow, through which fascination operates, opens the relationship of the o-object to the ideal ego.

D - The (o) as fetish

This formulation indicates everything that separates the theorisation of Lacan from that of other authors. Let us say schematically that while the latter are above all going to mark the positive aspect of the qualities of the object Lacan valorises the negative approach. A clear example shows us this. Before the image of the phallic mother the post-Freudian authors will say that she is terrifying because she is phallic. Because the phallus can be a maleficent instrument, a destructive weapon, etc... . Freud said

that the bewilderment produced by Medusa's head took place because the reptiles which took the place of hair for her denied, as many times as there were serpents, castration and by this reversal it was recalled in a multiplied way to the one who wanted to cancel it out. Lacan is happier to follow this path. The case of fetishism to which he gives a lot of attention is the apologue of this reflective mode. The object of the fetish will be the witness, the veil of the castrated sexual organ - of the lack in the field of the Other.

E - The (o) object of lack, cause of desire

In connection with his seminar on the *Symposium* there appears with a particular force the metonymical and metaphorical structure of the **o**-object in the mapping out that Lacan gives in Plato's text about the particular position of the *agalмата*, in the discourse of Alcibiades where the latter depicts Socrates: "He is just like the silenuses that one sees in sculptors' lofts which the artist represent as holding a pipe or a flute; if you open the middle of them you see that within they contain little figurines of gods". We are dealing both with fragments of the body, with a part of the body and its symbolisation and this is to be taken literally, in the form of a divine figurine.

It is precisely in so far as this **o**-object is going to emerge as objective lack that it is going to be deployed in a double register which will be at once the revelation of the lack of the Other and also of the lack as it appears in the process of meaning. What is lacking to the Other is what cannot be conceived of. The (-phi) which is introduced here in the shape of what does not appear - it is the Nothing which cannot be pictured - in which there is ordered the encounter with castration as unthinkable, whose hiatus is filled with the processes of meaning, by the mirage of knowledge. I quote again: "(o) symbolises that which in the sphere of the signifier as lost is lost to meaning. What resists this loss is the subject designated once the processes of knowledge come into play, once that is known, there is something lost." It is this apparition in the shape of the object of lack which specifies what our presentation is going to revolve around, namely the non-specularisable nature of the (o). Everything happens as if the barred subject takes on the function of i(o) as Lacan puts it or again as if, short-circuiting the impossible specularisation of lack, the subject thus identifies himself to knowledge, coming to the locus and the place of the loss which stimulates its promotion, covering over this loss to the extent of forgetting its existence.

Starting from this appearance of lack, there is going to come into play the function of the remainder issuing from the desire of the other, the function of the remainder which is manifested as a residue left by the bar, which affects the big Other and whose homologue in the subject interests him in knowledge. Here again Lacan makes a distinction of a logical order where nullifying does not suppress having, which precisely makes the remainder appear.

The function of the remainder is what is saved from the menace which weighs on the subject; “desire is constructed on the path of a question: not to be”. The **o**-object is the cause of desire.

F - The (o), product of work

One might think, even though Lacan does not say it expressly, that the progression-regression dimension might constitute a plane that is correlative to those of conjunction- disjunction and of suture-cut. The developments generated on the plane of knowledge are to be taken in their negative perspective, referring back to the plane of miscognition where they are organised in the approach of the processes of meaning - which ceaselessly tend to cancel out or to nullify the loss of the object - to what was signified around this loss, by the traces left of this work, of which the **o**-object is the surest reference point, the index of truth pointed towards the subject. Freud insists, in his final works on the historical truth at which the construction of the analyst aims. The channel of demand constitutes the guiding thread of this access to the truth. Its function is not alone to serve as a guide, but to form the very outline of this itinerary of the paths of truth.

This reminder in which we have only wanted to keep the indispensable minimum for the development which is going to follow is going to allow us to pose some problems.

a - Given the relationship of the **o**-object to representation it would be well to ask oneself what are the relationships between it and the signifying chain. Does the lack represent some relationship with the word as concatenation.

b - Must one accord - in turning towards Freud - the status of the signifier to the *Vorstellungrepräsentanz* alone? What about affect?

c - is there not in the work of Freud a point about representation which has not found an echo in Lacan: the distinction between different types of representation (of words and of things for example) which might lead us to differentiate still more, in order to underline the original character of the Freudian concatenation.

d - If knowledge is what comes in the place of truth, after the loss of the object, would it not be appropriate to link one to the other by the traces of this loss and the attempt to efface them.

These are questions which will allow the **o**-object to be considered less as a support of the partial object than as the pathway of a hand tracing, the inscription, the letter, o.

II -THE SUTURING OF THE SIGNIFIER, ITS REPRESENTATION AND THE o-OBJECT

I come now to what is going to constitute another axis of my presentation, namely the relationship between (o) and the cut and the suture, and I will refer to the presentation by J A Miller concerning the theorisation, starting from the work of Frege, of the logic of the signifier. This in order to situate correctly the position of the number zero in the measure in which it is going to have an impact on the destiny of (o).

In virtue of the principle according to which, in order that the truth may be saved, everything is identical to itself and zero is the number assigned to the concept “not identical to itself”, there is no object which falls under this concept.

But, says Miller, speaking about Frege, “it was necessary, in order to exclude any reference to the real, to evoke at the level of the concept an object that is non-identical to itself - subsequently rejected from the dimension of the truth”. The zero (O) which is inscribed at the place of the number consummates the exclusion of this object. As for this place designated by subsumption where the object is missing, nothing can be written and if it is necessary to trace a O, it is only to picture a blank in it, to make the lack visible”. There is here therefore on the one hand the evocation and the exclusion of the object which is not identical to itself and on the other hand this blank, this hole in place of this subsumed object.

The notion of unity is given by the concept of identity, the concept of the subsumed object. But the place of one, no longer *qua* unity but *qua* number one, remains problematic as regards its place as the first, as regards its primordially, as I might say.

It is not legitimate, Miller remarks, to count the number zero as nothing, and logic demands then that one should confer on this number zero the role of first object.

The consequence of this is the identity to the concept of the number zero which subsumes the object number zero in so far as it is one object. The primordially, in short, cannot be established under the sign of unity, but of number starting from which the one is possible, the number zero. Thus a double register overlaps a functioning which must be unfolded in order to understand the ambiguity of the number zero in so far as it includes :

- the register of the concept of not identical to itself
- the register of the object, matrix of the one, the object permitting the assignation of the number one.

Thus there is uncovered the double operation:

- The evocation and the elision of the non-identical to itself, with a blank at the level of the object subsumed permitting the number zero
- The introduction of zero as a number, that is as a signifying name and as an object.

This situation has an interest for us above all in so far as it specifies the structure of the concatenation. Not only does the subject exclude himself from the scene and from the signifying chain by the very fact that he constitutes it as subject in its structure of concatenation, but the first of these objects operates at once as a concept and as an object, not represented but named unary object and concept on the non-identical to itself, a concept that is a threat to the truth and this all the more so because it is out of play, or *hors-je* (out of I).

This concept of the threat to the truth is for us a concept which emerged from the encounter with the truth, in so far as it dissociates not alone the truth from its manifestation (identity to itself) but designates here its place, through the blank or the trace which negates it. It is insufficient to see in this, (it has to be said) only a simple relationship of absence. It is also necessary that there should be circumscribed here its relationship of lack of truth.

The interest taken by us in this confrontation with Frege read by Miller is to link the subject to the signifier. The subject is identified to the repetition which presides over each of the operations through which concatenation is knotted together, in the hold on each fragment by the one which precedes it and by the one which succeeds it: at the same time and in the same movement the subject sees itself so many times rejected outside the scene - and from my chain - which thus constitutes itself. Now if the operation excludes at every stage, the nullifying does not suppress the having which subsists for us, on condition of being able to recognise it under the form of (o).

The effect of concatenation rejoins the definition by Lacan of the signifier: "the signifier is what represents a subject for another signifier". There is thus clarified what is involved in the relationships of the subject and of the **o**-object in their relationships of suture and of cut. "If the succession of numbers, metonymy of zero begins by its metaphor," says Miller, "if the number O of the sequence as number is only the suturing substitute for the absence (of absolute zero) which is carried underneath the chain following the alternative movement of a representation and of an exclusion - what creates an obstacle to recognising in the restored relationship of the zero to the sequence of numbers the most elementary articulation of the relationship that the subject has with the signifying chain?".

I leave here the question of the relationship of the subject to the big Other by the effect of the zero but I am going to raise two problems, that of the suture and that of representation.

A - The problem of the suture

Leclaire protested against this suturing inferred by Miller. The question remains: is there or is there not a suture? Is not what designates the position of the psychoanalyst

with respect to the truth precisely the privilege that he does not have to suture? How can one deny that there is a suture if there is a concatenation?

I would take as proof this argument of Freud that is too often forgotten on the consequences of castration. If it is possible, if the threat has been executed, it does not simply deprive the subject of masturbatory pleasure, but it has, the henceforth definitive impossibility for the castrated subject of a union with the mother. That castration is seen here as the collapse of the whole system of the signifier by the rupture of any possibility of concatenation, explains why Freud compares it to a disaster whose costs are immeasurable. In any case the penis plays here the role of mediator of the cut and of the suture.

How can this be sutured? Jacques-Alain Miller, as I have just said, has shown the assension of the number zero its transgression of the bar under the form of one, its vanishing in the passage from n to n' which is $n + 1$. But one would not be wrong either to highlight the fact that the logic of an unconscious concept has requirements that are internal to its formation. Here let us quote Freud (with Leclaire): “faeces”, “child”, “penis” thus form a unity, an unconscious concept (*sit venia verbo*). The concept specifically of a little thing which can be separated from one’s own body.

To an opposition of a binary type, the one that linguistics offers us, that of phonology where relationships are always posed in terms of an antagonistic couple and the one that is put at the basis of all information, there is substituted here an operational process with three terms (n , $+$, n') with the vanishing of a term as soon as it is manifested. We find here a sort of paradigm which can give us the path of what may be involved in the cutting up of the signifier.

In effect the linguists show themselves to be extremely embarrassed when it is a matter of the cutting up of the signified while the cutting up of the signifier does not present us with any kind of difficulty it seems. If for example I can believe Martinet, I read: “As regards semantics, if it has acquired the sense which interests us, it is nonetheless derived from a root which evokes not at all a psychic reality but rather the processes of meaning which are implied by the combination of the signifier and of the signified”. “A seme in any case can be nothing other than a two faced unit.”

The embarrassment comes here from the fact that any direct reference to the signified would ruin the structuralist approach, since its accession by way of the signifier creates the necessary detour for an indirect, relative and correlative apprehension. Moreover, and above all, the tracing out of relevant traits leaves us here in perplexity.

Definitively, what lacks a consistent support here is the structure of the body. Does not the assurance of holding as firm the relevant traits in phonology repose definitively on the functioning of the vocal apparatus? No doubt it is under the command of the nervous system, which explains the fascination of linguists for

cybernetics. The psychoanalyst is here the only one who tries to listen to the sense, at its level, namely to consider, while respecting the same requirement of indirect reference, that the cutting up passes to the level of the signified and that it is this cutting up itself which will imply a cutting up of the signifier which renders the signified intelligible. Here there is located the ambiguity that must be raised between the linguistic concept of the signifier and its psychoanalytic formulation as Lacan conceives of it. But is it the same thing?

You have no doubt recognised in this two-faced unity the theorisation of the Moebius strip by Lacan. But can one not consider that the cutting up of the signified in this metonymical series of different partial objects is represented by the phallus precisely in so far as it has appeared in the form of (-phi) in its different partial objects whose diachronic succession you know well: oral object, anal object, phallic object, etc. these terms only representing their mapping-out with respect to the erogenous zones, leaving a place for more complex forms.

This could reconcile a choice between a strict binary system which refers to options which do not allow us ternary mediation, and another system where causality is developed in a network, a type of reticular system which makes disappear any functioning of an oppositional type.

Finally it clearly appears that the minimal form of this reticular structure is the triangular structure where the third is vanishing. It is, I believe, the operation illuminated by Miller's commentary.

This may evoke for us diverse forms of relationships with which we have to deal in the Oedipus complex where an opposition, that of the difference between the sexes, in so far as it is supported by the phallus is in fact inserted into a triangular system which is never apprehended except in two by two relationships; where the phallus constitutes the standard of exchange, its cause.

Saussure had the merit of placing at the beginning of the tongue as system, value, outlining in this respect the comparison with political economy. But even though he separated it out here, he scarcely went any further and did not pose himself the question of what has value for the speaking subject. Thus the suture is accomplished by allowing value to be seen as a cause without telling us anything about it.

This is where we encounter the function of cause developed by Jacques Lacan. If, with Frege, the identity to oneself has allowed the passage from the thing to the object, may we not think that what we have just shown may function as a relationship of the object to the cause? One might conclude that the object is the signifying relationship which can link the two terms of the thing and of the cause. We would here perhaps have one of the examples spoken about in this still contested article by Freud on the antithetical sense of primitive words since we know that *chose* (thing)

and *cause* (cause) have a common root, the mediation here being found to pass through the object.

In short, we would be present at the passage from “the indeterminate” to “the state of what is or works”, from “what is in fact” to “what is of the order of reason, of the subject, or of the motive” through the intermediary of the object in so far as its definition is: “what presents itself to sight or affects the senses” (Littré).

B - The problem of representation

Here there is posed then our second problem, namely that of representation. It seems to me that Miller paid little attention to all the references to representation used by Frege. Nevertheless he preserved in the passage quoted above the notion of an alternative movement of a representation and of an exclusion. The function of gathering together, of subsumption is solidary with the notion of a power which puts things together and which at the cost of a cut (that of the power of gathering together presented to the thing, represented). It is the cut which allows the representation. Now here the number zero figures as object under which there falls no representation. It is by the very operation of the cut that there comes, that there is accomplished the subject I would say on the back of, at the expense of the object. As if one could say: what does the cut (of the subject) matter since there remains the suture (of the \mathbf{o} -object). This is what the sacrifice of the object by desire in a way realises. What matter the loss of the object if the desire survives and outlasts it. Something also which would be of the order of: the object is dead, long live the desire (of the Other). The demand becomes what assures the renewed resurrection of desire in the case where it might happen to be lacking; it is formulated through the \mathbf{o} - object.

The demand which is sustained by no cause, a cause whose effect is the hole, through which the remainder is confused with the demand, is this not the way that the fool - the buffoon, Polonius - sees the fool - Hamlet in love with his daughter and an uncertain avenger of the dead Father - which will make another father perish, that of the object of his desire (Polonius) after a tragic mistake.

“That I have found
the very cause of Hamlet’s lunacy
I will be brief. Your noble son is mad
mad call I it; for to define true madness
what is it but to be nothing else but mad.”

And further on:

“That we find out the cause of this effect,
or rather say the cause of this defect,

for this effect defective comes by cause
 thus it remains, and the remainder thus.
 Perpend”.

Hamlet Act 2, Scene 2.

III - THE RELATION o TO i(o) AND THE PROBLEM OF REPRESENTATION AND SPECULARISATION.

Lacan insists forcibly on the fact that the **o**-object is not specularisable, the reference to the specular image is neither the image of the object nor that of representation, it is, says Lacan in his seminar on *Identification* (1962) another object which is not the same. It is caught up in the framework of a relationship where there comes into play the narcissistic dialectic whose limit is the phallus which operates there under the form of a lack.

Now we have just seen the non-depictable object represented by the number zero.

What does Freud have to say about it? By considering the problem uniquely from the angle of the narcissistic dialectic one short-circuits in my opinion the problem of representation which refers to the object of the drive. Freud designates it as eminently substitutable and interchangeable, which might perhaps appear to be a compensation for the impossibility of flight before internal stimuli, an intermediary procedure, I would say between a limited exchange and a generalised exchange.

It is necessary that there should participate in this exchange as an exchanged term an object of the drive, therefore it is not any object whatsoever that is involved in the substitution.

Two problems here present themselves before us. The first is that of the distinction between the representative of the drive and affect, the second is that of the differential distribution of the mode of representation.

A -The problem of the distinction between the representative of the drive and affect

The distinction between the representative and the affect is conjectural in Freud's work as we know. Often the drive is confused with the representative and visa versa. But at the end of his work, we know that a further distinction that is more and more marked is established where - this is what I propose should be taken into consideration - the affect takes on the status of signifier. The proof of this is that from 1924 on, the use of *Verleugnung* which it has been proposed to translate by *déni* (denial) is more and more specific; it finds its most precise formulation in the article on fetishism (1927) to which Lacan refers so frequently, the article on the splitting of the ego (1938) and finally in chapter VIII of the *Outline of psychoanalysis* (1939). Freud's

thesis then becomes that perception falls under the influence of *Verleugnung*, whilst affect falls under the influence of the *Verdrangung*.

The possibility in the alternative of acceptance-refusal of a global functioning or one impacting simply on one of the terms (perception and affect) is the condition for the differentiated suturing of certain conflictual organisations.

It is here, it is starting from this distinction that Freud sees this splitting of the ego: the *Entzweiung* that Lacan highlights. Now if Freud creates a term equivalent to repression, denial, which has the same semantic value, it must probably be concluded that if only a signifier can undergo this destiny, the fact is that affect enters into this same category.

I even think that the definition of the signifier would gain perhaps by being completed in the light of what is being said: the signifier would then be that which, under pain of disappearing, must in order to subsist enter into a system of transformations where it represents a subject for another signifier falling under the effect of the bar of repression or denial which constrains it to a fall in its status as being in its relationship with the truth, a fall through which it exceeds or it comes to the rank of signifier in its resurrection.

There would be a certain interest in underlining the correlation of these two modes of signification, each one englobing the two mechanisms. The affect is only seen as a discharge, even though it is - Freud says it for anxiety - a signal (a signifier for us), the representative is only seen as a signifier while it is (in the Freudian theory) the generation of a certain mode of production, therefore of discharge (engendered by the impossibility of this).

In the *Ego and the Id* Freud takes up the question already evoked, not without difficulty in his article on the unconscious, about the difference between the representative and the affect. What qualifies the affect is that it cannot enter into any combinatorial. It is repressed but its specificity *qua* signifier is to be expressed directly, and not pass through the connecting links of the preconscious.

In his seminar on anxiety, Lacan elucidated and demonstrated what unleashes anxiety, the fashion it operates when there is anxiety. But I would ask myself if he has really taken into account what anxiety is in the sense of the status that it has in the theory. I believe that there is an interest in considering affect as an original semantic form alongside the primary semantides - terms borrowed from the vocabulary of molecular biology - which are the representatives; it would function then in a secondary position which would allow it to acquire the status of a secondary semantide of a different nature to that of the representative and reduplicating the *Entzweiung* in this difference. There would be a reduplication of non-identity to itself through this disparity of the two registers of the signifier.

Contrary to received opinion, it is very curious to see that Freud makes of language what transforms internal processes into perception and not as might be imagined what detaches itself from the perceptive plane, and which would belong to the order of thought. With affect we are in the presence of an effect of the effacing of the perceived trace restored under the form of discharge.

What about the representative? Considerations of terminology are not useless here. It is not for nothing that it has long been discussed whether the *Vorstellungrepräsentanz*, the representative representating, the representative of representation, what takes the place of representation. We know that it enters into the combinatorial. This is where the ambiguity begins. It does not enter into it as a homogeneous unit identical to itself. The clairvoyance of Freud in his domain was to make from the start this exclusive distinction present to all your memories between perception and memory. Let us recall the role that he makes reminiscence play in so far as it is supposed to be, as one might say, memory in the locus of the Other but which preserves the trace before it not without losing its quality of memory if it comes to be lived out in actuality.

B - The problem of the differential distribution of the mode of representation

Another type of differentiation interests us here, that of representations of words and representations of things, a distinction which is not contingent. I am only recalling this, which is already known, in order to put forward that: if there is a theory of the signifier in Freud it cannot avoid passing through the perceived. This is tangible in the organisation of discourse. In the narrative of the analysand, the secondary elaboration of the dream, the present or revived phantasy, the image are renewed testimonies to it in the text of our sessions. The question is whether all of this is really of the order of the perceived.

This representative of representation shows that one cannot reduce its status to that of perception. Let us note once again that it is never a question of a presentation but of a representation. The perceived only represents the point of fascination, the centring effort of specularisation as Lacan would say. What allows a functioning at the level of zero, is of the order of the subject, but what is going to emerge and take the place of the one is here the **o**-object, on condition that one considers it in this differential distribution, where the non-identity to itself is manifested in this disparity.

The economic point of view is illustrated here not simply by being put in question when it is a matter of the quantitative evaluation of the processes, but because it can be identified in this differential distribution. It is the damming effect which weighs on discourse which compels not alone the combinatorial, but again the changes of register, of materials and of the modes of representation of the signifier. These mutations have as object the accentuation of non-identity to itself not alone in the

resurgence of the signifier but in its metonymical metamorphoses. The metaphor is infiltrated even into the metonymical enchaining.

It is not for nothing that Freud opposes two systems: what functions at the level of the one is the identity of perceptions and in the other the identity of thoughts. It is in so far as both have a relationship with truth that they form part of our concepts. But the disturbing and fascinating point comes from the fact that perception can be seen as a field of identity while identity operates there in accordance with a register which is not that of the perceived.

It is this identity which abolishes difference as sustained by lack and which finds itself being materialised in the perceived, in the same way as the identity of thoughts in the order of thinking only become operational after the loss of the object.

Lacan did not seem to me to be quite right to have so severely criticised the works dealing with negative hallucinations. At the very most one can only deplore their imprecise reference points. If negative hallucination is this emergence of the zero in so far as it has absolutely nothing to do with representation, is of the order of the representative of representation. Its value is to give support to the notion of *aphanisis* which has played such an important role for Lacan after Jones.

One must also remember the alternative picked out by Lacan in Jones' work on feminine sexuality, whose importance is probably greater: either the object, or the desire. Negative hallucination would thus give the model of a subjective structure in so far as it implies the mourning of the object and the advent of a negated subject thus rendered apt for desire. Might one not recall here that the first modes of representation of the subject - the first *i(o)* - is precisely the product of a representation that is homologous with negative hallucination: the negative hand of the artist appearing in the contour of the painting which delimits its shape. One sees then how the phantasy is placed, since it is the function that Lacan assigns to it of rendering pleasure apt for desire. Here then there appears a form of emergence of a subject which escapes the annihilation of the signifying power in *aphanisis*, since the negative hallucination manages to be produced but as a specular lack. It seems to me to be the inaugural relationship of narcissistic identification in the sense conceived by Freud as a relationship to the mourning of the primordial object. It is the meeting point of the cut and of the suture.

It becomes clear that this process is the same as the one which grounds desire as the desire of the Other, since mourning is interposed in the relationship of the subject to the Other and of the subject to the object.

If the *(o)* operates between all these forms (one could say that it plays with the fascination of the perceived in running through these registers), it is indeed because it is, not as perceived, but as the trajectory of the subject, the circuit of discourse. I will

give an example of it taken from *Othello*. In *Othello* it is the handkerchief which might appear as (o). In fact it is here that we are witnesses to the fascination effort of the perceived, the truth is that it is not so much the handkerchief which is important as the circuit that it goes through from the magician who gave it to Othello's mother or her father (both versions are in *Othello*) until it ends up on the bed of Bianca, the whore, in order finally to reveal Othello to his desire, "my mother is a whore". This must be demonstrated with the help of knowledge, for Othello like every jealous person wants an avowal more than the truth.

Is this not the way then that one must listen to his soliloquy, when he enters the nuptial chamber where he is going to kill Desdemona to make of her wedding night a night of mourning.

"It is the cause, it is the cause my soul
Let me not name it to you, you chaste stars.
It is the cause."

(Act 5, Scene 2.)

The function of the cause is here what orders the indubitable perception of his mother's handkerchief in the hands of a whore.

Freud underlines in *An outline of psychoanalysis* that we live in the hope that with a refining of our instruments of perception we may finally accede to certainty about the sensible world. In fact he accentuates once more the affirmation that reality is unknowable and that we can only allow ourselves a deduction of the truth from the connections and the interdependencies existing between different orders of the perceived. This is obviously to affirm the pre-eminence of the symbolic, if it were needed.

But his originality was to introduce at the level of the perceived an order, an organisation, which allows him to get out of the dilemma of appearance and reality, in order to substitute for it that of the ideal (*Idealfunktion*) and the truth, this couple functioning moreover in the order of the perceived and of the thought. The confusion repeated more than once between the symbol and the symbolic ought to make us more attentive not to take one for the other.

What then becomes then of the *o*-object? It exists as a structure of transformation where the object of desire takes on a new mutation in which it is the desire that becomes the object. Through what operation is the cross-checking (*recouplement*) through the non-identity to themselves of these enumerated forms accomplished? I think that one can grasp them in accordance with the two major axes of synchrony and diachrony taking Freud's theorisation as a reference.

1 - In the axis of synchrony we have a series formed by thoughts in so far as they are thoughts of the unconscious (and where it is necessary to distinguish between representations of words and representations of things), affects (as secondary signifiers) and two other categories which it seems to me must come into consideration in so far as we observe them in the analytic situation and not outside it; I am thinking about states of one's own body - depersonalisation or hypochondria, etc...- and all the manifestations which relate to what the English authors call paraparaxes as expressions of the register of the act (acting-in and not acting-out).

2 - But we can also map out another series on the axis of diachrony which is the axis of the succession of oral anal phallic objects etc... I wonder whether the scopic object and the auditory object that Lacan brings into this register gain from being included in this series and whether they do not rather form part of the register of transmission between synchrony and diachrony that one can pick out in discourse in the diverse forms of the dream and its secondary elaboration, of phantasy, of memory, of reminiscence, in short of all the ways which make synchrony and diachrony function. It is upon this sampling that there operates the creation of the **o**-object in which desire becomes the object and accounts for subjective positions. This non-identity to oneself which the blank images is linked for me to the processes of the effacing of the trace. This is what compels this system to be transformed.

IV - IDENTITY AND NON-IDENTITY TO ONESELF: THE DEATH DRIVE

The signifier reveals the subject while effacing its trace, says Lacan. It is here, I believe, that there is situated the divorce with all non-psychoanalytic structuralist thinking: in the visible/invisible opposition, in the perceived/ known opposition, we bring into play the order of truth, but in so far as this truth always passes by way of the problem of the effacing of the trace.

Freud says in *Moses and monotheism* (1938): “In its consequences, the distortion of a text is like a murder, the difficulty is not to commit the act but to get rid of its traces”. Now, it is this process which, starting from traces, makes it possible to go back to their cause in which we find the very process of paternity. In *Moses and monotheism*, again, taking up a remark already made at the time of the *Ratman*, he recalls that maternity is revealed by the senses while paternity is a conjecture based on deductions and hypotheses. The fact of having thus given priority to cogitative processes over sensorial perception “was heavy with consequences for humanity”.

I point out here that if Freud established a very close link between the phallus and castration, between sexual curiosity and procreation, it seems curious to me that he never in an explicit fashion related the role of the phallus in procreation, in the child's desire for a child or in sexual curiosity.

What functions as cause in the subject (in the search for truth in so far as it is a question of origins, a relationship to the begetter) functions as Law at the socio-anthropological level. Here also the combinatorial only comes into action through the compulsion of a rule.

To the prohibition of incest, the interdiction to the sight and to the knowledge of all which removes the mother and the sister from choice in order to designate other objects in their place, there is added the funeral ritual which establishes the presence of the absent one, of the dead Father. A double process, let us note, of cutting and of suturing. Among the living, a cutting off of the mother and a suturing by her substitutes, among the dead a suturing of the disappearance of the father by the ritual or the totem which is consecrated to him, a cutting off from him through the inaccessible beyond where he henceforth holds himself.

We have here a striking example of the cut between Lévi-Strauss and Freud which is illustrated in an unexpected encounter.

In connection with the mask Lévi-Strauss insists on its function as being at once negative (of dissimulation) and positive (the accession to another world). But what seems to be involved for him is a homology, a correspondence such that in this two-faced reality nothing is in any way lost on the way. One might pose the question : “What is it that necessitates dissimulation, what is it that requires this two-planed structure?”

Lévi-Strauss speaks about a mask (Hamshamtses) among the Kwakiutl Indians made up of several articulated shutters which allows there to be unveiled, to be “unmasked” (*sic*) the human face of a God hidden under the outer form of a crow. We are in agreement with him in concluding “that one masks not in order to suggest, but finally in order to unveil”, now when this mask is deployed it makes appear the human face in what could be taken to be the back of crow’s throat. We do not have to force the facts very much to say that the figure presented here makes there appear the four semi-halves of the beak (two upper ones and two lower ones) as the four members of a character whose trunk is represented by the face of a God. The analogy between this representation and the one Freud notes in an extremely short text - *A mythological parallel to a visual obsession* - is striking. He describes in it an obsessional representation which haunts the patient under the name *Vater Arsch* in which there is imagined a character constituted by a trunk and the lower part of this, its four members, with the genital organs missing and the head, the face drawn on the stomach.

And Freud concludes to the link between the *Vater Arsch*, the father’s arse, and the patriarch, this subject possessing of course a quite filial veneration for the author of his days, like any obsessional.

It seems to me that what Lévi-Strauss misses is this sacrifice of the head and of the genital organs represented by the Kwakiutal mask which goes beyond the relationship of what is shown to what is hidden but reveals a relationship of the unveiled to the effaced, to the barred, to the lack. The cause of desire is here.

The metonymy is highlighted by Freud in the representation of the substitutive body for the lack of one of its parts, the genitals. All of this takes on its value because it exposes to us the interest taken by Freud at the end of his life in Moses, not simply because of his quality as a Jew, but also because monotheism appears there to be closely linked to the interdiction of idolatry and to the total effacing of every sign of the presence of God otherwise than under the form of names of the father (Yahve, Elohim, Adonai). Let us note here again the duplication of the non-identity to oneself.

The work of the death drive which always operates in silence can be noted in this reduction - the word is to be taken in all its dimensions - which forces itself always to reach this point of absence where the subject rejoins its dependency on the Other, to identify itself to its own effacing. The mutation of the signifier, its epiphany in its polymorphous and distributed shapes, indicates the startled response that it intends to oppose - as in the dream - to this annihilation and the effort to which it perdures profoundly disguised and modified, as a witness.

Must one see again here a striking feature of Judaism in the silence that it maintains about the after-life? The two facts are perhaps linked. But in order to understand the logic of the effacing of the trace, perhaps it will be necessary to have recourse to other spatio-temporal categories than the ones that we know. Perhaps it will be necessary to find here the structures of a time and a space only the pre-Socratics were able to reveal to us, directly or through the analyses of Vernant and Beaufret, the two in a very different way, but where we are surprised to note that the analytic treatment furnishes us with a privileged access to this time and space, these places and this memory in the sense of the Greeks.

The (o) is revealed under the structures of nosography as an episemantic organisation and under the modes of the analysand's discourse in its semantophoric aspect. The analysts here have to pass through a narrow gate. The approach to a structural psychoanalytic technique appears to me to have to be based on the differentiation between representatives and affect and on the differential distribution of representatives.

One is extremely stuck in reading works on psychoanalytic technique to note the total absence about anything which concerns the modes of discourse of the analysand. Nevertheless we all know the considerable difficulty of treatments which do not conform to the model established by Freud of free association. What is most often lacking is this differential distribution of modes of representation which bear witness to the non-identity to itself of the signifier as a necessary condition of analysis. I am

only noting this point as a possible field of research without being able to dwell on it any longer.

The essential difficulty of psychoanalytic investigation comes from the fact that it is a constrained discourse : it is not simply a question of communicating but for the analysand to say everything. On the side of the analyst, it is a fleeting word - *verba volant* - that he is not able like the linguist or the ethnologist to lock up in a box. The analyst runs after the word of the analysand. If the death drive infiltrates the word of the analysand, in the silence towards which it always pushes him, the analyst has to deal with a living word; living in its refusal to be reduced to silence, living in its character which is refractory to all embalming where the text finally conditioned lends itself to all the treatments to which men of knowledge submit it.

We will know precisely what the (o) is when we have gone completely round the field of subjective positions. We will then have a vision which corresponds to that of the philosopher who thinks about history and culture through the modes of discovery of the movement of ideas, of art, of the science of his time but as a polymorphous, heterogeneous *milieu* where there are illustrated different forms of alienation. One should however not be deceived. The psychoanalyst here is not disposed to abandon his priority to anyone in the examination of these facts. Even though he may be taxed with imperialism, he will always remain arrested before this affirmation by Freud that the religions of humanity represent obsessional systems, just as the different philosophies represent paranoiac systems. The one and the other are valorised in so far as they allow the subject to feel better, says Freud, by having thus escaped desire and succeeding in installing something else in its place. And we would have here, in the order of the projections of the functioning of the psyche, the first elements of a conception or of a mimetic theory of the functioning of the subject. Psychoanalysis has not yet exhausted the resources of mimesis.

It is insufficient to attribute to the psychoanalyst the function of demystification which would allow there to be preserved a purged and purified *cogito*. It is in fact because Freud begins from what is slag, waste, mistake, that he discovers the structure of the subject as a relationship to the truth. This is perhaps less close to the image of Prometheus hunted for having stolen fire and than to that of Philoctetes abandoned by his own on a desert island because of his stinking wound.

Dr Lacan: I want to thank Green very warmly for the admirable presentation that he has just made to us on his position with respect to what I, as he recalled, patiently put forward, constructed, produced and what I have not finished producing concerning the **o-object**. He really showed very remarkably all the connections that this notion involves. I would even say that he even left in the margin something he could have taken further, I know, and specifically as regards the organisation of different types of treatment and what constitutes properly speaking the function of the **o-object** as regards the treatment.

I thank him for having given this clarification which is much more than a summary, which is a genuine animating, an excellent reminder of different stages, I repeat, in which one could specify my research or my discoveries. I will not answer him now because we have a programme. I think that he will be prepared to collaborate in the closest possible fashion with what has been put together in order that the text of what he gave to day and which marks a date and which can serve as a reference for what will be developed and I hope completed or increased this year, I think that it is an excellent work-base especially for those who will form part of this closed seminar.

(28) Thank you very much, Green. You have filled your hour with an exactness that I cannot compliment you on too much. So then. I give the floor to Conté who is going to propose a certain presentation about what is involved in the articles by Stein that are going to be questioned today. Nevertheless, I take advantage of the interval to let you know the following, which is that a study and work circle which is called the epistemology circle and which belongs to this school whose guests we are here, this epistemology circle has been constituted in the course of the *cartel*: theory of the discourse of the Ecole Freudienne and is going to publish *Cahiers pour l'analyse*. The very title of these *cahiers* requires no further commentary. But I will give you all the same its direction and what it is open to, what it may possibly welcome. These *cahiers* will be put at your disposal of course here at the entrance to the seminar but at the Ecole Normale in a permanent fashion and also at the Sorbonne in a place that I will designate for you later. I gave to these *cahiers*, which appear to me to be animated by the most fruitful spirit and this for a long time, I mean that the circle which is going to edit them appears to me to merit the attention of all of us, I gave my first lecture this year which as you saw was written out, so that it could be published in the first number. There will be other things. So you will see.

(29) **Monsieur Conté:** I am going to speak about two articles by Stein leaving to one side the third more recent one, his lecture on the judgement of psychoanalysts which seems to me to pose problems at a different level. So then here are two articles which follow one another and which are simultaneously consecrated to furnishing a certain mapping-out of the analytic situation and to elaborating a theory of the weight of the word of the analyst in the session.

The first article accentuates above all the reference to primary narcissism; the second introducing the opposition between narcissism and masochism is essential for the conception of transference.

I am first of all going to give a rapid account, too rapid surely, of what appeared to me to constitute the essential theoretical contribution of this work. I will be forgiven I hope for passing perhaps a little quickly over certain articulations and above all for depriving these writings of their references to precise clinical cases which give them their whole value as a reflection on psychoanalytic experience.

Stein will, I hope, at least correct me in case I have betrayed or badly expressed his thinking.

I will then make a certain number of critical remarks which have no other goal than to (30) grasp in his original development the points of divergence with the teaching of Lacan and in that way to open the debate.

The first article is then: "*La situation analytique: remarques sur la regression vers le narcissisme primaire dans la séance et le poids de la parole dans l'analyse.*" It appeared in the *Revue Francaise de psychanalyse*, 1964, No.2. Stein's remarks aim at elucidating the mode of action of interpretation but, I am quoting him here, in order to approach the question in a useful way, one must first ask oneself where the power of the word resides in the course of a session whatever may be the choice of the content of the interpretation, which opens out onto the problem of the power of the word in general.

Stein is going to tackle this problem starting from certain privileged moments of analysis. Such is in effect the consequence of the fundamental rule: asked to adopt the state of free- floating attention, the patient listens and speaks in one and the same movement. The perception and the emitting of the word are confused. He does not speak. It speaks. The analyst for his part also in the state of floating attention listens to the it that is speaking. He does not listen in person. It listens but the word and the listening are not two distinct things. The patient and the analyst both tend to be in a one in which everything is contained.

(31) The analytic situation, when ideally realised, is supposed to be quite like sleeping and the discourse which makes itself heard there is a dream. What is at stake in the analytic situation is therefore a topical regression involving the abolition of limits between the outside world and the inside world both from the side of the patient and that of the analyst. This topical regression is a regression towards primary narcissism expressing itself in a certain manner of well-being which would deserve, Stein tells us, to be called the feeling of narcissistic expansion or again in the illusion of having the object of desire, this is what he tells us in connection with a clinical example or in the syndrome of bliss accompanying the beginning of certain analyses.

Now such moments of analysis rarely fail to stimulate in the session the evocation of the past. Topical regression in the analytic situation is properly speaking the condition of temporal regression and it is in topical regression that there is actualised a conflict which appears to repeat the past. I quote him again: “what happens on the occasion of this actualisation is analogous to what is produced when at the moment of wakening the dreamer formulates the text of his dream.” Here the patient emerges from his state of free association in order to address his word to the analyst. It no longer speaks. He speaks. He reflects on himself and correlatively addresses himself to the analyst as if to (32) the object of his discourse. It is at this precise point Stein tells us again that aggressivity emerges for aggressivity, as Freud tells us, is born with the object.

The rest of the article enriches this articulation with a certain number of specifications. There can be, in particular, in the course of a treatment a defence against narcissistic regression in so far as it may favour the reappearance of unconscious conflicts and of anxiety. To the easy speech characteristic of this state of free-floating attention or to silence of a fusional type there is thus opposed speaking without discontinuity or the wary silence which always expresses the defence against narcissistic regression, the word of the analyst being in such cases wished for as a protection against regression but at the same time dreaded in so far as it deprives the patient of a substitutive satisfaction for narcissistic expansion namely the exercise of omnipotence.

The double incidence of the word of the analyst thus finds itself pin-pointed. Pronounced in person, it breaks the narcissistic expansion, while making itself heard as participating in the it speaks, it favours this regression. The intonation or the choice of the moment to speak may account for one or the other of these effects which are in fact habitually present simultaneously but in a variable proportion.

(33) I signalled that the first article introduced then a position of the analysand which, has the value of a compromise situation with respect to narcissism. Fearing regression the patient tries to reduce the analyst to silence, to escape from fluctuation by becoming the one who organises it, and to preserve a mastery over it and through that a substitutive *jouissance* of narcissistic regression.

The second article elaborates this position in opposing to narcissism this time the masochism of the patient in the treatment. It is a lecture entitled : “*Transfert et contretransfert ou le masochisme dans l'économie de la situation analytique*” given in October 1964 and I thank Stein for having been willing to put it at our disposal.

Narcissistic expansion in the course of a session is always threatened by the eventuality of the intervention of the analyst in so far as this implies two persons separated then by a cut between the patient and what is not him, a gap through which

there is introduced a heterogeneous power namely something which is to be put in relation with the principle of reality. Now, at this level there is realised a false link that is constitutive of transference. In the analytic situation there is produced a phenomenon of confusion, of coalescence between the representation of the intervention of the analyst and the recognition of the reality of the fact that he can speak.

(34) The analyst appears as the origin of the reality of existence, as the origin of a failing power. The analyst appears as frustrating the patient of his pleasure by his own will while he is not at all the master of the frustration that the patient experiences in the cut with what is not him. This phenomenon, Stein tells us, is known to us under the name of transference.

The intervention of the analyst is seen then as an abuse of power. Transference has masochism as a correlate. But in conferring on his analyst such absolute power, the subject aims in fact at making himself the master of this power which is lacking for his narcissistic completion. Presenting himself as a fool, he makes of the psychoanalyst his king. He is going to suffer for pleasure namely try to deny the reality of existence while at the same time recognising it since narcissistic completion is deferred. More fundamentally he aims at lying to the analyst, at indefinitely maintaining his desire by not satisfying him. It is not a matter for him of being the missing object, the object whose completing images in short the completion of the narcissism which cannot be. Through this substitutive realisation he simulates the possibility that frustration may no longer exist.

This allows us then to accede to the following step which is the recognition of the sadistic goals implied in the masochism of the subject namely the appeal to counter-(35) transference for the psychoanalyst who undergoes the common lot of not being able to escape from frustration, may at the limit allow himself to be deceived and believe himself in fact to be the master of frustration. Remaining frustrated in the reality of his existence, he would then be tempted to attribute the non-completing of his own narcissism to the lack of his patient who thus becomes the object who is lacking to him.

Thus it is that transference is established with the illusionary aim of restoring a narcissistic completion supposedly lost under the sign of uncertainty. The end of analysis, implies an access to a certain order of certainty in existence or of knowledge in frustration.

Starting from this very brief summary of Stein's two works, I am going to propose a certain number of critical remarks which are going to be ordered in three groups. The first group principally concerns the first article and the opposition or the alternation Stein introduces which is destined to account at this level for the dynamism of the treatment. I remind you that he situates on the one side the rule of free association

which tends to induce in the patient a movement of regression towards primary narcissism characterised as fusion with the analyst and on the other hand the topical (36) regression towards narcissism conditions a temporal regression namely the re-emergence of old conflicts or the repetition of conflicts in which there consists properly speaking the transference.

The repetition compulsion appears as the negation of the compulsion to topical regression where, I quote again another formula “the whole of analysis is in this regression”.

Here in this connection are all the questions that I would like to pose concerning the fusional situation, I recall two formulae. There is one unique it speaking and listening or again the patient and the analyst tend to be in a hand in which everything is contained.

Well then, the moments where there seem to be confused perception and the emitting of the word in an immediacy where there is supposed to be abolished every screen and every intermediary, may effectively evoke certain clinical situations but they also seem to be rather exceptional on the whole and pose therefore right away the problem of their meaning in the treatment and very especially with respect to transference.

Certainly this indeed is what Stein elaborates in his work but at the level, as one might say, of a global clinical experience, we would be tempted to ask him what led him to choose to privilege relatively rare situations in order to make of them one of the fundamental reference points of the treatment.

(37) Or again, to remain at this clinical level, we would like perhaps to know if he would tend to refer such facts to a particular neurotic structure for example or indeed how he would situate them with respect to the totality of the treatment and with respect to its different phases.

In a more theoretical register now the problem might be posed as to how Stein conceives of topical regression in the treatment and in what measure it seems to him to imply a situation of a fusional type when it might appear to have at first sight a relationship with something which would be on the contrary of the order of an unveiling of the big Other to refer here to the teaching of Lacan.

Or again, is there an argument for making converge the state of free association and the activity of the dream on the one hand, the re-emergence of the conflict and the narration of the dream conceived of as a reflection on the dream on the other hand. We know for example that a doubt about one of the elements of the dream when it is being narrated announced in the narrative ought to be considered to be a part of the text of the dream and that the subject remains implicated precisely in the text of the dream.

In a parallel way, in connection with this unique it speaking and listening, we would ask him what is involved for the analyst in the narcissistic moments of the treatment. Is (38) his mode of being to be closely linked to the activity of the dream? In other words is he also subjected to topical regression or is it rather a matter of a phantasy of fusion with the analysand?

In connection now with primary narcissism, it is presented essentially as a limiting situation referred to a primary fusional identification or to a state of hallucinatory satisfaction of desire which supposes a situation regulated by the pleasure principle. A note which refers to puts the fusion in relationship to the putting in suspense of this separating word and this appears to imply a reference to an ante-verbal or pre-verbal state. Certainly it is underlined that the regression in the session never quite reaches primary narcissism, there is only a movement towards it. Nevertheless a certain number of passages of the text appear to propose narcissism as something which is supposed to be one of the primordial steps or a first phase of the development.

The second article on the contrary, introduces a different aspect. The patient, in order to picture the completion of the impossible narcissism is led to try to pose himself as the missing object, in the extreme case the object that would satisfy his analyst. He seems thus to be aiming at the restoration of the narcissism of the other and this narcissism is presented thus as the myth or the phantasy of the completing of the desire of the Other.

(39) We have been asking ourselves which of these two aspects seemed to Stein to be the most decisive, the most essential or again how he articulated the two of them. Since then, Stein, in his lecture on the judgement of the psychoanalyst has contributed to this subject a certain number of precise articulations and I think that it is along this direction that he will be led to respond to us. I maintain however this interrogation in the measure that the problem remained posed at the level of these two first articles.

In connection now more especially with the second article, I would like to interrogate Stein's text about the relationships of these theoretical reference points to certain Lacanian categories, in particular the big Other, the small other and the *o*-object. I must say in this connection that it is the category of the imaginary other which seemed to me to appear most often highlighted to the point that his work seemed to me to tend at different moments to present the analytic situation as a dual situation for example when he put the accent on the dialectic of the frustration in analysis.

In the same way, in the first article, he tells us that at the moment of the re-actualisation of the conflict, aggressivity arising with the object, the patient emerges from fusion to address himself in person to the analyst who is also re-personalised as (40) object of his discourse. Is this not to situate the analyst essentially as an

imaginary other of aggressive rivalry? Undoubtedly Stein also introduces the big Other which is also found certainly implied by what I have just said or also when the analyst finds himself designated as the master of frustration or source of the heterogeneous power but it seemed to me nevertheless difficult to differentiate in his text between the big Other and the other of the imaginary relationship.

Finally, Stein introduces something which might seem close to the category of the \mathbf{o} -object in particular in the second article: the analysand trying to situate himself as the missing object of his analyst.

Without wanting to take up here again the contribution of Lacan concerning the \mathbf{o} -object and the articulation of sadistic desire and of masochistic desire, I point out that Stein appears at this moment to be engaged in a description of the analytic situation in terms of desire. We rediscover then the question: how is this level articulated with that of narcissism? In particular do we have to situate the \mathbf{o} -object as that whose possession, at the limit, would be the restoration of the lost completeness?

Or again, if narcissism is synonymous with the disappearance of limits between the ego and the non-ego, should it really be closely linked to what can emerge in the course of a treatment that is of the order of a phantastical evocation of the object which seems to (41) me to imply an articulated structure rather than a fusional lack of distinction.

Finally, the third group of remarks: I would like in finishing, to take up what constitutes the axis of Stein's work and gives it all its value for us namely the putting in place of the mapping-out of the choice of the word of the analyst as such or again of the power of the word.

What it seems should first be remarked is that Stein appears to have been led to having to orientate his research with respect to a series of positions with two terms. For example the alternation of narcissistic regression and the re-emergence of conflicts or the opposition of narcissism and masochism, this overlapping the Freudian dualities of the pleasure principle and the reality principle; primary process, secondary process. Do we have here a conceptual model which we ought to consider as necessarily implied as a frame for the analytic situation?

Stein sees of course the end of these remarks: it is in short an interrogation about the impression that his text gives which is finally essentially axed on the real-imaginary opposition and putting in the background the proper dimension of the symbolic. Undoubtedly my impression comes probably from the fact that Stein, in this text only exposes one of the levels of his articulation but at this level itself the question perhaps deserves nevertheless to be posed.

(42) For example in the first article, the word of the analyst takes its weight from the fact that it goes in the sense of regression or introduces on the contrary a rupture restoring then the duality of persons. The word is there in order to reinforce unity or underline duality.

This final eventuality appears more essential because Stein sustains his point of view by situating the word as that which intervenes in order to break down narcissism by separating the ego from these objects. The word is a cut. It is this cut which introduces the double polarity subject-object.

I must admit that I do not know here whether it would be wise to introduce essentially the word as cut generating a duality and not to grasp either exactly how this presentation accords with what is said about narcissistic moments of the treatment where the subject listens within and speaks in one and the same movement, where it speaks, the word seeming to espouse the psychic flux without a break or a cut.

In the second article, the word is opposed to narcissism as the reality principle to the pleasure principle; it is what obliges the patient to notice that there is a reality because of the impossibility of his narcissistic completion. There is here also a duality under the word supports and imposes the subject. The word is situated on the side of the real represented by the analyst as master of frustration.

(43) Is this to be attributed to the transferential error? It seems to me nevertheless that the articulation of the word and of the real as such would benefit from being made more specific. It is the same question which might be posed finally in connection with the end of the treatment as a knowledge about frustration. "It is not the analyst", Stein tells us, "who frustrates the subject of his omnipotence. But frustration is the very reality of existence. Must the psychoanalyst then operate as the representatives of reality in order to lead his patience to it?" I am forcing the text and it is only in order to interrogate Stein on the decisive role that he accords to frustration. It seems to me that the more radical category of lack may reveal itself to be more manageable at the different levels of structure by permitting for example castration to be situated with respect to frustration and allowing there to be articulated more precisely the symbolic with respect to the real and the imaginary.

I am closing here these remarks which were intended simply to introduce a discussion.

Dr Jacques Lacan: Without delaying on everything that I was responsible for Conté saying I think that, addressing myself to Stein, that he cannot but recognise that what we have here is the most strict, the most exact, the most articulated, the most honest and I would add the most sympathetic account that could be given of what we know at present about his thinking, in an effort which did not fail to hit out at it, in so far as undoubtedly there are avenues, as I might say, which have already served us at least in

grand part and which were and that it was your goal to integrate to put the accent on what, God knows, they serve you for an authentic experience.

This is not the time that I am going to highlight everything that appears to me in your position to preserve the mark of a sort of holding back, of tension, of a braking linked to other categories which are, I must say, more current in the common theory which is given today of analytic experience and whose two terms are very very well marked at the two poles in what you have presented, on the one hand, the notion, which is so questionable and which it is not for nothing that I have not discussed up to the present, namely, that of primary narcissism. I considered that at the point of my elaboration, it (45) was not up to the present, for any of those who follow me at least, ready to be tackled. You will see that with the last topological notations that I have given you, it is going to appear quite clear that the difference between what I have contributed as an articulation and what is precisely received in this order and showed at the same time, which is always necessary, how the confusion came to be produced, that there is here a knot, that before tackling it, one approaches it, this is not the time that I am going to mark it. Perhaps not even today, although I may, perhaps, at the end of the session give an indication of it.

On the other hand the very articulated and precise centring that you give to the schema of psychoanalysis as remaining on frustration, since, as you say, it is around frustration that there is situated and even, as you say, that here is what one calls, properly speaking transference, namely, that the analyst is at the beginning the representative for the subject of the power, of the omnipotence which is exercised on him in the form of frustration and that finally, the ending would end up at this knowledge of the fact that frustration is the divine essence of existence.

I think that here also what I have done and brought forward consists properly in saying that there is not only this axis and not in any case the definition that you give on page 3 and 4 of the article on transference and counter-transference, that what is involved (46) when you say that this is properly speaking the transference, is very precisely saying the contrary of how I introduced the transference by this key formula, to obtain this point of mental fixation for the direction that I indicate, namely, that the transference is essentially founded on the fact that for the one who enters into analysis, the analyst is the subject who is supposed to know. Which is strictly of a different order, as you see, to what I am developing at present.

This distinction between demand and transference which remains, at the beginning, in analysis around this *Entzweiung* of the analytic situation itself is why everything can be ordered in a correct fashion, namely, in a fashion which will make, in a way, the analysis come to a term, a finish properly speaking which is of a nature that is essentially different to this knowledge about frustration. That is not the end of the analysis.

I am saying this to give an axis in a way, I am not saying that with this I have closed the debate, on the contrary I am opening it. I am showing that the lines of perspective are completely different to what I will call, in an abbreviated way, your system which after all I have no reason to consider as closed. Perhaps you will open it up again. It is your system conceived, closed, with what we have up to now which represents already a certain body.

(47) I undoubtedly regret that Conté, with the purpose as one might say of being rigorous, seeing that he did not quite manage to see the sharp turn, the transformation which is produced in your third article, which also contains things that to my eyes, are extremely questionable, specifically the accent that you put on communication. It is still obviously about the sense that the word that the analyst has.

I underline moreover, at the point that we have got in the progress of things, I do not consider that we are going to liquidate the whole of this debate today. The fourth Wednesday in January will perhaps allow us to give.....

At the point we are at with time do you for your part see things that you think would be good to say, or would you prefer, for example, to leave Melman who also has something to say, leave Melman to put forward what he has brought along?

Dr Stein: I think it would be better if I let the others speak first.

Dr Lacan: Yes of course because after all even if today you do not have all the time you would like to reply we are reduced to a limited number precisely for that, so that we can consider in order that the recording of what has been received here may have time to mature. Others perhaps will want to intervene. I give the floor to Melman.

Dr Stein: I would like all the same before Melman speaks to say how much I appreciated Conté's presentation.

(48) **Dr Melman:** I will take things up at the very point where Conté began. Because of this work of Stein, one may well consider that they merit an attention that is all the more sympathetic and careful because they seem to constitute a sort of reflection on a general theory of psychoanalytic treatment, and that Stein begins in no uncertain terms, makes his reflections begin from the power of the word of the analyst, which, says Stein, opens out onto the problem of the power of the word in general and which culminates at the end of this first article which appeared in the *Revue Française de psychanalyse*, March - April 1964 in this formula: "to consider the content of the words pronounced, is never enough to account for the change produced by the word in the one who hears it. To envisage as I did here, contrary to custom, the analytic discourse otherwise than from the strict point of view of the content of the words pronounced appears to me to be a step following which the

understanding of the content will find itself grounded on that of the word. For it is indeed in appearance on the understanding of the content that there is founded in its essentials the conscious action of the psychoanalyst in the progress of the clinic.”

The little point that might be remarked is that to pass from the power of the word of (49) the analyst to the power of the word in general is an advance, is a step that in my eyes is altogether to be wished for, but which implies indeed nevertheless that we are dealing in analysis with language. And this second proposition, that it is a matter of considering the content of the words pronounced, appears to be a striking illustration of what it means, that one could go and seek its value, its weight, not alone at the level of its content but also of its container, in order to notice there for example that at the level of its container, certain terms are missing which are the very simple ones that I will allow myself to reintroduce here for the clarity of what I mean, which are the terms of course of signifier and signified and I think that their introduction puts better on the rails what Stein means.

In effect, what does the author say? I take up here a little point developed by Conté. It is that the word in the treatment has two faces; the one is that of the patient which is ordered by free association and which irresistibly orients the patient into a regression towards narcissistic expansion, primary narcissism whose extreme, ultimate, hypothetical well-being is linked to a feeling of fusion with the analyst, this so-called fusion being able to depict the rediscovery of the lost mythical first object of desire. The other face of the word is that of the analyst which he can make use of and which (50) he disposes of either to favour this regression towards this narcissistic expansion of the primary type or to introduce an inevitable cut, that of reality of which the patient wrongly will make him the agent. One can only mark here already the rather peculiar position accorded by Stein to the word of the analyst which it seems is still better illuminated in the last work done quite recently on Mondays by Pierra Aulagnier at St Anne, recent work which has as the title “The judgement of the psychoanalyst” and in which the author says the following : “The exceptional word of the analyst which comes to fulfil the expectation of the patient is effectively received with pleasure. It neutralises a tension in a feeling of adequation and of relief even if immediately afterwards it may give rise to anger, to opposition or to denial. Hence its frequent comparison with a substance, food, sperm or child which is supposed to fill up the belly of the patient to the degree that sometimes he is sick of it. Having received an interpretation towards the end of the session, a female patient replies: ‘that makes me happy I would like to end with that’, that at the next session she evokes the pleasure that she has when you speak to me, the unexpected aspect of your words and nevertheless it is like a miracle but this comparison does not please me for in the miracle, the patient adds, there is something passive and that the patient has great trouble explaining her: and nevertheless which is referred to the fear that the (51) pleasure will not last and to her impression of not being able to grasp everything that her psychoanalyst says to her. And this ends as follows: “and one will

not be surprised to see in what follows that she received the interpretation like a child that her analyst had given her, a guilty satisfaction.”

And it seems to me that it is at the level of a formulation that has here become quite clear that there is better specified no doubt what Stein meant when he said that the content did not exhaust the word of the analyst. And, in effect, this content as it is called here seems to evoke “no signified which summons by itself some signifying articulation” but seems essentially to evoke the place from which the word of the analyst might take on this so singular brilliance.

I do not believe that I am here forcing Stein’s thinking in quoting for example this sentence, still in his last work when he says: “the word of the analyst is always awaited like the repetition of a word already pronounced”; I would tend of course to say : “as the evocation of a place which has always been there”. I continue with Stein: “a mythical word, a foundational word which establishes him both as (which establishes the patient as both) for these two effects are inseparable, *qua* objects of the desire of the Other and *qua* subject of an original fault.”

(52) And it seems to me that, while always according to these elements their place which to my eyes appears very important in Stein’s work and in the effects that he furnishes, I would say that to suppose that the word of the analyst is exercised at this place whose particular brilliance I tried to evoke earlier, supposes of course that the analyst accepts or ratifies, poses, quite simply that his word comes from this place and it seems to me that a certain number of articulations in the text could eventually be ordered around this supposed position of the word of the analyst in the treatment. For example, when it is said that through these free associations the analysand “in the perfect accomplishment of his gift” (it is a quotation) tries to realise his word towards that same place which is that aimed at by the analyst, one might think then that if through this gift the analysand tries to rejoin here what may seem to him to be the place or the word of the analyst; he is likely eventually to inscribe let us say a lived experience to simplify in terms of mythical fusion indeed even in something which may, at that moment, take on the term of this narcissistic extension which is so particular, he is likely to end up at these extreme effects, namely at that of a fusion with the analyst.

On this I have been a little, I have the impression that I have not said this altogether clearly but what I mean to say is that starting from the mapping-out of this place one (53) can ask oneself whether effectively starting from that moment the movement of the analysand in the treatment is not an attempt to rejoin a locus starting from which effectively a mythical fusion can, from all time, can be perhaps supposed and perhaps obviously in this movement to situate something which is this ineffable well-being inscribed under the term of primary narcissistic expansion.

One could also ask oneself whether situating the thing in this way, I mean the word of the analyst does not come to this place, this word which can either fulfil this narcissistic regression or introduce the cut, whether to see things in this way does not amount to recalling this frequent and current bi-valence which recalls a frequent speculation which has no doubt its value on the good and the bad object.

One could ask oneself also whether situating things in this way is not something which allows there to be understood, for to my eyes it appeared rather surprising, the fact that if the subject fails to observe the fundamental rule in the treatment he immediately senses himself to be guilty of masturbation. One could say there also, situating things in this way, or guilty of some original auto-erotic satisfaction.

(54) One could then ask oneself whether the refusal of the patient when he fails to observe the fundamental rule, to lose something, in obeying this rule imposed by the analyst whether this refusal of the patient is not something which eventually takes on this auto-erotic or masturbatory character because it can signify the fear or the refusal of the patient to lose himself in some object to be specified which is supposed to be for its part held precisely in the power and the hands of the analyst.

That, for example, in the dialogue of the treatment there may intervene elements which bring into play the body, the somatic, at the level of a malaise that the word of the analyst is able to remove. I must quote again here these few sentences which seem to me altogether clear and altogether interesting in the remarks, in the text of Stein. He says for example the following: “in lifting the uncertainty, this word of the analyst suppresses the malaise at the same time. But the patient had already partially removed this uncertainty by translating his malaise into a more or less determined affection of his body, a phenomenon that is very close to the one of somatic compliance that Freud studied in connection with Dora’s hysteria. For a certain malaise that is waiting for the word of the analyst the patient had substituted a suffering which invited a rather precise representation of the substance or the physical agent necessary for its suppression. This at least allowed him to know what he was lacking. It was sufficient for him to model it on a suffering previously experienced because of the action, a natural factor and thus there is explained the fact that the word of the analyst can act as if it were a physical substance or agent .”

I would tend, moreover Stein says elsewhere, is it not perfectly clear that this word of the analyst is also the same that, indeed it is much better imaged when for example Stein compares it to food: this word which has as effect the bringing about of a corporal modification just as food calms hunger, or as the rays of the sun suppress the sensation of the cold. I already underlined, says Stein, that the word could on occasion make a toothache or a pain in the head disappear. It is not rare either for it to calm a sensation of hunger or for it to warm somebody up. Such an identity of facts might lead one to think that it is the substitute for a substance or the agent of a physical action or that it is of the same nature.

Indeed I would have a tendency also to see in this position, in this particular place accorded to the word of the analyst, something which would bring it about perhaps that the logical approach of the author finds itself engaged in a completely binary (56) system, as Conté said a little earlier, a binary system sustained by a fundamental model and that I would tend to see as follows, not something that would be like that, for example, of being or not being, but something which is rather perhaps being this or being that.

Finally, I asked myself also if it were not starting from this place, from this locus accorded to the word of the analyst that there is necessarily posed the problem of the end of the treatment in this closed situation or effectively as Stein does, they can only be inscribed, they can only be expressed in terms of technical artifices.

I ought to say that, of course, Stein has not, in his remarks in the text that we have studied does not go beyond this introduction but in any case it is nevertheless how it is, I mean in terms of technical artifices that this end of the treatment is evoked and effectively, of course, one could ask oneself how in this dual, relatively immobile situation and situating in this place the word of the analyst things could be that much different.

Finally, to end, the author poses, of course, the problem of the truth. “How,” Stein says, “can the analyst make of his word the guarantee of truth when the patient in transference attributes to him a power that he does not have”. Which ends up, of (57) course, with formulae which make of the analyst a deceiver, quite simply deceived himself. And I would say that for my part this is eventually what I will be led to situate, I mean in such an articulation even though after all I cannot see effectively how it could here be otherwise if the analyst were not led perhaps was not led to contribute something else in place of the lure.

Stein also adds : “there would be no psychoanalysis if the psychoanalyst pretended to situate himself at every instant as a faithful servant of truth”. I will read this sentence again: “there would be no psychoanalysis if the psychoanalyst pretended at every instant to situate himself as a faithful servant of the truth.” I must say, for my part, that I do not at all agree, of course, with this conclusion, that I think, on the contrary, I am ending in an abrupt and rather rapid fashion - that analysis on the contrary has this fundamental relationship to the truth and that if the psychoanalyst was not able effectively to be constantly the guarantor one would risk finding oneself in these positions of lure, in these positions of deceived deceiver with the consequences that this would have on the carrying out of the treatment that I tried perhaps in a rather difficult way and one that was not always too clear to retrace in my remarks.

Dr Jacques Lacan: It is two minutes past two. I would ask you for another two minutes. I do not think that Stein will respond today. There is clearly not enough time and I think that things should be taken up again.

One part, one part only of the difficulty of Melman's text comes certainly from the fact that this article by Stein on psychoanalytic judgement was not adequately presented. I think that there will not escape Stein himself, something that I am going to clarify immediately that in short Melman committed himself to a reading of an article essentially founded on the preaching function (*fonction de prédication*) of the analyst.

It is in a way in so far as this preaching, you can be sure, is expected that you note at the level of four principles what are its effects. In order to explain these same effects Melman supposes a more central apprehension on your part of this function of the word of the analyst. In short he read it, he dares to read it beyond what you yourself see in it. Everyone was all the same able to follow this place that he designates and it is a question. This is not to take up a position. This indeed is why he did not specifically designate it, precisely in the final analysis as the place of the **o**-object. You (59) sensed right throughout Melman's presentation and this again poses problems since, moreover, it would be of a nature to reform the whole chain of your conception, if not mine, indeed mine for the past ten years, of the relationship of the patient to the word of the analyst which might go so far almost to being a position constituted not at all here, it is not a matter of masochism, we have left completely to one side today our conception of masochism because it poses to many problems. But a conception that is in a way hypochondriacal of the function of the word of the analyst.

Naturally, everything culminates, he made it culminate admirably at this difficulty that you raised: should the analyst be the faithful servant of the truth. This is what I brought up recently in saying that there is no truth about the truth. Would this not allow you to correct what is in a way this simple approximation, this notion, of course, that the psychoanalyst cannot be the faithful servant of the truth for the very good reason that it is not a matter of serving it.

In other words one cannot serve it. It serves itself all on its own. If the analyst has a position to define, it is quite elsewhere than in that of a *Bejahung* which is in effect never anything other than the repetition of a primitive *Bejahung*. It is much more (60) precisely than what was recently introduced during an internal debate in our Ecole to which Green, who had some echos of it, alluded earlier. If precisely the analyst is in a certain position, it is indeed rather in the one which is not at all, I would say that it has been spoken about but not yet elucidated, it is that precisely of the *Verneinung*. .

I am giving you that as a final suggestion. If you wish it is starting from there that we can take up on the fourth Wednesday of January this debate then which has simply begun.

I think that all the same, as regards Stein, you had enough to satisfy you today. There is no need to add that what has been begun and that I pose a final question: is there not a profound confusion in this kind of prevalent value, this value as an aspiring point that the oral drive has in all our theorising about analysis, does that not come precisely from a fundamental failure to recognise of how orienting, directive there can be in such a vanishing point, the fact that it is forgotten that the demand, whatever it may be is pronounced with the mouth.

Seminar 5: Wednesday 5 January 1966

I wish you a happy New Year, and my very best wishes, wishes which, after all, in my mouth take on their importance from my being able at least on one point, however limited it may be in terms of your interest, to bring something of myself to it.

We are going to pursue what we have to say this year about the **o**-object. If you will allow me, taking advantage of this cut and these good wishes, to put the accent here on a certain solemnity, it must be said, we will say that this **o**-object, a waste object, you have already had enough approaches to it to sense the relevance of this term object, is from a certain perspective and in a certain sense rejected. Yes! Will we not say of it that, as it has been foretold, that the rejected stone must become the corner stone.

It is present everywhere in the practice of analysis. Again, when all is said and done, it can be said that nobody, let us say, knows how to see it. This is not surprising if it has the situation of properties that we give it, the articulation that we are going to try once more to take forward today.

(2) That nobody is able to see it, is linked, as we have already indicated, to the very structure of this world in so far as it appears to be coextensive to the world of vision.

A fundamental illusion that from the beginning of our discourse we have tried to shake, to refute when all is said and done.

But that nobody has been able to see it, in the sense that to be able means cannot see it, is no excuse for the fact that no one up to this has been able to conceive of it.

When, as I told you, its apperception is constant in the practice of analysis, so much so and to such a degree and in such a way that, after all, people speak about this so-called re-genital object which people gargle in the backs of their throats, in order to try to typify in terms of it this unjust, imperfect apprehension of a reality, the grasp and the form of which is supposed to be linked to the simple effect of maturation whose pillars are undoubtedly firm in analysis, namely, the link that exists between this maturation and something which must be called by its name, a truth.

This truth is that this maturation is linked to sex even though all of this must appear to be swamped in a confusion between sex and a certain sexual morality which no doubt is not without a certain intimate link to sex since the morality emerges from it which, for want of being sufficiently well delineated, makes of this pre-genital object the function of a myth in which everything is lost, in which the essential of what it can and ought to bring us as regards the most radical function of the structure of the subject, as (3) it emerges from analysis and abolishes for ever a certain conception of knowledge.

People speak a lot about it then and not simply in the sense that, as I said, is quite excusable, namely, to see it, for we will see what the conditions are for a thing to be seen and without knowing even the sense of what is said about it, since this position, not to know what one is saying is properly speaking what must be turned around in analysis, what must be forced in analysis, what ensures that analysis opens up a new path to the progress of knowledge, one can say that the analyst fails in his mission by not progressing precisely to where the key point is on which his efforts should be brought to bear.

I have come a long way to come to grips with this central point and one of the useful things about the use of this algebra which means that I pinpoint this object by the letter (o), one of the functions of this use of algebraic notation is that it allows us to follow its thread, like a golden thread from the first steps of this approach that constitutes my discourse and that, striving from the first to come to grips with this key point, this dividing point of what is analysis and of what is not, having begun with the mirror stage and the function of narcissism, if from the beginning I called this alienating image around which there is grounded this fundamental miscognition which is called the ego. (4) I did not call it for example $i(S)$, the image of the “self”, which would have been quite enough, it would only have been an image of it. What had to be demonstrated there, that it was only imaginary, had already been sufficiently indicated. From the beginning, I called it $i(o)$ which is in short superfluous, a

reduplication, the indication that there is in identification a fundamental alienation. We miscognise (*meconnaissons*) ourselves to be ego. (o) is in brackets, at the heart of this notation. To such an extent that already, it is here that it is indicated that there is something other, the (o), precisely at the heart of this capture and which is its true reason.

There is then a double error, the error of the mirage of identification and the miscognition of what is at the heart of this mirage and which really sustains it.

I am indicating it today for the first time I believe, you will see it returning today in what follows of my discourse, (o), a reference point, a simple indication, I am saying it, I am not here giving the reason for it, and you will see it emerging, (o) is of the order of the real.

I had the satisfaction, during my closed seminar, of seeing gathered together by someone, up to this very day and date, covering, I would say, almost the whole field of what I have articulated about the (o) and posing, covering the questions that this gathering together left open.

(5) I am indicating in passing, for all of those whom I cannot, for reasons of the relationship of mass, of the relationship between quantity and quality as it is put elsewhere, from the fact that the quality of an audience changes when it is too big and too dense. I apologise to those that I am not convening to these tasks which I hope will take on the tone of an exchange, of a team work. The one of which I am speaking, which is due to Mr. André Green, has undoubtedly not yet begun the dialogue, except with me, since it was a matter of saying what I had said up to now about the **o**-object in order to question me, and its relevance is sufficient here to impose on me the adequacy, otherwise why would he question me, the relevance of the questions and of the ones to which I hope to be able this year to give a satisfying response. Moreover let all of those who do not attend these seminars know that here the solution to the problem of communication is simple. It is sufficient for this sort of little report to be diffused in order for it in fact to serve everyone as a reference for what I may be able to insert into it in terms of replies in what follows. In other cases where the dialogue is a debate, articulations allowing there to be resumed in a protocol in the same way it will be simply a question of a lapse of time which will remain between what can be articulated as an outline, a grid obtained of this discussion which will be communicated in the same way. It is in no way a question therefore of (6) esoterics in what is called the closed seminar, of something which is not available to everybody.

I began, therefore, today from these two terms recalled in the discourse to which I am alluding, namely, that it is from the beginning of my critical furrow in the articulation of analysis that we see there being highlighted, there appearing, what now culminates at the articulation of the **o**-object.

The ego, a function of miscognition. It is important to see the degree to which, yielding, with respect to what is called, before Freud, let us never take as a reference point the function of the real, the important thing is to underline constitutive of the world. Contrary to what is affirmed, the ego in Freud is not the function of the real even if it plays a role in the affirmation of the reality principle which is not at all the same thing.

The ego is the apparatus of perception-consciousness: *Warnehmungsbewusstsein*. Now, if from all time the problem of knowledge turns and twists around the critique of perception, can we not from our place as analysts precisely, glimpse something which is betrayed in philosophical discourse itself, for always, when all is said and done, there lie about in the discourse the keys of what it refutes, and the senseless discourse of analysts about the pre-genital object allows us also to bring out, from here and there, (7) the articulations which will allow us to situate it correctly.

It is this indeed which ought to allow us to predict this striking thing which ought to have been for a long time a part of our patrimony because it is at the disposition of all.

Who does not know how limited the intelligence of man is, and in the first place those who, guided precisely by the progress of the scientific context, set about studying intelligence where it ought to be grasped: at the level of animals.

That we are already rewarded when we know how to determine the level of intelligence by deviation behaviour (*conduite de détour*). I ask you, as regards intelligence, what further degree man attains. There is a further degree. There is what is found at the level of the first Thalesian articulation, from Thales, namely, that something, some measure, is determined with respect to something else as being, with respect to this other thing, in the same proportion as a third to a fourth. And this is strictly the limit of human intelligence. For it is the only one, the one that it grasps in its hands, all the rest of what we place in this domain of intelligence, and specifically what culminates in our science, is the effect of this relationship, of this grasp on something that I call the signifier whose import, whose function, whose combination surpasses in its results what the subject who handles it can predict because, contrary to (8) what is said, it is not experience that makes knowledge progress. It is the impasses in which the subject is put because of being determined I would say by the jaws of the signifier. If we grasp proportion, measure, to the point of thinking - and no doubt quite correctly - that this notion of measure and that it is man himself, man has made himself, says the pre-Socratic, the world is made in the measure of man. Of course, since man is already measure and is nothing but that.

The signifier - I tried to articulate it for you during these last lectures - is not measure, it is precisely this something which by entering into the real introduces into it the ell (*l'or[l'aune?]*) of measure which some people have called and still call actual infinity.

But let us take things up again. What is signified by what I mean when I repeat, after having said it so often, that what falsifies perception as I might say is consciousness. What does this strange falsification depend on? If from all time I attached so much importance to grasping it in the psychological register, at the level of the mirror stage, it is because this is to look for it in its place, but this place goes a long way. The mirror is only defined, only exists because of this surface which divides, in order to renew it, a three dimensional space, a space that we hold to be real and which undoubtedly is so.

(9) I do not have to contest it here. I make my way like you, and I have not got the tiniest foot in the stirrup of the Taoist journey, straddling some dragon or other across the worlds. But precisely. What does that mean? Not that this specular image does not have this value of error and of miscognition when already, a symmetry which is described as bilateral, along a saggital plane, did not characterise in any case the being who is interested in it. One has a right and a left, which are obviously not the same but which behave as if they were the same, generally speaking, two ears, two eyes, a lock of hair no doubt a little crossways but in any case one can put the crease in the middle. One has two legs, one has organs for the most part in pairs, but not in every case, and when one looks at it a little more closely, namely, when one opens things up, inside, it is a little bit more twisted, but this is not seen from the outside.

Man, just like a dragon-fly, has a symmetrical appearance. It is an accident of this species, an accident of appearance, as the philosophers say, that something is due first of all to this capture which is described as that of the mirror stage.

Is there not, it is the question that we can pose ourselves here, a more profound reason for what appears to be this accident because of this capture? It is here, of course that a (10) more penetrating, more attentive look at forms might put us on the track for, first of all, not all living beings are marked by this bilateral symmetry. And what is more neither are we, for it is enough to open our bellies to be convinced of it.

What is more, we have interested ourselves in the forms that are taking shape, in embryology, and here the more we advance, the more do we remark what I called earlier, what I designated by the term of torsion, or again of disparity, or again - I wanted to use the excellent English word - *oddity*, always dominates in what constitutes the transformation, the passage from one stage to the other.

In the year when I traced out on the blackboard the first uses of these shapes (*formes*) to which I am now going to come in topology and in which I tried to inscribe for the edification of my listeners and to indicate to them what was to be extracted from them in terms of resonance, as an analogy, to introduce them to what I must now show them as being properly the structure of reality, and not some simply the figure. How often have they not being struck, when I showed them the bladder of some eviscerated torus

or cross-cap, to see in a way emerging on the blackboard a figure which might pass at first sight for a cross-section of the brain, for example, with such striking involuted shapes, even in macroscopy, or, on the contrary, a stage of the embryo, after all, open (11) a book on embryology, the first one you come across, look at things at the level where an egg is already at a rather advanced stage of division and presents us with what could be called the primitive line, and then a little point which is called the Hensen knot, after all, it is all the same rather striking that this resembles very exactly what I have several times drawn for you under the abbreviated name of a *chapeau croisé*, of a cross-cap.

I am not going, even for an instant, to slip into this philosophy of nature. This is not what is involved. In any case, we can only find there an indication of something which indicates that in the shapes of life there is something like a kind of obligation to simulate a more fundamental structure.

But what this simply indicates to us and what ought to be retained, is that it is not legitimate to reduce the body, in the proper sense of this term, namely, what we are, and nothing else - we are bodies - to reduce the dimensions of the body to what in the final analysis of philosophical reflection Descartes called extension.

In the theory of knowledge, this extension is there from all time. It is there from Aristotle. It is there at the beginning of the thought that is called by the name - I hate these idiocies - of Western.

(12) It is that of a homogeneous, metrical, three-dimensional space and, at the beginning, what this implies is an unlimited sphere. No doubt, but constituted all the same by a sphere. Later, I hope, I am going to be able to specify what is meant by this correct apprehension of a homogeneous three-dimensional space and how it is identified to the sphere which is always limited even if it can be extended.

It is around this apprehension of extension that thinking about the real, that of being (*l'étant*) as Mr Heidegger says, was organised. This sphere was the supreme and the final being: the unmoved mover.

Nothing changed with Cartesian space. This extension was simply pushed by him to its final consequences, namely, that there belongs to it by right everything that is body and knowledge of the body. That is why the physics of the *Passions of the soul* fails in Descartes, because no passion can be an affection of extension, the affect of extension.

No doubt, there is here something which has always been very seductive. We are going to see that the structure of this spherical space is at the origin of this function of the mirror put at the source of the knowledge relationship. The one who is at the

centre of the sphere, namely monstrously reflected in its inner lining, a microcosm responding to a macrocosm.

(13) Thus the conception of knowledge as *adequatio* of this mysterious central point which is the subject to this periphery of the object, is once and for all established as an immense deception about the sense of the problem. Descartes was not suspicious enough about the evil God. He thinks he can tame him at the level of the "I think". It is at the level of extension that he succumbs to him.

But, in fact, this deception is not necessarily a deception. It is just as much a limit, a limit imposed by God, precisely. In any case in *Genesis*, more or less in the fifth verse - I did not have the time to verify it before coming here - that of the *berechit bara heloim*, there is here from all time an explosive term which, naturally, did not escape rabbinical commentaries.

It is the one that St Jerome translated by *firmamentum*, which is not that bad. The firmament of the world. It is beyond this that God said: "You shall not pass". For do not forget that up to a recent epoch the celestial vault was the firmest thing that existed. That has not changed. It is not at all because people imagine that one can sail further and further into it that it is any less firm. It is a matter of a different kind of limit in thinking from the one which articulates this in Hebrew characters: *rakia*. *Rakia* separates the upper waters from the lower waters. It was understood that for the (14) upper waters access was forbidden. It is not just because we stroll around in space with - a point which, incidentally, I appreciate, I do not reduce it to nothing - that we stroll around space with charming satellites which is important, it is that with the help of this something which is the signifier and its combinatorial, we are in procession of possibilities which go beyond those of metric space. It is from the moment that we are capable of conceiving as possible, I am not saying as real, worlds of six, seven, eight, as many as you wish, dimensions, that we have broken through the *rakia*, the firmament. And do not think that these are jokes, namely, things into which one can put whatever one wishes on the pretext that it is unreal. People believe, like that, that they can extrapolate. People have studied the sphere in four, then in five, then in six dimensions. So you say to yourself that it is good. You discover a little law like that which appears to be consistent. So then you think that complexity is always going to be added, in a way, to itself and that you can treat this as you might treat a series. Not at all. When you get to the seventh dimension, God knows why it must be said, He is still the only one, no doubt, at the moment for the mathematicians do not know, there is a problem. The seven-dimensional sphere creates unbelievable difficulties.

These are not things that we will have the space to pause on here. But it is in order to (15) signal to you, in return, in retreat, the sense of what I am saying when I say: the real is the impossible. That means precisely what remains affirmed in the *firmamentum*, which means that speculating in the most valid, in the most real

fashion, for your sphere in seven dimensions is real, it resists you, it does not do what you mathematicians wish. Just as in the first steps of Pythagorus the number which he did not have the *naïveté* to believe to be a product of the human spirit created a difficulty for him simply by doing the minimal thing, by beginning to make use of it to measure something, by making a square. Immediately number emerges from our first effect as irrational. In this way this is what the real denounces. It is the impossible. It is that one cannot make of it what one wishes. I drew as much teaching from this first experience as from that of the seven-dimensional sphere which is only there to amuse you and not to be a planet (*faire "planète"*).

So then, the question is how we can give an account of the fact, which has always been within hand's reach, of something which is, all the same, also in the real but is not at all as the theory of knowledge depicts it, namely, this central point, this point of convergence, this point of reunion, of fusion, of harmony regarding which one might then ask oneself why there are so many peripetias, avatars, vicissitudes from the time (16) that it has been there, in receiving the macrocosm. This subject, regarding which the first thing that one sees, and we did not have to wait for Freud for that, is that it is, wherever it goes, or wherever it acts like a subject divided from itself, how can it be inscribed in a world of spherical topology.

Our only grace is to be at the moment when, perhaps, having broken through the *rakia*, the *firmamentum*, above all in the speculation of mathematicians, we are able to give to space, to the extension of the real a different structure than that of the three-dimensional sphere.

Of course, there was a time when I made you take, in a certain report, that of Rome, the first steps which consist in clearly marking the difference between this ego which believes itself to be me and what it requires from us, fascinated by this secret fainting point which is the true point of perspective beyond the specular image which fascinates the one who here recognises himself, looks at himself, the difference there is between this and the "I" of the word and of discourse, of the full word as I put it, the one which engages itself in this wish that I can scarcely repeat with a straight face, "I am your wife" or again "your husband" or indeed "your pupil". For my part, I never alluded to this dimension except in the form of the *tu* that, of course, any person who is not absolutely senseless, that one only receives this sort of message from the other and in (17) an inverted form, this is what I first of all insisted on. In my seminar on President Schreber I oscillated for a long time in connection with what I called the perforating power of the consecrating affirmation, I oscillated for a long time around the:

"tu es celui qui me suivra (s)" which, a benefit of the Gods' in French, benefits from the amphibology of the second and third person of the future, you do not know whether you should write *vras* or *vra*.

One can say that, but as regards the person who says: "*je suis celui qui te suivrait*". You poor idiot. How far will you follow me? Up to the point that you lose track of me or to the point that you will feel the urge to give me a belt of a *tabuse* on the head.

The fragility of this foundational word is one of those that humans make use of in order to try to exist. It is something about which we can only begin to speak with some seriousness because we know that this announcing "I" is the one which is really divided, namely, that in any discourse, the "I" which announces, the "I" which speaks, goes beyond what is said. The so-called full word, the first element in my initiation, is here only a derisory figure of the following: it is that beyond everything that is articulated something speaks that we have restored in all its truth.

(18) I, the truth, speak in your stumbling discourse, in your shaky commitments which see no further than the end of your nose, to the subject, the "I", does not know at all that he is. The subject of the "I" speaks, speaks somewhere that I called the locus of the Other and here is what always obliges us to take into account a figure, a structure, which is other than punctual and which organises the articulation of the subject. This is what leads us to consider as closely as possible what ought to be taken up again in terms of this trace, of this cut, of this something which our presence in the world introduces as a furrow, as a graph, as a writing, in the sense that it is more original than anything that is going to emerge, in the sense that a writing exists already before serving the writing of the word.

It is here that, in order to make our leap, we take a step backwards. We do not hope to break through the *rakia* in three dimensions. Perhaps by being satisfied with two, these two which always serve us, after all, and since, ever since the time that we have been struggling with this problem of what is meant by the fact that there should be a world of beings which believe that they are thinking, that it is on a parchment paper, of material or of toilet paper that we write it. What is it, what does it mean that there should be in the world beings who believe that they are thinking.

(19) So then, we are going to take a function already illustrated by a title given to one of his collections by one of the curious spirits of our time. Raymond Queneau, to give him his name, called one of his volumes: *Bord* [Edge].

Since it is a matter of frontiers, since it is a matter of limits, and it means nothing else, *bord*, means limit or border, let us try to grasp the frontier as being what is really the essence of our business.

In two dimensions, a sheet of paper is the simplest form of the edge. It is the one people have always made use of but to which no one really paid attention before a certain Henri Poincaré. Already someone named Popilius and many others also...

And if you do that? Is it an edge? Precisely not, but that does not mean that it is not something about the edge (*de bord*). This, this stroke has two edges or more exactly, by convention, we will call the two points which link it its edge. It is precisely in the measure that what you see here, which is also called a closed cut does not have an edge, precisely, that it is an edge, an edge between what is here and what is there.

What is there, because we have limited ourselves to two dimensions, we are going to (20) call it what it is. We are going to call it a hole. A hole in what? In a two-dimensional surface. We are going to see what happens to a two-dimensional surface which starting from what we said earlier and which is there from all time, is a sphere - I did not say a globe, a sphere - what results in the surface from the establishment of this hole.

In order to see it, this hole for its part being stable from the beginning of the experiment, let us make other ones. It is easy to see that these other holes on which we give ourselves the liberty of movement, the liberty to experiment, what will happen to the other holes from the fact that there is a hole. All these other holes can be reduced to being this subject-point of which I spoke earlier.

All of them. Because suppose I do the following. It is the same thing. However large the sphere may be I can enlarge this hole infinitely so that it is going to be reduced to a simple point at the opposite pole. This means that on a surface determined by this edge that we call the edge of a disc, that this surface is in reality a sphere, all these holes that we may make are infinitely reducible to a point and, what is more, they are all concentric, I mean that, even this one that I am making outside the first cut, in appearance, can, by a regular translation, be brought to the position of this one here.

(21) For this it is enough to pass through what I earlier called the opposite pole of the sphere.

And nevertheless, something has changed since we made the two holes. The fact is that from now on, if we continue to make holes, suppose that we make one like that, here, it is a reducible hole, one reducible to a point. But if we make one that is concentric to the first hole and concentric also to the second here, this hole here, has no chance of escaping which would allow it to be reduced to a point. It is irreducible. Whether one restricts it or one enlarges it, it meets up with the limit of the edge constituted by two holes. I repeat, I am saying edge in the singular in order to say that, at a subsequent stage of the experiment in the sphere, I defined two holes and this is what I call the edge. Which means what? The fact is that a surface which is drawn here, which is easy for you to recognise even if it appears to you - because you can call it a disc - holed, indeed something like a Chinese jade, you can see that it is exactly equivalent here to what is called a cylinder.

With the cylinder, we are already entering into a completely different type of surface, for I am presenting you here my sphere with two holes. I told you earlier that it was altogether equivalent whether these holes seemed or did not seem to be concentric, (22) as I might say, one on the other, it is exactly the same thing (*le même tabac*), moreover, as you see, this kind of stomach that I drew here is a cylinder, it is enough for me to fit the ends together, namely, a cylinder, with two holes to the two preceding holes which makes four of them, and it is enough for me to stitch them together to make emerge the figure of what is called quite simply in the language of young ladies, a ring. It is necessary of course to preserve the image of it as hollow to see what sort of surface we are dealing with.

For a long time I have made use of this torus to articulate many things, and you will rediscover the trace of it in the last section of the Rome report. This torus, all by itself, and I would almost say, intuitively, introduces something that is essential to allow us to emerge from the spherical image of space and of extension.

Because, of course, we do not imagine that we have drawn here the true three-dimensional torus. This two-dimensional torus for its part is, undoubtedly, an edge, namely, that in the measure that we have abolished the edges of the cylinder it is one without an edge and, as surface, it becomes the edge of something which is its interior and its exterior.

But it is a simple figure which ought not to give us the idea that, analogously to what can happen to space, to spherical space, if we suppose it in its breadth, in its spatial thickness, as I might say, to make myself understood to an audience that is not (23) necessarily accustomed to using mathematical formulae, that it is twisted onto itself in a toric fashion.

In any case, by taking it, which is enough for us, as a model in two dimensions we see that here, that there is concerning what we can draw in terms of an edge of one dimension, a cut, a difference of species of the clearest kind between the circles that can be reduced to being only a point and those that are going to find themselves in a way shackled, hampered by the fact of being a circle, for example, traced out like this right along the torus or even here, to buckle it in what we will call, if you wish, its thickness as a ring. These are irreducible.

I will show it to you, I will reproduce something that I already articulated the year of my seminar on *Identification*, that the torus gives us a particularly exemplary model to image the knot, the link, which exists between demand and desire. For this it is enough to declare, as a convention, but a convention whose profound motivation you will see when I have come back to the following figures, that the demand must, at the same time, loop its loop around the inside, the inside of the ring, of this ring which the torus is, and come to buckle onto itself without having crossed itself. Here is more or less the figure that you obtain. However you strip it down, it is a figure like the following: (24) the central void of the ring being here.

You can then easily remark that in drawing such a loop, you are obliged to make at least two loops, I would say, around the inner void of the ring, and in order that these two loops should join together to make a circuit around the other void, namely, at least two D's plus one d or inversely two d's plus a big D.

In other words, a desire always presupposes at least two demands and a demand always presupposes at least two desires. This is what I articulated at one time and what I will take up again, I am only recalling it here to highlight the element to which we are going to be able to return in a way that removes its opacity from this figure.

It is important to go further before I leave you. Namely, to show you what constitutes, properly speaking, the discovery of this topology which is absolutely essential to allow us to conceive of the link which exists between this furrow of the subject and everything operational that we can attach to it, and specifically the mirage that is constituted by this something which has remained on the seat of the trousers of psychoanalysis as a remainder of the old theory of knowledge and nothing else, the idea of autoerotic fusion, of the supposed primordial unity of the thinking being, since (25) to think, it is a matter in the unconscious, with the one who carries it as if it were not sufficient that embryology should show us that it is from the egg itself that there emerge these envelopes which are only one, which are contiguous with the tissues of the embryo which are made of the same original matter, as if, from the first outlines of Freud, the very ones which it seems we have never being able to go beyond, it was not obvious in the *Wolfman* remember, the Wolfman was born with a caul. Is this not of capital importance in the very special structure of the subject, this fact that he carries with him even after the steps have been taken, the final steps of Freud's analysis, this sort of debris which is the envelope, this clouding over, this veil, this something because of which he senses himself as separated from reality. Does not everything carry the trace that in the primitive situation of the individual that what is involved is indeed his enclosure, his envelopment, his being closed off within himself, even if he is found, with respect to another organism, in a position which the physiologists have absolutely not failed to recognise, which is not symbiosis but parasitism, that what is involved in the so-called primal fusion is, on the contrary, this something which is for the subject an ideal that is always sought of the recuperation of what constituted his (26) closedness and not his primitive openness. This is a first stage of the confusion but this does not mean, of course, that we ought to stop here and believe like Leibniz in the monad, for in effect, if this complement always remains to be sought by us as a reparation that is never reached, something we have effectively the traces of in the clinic, it nevertheless remains that the subject is open, and that what it is a matter of finding is precisely a limit, an edge, an edge of such a kind that it is not one, namely, an edge, which allows us to trace out on its surface something which is constituted as an edge but which itself is not an edge.

You can, you have already seen being traced out on the torus the inverted figure eight. It cuts the torus and opens it in a certain twisted fashion but which leaves it in a single piece. And this reconstituted torus is an edge. There is an inside and an outside. We can, then, draw a model and a teaching from a certain function of the edge which is inscribed on something which is an edge. We need an edge-function determining effects analogous to those that I have described on the surface in terms of a difference, of a differentiation between the edges which can subsequently be traced out. We need this on something which is not the true edge ,namely, which does not determine the inside or the outside. It is precisely what is given to us by the figure that I earlier called on a sheet, this sort of *bonnet croisé* or cross-cap.

This figure, I would say, is too advanced with respect to what we have to say. What I want to underline today, before leaving you, is the following, which is that one of the two surfaces which are produced when, on this surface which is falsely closed, falsely open, is what I have called the cross-cap, we trace out the same inverted eight edge that I earlier described.

We obtain two surfaces, but two surfaces which are distinct from one another: namely one is a disc and the other is a Moebius strip. Now, what this is going to allow us to obtain, subsequently, are the edges of a different structure.

Every edge which is traced on the Moebius strip will give qualities which are absolutely distinct from those which are traced on the disc. And, nevertheless, I will tell you which the next time. And, nevertheless, this disc is found to be the irreducible correlative, once we are dealing with the world of the real in three dimensions, of the world marked with the sign of the impossible with respect to our topological structures. This disc occupies a determining function with respect to what is the most (28) original, the Moebius strip.

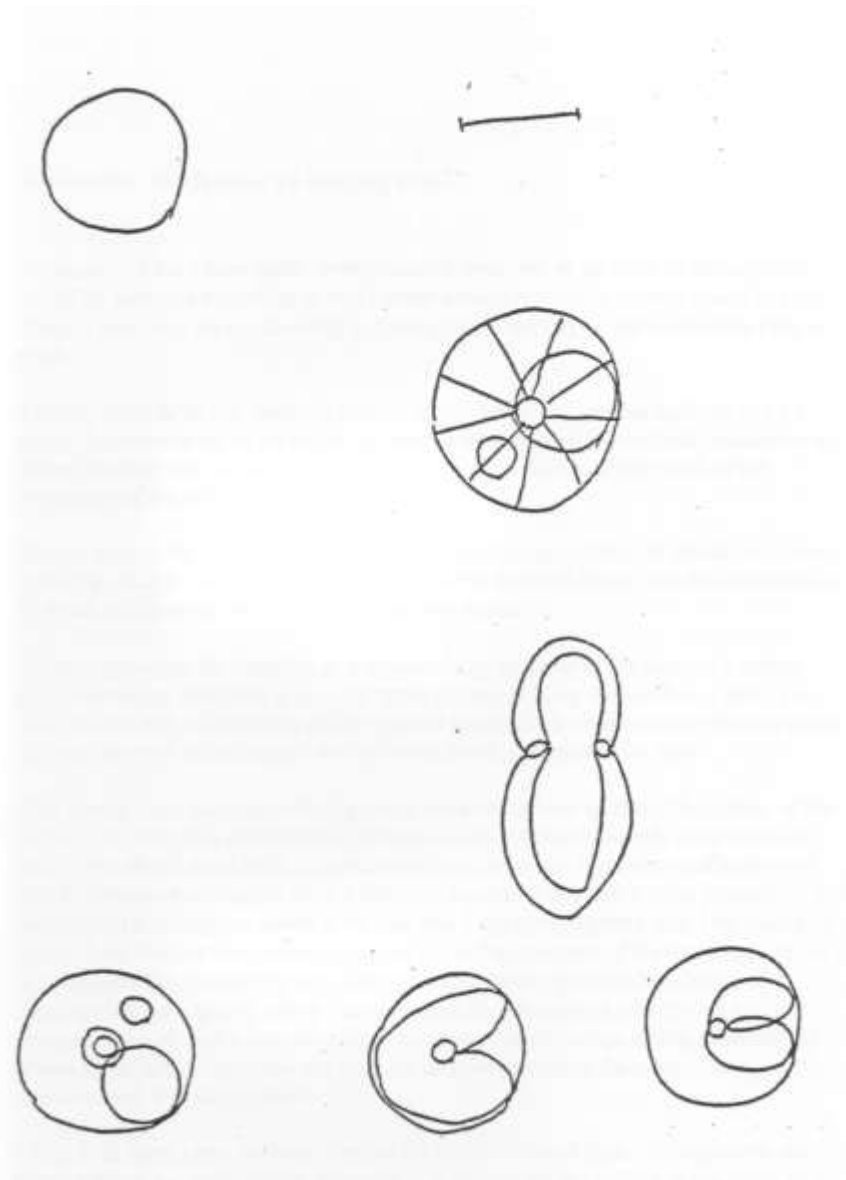
In this figuration, what does the Moebius strip represent? This is what we are going to be able to illustrate the next time in showing what it is, namely, a pure and simple cut, namely, a necessary support for us to have an exact structuring of the function of the subject, of the subject in so far as this auscultatory power, this taking of the signifier into itself, which means that the subject is necessarily divided and which necessitates that any cross-checking within itself does nothing else, even when pushed to its most extreme, than reproduce its own structure, more and more hidden.

But existence is determined by its function in the third dimension or, more exactly, in the real in which it exists. The disc, I will show it to you, is found in a position of necessarily crossing, it as real, this figure which is that of the Moebius strip in so far as it makes the subject possible for us.

This crossing of the strip without a front or a back, allows us to give a sufficient figuration to the subject as divided, this crossing, is precisely the division of the subject

from itself, at the centre, at the heart of the subject. There is this point which is not a point, which is not without leaving to the central object; underline this not without (*pas sans*) which is the same as the one that I made use of for the genesis of anxiety.

(29) This function of this object with respect to the world of objects, we will designate the next time. It has a name. It is called value (*la valeur*). Nothing in the world of objects could be retained as value if there were not this more original thing, which is that there is a certain object which is called the **o**-object whose value has a name: truth- value.

**Seminar 6: Wednesday 12 January 1966**

Contrary to what I have heard, even though it was only as an echo, as having been stated by someone very close to me, I mean among my pupils, theory, theory as I am doing it here, as I am constructing it, theory can in no way be put in the same rank as myth.

Theory, in so far as it is scientific theory, claims to be and proves itself not to be a myth. It claims to be, in the mouth of the one who is speaking and who enunciates it, whose register one cannot but reintegrate into every theory of the word, of the dimension of enunciating beyond enunciation.

That is why, at the origin of theory, it is not superfluous to know in whose name one is speaking. It is not an accident that I speak in the name of Freud, and that others have to speak in the name of the one who bears my name.

When I denounce, for example, as a non-truth, to enounce in the name of a certain phenomenology that there is no other truth about suffering than suffering itself, I say that this is a non-truth as long as one has not proved that what is said in Freud's name, (2) that the truth of suffering is not suffering itself, is shown to be false.

This having been said, the birth of science does not remain eternally dependent on the name of the one who established it, because science does not simply claim not to be part of the structure of myth, it proves itself not to be so. It proves itself in the fact that it demonstrates itself to be of a different structure, and this is what is meant by the topological investigation which is the one that I am pursuing here, that I am taking up today, from the last time where I stopped it, on the structure of the torus, in so far as it is constructed by joining together where the two holes of the surface described topologically as a sphere, which I am sure you do not confuse with the bladder of children, even though it has, of course, the closest relationships with it, whether it is blown up or not. Even when it is reduced in your pocket to the state of being a little handkerchief, it is still a sphere.

I ended, in some haste no doubt, limited by the cut, that of time, which governs for every subject our relationships, I remained at the cut on the surface of the torus, of an edge, a closed edge, the one which establishes minimal repetition there. One circuit does not suffice to deliver up to us the essence of the structure of the torus, one circuit (3) makes there appear the gap between the two holes on which it is constructed, restores, with these two holes, the opening of what we have defined at the beginning as the cylindrical strip, namely, that which, I do not think I have to go back on it today, and that all of those who were here the last time, for the others, good God, too bad, let them inform themselves, I said that two holes, whatever they may be, on the sphere, are always concentric even if they appear, at first sight, to be what is described as exterior. They are always concentric and create what I am drawing here which is called the strip, that we will call by convention here in order to make use of it, the cylindrical strip. Topologically, that it is, I told you the last time, a flat and perforated jade, all this because it is a figure in which this strip may appear and effectively appears and not without reason in art, or in what is called art, because it is then at the same time this flat shape, perforated in the centre, or a cylinder. Topologically it is equivalent.

One circuit then on the torus, a cut made in this way, for example, or made like that, has simply as effect to refer it back to the structure of this cylindrical strip, and in no way reveals, let us say, its property.

Two are necessary. Very convenient, in order to support for us the necessity of (4) repetition, for what the torus is going to represent for us, but then, for this cut to close, it is necessary that there should be added to it, let us say, the circuit made around the second circuit, since, what defines the structure of the torus, I mean intuitively, I am uncomfortable myself at having to pursue this discourse in terms which appeal to your eye, to your intuition, about what this hollow ring, this torus is. But let us profit from this support of intuition and, after all, it corresponds to the foundation of the structure for the cut to close having made two circuits around the hole, that we will, if you like, call circular, it is necessary that this cut should also make a circuit around the hole, that we will call - the name is not perhaps the best, but it creates an image, a figure for you here - the central hole.

Conventionally, we are going to represent - I am saying "to represent" in the name of the term representative, whether this representative deserves to be called a representation we will see afterwards - representative has the advantage of saying here what takes the place of (*tenant lieu*) which means that nothing has been decided on the subject of the function of representation and that moreover, perhaps, what here is defined is cut out, is affirmed as cut, may well, until we think better, be taken literally as being really what is involved. That is why the term representative is enough for us for the moment.

Here then is what is going to be produced each time that the repetition, that this circuit (5) which by convention we are going to assimilate to the circuit of demand, 2D, cannot work unless, for the curve to close, the circuit of the central hole is also made, 2D cannot occur without d or, if you make the cut differently, which is also conceivable, I think - I have to do things a little bit more rigorously in order not to be completely - which is also conceivable, 1D (one demand), for the cut to close, implies two circuits around the central circuit that we will call the equivalent of two d's.

Demand and desire are what, in the course of our long-prepared construction, and when we introduced as being at the heart of analytic experience the terms function and field of speech and of language, what we are going to give the essential share of analytic experience to, not simply its medium, its instrument, its means, but undoubtedly, it must be taken into account that, in the final analysis, there is no other support for analytic experience than this word and this language.

To say, as I might say, that its substance is word and language, is the given upon which we have constructed this first restoration of the sense of Freud. But, of course,

this does not say everything as far as we are concerned. What the topology of the torus, (6) finally, comes to support, is imaging for us, is allowing us to intuit this divergence produced between the enunciation of the demand and the structure which divides it and which is called desire, it is a way for us to support what is we are given by an experience whose subjective presuppositions need to be deepened.

Psychoanalytic experience, at the stage of structure that we are supporting here by the torus and which is, as I said, the first phase that I gave to my reconstruction of Freudian experience, in a sense, function and sense of the word and of language, is to ground it on the foundation of the pure symbolic.

And if the torus is not enough to account for the dialectic of psychoanalysis itself, if, after all, we may believe ourselves to be obliged to turn on the torus eternally in this cycle of two terms, one duplicated, the other masked, of demand and of desire, if it is necessary that we should make something, as I might put it, of this cut, and if we must see where it leads us, namely, how from this circle, from this edge which, according to the formula proper to every edge, is edgeless (*un sans bord*), namely, will turn always and endlessly around itself, what can one reconstruct by using the cut of the edge?

One moment, let us pause then before leaving it with this structure - you saw me (7) hesitating because I was going to say this shape (*forme*) and, in effect, in so far as we are going to leave it in order to go on to another structure, it is detached as a shape at the moment that it falls - let us pause there for a moment to envisage how it was even possible that we should have been retained, that we are necessarily retained, for it is not a useless detour but an obligatory passage in our construction of the theory if we had to begin again from the function and field of the word and of language as an initial point, this pure symbolic is inscribed in the conditions which bring it about that it is the neurotic, and I would say the modern neurotic, a mode of manifestation of the subject not mythically but historically dated, entered into the reality of history, surely at a certain date, even if it is not dateable, we are not going to go wandering about asking what obsessionnels were in the time of the Stoics. For want of documents, we would be prudent to make, eventually, some structurally modified reconstruction of it.

This is not what is important to us. For this modern neurotic is not without a correlation to the emergence of something, of a displacement of the mode of reason in the apprehension of certainty, which is what we have tried to circumscribe around the historical moment of the Cartesian *cogito*. This moment is also inseparable from this other emergence which is called the foundation of science and, at the same time, the intrusion of science into this domain that it completely upsets, that it takes by (8) force, I would say, which is a domain which has a perfectly articulated name which is called that of the relationship to truth. The limits, the links to the difficulties, as I might put it, of the function of the subject, in so far as it is introduced in this way, in this relationship to truth, have a status that I tried simply to sketch out for you in so far as it is useful for our purposes, for without it, it is

impossible to conceive either of the existence as such and as structure of the modern neurotic which, even though he does not know it, is coextensive with this presence of the subject of science, not to mention the fact that in as much as its clinical and therapeutic status is given to it by psycho-analysis, however paradoxical that may appear to you, I affirm that it does not exist, however singular this may appear to you, that it only exists, I would say, in a completed form from the agency of the psychoanalytic clinic and therapeutics.

To which you are going to reply legitimately, because I said “completed”, that psychoanalytic praxis is literally the complement of the symptom. And why not? Since, moreover, it is because of the attention of a certain perspective and a certain fashion of questioning neurotic suffering that, effectively, symptomatology is completed in the treatment, as Freud quite correctly underlined. The fact that it can also be completed elsewhere, namely, even before Freud completed his experiment (*expérience*) there was a certain way for the neurotic to complete his symptoms with (9) Monsieur Janet, does not go against this. It is a matter precisely of what we can retain of the Janetian structure for the constitution of the neurotic as such.

But after all, I am telling you right away that, for all that, you must not vacillate. This kind, I would not say of idealism but of relativism of the patient with respect to his doctor, is something you would do well not to precipitate yourselves into, because this is not at all what I am saying, despite the fact that this is how I was heard because I introduced this function of the psychoanalytic clinic a little prematurely to the meetings of my School, where, of course, I instantly received this interpretation of the complementing of the neurotic by the clinician, and in truth I was hoping for better from those who were listening to me.

It is perhaps also for me a little excessive to expect so much because, moreover, I was forced, for the purposes of my presentation, to go by way of this term completing which, you will see, can be corrected when precisely I will have been able to progress to another structure. It is perhaps a complementing but it is not of a homogeneous order.

This is what the following structure is going to give us, I mean that I am here going to re-introduce the Moebius strip. In any case, let us note clearly already the fundamental disparity that exists. It is already what is tangible, inscribed, living, and which gave rise (10) to the enormous impact of psychoanalysis even in the imbecilic forms in which it was first presented.

When I said that the entry of the mode of the subject established by science overturns and forces the domain of the relationship to truth, you should note that, in giving the floor to the neurotic as such in psychoanalysis, what he represents, to employ my earlier term, is no doubt something which is called, which is manifested in the first place as a demand to know and in so far as this demand is addressed to science.

But what is decisively introduced with psychoanalysis on the side of the one who authorises and supports himself here as being the subject of science, whether he knows or not why, in so far as he engages himself as responsibility, it has to be said, he does not always seem to know it, even though he prides himself on it, but what is original is that the floor is given to the one that I called the neurotic as representative of the truth. The neurotic, in order that psychoanalysis should be established, should have what we will call in the broad sense that I use this term, a sense, that he is, and is nothing other, than the truth which speaks, what I called the truth when I made it say, speaking in its name: "I the truth speak". This is what we are asked to dwell on and in the closest possible manner, for the person that we are listening to represents it. Such is the new (11) dimension, its originality depends on the disparity that this absolutely senseless credit which is given to a manifestation of the word and of language, is given to science in so far precisely as science, in this fundamental displacement which establishes it, as such, excludes it for the subject of science for whom it is only a question of suturing the gaps, the openings, the holes through which, as such, there is going to be brought into play this ambiguous, ungraspable, domain clearly located from all time as being the domain of deception (*tromperie*) which is the one where, as such, the truth speaks.

It is to this junction, to this strange connecting up, that it is a question of giving its status. I repeat. Doubtless, I have too many opportunities to see how necessary it is to insist in order to make oneself understood.

The truth as such is prompted, is convoked, no longer has to be grasped as it were in the emergence of the status of science as problematic, but to come, to plead its cause itself at the bar, to pose the problem of its enigma itself in the domain of science, this relationship to truth cannot be eluded. It is not for nothing that we have a logic that is described as modern, a logic called propositional, outlined, one might even say and believe to such a degree that one must also credit, so few are the documents that we have, outlined, I am saying, by the Stoics. It reposes, this logic the manifestation of (12) whose importance you would be wrong to minimise, for even if it comes late in the construction of science, it has occupied in our present pre-occupations this extraordinary place which does nothing less than reveal a problematic which no doubt being resolved *ambulando* rejoins us, not by chance, at the rendezvous where we now find it.

Without even being able to say here anything whatsoever about it to remind those who know the complexity, the richness and the heart rendings, the antinomies that it sets up, I will simply recall as a reference point to what, as I might say, it reduces the function of truth. It is *alethia*, this ambiguous figure of what cannot be revealed without hiding itself, it is the *alethia* whose inaugural function a Heidegger recalls for us in our thinking and reminds us to return to, not, I must say, without a strange awkwardness on the part of the philosopher, for at the point that we have got to, I

would dare to say that we psychoanalysts have more to say about it, yes, more to say about it than Heidegger says about *Sein* even barred in its relationship to *Wesen*.

Let us leave this to one side for a moment and let us say that *alethia*, that is why I reintroduced it, since the Stoics, is opposed to *alethes*, the true in the neutral, the attribute. What could be meant by the *alethes* of machines, of *alethia*.

(13) Naturally, I am all the same not the one who introduced this question for the first time. Let us say that the whole of logic, propositional, modern logic that you can, by opening any manual, whether it is called symbolic or not, you will see there being constituted the operation of what is called the logical operation, conjunction, for example, disjunction, implication, reciprocal implication, exclusion. Nowhere will you find there, I tell you this in passing, the logical function that I introduced last year, the year before last under the name of alienation.

I will come back to this.

These operations are grounded, are defined, in a fashion that is called purely formal starting from the possibility of qualifying a statement as *alethes*, true or false, in other words giving it a truth value. The most common logic, the one with a truth which has always lasted and which, perhaps, has a certain title for lasting, is a bi-valent logic.

A statement is true or false. There are strong reasons for presuming that this way of tackling things is altogether inadequate as, moreover, it must be recognised, the modern logicians have perceived, hence their attempt to construct a multi-valent logic.

(14) Well, it is not easy, as you know. And, moreover, I would say provisionally that it does not interest us. The interesting thing is to know simply that one constructs a logic on the bi-valent foundation, *alethes*, true or not, and that one can construct something which is not at all limited to topology, the true is true, the false is false which can go on for pages and pages and which, of course, while being closely related to topology, nevertheless constructs something where some ground is gained. It is exactly the same problem as that which is, one might say, mathematics is a topology from a certain logician point of view but it remains nonetheless that it is a conquest, an edifice which precisely is fruitful and whose exploits, whose apogees, whose developments, call them what you wish, are altogether substantial, existent. With regard to the premises, one has effectively constructed something: one has won some knowledge.

The reference to truth is, in other words, sutured here by the pure and simple reference to value. That people demand more of it when people ask what it is to be true, of course, the thinking described as positivist or neo-positivist will go so far as to have recourse to a referent (*référence*), but this recourse to a referent, in so far as it is supposed to be experience or anything whatsoever which is supposed to be of the

order of an experiential objectality, will always be insufficient, as it is easy to demonstrate every time this path is taken.

(15) For one cannot, with this simple reference, explain either the source or the parts or the development or the crises of the whole scientific construction.

We have to remind ourselves that by simply having a sound logic we cannot completely eliminate the simple relationship to being in the Aristotelian sense which says that the truth is to say of what is, that it is, and that what is not, does not exist; that the false is to say that what is, is not, and that what is not, is.

People have tried for a way out of this reference to being, and so we have Russell's way out, that to the event which is something quite different to an object. Russell's wager, whose sole reference is that of the event, namely, the spatio-temporal intersection, this something that we can call an encounter and, henceforth, one defines the true as the probability of a certain event, the false as the probability of an impossible event.

There is only one to this theory, to this register, which is that there is, and it is here that we bring into play again, we analysts, a sort of encounter which is the one of which I spoke to you the first year that I spoke here immediately after repetition, it is precisely the encounter with the truth.

It is impossible then to eliminate this dimension which I describe as the locus of the (16) Other where everything that is articulated as word, is posed as true, even and including the lie, the dimension of the lie, contrary to that of the feint, being precisely to have the power of affirming itself as truth. In the dimension of the truth, namely the totality of what enters into our field as a symbolic event, the truth before being either true or false, according to criteria which as I indicated to you are not simple to define since they always bring in from one side, the question of being, and from the other, that of the encounter precisely with what is in question, with the truth.

And the truth comes into play, restores and articulates itself as a primal fiction around which there is going to have to emerge a certain order of coordinates which are there in order not to forget the structure before anything whatsoever can be pursued validly in terms of its dialectic, it is this that is in question.

It is here that what is pursued as a work, as an embrace, as a weaving together, on this point that I called the connecting point between truth and knowledge, becomes fascinating. If last year we spent so long and made so much of the themes of Frege, it is because he attempts a solution - one among others, but this one is especially revelatory for us because it goes in a radical direction - when we saw or glimpsed, (17) thanks to some of those who were willing to respond to me here, what we saw is that at the level of the conception of the concept, everything is drawn to the side

where what is going to have to take on the value or not of truth, is marked by a certain solicitation, reduction, limitation which is properly that of the fact that he was able to extract his theory of number from it, and that if one looks closely at it, the Fregian concept entirely centred on that to which one can give a proper name. Which means for us, with the critique that we made of it last year, here I apologise to those who were not participants at it, by which there is revealed the specifically subjective character in the sense of the structure that we ourselves give to the term subject, of what, for a Frege, *qua* logician of science, is what characterises as such the object of science.

I know that here I am only approaching a point which would require a development. If there is to be a development it can only be around a question, if there can be a question about it, and this can be done at my closed seminar.

But I have indicated enough about it to connect up with what I ended on the last time, namely, that there is a problem about this Fregian function precisely of the *Bedeutungswert* which is *Warheitswert*, and that if there is a problem about this truth value it is here perhaps that you will see in fact that we can contribute something which gives to it, which designates in it, in a fashion renewed by our experience, the true (18) secret, it is of the order of the **o**-object.

It is at the level of the **o**-object *qua* object that there falls the apprehension of knowledge, that we are, as men of science, rejoined by the question of the truth.

This is hidden because the **o**-object is not even seen in the suture of the subject as it is constructed in modern logic, and that it is precisely this that our experience forces us to restore in it where theory, precisely, not alone claims but proves itself to be superior to myth and that it is only starting from there that there can be given its status, a status that can be accounted for and not simply noted, as the fact of being divided, its status precisely to the subject whose sense cannot escape from this division.

It is here that there is introduced the structure of the projective plane in so far as this surface is different one and allows us to respond differently to what is cut out as object and as subject. I already showed you this Moebius strip in the course of the past years and already I gave you the indications which put you on the path of its use for us in the structure. I already, once upon a time, constructed the Moebius strip before you, you know how its made. You take a strip of the type of those that I call a cylindrical strip (19) and giving it a half-twist, stick it to itself, in this way one makes this Moebius strip which has only a single surface and which does not have a front or a back. And already, the first time that I introduced it, I alluded to the way in which this surface can be as it were the lining of a garment, how can it be or not be reduplicated? Well then, notice here something essential in the structure of the sphere. This structure of the sphere on which all thinking lives, at least that which emerged up to the coming into play of science, in other words cosmological thinking which, of

course, continues to claim its rights even in science among those who do not know what they are talking about.

It is not enough to have revolutionary pretensions in social matters to escape certain impasses concerning precisely what is, nevertheless, at the root of the bringing into play of any revolution whatsoever, namely, the subject. But I will not evoke here a dialogue that, perhaps, I already evoked with one of my Soviet confreres. I was able to see and to confirm since, by information that I would ask you to believe is plentiful, that in the Union of Socialist Republics people are still Aristotelian, namely, that the cosmology there is no different, namely, that the world is a sphere, that the sphere can be reduplicated within by another sphere and so on, like onion skins.

(20) Every relationship of the subject to the object is the relationship of one of these little spheres to a sphere which surrounds it, and the necessity for a final sphere, even though it is not formulated, is all the same implicit in the whole style of thinking about reality.

Now, whatever one thinks of it, this is something which can indeed be painted in colours that are ridiculously called, I again heard there being used not long ago the term realist, to designate the myth, as it was said, of reality. In effect, it is indeed a mythical reality that is involved but to call that realist has something hallucinatory about it, since the history of philosophy demands that we describe as realist something quite different. It is an affair of the quarrel of universals.

As to whether or not Freud fell into the trap of taking reality as the last or the second last or any one of these skins, namely, that by believing there is a world whose final sphere, as I might say, is immobile, whether it is a mover (*motrice*) or not, I think that this is to put forward something that is completely unwarranted for, if this is how things were, Freud would not have opposed the pleasure principle and the reality principle. But it is still a fact whose consequences nobody has up to the present taken (21) cognisance of, namely, what this supposes as regards structure. I repeat that one sees the degree to which there is solidarity at once with idealism and a certain false realism which is the realism, I will not say of common sense, for common sense is unplumbable, of the sense precisely of people who believe themselves to be an ego, an ego which knows, and who construct a theory of knowledge. The fact is that as long as the structure is made up of these spheres which envelope one another, whatever may be the order in which they are staggered, we find ourselves precisely before this figure between us, a subjective sphere, and every other sphere - there will always be a certain number of intermediary spheres, idea, the idea of an idea, representation, representation of representation, idea of representation, and that even beyond the final sphere, let us say it is the sphere of the phenomenon, we can perhaps admit the existence of a thing in itself, namely, of a beyond of the final sphere. It is around this that people have revolved from all time. And this is the impasse of the theory of knowledge.

The difference between this structure and the structure of the sphere and that of the Moebius strip that I am presenting to you, that if we set about making the lining (*doublure*) of this Moebius strip, which is the one that I am holding here in my right hand, when we have made a circuit, this is what I told you when I presented it to you, (22) we will be on the other side of the strip, it would seem then that it is necessary to cross it as I told you the first time in order to give it a lining like the lining of this coat or the lining of the sphere earlier, a lining which is closed in one circuit, but if you make two of them, you completely envelope it, namely, that you no longer need to make another one. The Moebius strip is completely duplicated by this element which, moreover, is linked onto it. Concatenation, an essential term to give not its metaphorical but concrete value to the signifying chain, only what duplicates this Moebius strip is a surface which does not at all have the same properties. It is a surface which, if I undo it, I believe for the moment we have nothing more to do with it, if I undo this Moebius strip which was buckled on to it, have as a property being able, as I might say, doubling itself, sticking one of its faces, let us call it the blue face in order not to be talking about the front and the back, it has no front and back, it has a front and a back once I have chosen it, the blue face is stuck to itself and the red face since I repeat, has a front and back, is entirely in what is seen on the outside.

(23) Here then is something, a surface which has as a property the primitive Moebius strip in which these two others were made, it is a Moebius strip that you take, construct, in the ordinary fashion, by turning it in this way, if you cut it in a way that is equidistant from its edge, if you make a cut in it, you will have two loops, you cut them in the centre, of another Moebius surface, the one that I showed you earlier and at the periphery a strip, a strip which it, for its part, is not a Moebius strip, it is a strip with two faces, it is not a cylindrical strip for, as you see, it has all the same a shape and a rather bizarre shape, I am showing you this shape, it is very easy to find, here it makes two circuits and in this case here it one. Good. Verify it. This strip is a strip that is applicable to the surface of the torus. There you are, I am passing it around so that you can look at it.

So then, what have we got? We have a Moebius strip of such a kind that, being subjected to a cut, a typical cut in a regular fashion equidistant from its edge, one ends up with something which is the Moebius strip which still remains, something which envelopes it completely by making a double circuit. This something is not a Moebius strip, it is something which envelopes the Moebius strip, from which this something has (25) emerged in the measure that this strip results from a division of the Moebius strip. This strip, in so far as it is both linked onto the Moebius strip but, when being isolated from it, is applicable to the torus, this strip, is what for us, structurally, can be best applied to what I define for you as being the subject in so far as the subject is barred.

The subject in so far as it is, on the one hand something which envelopes itself or again this something which can suffice to manifest itself in this simple reduplication,

for there is no need even for the Moebius strip to remain isolated in the centre and to be linked onto this strip which is, as you have seen, from this strip simply by making it reduplicate itself, I can reconstruct the structure of a Moebius strip.

This is going to serve us as a support to define the function of the subject. Something which will have this essential property to define the conjunction of identity and difference. Here is what appears to us to be most appropriate to support for us structurally the function of the subject. You will only see details, refinements in it in the measure that I continue, namely, what you will be able to see in it in a more intimate fashion about this relationship of the function of the subject to that of the signifier. And the distance which separates in one case and the other this relationship to the conjunction of identity and of difference. And now I point out to you that if the Moebius strip is itself the effect of a cut in another kind of surface, which to facilitate things for you I did not introduce otherwise, and that I earlier called the projective plane, it is at the cost of leaving here the residue of a fall, a discal one, which I take as a support for the \mathfrak{o} -object in so far as it is on its fall that there depends the advent of the Moebius strip and that its reintegration modifies it in its nature as discal fall, namely, ensures that it has neither front nor back and it is here that we rediscover the definition of the \mathfrak{o} -object as non-specular.

It is in so far as, as you see, it is re-sutured, it is re-situated in its place with respect to the subject in the Moebius strip that it has the property of becoming the something different whose laws are radically different from those of any hole made in the sphere which moreover defines subject or object. It is a quite special object. And last night, I regret that the person who introduced this term has now left, given the time, we were told about *retournement* [turning inside-out, back-to-front, reversal]. No use of a term such as that can be held to be legitimate, except by being properly speaking spoilt, if it does not emerge from this structural reference, namely, that what can be qualified as reversal has a completely different import according to the structures. What good was it for me to have hammered out for years the difference between the real, the imaginary (27) and the symbolic which you have now seen incarnated, I think that you sense this, that earlier in my successive spheres, you have seen the way the imaginary finds its place there. The imaginary is always the intermediary sphere between one sphere and the other. Does the imaginary only have this sense or can it have a different one? How can one speak in a univocal fashion about reversal, how can one give a sense of it?

A glove, let us take the oldest way of presenting things, one which is already in Kant. A glove that is turned inside-out and a glove in the mirror are not the same thing. A glove that is turned inside-out is in the real, a glove in the mirror is in the imaginary in so far as you take the image of the glove in the mirror as the image of the glove which is inside. Starting from there you can clearly see, for our shapes, the ones that I can draw for you on the blackboard, it is the same thing because they have a front and a back and because they have an axis of symmetry.

But for the projective plane and for the Moebius strip, which do not have a front or a back or a plane of symmetry even though they are divided in two, what you have in the mirror is to be seriously questioned. As regards what you have in the real, try again to reverse a Moebius strip, you can reverse it as much as you wish, it will still have the (28) same twist for in effect this Moebius strip has a twist which is proper to it and it is in this way that one might believe that it is specular for it turns either to the right or to the left.

This is precisely why I do not say that the Moebius strip is not specular, we will define the status of its proper specularity, we will see that this will lead us to certain consequences.

What is important is this false complementarity which means that we have on the one hand a Moebius strip which, for us, is the support and structure of the subject in as far as we divide it, if we divide it in the middle we will no longer have this residue of the Moebius strip linked up as I showed you earlier, but we will still have it in the form precisely of this cut and what does it matter the essential will be obtained, namely, the strip that we will call toric applicable onto the torus and which it is capable of restoring, by applying onto itself the Moebius strip.

This, for us, structures \$. Something which is conjoined to this \$ that we call (o), which is the non-specular (o), in so far as it is knitted together, in so far as it is considered as the support of this \$ of the subject, on the other hand, having fallen from it, it loses all privileges and literally leaves the subject alone, without the recourse of this support, this support is forgotten and has disappeared.

(29) This is where I wanted to lead you to today. I apologise for not having taken this presentation further but I have thought for a long time that by not literally chewing over every step, I was taking the risk of leaving the way open to a relapse into the psycho-cosmological thinking which is precisely what our experience is going to put an end to.

Seminar 7: Wednesday 19 January 1966

Today is going to be spent on a sort of test whose plan I would first of all like to tell you about.

It is first of all a kind of sampling of a method. Someone is going to speak to you - not me, the person to whom I gave the responsibility - someone is going to speak to you about a clarification contributed to a particular point of Dante's *Divine Comedy* by someone who, obviously, was guided by the suggestions that he received from knowing about my mirror stage.

Of course this is not what gave him his knowledge of Dante. Monsieur Dragonetti, the author of the article which you are going to be given an account of, is an eminent Romance scholar whose very broad knowledge of Dante is, precisely, what gives its value to the mapping out that he conducts of the function of the mirror in such a style that it allows him to contribute on consciousness its fundamental function, notations, as one might say, that are completely unrelated to what was circulating in his time. This is what is going to be presented to you.

(2) What is the interest of it? It is to indicate the sense in which there could be carried out this sampling of structure, which would allow there to be given an order, a different order than one reposing on the pre-conceptions of linear evolution, of historical evolution, or more exactly of this introduction into history of this notion of evolution which completely falsifies it.

In short, this is a kind of first model, a model borrowed from what is effectively produced in reality, but which is, in a way, confined to the works of specialists, a model, as one might say, if you wish, of historical method as it can be guided by structuralist considerations which guide us here in so far as they are employed with psychoanalytic references. This will be an opportunity to recall them.

This will at the same time put me in a position of reminding you of certain acquisitions of my previous teaching in so far as I am going to have to put them very soon into communication with what I continue to develop for you in terms of fundamental topological structures in so far as they are for us guiding structures.

I will speak to you about something else which I will leave as a surprise but about which I indicate to you now that while being a structuralist analysis, from another point of view of the data of what has been culturally acquired - you will see later what I (3) chose - at some centuries distance from Dante, I will find myself lead here to one of these turning points of the introduction, of the highlighting, of the bringing out of a structural given which will be, especially for us analysts, of the greatest utility as a foundation, in order to try to order things that are completely confused because collapsed together, crushed, as I might say, by the different planes that it invokes on the subject of masochism.

So then, I give the floor to Madame le Docteur Parisot, who is going to give you an account of this article on a particular point of the *Divine Comedy*, namely, this presence of specularity, of what Dante thinks about it.

Madame le Docteur Parisot

Dragonetti's work is a work that he published in the *Revue des Etudes Italiennes* number 102, September 1965. The title that he gave to his work was; *Dante et Narcisse ou les faux monnayeurs de l'image*.

In the *Divine Comedy* there are two allusions and only two to the myth of Narcissus. The first in Hell where the name of Narcissus is mentioned; the second in Paradise which is only treated in the form of a periphrasis.

The intention of Roger Dragonetti is, by means of a commentary on these two passages, to put forward that the substance of this myth is ceaselessly present in the *Divine Comedy* and that it was Dante's inner monster.

The first allusion, that in Hell, is found in Canto XXX; this allusion itself is around verse 128. It figures in the course of the episode about the counterfeiters (*faux monnayeurs*). Here is the episode: Dante sees someone with dropsy, with a protruding stomach and limbs out of proportion: it is Master Adam. The obsessive image of the streams of Casentino only increase the thirst that consumes him. Stuck to him there are two shades, one is the wife of Potiphar, and the other is Sinon the Greek of Troy.

(5) Master Adam and Sinon are exchanging blows in a quarrel that has been provoked by the former who had called the Greek a cheat. Here is the text, translated, naturally:

“The Greek said: ‘May the thirst that cracks your tongue
Be torture to you, likewise the festering water
That makes your belly such a hedge around you’.

To which the counterfeiter responds:

“So it is open wide,
Your mouth to speak ill as it used to do;
If I am thirsty and am bursting with fluid,
You have that burning and that pain in the head,
For you to lick the mirror of Narcissus,
You would not need much of an invitation”

The first point is the mirror of Narcissus. This mirror of Narcissus cannot be taken as a simple metaphor to designate fresh water. It is not fresh water designated in more beautiful language. Moreover, it would be altogether contrary to Dante’s idea of poetry. Here then it is a metaphor but it is the metamorphosis of this water, the metamorphosis of this water into the mirror of Narcissus. Dante does not speak then only of water, but of a hardened reflecting surface which sends back the image of a Narcissus fascinated by his shadow. Thus the fresh water is effectively this water but a water transmuted into a mirror, a water changed into an image of water. Starting from there the reply of Master Adam takes on its sense. One could translate it as follows: “your fever makes you so thirsty that you would not need to be asked very often to (6) start licking an image of water.”

The second point is the allegorical sense which agrees with the literal reading of this verse. It is necessary therefore to look for the symbolic sense of the sin of Master Adam and the symbolic sense of this deformity of dropsy.

Master Adam is then a counterfeiter whose sin appears of particular gravity given the place that he is in Hell.

What had he done? On the instigation of the Counts of Romena he fabricated florins. These florins had the right weight, but their alloy - they contained an alloy - the florin was in principle a coin of pure gold. These are not of pure gold. They include three carats of metal.

Before investigating the sense of this sin, it would be well to situate it in what one can call the moral order of Hell which is presented in Canto XI, presented through the mouth of Virgil. It is said that fraud on the one hand presupposes malice, and on the other hand it is said that fraud is an evil proper to man.

The first point: fraud, falsifying, presupposes malice. Malice is manifested in the deliberate choice of an evil that one pursues. It falsifies the very principle which grounds every virtue on the good, by dissimulating itself under the appearance of a (7) good. It strikes God in what is closest to his essence, namely reason. If reason renders man similar to God it is also through it that this similarity, in the analysis, is adulterated in its reflection, that of an absolute Other, a semblance of the absolute.

Reason, captive of its own image of the good, seduced by its reflection, makes itself like its reflection by choosing itself as such, the absolute sense of metamorphosis. In this sense, what draws into its hollow the being of everything, draws in a double that resembles it where nothing ever is presented or slips away, under the appearance of an absolute.

It is therefore by its latency that malice is formidable, and the proper of malice is that it never appears. This is no interpretation. It is in the text. In fact it is in Canto XI.

The second thing that is said in this Canto is that fraud is the evil proper to man. It is Virgil who expresses this in a quite striking short-cut and in a single verse, verse 52 of this Canto XI: "Fraud, by which every conscience is bitten."

In other words every conscience as such is bitten by fraud. There is in every man something fundamentally false of which conscience bears the marks. What is involved is the primal fault, the primal fault is separation, it is the bite. And in the fault of every conscience in remorse, there is this "*mor*" of the bite (*morsure*). It is Adam's bite which provoked this separation, this break-up, this break-up of reason.

Therefore every conscience is already ruptured, contaminated as it is by the original falsification. The counterfeiter is called Adam. Naturally, the name of this personage recalls that of the first man and preceding the text that I read at the beginning, the text about the allusion to Narcissus, all the themes of the original sin (*faute*) are present.

Now, by taking into account this symbolic *rapprochement*, and in the same register of interpretations, we are going to see in what sense counterfeit money is an image of the original sin. This florin as I told you was a florin of pure gold, nature still remaining at that time the referent. This florin of pure gold is recognised as pure money by name and by effigy, name and effigy which are the signs of truth. But this power of signifying naturally belongs to the one who has authority to authenticate the sign, namely the prince. The prince is guilty if he corrupts the sign. The golden florin is marked by the effigy of John the Baptist. This effigy as sign is then the reminder of a divine order that has to be safeguarded. When the coin is counterfeit, the authentic relationship of the sign and to the material is destroyed. The symbol, perverted into a (9) fiction, fears an image of integrity in which there can be imbedded all the abuses of fraud. Fraud falsifies therefore the truth of the coin and at the same time falsifies the coin of truth. The coin of truth is a holy thing. It adulterates, therefore, the divine

order; it adulterates the relationship to God, the relationship to the source which founds the natural order of values.

As regards the symbolic sense, now from the deformity of Master Adam one can always prove it in the same register. The *res publica* has from all time been compared to a body, the body social that one employs even now, and the effects provoked on this body by the disproportionate swelling of the unwarranted riches of the prince leads to images of deformity. The prince is a member of this body. He becomes a sort of monster disproportionately swollen, swollen to the detriment of the rest of the body, namely of the community. There results a monstrous disproportion of this community. And the deformity of Master Adam, this dropsy, a dropsy which means that he has an enormous body, an enormous wound. This wound rises before his eyes and it creates a screen before his eyes, it blinds him, this wound is full of a water that is stagnant because of the riches of the prince. Because it is stagnant, it is corrupt. Because it is stagnant it can no longer circulate in the rest of the body of Master Adam and it leads then to this dryness in which the mouth and the lips are fixed. It involves this constant (10) thirst and also this thinness of the lower members which can no longer support Master Adam, this enormous blind wound.

Taking account of these remarks one might ask oneself what Master Adam represents, what Sinon represents and what is meant by this quarrel, namely, what is the relationship between Master Adam and Sinon which ends in this marvellous allusion.

First of all Master Adam. The scene unfolds then in the perspective of the latent malice from which there has emerged the fraudulent art of the first man. This evil proper to man is symbolised then by dropsy. It is a water illness, a perversion of man at the source, and it is a weighty illness which immobilises Adam in a grotesque position. Here is the brand of his radical impotence. The image of the streams of Casentino, Casentino is a place close to Romena, and Romena is the locus of the sin. It is there that Adam counterfeited his coin. This image and this source that has been destroyed torments Adam by its reflection, and the fact that, nevertheless, he is ready to sacrifice this image to see its instigators. He is ready to sacrifice this reflection to see the prince, namely, the one who is the cause of his spiritual destruction, namely, malice itself. And the desire to see the malice is equalled only by the radical impotence (11) Adam to see this shade, because he does not want to be moved.

If one remembers that what is proper to malice is its latency one can clearly understand that what Adam pursues, the principle of evil, which is preferable to the spring which quenches his thirst, slips away and that it is nothing other than the refusal to be, hence the radical slipping away.

And Master Adam bears it in himself. He bears it in himself as a void swollen into a dream of the absolute. And what his desire pursues is nothing other, when all is said

and done, than Master Adam himself with respect to whom there forever escapes the principle of evil as the Other of the absolute.

In sacrificing the coin, a holy thing, sin has thus provoked the perversion of the sign, metamorphosed the symbol into a fiction, soiled the source of justice, falsified the link of love between men as God wishes it. There was therefore a choice. But this choice, nevertheless, is still love but a different love, it is the one that man brings back entirely onto himself through the detour of an image, an image which feigns love for the other. It is a doubling of the absolute which is missing by a fictitious absolute.

So much for Master Adam. Now what about Sinon? By falsifying the indication of the divine principle Master Adam engages the whole community in a sort of adventure between being and appearance. This is what emerges from the words of Sinon. Sinon (12) says the following: “and if I spoke falsely, well then you, you falsified the coin and I am here for a single crime, and you for more crimes than anyone else even if he were the demon”.

Sinon comes on the scene when the coin, the word of truth is already falsified. He makes use of the product of Master Adam. For the falsification of the word of truth, Sinon, for his part, is not responsible. He comes into play at the level of the effects of the act of Master Adam. The perverted word has brought about an unlimited falsification of language and it is language that Sinon abuses.

Sinon’s crime is to have pretended to be a deserter from the Greek camp and to have made the Trojans decide to bring the wooden horse into their city. In principle that is it. Which presents him, therefore, as a cheat and a cheat by tactics. But his crime is a double one. It is then cheating as a tactic, but he is also implicated, like in the crime of Judas, as a perjurer in a crime of universal notoriety. He is a pretender who feigns to be what he is not and a perjurer because the language that he abuses is an offence against the gods.

The relationship now between Master Adam and Sinon. Sinon occupies a very particular position in this scene. He is stuck in a very close way to the person with dropsy and he seems to be of one body with him. Master Adam cannot see him and (13) Master Adam does not know the origin of their close relationship. Everything happens as if, once it has been put into circulation, the false word, like false money, so much resembles the authentic that the true becomes unrecognisable and invisible. The sign which carries the guarantee, effaces, in its apparent legality, the traces of its suspect origin to such a degree and so well that the counterfeiter himself is not capable of identifying the product of his own artifice.

And the quarrel breaks out at the moment that Sinon hears himself being presented by Master Adam with qualification of a cheat. Master Adam says: “the cheat, Sinon the Greek of Troy.”

He hears himself, then, on the one hand being denounced in the eyes of the world and, on the other hand, he hears himself being denounced in the attitude of his latency. And in the extraordinarily rapid rhythm of the altercation, one after another the two simulators are placed in the position of accused and accuser and in no way recognise in the malice of the other their own simulation and even play the game of truth. The word truth returns three times in Adam's mouth.

All of this seems to symbolises two phases of the movement of self-fascination of the fraudulent conscience. On the one hand Master Adam, even though riveted to an image of water, an image which does not have for him an autonomous power because he prefers to this reflection the vision of the principle of evil and, on the other hand, (14) Sinon, who is not interested in the principle of evil since he does not feel himself responsible for this perversion. Sinon, for his part, has then nothing to prefer to an image of water. The spring, annihilated in the language that he has feigned, works so well on this fiction that it has acquired an autonomous power for Sinon. For Sinon the true spring has become this image of water with which dreaming consciousness is capable of slaking its thirst. Hence the reflection of Master Adam to Sinon that to get you to lick the mirror of Narcissus not many words would be needed.

Sinon represents in the movement of fraud, the culminating point, the radical perversion where malice encloses the falsifier in his image which has become for him the truth itself. The image of nothing. One could probably say that it is to the absoluteness of this image that the pervert is fixed.

As for the way Dante is involved in this story, Dante himself tells us. He is fascinated by the spectacle of the altercation; he is fascinated by the images of hell. And to break the attachment of his look to error, the intervention of the voice of Virgil is necessary. Virgil says: "now then, be on your guard". From these images Dante has to turn aside, not take these images for reality, and turn away from them, such is the sense that Virgil gives to the path that Dante travels with him. To be on your guard against this danger of capture, is to look to the truth.

(15) Dante in fact wakes up but he will need more than one warning to really awaken.

Here is the text in the translation of Madame Tenaasse-Mongen  [here: C H Sisson, World's Classics, Oxford University Press] It is Dante who speaks :

"I turned towards him and was so ashamed
That I am so still when I think about it.
And as one who dreams of something harmful,
Wishes in his dream that he was dreaming,
And so desires what is, as if it were not,
So did I, for I was not able to speak;

I wanted to excuse myself, and was doing so
All the time, and did not think that I was”

The voice of Virgil brings Dante to the truth, and this in shame. But the awakening is brief. Born to the truth in shame, Dante pauses. He pauses to reflect the shame by wishing to express it. Wishing to express it in order to excuse himself, Dante ceases to see the reality which speaks by itself in the silence of the shame. And his desire for expression means that he fails to recognise this truth even at the moment that it is accomplished. He falls once again into this broken reflection that he assimilates to sleep. This comparison fixes in a way the radical impotence of reason ever to recover the truth by itself. Dante the sleeper desires what is as if it were not. The real fact, namely, the truth speaking by itself through shame, is transmuted into the unreal, the impossibility of speaking. The reality is taken as unreal.

(16) Virgil intervenes at all speed at that moment and he says:

“ A lesser shame would erase a greater fault
..... than you have been guilty of;
Therefore let fall any unhappiness”.

It is sadness that is involved. And here Virgil puts the accent on what, beyond the shame, weighs on Dante a residue of heaviness, a residue of evil desire.

This second intervention seems to have more of the value of a warning than the first one. One could perhaps say that it is, could be assimilated to an intervention. In any case it appears from it that the conscience that is originally bitten is incapable, left to itself, to react against evil desire, base envy.

Dante closes this Canto XXX with these words of Virgil. He posits Virgil in a way as a memory of presence. Virgil says:

“And take account of the fact that I am here,
If it so happen that fortune should bring you
Where there are people in the like disputes:
To want to hear them is an inferior wish”

Perhaps one could link the place that Virgil occupies to that of the analyst.

The second allusion to the myth of Narcissus is that in *Paradise* in Canto III. The scene takes place in the moonlit heavens. Beatrice has just destroyed the erroneous opinion of Dante about lunar spots. Dante is disposed, at that moment to confess his (17) correction and his new conviction. Here is what Dante says:

“And I, to admit that I was put right
And convinced, as the case indeed required,

Raised my head to address some words to her;
 But an apparition appeared, which held me
 So closely to itself, to look at it,
 That I did not remember my confession.
 As through a glass which is transparent and polished,
 Or through tranquil and translucent water
 Which is not so deep that it is dark at the bottom
 The outlines of our faces are reflected
 So faintly, that a pearl on a white forehead
 Does not come less readily to our pupils;
 So I saw many faces set to speak:
 Which made me run into the opposite error
 To that which made the man in love with the pool.
 The moment I caught sight of them,
 Thinking that they were reflected images
 I turned my eyes to see whose they were;
 And saw nothing and looked back again
 Straight at the light which came from my sweet guide
 Which, as she smiled, blazed from her holy eyes.”

Dante was disposed to confess his being put right but nevertheless he did not speak. The gesture of bringing his face to the front changes intention before a vision which imposed itself with such force that Dante forgot his confession. Dante perceives several faces which like him are ready to speak.

(18) Thinking that he is seeing images in a mirror, he turns his head back in order to see where they are coming from and, seeing nothing, he turns his eyes to the front, straight into the gaze of Beatrice.

In Canto II which comes before, Beatrice had, then, explained to Dante what the lunar spots were and she had told Dante that what appeared to him on the moon as a shadow reveals itself in truth to be also light, but light which is differentiated from the properly luminous part of the moon by a degree of receptivity, or rather of transparency, I believe that the term transparency is more appropriate, a lesser degree of transparency. So then, shadow understood as light and always presented as light appearing against a luminous background, this background being the measure which makes tangible their difference and the possibility of their apparition.

The shades, the souls of Paradise are of course also understood as light, and it is in the divine light that they are lit up and allow the rays to pass through without stopping them.

Dante symbolises God by a mirror in which there are reflected the souls of Paradise. In any case this is Dragonetti's conviction. Not by a silvered mirror but a mirror

whose depths remain entirely light. The shades, the transparent images, appear in the realm of light and here reflection is considered in a manner different to terrestrial (19) reflection. Reflection is considered as the action of the direct radiation of divine light through the transparency of celestial bodies and not as the reflection of rays produced by bodies whose opacity forms a screen to this light. Dante clearly specifies that the more or less specular surface on which his vision appears is like that of a crystal or that of waters whose bottom is not obscure, whose bottom is not hidden. The obscure bottom and the hidden bottom is the tain of the mirror of Narcissus. Here the bottom is light. It is not even that there is no bottom. The bottom is something and it is light. It is not a matter then of a mirror on the terrestrial model; it is a matter of pure transparency, of a mirror in the celestial style.

What is more, there are two sorts of images that have appeared: there are the figures that are prepared to speak; these are the admired figures. And these images play into one another in such a way as to give the impression that the admired figures, the faces of the spectators blend in with the faces that are prepared to speak.

Dante turns away to break the spell of the mirror and he reveals at the same moment, says Dragonetti, the degree to which he is conscious of the error which perverts such a relationship to images. Dante brought to bear on the vision a gaze captivated by its reflection so that he had changed the transparency into a spectacle. What Dante denounces as “the opposite error to that which made the man in love with the (20) pool” is in the rejection of reason onto itself for having made reality disappear in an image.

To the appeal of the vision, Dante replies by the spontaneous correction of his look in the direction of the eyes of Beatrice. For Dragonetti, Beatrice is the revealed truth who turns Dante away from his fascination with a reason too sure of its rightness. And at Dante’s gaze on transparency, to make it become transparent by this gaze itself.

Dragonetti says that to see is to interiorise reason in faith. The danger that threatens Dante is that his reason confronted with transparency, is tempted to represent it instead of presenting itself to it. The reason which wishes to reduce faith to an image of terrestrial reflection would no longer deserve that name, because not only does it transform its object which is essentially light into shade, but that cut off from the true light this reason which ought to be transparent, then becomes itself a shadow projected onto things. Without this I think that Dragonetti sees a Dante whose monster submits to the myth of Narcissus.

But to this interpretation of Dragonetti there can perhaps be added the following, that at the heart of the transparency of Paradise there is no possibility of being a part of it. To remit to God the cause of one’s desire is the only possible path. Perhaps this is Dante's phantasy, the transparency of his gaze before the light of God.

(21) After all in Paradise, there is God. All is light and the light comes from God. Light is God's look. And between God and Dante there is Beatrice, Beatrice who is not God, who is not either, I think, the revealed truth of Dragonetti but Beatrice who bears the mark of God. Then there is, still between God and Dante, the vision of Dante onto which he stuck the admired figures. It is from these admired figures whose spell he broke by turning away, it is not from the vision itself, the vision itself pre-existed these admired figures. This vision is not the vision of something indifferent, it is the vision of souls who by compulsion failed in their vows of chastity. It is the vision of God's creatures. Then there is Dante. Now, in Paradise reflection is conceived of as the action of the direct radiation of the divine light through the transparency of celestial bodies. Before God, in the field of God's look, the only presence which is not transparent is Dante, perhaps the earth, an obscure bottom. So then, rather than Dante's narcissism, is it not also a question of the narcissism of God?

Dr Lacan

You have heard a very faithful account of this article by Dragonetti. For those who perhaps got lost because of the very fidelity of these detours that are pursued on this occasion by Dragonetti, I am going to try to take things up again once again, and summarise what is involved. At the same time, as I announced, I will show the interest that such a reference has for us.

Our starting point this year was to render coherent what we have to affirm about the function of the \circ -object in the position of psychoanalysis, in so far as it originates from science and from science in its very particular relationship to truth, science being understood as the modern science born in the seventeenth century, in the century that has been called, because of this mutation in the position of knowledge, the century of genius.

You will see that we are going to come later to another aspect of this apparition of the scientific position in so far as it was eminently incarnated by someone other than Descartes. You will see later who, if you do not guess it already.

There is here then a profound transformation of something which is not eternal, which corresponds to another field, to another interval of history, namely, the relationship prior to the origin of science to what is inscribed in the form that I would (23) not qualify as more general and which I qualified as prior, of the relationships of knowledge and of truth. These relationships of knowledge and of truth are the whole tradition that we are going to call, for greater convenience, the philosophical one.

It is in this topological framework that there is situated the position of a Dante. Let us not go too quickly. I am not saying that Dante is a philosopher even though his relationship to philosophy is such that it was able to be followed, isolated, in a whole work for example by Monsieur Etienne Gilson which is entitled precisely, *Dante et la philosophie*, and which keeps its promise by showing us its insistence, punctuating the life and the work of Dante.

Our topology here, in the sense that I understand it, that I manipulate it, that I introduce you to it has no other function than to allow there to be mapped out these transformations of the relationships of knowledge and of truth. If Dante is chosen by us today to be presented to you, within his most outstanding poetic creation, that of *The divine comedy* it is for a reason which for us determines it, as I might say, in two phases:

1) He introduces here the presence of the Christian religious construction and the thesis that is latent, as one might say, in this choice, is the following: that at the origin of the Christian religious tradition there is this introduction into the (24) field of the relationships of knowledge and of truth of a certain God to whom we will come later in order to define him in his origin, in his Jewish origin, in so far as his presence is the crystallising point of this fundamental, inaugural axis for us which is the very one of the introduction of science, I am saying, I already sufficiently indicated, I am repeating it here with more force and I am going to justify it later, the introduction of this God of the Jews is the pivotal point which, even though He remained throughout the centuries enrobed in a certain philosophical framework of the relationship of truth and of knowledge, ends up by emerging, by coming to light, by the surprising consequence that the position of science is established from the very work that this function of the God of the Jews established within these relationships of truth and of knowledge.

This would not have been enough to make us choose Dante because, in fact, any theologian of the medieval epoch would have been able to serve us in the same way as an example to situate what the philosophical tradition involves in terms of the relationships of knowledge and of truth. Dante is also a poet, and I am going to try to tell you how it is *qua* poet that he manifests in a fashion that is not only outstanding but choice, the emergence, the analytical point where, in what he articulates, there is manifested more than he realises, and where he testifies in a certain fashion that I am now going to situate, I mean give the reasons, why he is able to testify, where he (25) testifies in a fashion that is in a way anticipatory for us, to the presence in the relationships of knowledge and of truth of what, properly this year, is promoted by me as the function of the \mathbf{o} -object. This is the interest, in effect, of these two passages in so far as they are chosen, signaled criticised in Dragonetti, that they are signaled by the presence of the mirror which allows us, for our part, to pick out there the manifest designation as such of the \mathbf{o} -object, whose name here is the look.

Let us take things up again. Dante of course, far from escaping, falls completely, as you know, even if you have hardly ever opened it, you know enough about *The divine comedy* to know that this work is inscribed in what I call the cosmological module, a cosmology of the beyond, it is, nonetheless, a cosmology and one which borrows its framework from the cosmology established, let us say, starting from the first Greek philosophers raised to its first model by Aristotle, and transmitted as a form, as a framework for the thinking of the physicists of the time, the Ptolemaic system for example, however limited it may be to the observation of the functioning of the real world as it is presented, namely, to account for the relationships of the movement of the stars and to establish it as consistent with the existence of this world which is that of the terrestrial world which is ordered as you know in function of this topology of (26) the sphere, of a series of spheres including one another which are the planetary spheres before arriving at the upper sphere, the fixed stars. It is a matter of accounting for their functioning, such is the start of ancient physics, and it is in this that we can, in short, qualify as an introduction to a science as such in human knowledge, it is in this that we can qualify the Ancients as having taken the first historically acceptable, transmissible, steps which served as primary matter for the revolution which was called the Copernican revolution, itself an introduction to the quite different Newtonian revolution.

This cosmological world which also includes coordinations of divers parts of the teaching, let us say, of the university (*universitas*) is the fundamental reference point, the framework in which there developed what was teaching up to a certain date, cosmology therefore with its psychological, ideological, even ontological coordinates, it is in this framework that Dante's thinking is situated.

What is it, if not a presentation to us of the first split between truth and knowledge. And it is thus indeed that all mediaeval thinking which, far from being a negligible thinking, rejected, in a way, however radical I present to you the cut established by the (27) birth of modern science is illuminating for us as regards this topology which we have to take into account in the situation which is re-established because of the question posed by analytic experience, this thematic of the opposition between truth and knowledge is inscribed throughout the whole development of medieval thinking in what is called the doctrine of the double truth. No thinker, no teacher of this epoch escaped the question of this double truth. It is the real foundation of this split which had necessarily to be made by the teachers of this epoch between the field of reason and that of revelation.

It is nothing other than the fact that there is a supposed field of constructive knowledge in the ideal, deductively, concerning the structure of the world and then something else which we only know from a supernatural source and from the word of this other who is God.

This distinction is so fundamental in the structure of everything that is articulated at this epoch that we ought to pay tribute to it, to the eminent rationality of the thinking of those that I call these noble teachers (*enseigneurs*) in order not to call them by this disparaging name of scholastics.

Let us admire the firmness of the reason of these people who, supposedly caught up in suggestions which are no longer anything but obscurantist for us, which come to us (28) from religion, did not prevent them from maintaining the rights of strict reason.

Do I need to recall that St Thomas, if I remember correctly, even after - I am not sure but it does not matter - with reference, this is the point of reference for us, the condemnation in 1277 emanating from the Sorbonne of Bishop Tempier which condemns him precisely for having supported, according to the ecclesiastical authorities, more than was proper for the Christian conscience, the distinction between these two domains, finds himself compared in the same condemnation to the followers of Averroes and to the teaching for example of a Siger de Brabant from whom, nevertheless, he is distinguished by all sort of modalities. Still, this did not prevent St Thomas from writing something whose title at least you know: *De aeternitate mundi contra murmerantes*, namely, against what had already provoked his condemnation, namely, to maintain that from the point of view of strict reason the world ought to be eternal and that only revelation indicates to us that it is nothing of the kind.

Is not this distinction between truth and knowledge there to remind us that already the whole organisation of knowledge, of knowledge in so far as it is supported by this body which up to the inauguration of the position of modern science imposes itself as what can be said about knowledge, namely the cosmological, theological, psychological, ontological body, that this body is posited as this ambiguous style of approach which is at the same time a fundamental distancing from what is involved in (29) the truth. I would almost say that for centuries knowledge is pursued as a defence against the truth.

The truth, if you wish, in order to make you sense it, being here to be mapped out, registered, as the question about the most essential relationship to the subject, namely, his relationship to birth and death in so far as everything that concerns him is in the interval between them.

This is the question of the truth in the sense that I define its truth as the one who says: "I the truth speak." It is about this, it is about our last ends that the truth has something to say to us.

Observe here that the articulation of the very term of interval is even a poetic metaphor from a sombre quarter (*bord*), and is here to remind us of the very topological term, properly speaking the one that I designate as being the function of the edge (*bord*). Everything happens as if, to take our reference point, which is not a

metaphor, from the opposition in modern logic between the open set and the closed set, namely, for centuries did not protect and protect so well the line of choosing uniquely the side of the open set. You know that a closed set is what is conceived as uniting the open set with its limit in so far as topologically it is distinguished from it.

(30) Limit, frontier, edge, these are the terms that are involved. The part of truth, is that of our limit between birth and death, a limit in so far as the subject, and everything that is involved in knowledge, is the open set which is comprised in the interval.

This is why the poet in any case, and even if he does not know it, henceforth reintroduces that what he knows and what he manipulates is the structure of language and not simply the word, reintroduces in any case this topology of the edge and the articulation of the structure.

It is through this that Dante, here, goes beyond what he borrows from the structure of knowledge of his time, and precisely in the measure of this ambiguity introduced because of the fact that he projects the cosmological forms of knowledge of his time into the field of what I call the final ends. It is having made of the cosmology of his time what he intends to sing about a beyond of knowledge, the proper field of truth, that he manages to bring out in two points chosen by a commentator, a commentator who is no doubt guided, enlightened, because he is situated in the modern epoch, allows us to pick out in two points, one of Hell, the other of Paradise, constellations that I would qualify as typical, which are properly speaking those of the relationship which links the word *qua* situated in the field of the Other as support of the truth and (31) the necessary, co-ordinated emergence of the \circ -object, that at the same point, a point whose depth I did not point out to you precisely enough earlier, even in deepest Hell, there are found joined together the one who made of the word the support of deception and the one who made counterfeit money.

What a strange conjunction, what a singular necessity, for which we have to invoke the poetic double view, the fact is that Dante as regards whom, undoubtedly, the simple reading of this poem, marked by so many strange things, imposes on us the idea that he knows what he is saying, however strange there appear to us at every moment these excesses with regard to our common sense.

It is not for nothing, it is not by chance that there are joined together to dialogue, in this sort of singular embrace the one who fundamentally has lied, and not in just any fashion whatsoever, has not simply lied, simply cheated, as you were told earlier but cheated in deceiving the trust of the other. This conjunction of the lie as an attack on faith with the fact of the reference of this something which is not truth but truth value, this thing whose reference it is so necessary to introduce when it is a matter of the truth, that when Heidegger proposes to us the *von Wesen der Wahrheit*, he also speaks about a coin.

What is meant by a counterfeit coin? Is not this counterfeit coin also something which (32) is. It is what it is. It is not false. It is false only with respect to this function that conjoins truth to value. This indeed is why what is involved around this **o**-object is this function of the value of truth.

It is here that it is striking, singular, to see that Dante in this vulgar dispute set up between two of the damned, makes there emerge from the mouth of one, precisely of the counterfeiter who addresses himself to the traitor, that he would still be quite content to succumb to this sort of miscognition which would be to lick the mirror of Narcissus, namely, to believe himself to be at least himself, while what is involved is precisely, as was very well articulated for you earlier, that at the very essence of himself which is to be a liar, he has lost it and that he can no longer rediscover any form of his being except by desiring passionately to rediscover before him the one who led him into his fundamental lie.

In the same way, arriving in Paradise what Dante calls the error contrary to that of Narcissus is, apprehending oneself as something which is presented to him as an appearance, not to be able to do otherwise than turn around to see what he sees is the image of.

(33) So that, Dante himself reveals to us that this something which is produced at the limit at which he enters into the field of God, proposes to us objects which are properly speaking what I designate as **o**-objects. In the field of God, in so far as it is from him that there emanate the substances, nothing that is an object is presented except as a darkening relative, in a way, to a pure look, a transparency against a background of transparency, and that this apparition can only be recognised, for the thinking of reflection, as they say, by seeking, by turning back to behind oneself where the original being may well be.

I happened at one time to write these sentences: “When man, searching the void of thought, advances into the shadowless gleam of imaginary space, abstaining even from expecting what is going to emerge from it, a mirror without lustre shows him a surface in which nothing is reflected.”

The snare in this sentence which concludes one of the chapters of the discourse on psychic causality, is that it seems to appear to say that there is no image, while what it means is that the image reflects nothing, designating here already something that Dante’s text accentuates, and which is properly what I am telling you, that the (**o**) is not specular. In effect, when it appears against the transparent background of being, it is precisely at the same time to appear as an image and an image of nothing. This is what Dante accentuates in the second appearance of the reference to the mirror, (34) namely, that here where he believes there is a mirror-function, he comes to realise that when the (**o**) appears, if there is a mirror, there is nothing reflected in it.

Such are the structures that Dante's poetic construction brings to light and if he is able to do it, it is because he is a poet and that, being a poet, what he rejoins is not so much our science as what we are in the process of constructing for the moment and what I call theory.

The privilege of this poetic construction with respect to theory, psychoanalytic theory, if you wish, for us simply theory, depends on a privileged relationship which is constructed by means of a certain form of asceticism of the subject with respect to the other. This privileged structure, I defined the year that I gave my seminar on *Ethics*. It is that of courtly love in so far as we can locate in it in an outstanding fashion the terms (I) the ego ideal, (o) the \circ -object, i(o) the image of o, foundation of the ego, and \$.

This privileged structure - I can only here refer to my seminar on ethics those who attended it - is linked to something which is courtly love and which is so important for us to reveal the structures of sublimation.

The centre of Dante's life and of his work is, as someone as well balanced as Monsieur (35) Etienne Gilson underlines strongly, his choice of Beatrice and the existence, the real existence of the person designated in his work by this name. It is in the measure that Dante, as the simple continuation of his work shows, and its origin in the *Vita nuova*, is a poet bound to the technique of courtly love that he finds, that he structures this elective place where there is designated a certain relationship to the other suspended as such on this limit of the field of *jouissance* which I have called the limit of brilliance or of beauty.

It is in so far as *jouissance* - I am not saying pleasure - is withdrawn from the field of courtly love that a certain configuration is established there which allows a certain equilibrium between truth and knowledge. It is properly what has been called, knowing what he was doing, *le gai savoir*. And in a thousand terms of the field thus defined in which the erudite lose themselves for want of being able to bring to it the slightest philosophical orientation, and here we find a thousand terms which designate for us topological references. A very outstanding term, for example, is the one which is employed to refer to the function of the other and of the beloved other, that the chosen woman is the one - which appears paradoxical to us and it is in Guillaume IX d'Aquitain - the good neighbour. The good neighbour, for me, if I had the time I could insist on it, is here as close as possible to what in the most modern mathematical (36) theory is called the function of neighbourhood. This point is absolutely fundamental to establish this dimension that I introduced earlier of the open set and the closed set.

In the development that I shall have to pursue on the subject of structure, the one that I shall bring in again, after having introduced it last year in the shape that it has for the

moment, it is a fact, that is what it is called, it is the Klein bottle, will allow there to be structured in a decisive fashion what I mean here about the relationship of the subject to the other.

It is in so far as Dante, the courtly poet rejoins it, that he can achieve the encounters that I have now, I think, it is too late in any case to know whether I reached them that year, for what follows will prove to me whether I sufficiently mapped out what is in question.

We are coming up to two o'clock and, consequently, what I was not able to do otherwise than announce to you earlier, and which I am now happy at not having said any more about, that way you will not have the feeling of being frustrated, what I wanted to talk to you about in a second moment today, I did not have the time to do it, I will do it therefore at my next seminar and because of this, the people who are invited to the third seminar are also then invited, this time, to the fourth seminar.

Seminar 8: Wednesday 26 January 1966

Dr Lacan: My dear friends, the question is about the existence and the functioning of this closed seminar. What decided me to start it is that I intend that there should be produced at it what is called more or less correctly a dialogue.

This term is vague and is much abused. The dialogue as it may be produced in the framework that I am trying to establish in this closed seminar has nothing privileged about it as compared to any other dialogue.

Quite recently for example someone came to ask me for something, this something was in itself something so exorbitant and impossible to grant that I did not believe for a moment that this was what was being asked of me. The result is that, conceding something that I could quite easily grant, the person before me was convinced that I was granting him something that was in accordance with his desire and which, I repeat, was so much outside the limits of any possibility that I could not even think that this was what he was asking of me.

This is an example that it is easy to relate to many [page 2 missing?].

(3) On the other hand, you have had a presentation by my pupil Conté, a certain number of questions posed by my pupil Melman. These three works, which were very carefully prepared, were sufficient to fill the fourth Wednesday to which I have alluded that of the month of December. It is along the line of things and of what has been promised, that you will hear today a response from Stein. I heard from him yesterday evening, with pleasure, that he was asking me to speak for more than a half an hour; let him speak as long as he wishes provided he leaves half the session for the responses that I hope will manifest themselves.

I apologise then to him if I commit myself, as I do, not to speak today myself. Since it appears that for some people it is the very presence of this word which puts them in a position of not wanting, I am summarising, it is much more complex, to expose themselves to some comparison or other whose reference on such an occasion seems to me to be absolutely at the limit of the analysable. I will succeed or I will not succeed, but it is not at all a question for me of the value of the work that I have done for you here, I will succeed or I will not succeed in getting people to intervene.

So I would ask you now to give your attention to what Stein is going to say to you and I give the floor to him immediately.

Dr Stein: I will take as a starting point for my replies the very precise and very relevant remarks that Conté made the last time and, at the same time, I will be led to respond to a certain number of questions by Melman in order subsequently to take up a problem which concerns very particularly Melman's presentation.

I believe that the centre of Conté's preoccupations in connection with two articles by me which he analysed is found in this notion of a fusional situation. This is what Conté picks out first and what he insists on from the beginning and he quotes two sentences of mine, two sentences which figure in the first article. One: "there is a unique it (*ça*) speaking and listening ..." and the second: "the patient and the analyst

both tend to be in one (*en un*), in which is everything.” Starting from there Conté notes that such states are rare. He is thus led to ask me:

- 1) Whether I refer these states to a particular neurotic structure,
- 2) How I situate these states with respect to the totality of the treatment.

Let us pause then at this first question by Conté.

(5) The response that I hope to provide you with will serve in great measure as a key to all these other questions and to all the other objections which have been made to me. My response could be the following: it is true that I refer these states to a particular structure, to a particular neurotic structure but this particular structure concerns all patients, the totality of all the patients who are capable of transference. I would say again: yes, I refer all of these states to a common structure which is defined by this category that I am going to try to elucidate a little later on. I will reply no, if you have to take the structure as neurotic structure in the strict sense of the term, namely, what distinguishes one form of neurosis from another.

I do not think that these states are only encountered in one of the forms of neurosis that one can distinguish.

As regards the totality of the treatment I must say that the question is a little bit more difficult given that in these works, in the works that I have provided up to now, the totality of the treatment is not yet taken into consideration in terms of what differentiates it in its successive phases. This is not what I have dealt with up to the present. On the contrary what is indeed in question are things, phenomena, which are met from one end to the other of the treatment, namely, that in this first stage I took into consideration something which is common, which concerns not the treatment but (6) which concerns the analytic session whatever it may be, namely, that I try for my personal use in the first place moreover, to find reference points which are valid for the first session of a treatment just as much as for a final one.

The replies that I have thus just given to Conté are in contradiction with the notion that I privilege according to Conté, rare states. I could object to this:

- either it does not matter whether these states are rare if they are exemplary
- I could also object to this, that I for my part encounter them very frequently.

You will not fail to find that both one and the other response are too subjective to serve as a basis for a discussion and this subjective character of my reply would be still further increased if you recalled that it is a matter here of limit states which cannot be realised, what one can perceive are only the states that can be, this is what I have done, be described as tending more or less towards this limit.

To abandon this too subjective register we must realise that these limit cases in question, which cannot be realised, are by very definition imaginary.

We are thus led to define this imaginary state, which comes back more precisely to (7) defining the sense of the proposition: it speaks. It is in connection with the definition of the sense of this proposition that I am going to be led to present to you an argument which is perhaps a little new and which ought to serve us as a key for the principle question which have been raised. I am thus obliged to ask you for a particularly sustained attention for a few moments because I am obliged to state to you a certain number of propositions in a rather arid form.

It is a matter then of elucidating the sense of the proposition: “it speaks”. Let us call predication any proposition which designates a subject by means of its predicate. This subject, let us call it the subject of the predicate. As regards the one who is at the origin or the one who is the agent of the predication, the one who really, pronounces the words and who is not habitually represented by one of the terms of the proposition, the one who could precede the proposition by an “I say”, let us call him the predicating subject. It is not grammatical, it is a supposed subject. You will note that it is necessary always in the first person.

Now let us agree that in every proposition, the subject of the predicate is the term which designates a particular patient once and for all. In the analytic situation, it is a matter of someone that one habitually calls the patient and if one wished to examine (8) with this method the content of any dialogue whatsoever, the one of which Lacan spoke to you earlier, well then, the patient may be chosen arbitrarily but he ought always to remain the same. The patient must always remain the same whether he is being spoken about, whether he is being spoken to, or whether he speaks himself.

I give you an example to specify things clearly. The patient, let us say in the analytic situation, since in fact this is the only one we will be dealing with today, and I would not go so far as to extrapolate it into every dialogue, the patient says to his psychoanalyst: “you do not respond to my expectations”.

The subject of the predicate, contrary to appearances, is contained in the “my”. Which means that this sentence, to clarify things, could be transposed: “I am waiting in vain for your response”. Here the subject of the predicate is indeed “I”. I (predicate) await your response in vain.

To this you may object that the two sentences do not have the same sense. I would respond to you that this shows us that it is not indifferent that the subject of the predicate should figure in one manner or in another.

Our own proposition: “it speaks in the session”, is a second degree predication. Let us not forget it. We do not have to study these second degree predications especially but

(9) we do have to know clearly that when we speak, we are speaking about words which are spoken in the session. We must distinguish what we say about words which are spoken. That means nothing else. “It speaks in the session” is our discourse about the word which in the session was pronounced. We do not have to ask ourselves: “Who was speaking? Who is speaking?”.

Quite obviously in the case under consideration, “it speaks in the session”, it was the patient who spoke. Nevertheless we say clearly: “it speaks” and not “he speaks”. Why? Because he does not speak, he does not speak to his psychoanalyst in the imaginary sense that we have to consider.

To clarify things let us envisage first of all the case in which he might speak to his analyst, the case at the limit which is by far the most usual. In the case that he speaks to his analyst his word could be preceded by an “I say” which implies that there ought to be two people in the listening :

- I speaking and listening which designates the patient of the same order, in so far as he is I, other than the I of the other, the psychoanalyst who is listening.

Can we consider another case where it is the patient who speaks, of whom we should say: “he speaks”. The patient can pronounce words that he can suppose to be addressed to himself by his double or by a third party, for example, by his psychoanalyst.

(10) This supposition of his is that his word can still be preceded by a “I say”, an I similar to the I of the one whose word is supposed. This is still not the imaginary case that we are considering.

Let us first of all make some remarks relating to this formal order which is the one of the: “he is speaking”, that we are envisaging for the moment.

First remark

I, predicating subject, is always of the same order as another I, predicating subject.

Second remark

When it is the patient who speaks, the predicating subject is by definition the same as the subject of the predicate. I say I.

Third remark

When the predicating subject is the same as the subject of the predicate, the latter is always in the first person. Speaking about myself, I cannot designate myself otherwise than by “I”. In order to speak about oneself, one says “I”. But in the second case that we have considered to make another speak about oneself, one says to one’s psychoanalyst: “you are telling me even though ...” to make another speak about

oneself, one does not say I, one says me. You are telling me. In connection with this reflective form of the first person, me, we ought to note, it is very important, that it (11) implies a reference to the predication of the second person. You tell me. Me contains the subject of the predicate. It nevertheless remains that the implied reference to the second person is that of you: “you say you to me”.

There is therefore in the reflective form of the first person, me, a certain degree of contamination of the I, the first person properly speaking, by a reference to the second person, you.

If I point out to you this degree of contamination that exists in this reflected form, it is because it leads us easily, by a transition, to the imaginary case that we have to consider where there is no longer contamination of I by the reference to a you, I and you always designating the same subject, the subject of the predicate, but where there is a confusion between the two.

What are we to say then about the imaginary case that we have now to consider, that in connection with our commentary is: “it speaks”. Well, we have seen that in the formal order in which one can say: “he speaks”, he designates the predicating subject which always supposes another I, a predicating subject. The imaginary order is that of the “it speaks”. It designates as emitter of the word, a unique person, there are always two I’s, there is only one it; a unique person and an unnamed person in the sense that he does not name himself.

(12) Moreover, when we say: “he speaks” we refer to the one who says I, and when we say: “it speaks” we have no name to designate what is at the origin of the word pronounced, we do not have a name to designate the predicating subject for the good reason that this predicating subject loses here the status of subject.

The imaginary case is precisely the one where, contrary to the law that I presented to you under the form of a remark earlier, where contrary to the law, the subject of the predicate is in the second person while the predicating subject is the same as the subject of the predicate. In other words, where the first and the second person are only one.

Example

How can one give an example of an imaginary case. One can only give it in a very approximate manner obviously, for example, the patient speaking through the mouth of his psychoanalyst. I mean, not in the figurative sense of the formula speaking through someone else mouth but the patient speaking through the mouth of his psychoanalyst, saying really, because there is nothing as real, in the sense that what we are dealing with in psychic reality, as the imaginary. The patient speaking through the mouth of his psychoanalyst is something, if one takes the term in its proper and not

figurative sense, evidently impossible in any other domain than the one of psychic reality (13) that Freud assigns to psychic reality. So then, what happens in this imaginary case? In his predicating, he will designate himself as the subject in the second person, saying you to himself. If such a word were preceded by an “I say”, this would give I and you being the same: “I am saying you are I”.

Now he cannot say you or I, this is why we say: “it says you are I.” The imaginary person which is at once the first and the second, we designate in our discourse about his discourse as being it. It is an imaginary person. It speaks and the discourse which makes itself heard, just like a predication, does not have its status by reason of the ubiquitous character of the subject which is designated there. (I told you earlier that it (*ça*) did not have the status of a subject).

Now it is perhaps a good thing to note that we have distinguished two registers of the word: the formal register from which he speaks and the imaginary register from which it speaks. We must add that these registers admit subdivisions, very numerous subdivisions but it is not our purpose today to examine all the possible subdivisions of these registers, it would moreover be a very interesting project to carry out. I would like simply to mention three registers which constitute subdivisions of the formal register: he speaks; three registers because they will be of immediate use to us.

(14) These registers are moreover the most simple.

1) That of the designation of the subject of the predicate in the second person. The word in this case is obviously the creation of the other, the one who says you. This register, in very rough approximation, in a first approximation, the one which is privileged in the interpretation of the psychoanalyst who says to his patient, you.

2) The designation of the predicate in the reflected first person, a register that we have already encountered as example. Here it is indeed the patient who speaks about himself designating himself by means of the supposed statement of his psychoanalyst which constitutes the predicate. This register of the designation of the subject in the reflected first person, of the subject of the predicate, is that of the supposed interpretation of the psychoanalyst, it is the register, which in a still very approximate manner, and in a privileged manner, of transference.

Now you will say to me, there exists all the same an extremely simple register which we have already spoken about earlier and which must be taken into account, it is that of the designation of the subject of the predicate in the first person, in the case of psychoanalysis, the one in which the patient speaks saying I. What is involved in this register? Well then, I would ask you for a moment. We will come back to it later. For I would propose to specify all of this for you by replying to a certain number of (15) questions by Conté. Conté said that I presented the word as introducing a cut. He also said that I presented the word as exhausting the psychic flux without a gap or

a cut. The expression is Conté's. There is here an apparent paradox which leads Conté to pose the question: "in my opinion what is primordial?"

Here is my reply: the primordial function of predication seems to me to reside in the register that I designated earlier as being that of the designation of the subject of the predicate in the second person, a register which in a privileged manner is that of the interpretation of the psychoanalyst. I would point out to you that all of this demands to be, of course, demands to be much more developed and that I did not do it in this first project. Here then is what is primordial.

I would add that the function of this predication has some relationship, I would not even say a very intimate relationship, with what we can designate as being the paternal function, that it is constitutive of the apparatus of the soul, as Freud calls it, or the psychic apparatus in its topical dimension just as much as in its structure, namely, in its reference to these three neo-grammatical persons who constitute what can be called in an improper term the second Freudian topography, consequently constitutive of the imaginary register of which we say: "it speaks".

(16) Constitutive in a very different way of what in habitual language one calls the "it", it is just as constitutive of the ego and of the super-ego.

Let us add now that in this imaginary register, "it speaks", the function of predication of the word is in a certain way alienated. Let us now note that there is an incompatibility between "it speaks" and predication, that *vis à vis* the narcissistic register "it speaks", predication has, either a cutting effect restoring the patient to one of the modes of the register in which he speaks or, again, has no effect whatsoever. In this case this function of predication, this predication, is in a way foreclosed, to take up Lacan's term in the exercise of its function and I think that this way of seeing things overlaps rather exactly what Lacan calls the foreclosure of the name of the father.

In other words, when it speaks and when in a way things are fixed in this register, that predication remains without effect, we ought to consider that there is no transference, that there is no transference simply in the sense that the intervention of predication, of the predication which designates the subject of the predicate in the second person in no way breaks up the it speaks and does not make the patient accede, in particular, to the register of the designation of the subject in the reflected first person.

(17) Namely, that in the case of foreclosure we are dealing in practice with patients for whom interpretation represents nothing as such and who do not accede to the register in which they designate themselves by means of the supposed interpretation of the psychoanalyst, this is what foreclosure is, this is what foreclosure of the name of the father is, as Lacan says, and here is very precisely the definition of narcissistic neurosis as Freud distinguished it.

You know that I am making an incident here that is designed to show you that all of this has also an interest for psychoanalysis. You know that ever since psychoanalysts have begun to deal with people who are mad, to deal with psychiatric patients, they have noticed that these people experience with respect to them very lively feelings which made them believe that madness did not exclude the possibility of transference. Well, this is an error. If one wishes to maintain the framework of narcissistic neurosis, which seems necessary to me, it is necessary to take transference in a more restrictive sense than that of a feeling relating to someone, in a strict sense which is the one that I propose to you, for example, for there are many other formulations possible, as being for example this capacity to designate oneself by means of the supposed interpretation of the psychoanalyst. Well now madness, in the measure that the patient is mad, for one is never entirely mad, and this is why one can all the same treat the mad, and in the (18) measure that the patient is mad, this possibility does not exist because of the foreclosure that we have just been dealing with.

Now, still in this incident since here I am no longer answering Conté's questions, it must be noted, we must come back to this register which I said nothing about to you earlier, the register of the designation of the subject in the first person, the patient speaking about himself and saying I.

Well then, at this other extreme, one could say, the function of predication of the word is not alienated, as in the imaginary register of "it speaks", but is supposedly entirely assumed.

This register could be defined as being that of secondary narcissism. With respect to this register, predication is either put in question in its effect or again it remains without effect. Here again there can be a foreclosure of this function, that Lacan designates as essential, of the name of the father. Here again there is no transference possible in the measure that things are really so. We are dealing here, not in practice with the mad, but on the contrary with people who are perfectly sane or apparently sane, these sane patients who do not do analysis, who appear in a way, irreducible and of whom one says in a language which appears to me to be rather inappropriate, rather (19) vague, all the more so because the terminology is multiple, that they present rigid narcissistic defences or irreducible character defences or whatever you wish. This then was an incident, a very summary indication to show you that my rather arid formulations, I do not think that it is necessary to see things as I see them and I do not think that it is necessary to be interested in this type of formulation, but to tell you that in the measure that one is interested in them this does not mean that one is not doing psychoanalysis.

Another question of Conté's: in the unique speaking and listening it, the psychoanalyst is for his part also subject to regression, to a topical regression. Or again is it rather a question of a fusion phantasy of the analysand?

Well now, I believe that what has gone before allows there to be formulated a very simple response, already implies the response. In the whole measure that we have precisely posed this convention that the patient remained always the same by convention, a particular person then, that when we speak the words which make themselves heard in the course of the analytic session we cannot all of a sudden take the psychoanalyst as the patient but one could reason as follows, the unique speaking and listening it, designates quite obviously the phantasy of the patient, a phantasy which betrays, from the phenomenological point of view, a certain effect, a certain (20) temporary random manner of being that I designated as being narcissistic expansion. I do not at all require that one should keep this terminology which does not have a fundamental importance.

What is important is to underline the irreducible unconscious character of the phantasy of the patient in articulating, rather than speaking about narcissistic expansion here we are constructing the theory in articulating this phantasy, in the following fashion: "it says you are I". You will notice that this formula, "you are I" is not specularisable and that there is always only one it, which responds I believe sufficiently to Conté's question.

Another question.

Conté says that for me primary narcissism appears, he does not assume it, appears as a primordial step, as an ante-verbal or pre-verbal step in development. Moreover the patient positing himself as the object lacking to his psychoanalyst, appears in my work to be aiming at the restoring of the narcissism of the other. And this restoring of the narcissism of the other is supposed to be presented as the myth or the phantasy of the completion of the desire of the other. So then Conté asks me: what is the decisive aspect and how are these two aspects articulated with one another? Well then my reply to the first point: I believe that I have sufficiently replied in order not to need to give specifications on the fact that it is quite obvious that I cannot consider primary (21) narcissism as something ante-verbal or pre-verbal, this results from what I tried to show you earlier. On the second point: I would say to Conté that I believe that it is necessary to distinguish the narcissistic phantasy and the narcissistic myth, that at least one can distinguish them.

The narcissistic phantasy is the phantasy of the patient, it is unconscious. The narcissistic myth, is a notion that is perhaps rather newer than the one that Conté introduces here, the narcissistic myth, for its part, is not unconscious but conscious or pre-conscious, liable to become conscious, this narcissistic myth is the one according to which the other can accomplish or fulfil his desire. The narcissistic myth might be for example the myth of the psychoanalyst as ordering destiny, the myth of the psychoanalyst erected into a function which is properly speaking that of an idol.

Conté and Melman also wanted to question themselves on the relationship between the reference point furnished by my two first texts and a certain number of the principle Lacanian categories. They found themselves troubled by the fact that primary narcissism, described in a first approximation as a limit state of fusion, may appear to have an aspect that is in a way amorphous. Perhaps the specifications that their remarks led me to formulate as regards the signification of the proposition, it speaks, (22) perhaps these remarks, this key that I tried to furnish in a first approximation, will contribute to better posing the elements of such a confrontation.

Nevertheless, it remains, let us not forget, my first article preserves and will preserve a character that is more descriptive than theoretical properly speaking and that the second article that Conté summarises is aimed at situating the word of the patient in a plane defined by two co-ordinates axes, that of the imaginary where it speaks and the formal one where he speaks, designating the first person by means of the attribution of his object. The asymptotic progression towards the first of these axes I described as the movement of topographical regression, and the asymptotic progression towards the second of these axes I described as the movement of repression. This fully justifies the impression of Conté and of Melman that what is at stake here, as they say, is a framing of the analytic situation in reference to the opposition I would no longer say so much of two terms, as they say, but rather of two axes.

Conté sensed very well, moreover, that in the whole measure that such a mapping-out led to an evocation of the sado-masochistic relationship in the transference as I did it in the second article, a third term is found to be necessarily implicated, a third term which will be introduced in the third of these articles that Melman commented on, that of the (23) function of predication of the word of the analyst. But it remains that in this third article the work is far from being completed. It is indeed this incompleteness which makes the confrontation a little uncertain.

The question of the situation of castration with respect to frustration on which Conté's commentary ends will be tackled correlatively to that of the constitution of the ego ideal ego *qua* inheritor of primary narcissism. This is something that I have not yet done but it is only then that I will be able to speak about the evolution and the termination of the treatment. (In connection with the ending of the treatment, it is perhaps now useless for me to say as Conté and Melman think perhaps, for me to say whether I can subordinate it to some artifice that is described as technique).

I think that I have re-evoked, if I have not responded to all the questions and remarks of Conté and to a great number of those of Melman. For Conté there remains only the question of the dream for which the response would, moreover, be a very instructive exercise but I do not have the time.

But as regards Melman there is a sort of remainder, and I ought to respond separately to him about what seems to constitute between him and me, what appeared to

constitute, at least the other day, between him and me the principle misunderstanding. Here is what is at stake.

(24) How, says Melman, can the analyst make of his word the guarantee of truth when the patient in the transference attributes to him a power that he does not have. This is what Melman says making me speak, what he attributes to me. Now I said nothing which could lend itself to such a paraphrase. I wrote, and here Melman quotes me correctly and even on two occasions, in an article which moreover does not deal with the word pronounced by the psychoanalyst, it is perhaps an artifice to write an article leaving for later the question of the word that is effectively pronounced by the psychoanalyst but this artifice was the one I practised. I wrote in this article: “there would be no psychoanalysis if the psychoanalyst claimed at every instant to pose himself as a faithful servant of the truth.” This is what I wrote, and in a context which does not allow, I believe, any doubt as regards the sense of this sentence. In order to be still more explicit, let us replace the term servant, if you wish, by the term champion. Champion of the truth. That he does not claim to be its champion at every instant does not at all mean that he does not serve it and that sooner or later this truth may not explode. In a general manner, this signifies even that he keeps quiet and that he does not prevent the patient from speaking, that he does not set himself against the development of the transference in which the patient makes of him a deceived deceiver, this does not at all imply, on the contrary that he accepts or that he ratifies this position (25) when he in his turn comes to speak, namely, to interpret. The place from which the psychoanalyst speaks is not the same as the one from which, in the transference, he is supposed to speak. This is essential.

A remark that is a little incidental all the same. In this connection Melman speaks about the place from which the word of the analyst would take on this singular brilliance. It is a very beautiful expression. But when one speaks about this problem of the place of the analyst, of the place that the analyst occupies, I believe that there is often in the dialogue a certain confusion between a problem of right and a problem of fact. I do not think that we are there in the first place to say from what place the psychoanalyst ought to speak in order that his word should take on this singular brilliance, but I think that we are there to examine in the first place from what place the analyst is proved to speak from. I would sustain this consideration of a remark which might perhaps appear to be a little wicked but Melman will easily grant me that the word of one or other of his colleagues, for the intelligence of whom he has not the greatest esteem, I am mentioning nobody, it is an example, that he considers that this analyst does not understand very much about analysis and what he is doing, you will grant me all the same that even in this case, that provided he is in the situation of an analyst with his patient, it happens from time to time that his word takes on this brilliance.

(26) In fact, perhaps not for us who may have an account of the analysis, but for the patient. It is a matter then not so much of the question of right but of the question of fact.

Melman notes that the word considered independently of its content, he will grant me this, seems to evoke essentially the place from which the word of the analyst would take on, he says, this so singular brilliance. It is a matter, I say, indeed of the question of the place of the one who pronounces the word, in other words of the status of the predicating subject. The one who pronounces the interpretation designates the subject of the predicate in the second person. He does not have the same status as the one who, while he is in fact designated by himself in the first, in the reflective form, me.

The analyst who is thus supposed to speak occupies the place of the subject of the myth of narcissistic accomplishment. He is supposed to be at the origin of all things. The psychoanalyst giving the interpretation occupies the place of a subject himself designated in his turn in the second person by another. Contrary to the one who is supposed to be at the origin of all things, he is marked by his place in the succession of a genealogy. I will be very brief in ending but it remains for me to reply to the suggestion that Lacan made to us at the end of the last meeting, of the meeting in which this text was in question.

(27) He suggested to us to take up our debate today starting from the following idea: that if the analyst is in a certain position, it can only be that of the *Verneinung* and not that of the *Bejahung*. *Bejahung*, in French, is simply *affirmation*. Now everyone knows that predication can take an affirmative or a negative form. The category of predication cannot then be either that of affirmation or of negation. This refutes, I believe the argument of Monsieur Lacan according to which I am supposed to situate the psychoanalyst in a position of affirmation, of *Bejahung*.

And to attempt to situate what I tried to formulate today from the view-point of Lacan's suggestion I would say very quickly the following. The word of the psychoanalyst designating the subject in the second person is incompatible with the imaginary "you are I" of narcissism, I remind you. When the word of the psychoanalyst is heard, it can only be received as a cut, as the cut constitutive of desire, as a denial of narcissism, a repetition of the first mythical denial in which the phantasy "you are I" was constituted in the alienation of the function of predication or function of denial - for it is one and the same thing here - of the word. Where according to the terms of Freud this word cannot be received except as a denial of (28) infantile omnipotence, Freud's first formulation, or let us say as a denial of narcissistic omnipotence to refer to the later formulation of Freud. A denial which is consequently correlative to repression. This denial of omnipotence is best illustrated by the following word, by the word: "because of your wish", a word which the psychoanalyst adds to the text of the patients dream. He did not know that he had died

thus giving rise to the denegation of the patient, this is not my wish. This is what I wanted to say to you.

(29) Doctor Lacan: Stein, thank you very much for what you have been willing to contribute in terms of a gathering together of the specifications of what you have presented to us elsewhere as being only the first three moments of something which is your project and which undoubtedly must involve at least one more, is that not so.

I must then thank you for two things, first of all for having succeeded in bringing out this first part, secondly for having been willing to situate them for us in the totality of your plan. I am not going to, as I announced earlier, in conformity with what I announced, I will not intervene today either on the foundations or the details of the articulation that you have brought to us, counting on the people in the audience who have heard you to contribute the first remarks.

I can only say one thing which is that I am delighted beyond what was the immediate motivation for which I wanted a discussion to be brought to bear here in the framework of our seminar on certain of these articles as a group and more precisely in connection with the first one,. Undoubtedly in what you have put forward a certain misunderstanding was dispelled concerning the essence of what you meant.

(30) It remains nevertheless that this does not mean that I can be in agreement about the totality of your way of situating the problem because this is what is at stake. But it is undoubtedly something that is profoundly enough structured for it to designate for us very well the level at which there are placed certain essential problems. I think that, for the limits which you imply about the development of this analytic situation can be gone beyond, and there is precisely here a basis, a supporting point which can be extremely precious for me to map out the way in which what I am articulating this year allows me to criticise this position. I will undoubtedly do it all the more, and all the more easily, and in a way that is all the more relevant for all, to the degree that I see where one or other of my listeners are, with respect to the hearing that your presentation today imposes.

Nevertheless, I cannot avoid, right away making a correction. It is important. I am really very sorry that the text that I communicated to you and where in particular Melman had made his corrections had allowed there to get past in the last page something that was not on my part, even a staking-out, a cord launched from your side, I spoke for two and a half pages. There is in effect written in this text the word, whose incorrectness should perhaps have startled you, the word *Verneunung* which does not exist. You had translated it as *Verneinung* and I had said *Verleugnung*. This puts me a little bit in a false position without at all for all that diminishing the interest of what you have directly responded to me in finishing

Doctor Stein: I am much happier with *Verleugnung*.

Doctor Lacan: So then I ask first, as is natural, those who have been answered, namely specifically Conté and Melman, if they now wish to take the floor. Conté, you have taken notes. Would you prefer to have a moment of reflection or are you prepared right away to tackle what you have to say? Do not speak from where you are. Come up here.

So then since it is possible that things will happen rather well to suit me, in order that later people will start leaving in stages as it happens, namely, that some people are limited by time and have to go, I would like to announce to you, it is one of the reasons (32) why earlier I rejoiced that there should have taken place in the framework of my seminar this year, that this place was taken by a discourse like the one that we have just heard.

In effect, perhaps you will not grasp right away the relationship, but I believe that there is no better text to allow me to re-launch certain affirmations that I intend to discuss about what Stein has announced to us than this one, this text, the one that I had announced to you the last time before Madame Parisot spoke to you about Dragonetti's article on Dante.

I cannot, of course, comment in any way today on the function that I intend to reserve for it. But after all in order not to tackle it as a complete surprise and so that nobody will be too shocked at its appearance, I announce to you in order that you may make whatever use you wish of it, namely, in order that you may be able to renew your knowledge of it, even that you might refer to the numerous and essential commentaries that this text provoked, the one from which I will begin the next time, that I will take up as a relay to what will follow topologically which, this year teaches you to situate the function of the *o*-object, is none other than Pascal's *The wager*. Those who wish to listen in an appropriate way to what is being said this year have therefore a week at least to refer to the different editions of it which have been produced. I insist, most of you I hope know it, on the fact that since the first edition of the *Messieurs de Port-Royal*, there have been a series of texts which are different, I mean that they get closer more or less, which tend to get closer and closer to the two little sheets of paper written in a really scribbling fashion, the two little sheets of paper back and front, on which what has been published in this register about the wager of Pascal happened to have been left to us. Therefore, I am not giving you a whole bibliography unless someone demands it of me at the end, you know also that numerous philosophers have attached themselves to demonstrating its value and its incidence. Here also those who may have something to ask me as regards some of the more substantial articles to which it would be well for them to refer, can come when appropriate to ask me myself for them unless there is some time left for me which will allow me to indicate them.

(34) Monsieur Conté: I intend to limit myself to a very few things and essentially to thank Stein for what he brought us today which in effect is a contribution which for a major part is new with respect to what I had read and which allows us to situate things in a different perspective.

Already certainly the third article on the judgement of the psychoanalyst with the introduction of the function of predication certainly allowed us to understand better his first article and in any case what he said this morning, which is more precise, more developed, leaves the majority of my remarks without an object. I mean that the difficulties which were raised are resolved at that level, the problem being referred now to another level of discussion.

I remain all the same a little bit unsatisfied about a certain number of points particularly on the relationships between the register of narcissism and the register of desire *qua* implicating the dimension of the *o*-object. I do not see very clearly yet how Stein articulates these two registers.

A second point: the second article, that on masochism in the treatment, insisted on the reference to the word pronounced by the psychoanalyst as real, this being opposed to the dimension of the imaginary and I wanted to ask Stein in this connection whether he (35) does not tend, in this text, to situate transference, to make transference tip over a little bit to the side of demand and whether there might not be a bias on his part at the level of this presentation.

In fact, I believe that the debate should now be brought to bear in effect on what is the function of predication and this is a reference that I am little prepared to intervene on. I would prefer to give some more mature reflection to this subject. And I ask simply at first hearing, at first listening, whether one has to situate the predication, this first foundational or original word as a predication founding the subject namely attributing a predicate to the subject, the subject becomes such, he is this or that, or whether predication is not to be referred rather to a judgement brought to bear on objects. I could eventually develop this point.

And with regard to the third article on the judgement of the psychoanalyst, there is something here also that for the moment I grasp badly in Stein's thinking, it is precisely the articulation of the level of desire and of that of the law or again of prohibition, namely, the moment that Stein passes from the lack, for example, of the analysand trying to posit himself as the object lacking to the analyst, where he passes then from this level to that of lack where it is a matter here of lacking (*manquement*) with respect to a law and where it would thus be a question of interdiction, namely, the very precise articulation that Stein makes between the first foundational judgement in so far as it establishes the subject on the one hand as object of desire and on the other hand as (36) subject of a past sin (*faute*). There is here an articulation that I

have not grasped very well but no doubt it is because I have not reflected enough on it. That is all I wanted to say for today.

Doctor Melman: It seems to me that one of the great merits of your presentation is in any case to have made much more clear to the listeners than we were able to do with Conté, your positions and your opinion on the treatment which will of course allow us to engage more easily in a discussion.

What I would like to say to you all the same is that I read your text with great interest and certainly one all the greater that as I tried to say the last time everything that presents itself as an effort of general theorisation of the treatment or of what happens in analysis cannot fail of course to awaken our attention our interest and our sympathy, of course.

This having being said, I had the impression and the feeling, in reading precisely these three texts, the last three recent texts that it was possible to articulate the different terms that you put forward and which are those of primary narcissistic expansion, you told us today that after all that you did not hold too much to this text [term?]and that you would be willing to abandon it - that's fine.

Doctor Stein: I would like to specify that it is not a matter here, that this term does not refer to a theoretical concept. That is why I said that I considered it as descriptive, therefore as having effectively a secondary importance.

(38) **Doctor Lacan:** This is a very important specification given the essentially theoretical character given generally to the term primary narcissism.

Doctor Melman: Essentially theoretical and very difficult to situate, I mean fundamentally in your text. I mean that one sometimes has the impression, I mean that, for example, when you situate primary narcissism or at least the goal of primary narcissism as the rediscovery of this mythical lost object, it is quite certain that you are engaging there along a certain path, a certain way of approaching this term.

But what I wanted to tell you is that I regrouped, in a way, your different propositions and your different terms around something which seemed to me to be a position. This position is the one which would make of the word of the analyst an *o*-object. It is around this that I tried to speak to you and it is also, I am saying, around this that it seemed to me that the different moments of this text could very well be articulated. When you say that the word of the analyst is liable to take on what I called, moreover, in a rather forced way, to take on this so singular brilliance I have no doubt,of course, absolutely not, the essential question appeared to me to be rather that of the position of the analyst with respect to his own word and in so far as it is liable to picture for the patient this particular object, this singular object.

(39) To take things perhaps a little bit from the beginning what seemed to me, I must say, to stymie in a way the development of these texts, in a certain way to reduce them constantly to this dual game between the patient and the analyst, with things oscillating like that from one to the other in a movement in which, as you say very clearly, one asks oneself how it can end up because, in fact, you say it all the same very clearly: you pose in any case the question in the clearest fashion and you are very frank, it seems to me that the reference to the other, I mean here of course the big Other, the lack of the references that you make here to the big Other is the point where precisely things start to agglutinate in the text, it gets clogged up and one finishes by asking oneself how they can be disentangled.

For example, I would have a tendency to interpret what you define by the term of fusional situation by which you began your presentation, I mean the realisation of this unique speaking and listening it, which Conté picked out, moreover, as a phenomenon that is of course possible but rare, I would have of course a tendency to try to evoke it in this dimension which might be perhaps eventually that in which the patient may have the feeling that his word risks rejoining the discourse, the discourse of the Other, and (40) where any separation, starting from this moment, any rupture, any hiatus or any distance would find itself abolished.

I ask myself also whether introducing this reference would not allow there to be situated in the measure in any case, I apologise if they were not here always sufficiently attentive in listening to you, but what you introduce on the subject of this distinction of different persons with regard to the subject of the you and of the he which are grammatical categories which, of course, are essential but of which I must say, I ask myself every time listening to you how you use them, I mean do you take them, do you pick them out as such in the subject of your patient, I mean, when the patient says I, for example, starting from there do you put that in one of the three categories that you have isolated, the designation of the subject of the predicate in the second person or to the first reflected person or again a designation of the subject of the predicate in the second person, is that not so.

In other words, everything that you introduce in an effort to make distinctions and to analyse the I and the you and the he, I ask myself whether it could be, I would say, situated outside this reference to a third locus from which the subject receives his own word *qua* subject.

As regards this little point that you put forward about the truth, the question of the (41) truth, allow me to quote you. When you say the following, in the text on masochism: “the psychoanalyst is called on to intervene, he is affected from two sides at once. In the transference the patient appeals to him at a place where he is not. He situates him at the supposed locus of power from the existence of which he experiences frustration, namely, this power of reality that the analyst is supposed to hold and which he can make use of as he wishes to interrupt the narcissistic expansion

of the patient. In the name of truth, he is supposed to be called to pronounce on the transference, to denounce the illusion of the patient. Replying to the first appeal from a locus where he is not, he would deceive the patient by accepting to serve as a lure for him and arrogating to himself a power which is not his own. In the name of the truth he ought to abstain from responding to the appeal of the patient and intervene in order to declare himself incompetent to judge. But, as the analyst listens, the patient's appeal is constant. To tolerate the transference is already to deceive because it is the listening which gives rise to it. The analyst ought then constantly to intervene to denounce the false in the name of truth and not listen to the appeal of deception. His efficacy would then be that of the preacher and no longer that of the analyst."

And this is where you add: "there would be no psychoanalysis if the psychoanalyst pretended to posit himself at every instant as a faithful servant of the truth." I believe that it is certain. I believe that you are completely right. But I do not see how in the articulation that you advance there, you manage what seems to be nevertheless essential for any possible development of the treatment unless it were to become, I cannot situate exactly how you manage to find a place in order nevertheless in this movement of existence of the dimension which is that of the truth.

Stein: There I reply immediately to you. It is that there is no truth at that point. As regards the term preacher, in this text it is quite evident that subsequent developments are going to lead me to suppress it. Up to then I had simply taken it in the sense of someone who gives sermons. Therefore, so that there will be no confusion, that will be left out. That is obvious.

Melman: Good, that is agreed then. I will also take up then, perhaps, perhaps on my own account, perhaps in the very final place, what you say with regard to the predicating subject which takes on an important place in your last developments which I believe deserve much reflection, what is the eventual predicating function that you assign to the analyst here.

Doctor Lacan: Good. Stein has obviously, I only noticed it afterwards I was so charmed by his speech, Stein went well beyond his time, which does not allow us sufficient time to give to the discussion, the time that I would have expected today.

(43) Now there is still space for one person. Green, would you like to intervene?

Green: I am quite willing but I do not want to deprive others of the opportunity.

Lacan: Would Major like to intervene? Have you something to say Major? You have to leave. Good. So Audouard.

(44) **Monsieur Audouard:** It seems to me that this sort of grammatical universe in which Stein situated us earlier allows itself to be constituted at every moment as a

remainder, and it is tangible from different aspects of his remarks for example when he says that even if the psychoanalyst's activity is contestable, or if he occupies a contestable position in our view, it nevertheless remains that there is a certain brilliance in his remarks. That even if the psychoanalyst is not the possessor of the truth it remains nevertheless that he is its faithful servant. That if it is true that predication is always either positive or negative, it nevertheless remains that the proper field of predication falls outside the positive as it does of the negative. And it is not perhaps for nothing that precisely *Verneinung* here was understood instead of *Verleugnung*. For *Verleugnung* precisely introduces this dimension of the lie which is nothing other than denegation. In this grammatical universe in which Stein seemed to me to situate the relationships of the analyst to the analysand, there is a sort of fidelity which appears at every moment where the effort of specularisation which takes place for example between the I and the you, between the first person reflecting himself where the you comes here to reflect the first person, there is in this effect of specularisation in which (45) Stein tries to introduce the relationship of the analysand to the analyst, there is something non-specularisable which appears at every incident. In short, one could say that this logical universe of a reflection of the you onto the I or of the I onto itself is perhaps already given the orientation of a dialectic and that, even if one introduced a more dialectical orientation, it would still remain that in this dialectic one would scarcely find a basis or a truth to ground it. It is linked, for example, with what Madam Parisot told us the other day, that one could put all of that, namely, that after all the specularised is not the specularisable. Far from being the specularisable, it is perhaps simply what makes us believe that there is a specularisable and that the specular as such is always traversed by a remainder which falls out of the field of reflection. In short that there is a sort of abyss between the predicating subject and the subject of the predicate indicates to us that there is here between the two something like a world, like a void, something which distances them, certainly not without being able to dialecticise them but without permitting at any moment that this should aim at "you are I" without there being constituted as something different, as something forced which belongs neither to logic nor to grammar but to this particular forcing of desire. Predication does not appear to me to be at the beginning a logical act, as when the (46) child says that the dog goes miaow and the cat goes bow-bow, as Lacan said, it is not a matter of a predication which belongs to the order of logic but to an order of particular forcing which is desire.

In any case this is simply to indicate along what path there could to my sense be introduced a critique of an interpretation that in my sense is too satisfying because it is too grammatical.

Doctor Lacan: Green, say a word.

Doctor Green: I apologise. I would need a blackboard. I will try to be as brief as possible. I think that I would like just to say a few words about Lacan's formula : "I the truth speak" (*Moi la vérité je parle*), with what Stein has just said.

So, we write: Me I
 the truth
 speak

We find a sentence which is in fact articulated along two axes: the Me - I axis and the axis of the truth - speak. I think that all of this has a relationship with what Stein told us about the relationships between the I and the me and the word. Audouard has just remarked that Stein constructs an equivalence between different pronouns, between the I, the you and eventually the he. By the very fact that the subject cannot say : “I say that you are I”, from the very fact that the “I say that you are I” is replaced by “it says that you are I”, by that very fact I believe that it is this equivalence between the different pronouns which seems to me to falsify things. Why? Because if at that moment in connoting in the form of an index “it says that you are I” one can say in a way that in the enunciating itself, in the succession of the enunciating, starting from the moment where the you reaches the I, the I finds itself as one might say transformed (48) and is no longer the same I as at the beginning and it is brought back to the primitive you. I believe that this point is very essential in order to conceive that there is here something which is a closed circularity and that the only way to get out of the circularity, the only way that this does not constitute a system which turns in a circle is in effect to conceive that there exists a difference between the you and the I, this difference being that of the big Other and that of the big Other barred in so far as precisely what liberates the bar is a remainder. It is necessary that there should be a remainder and in order that there should be a remainder it is necessary that there should not be an equivalence between the different pronominal values.

What do we fall on here? We fall precisely on the term of which I spoke at first: the truth, namely that Stein has spoken about the me, that he has spoken about the I, that he has spoken about the word, but precisely the question remains hanging for what concerns the truth. The analyst, is he or is he not the faithful servant of the truth?

Well then, I believe that it is here that we have all the same to return to a formula proposed by Lacan as specifying the transference, namely, that the transference is addressed to a subject who is supposed to know, supposed to know what? That is the whole question. What does the psychoanalyst know?

So then? What does he know?

(49) I think that the whole misunderstanding of the treatment, its whole *Verleugnung*, is that he is supposed to know everything except the truth, and that it is in the measure that this misunderstanding exists at the beginning that the treatment can be pursued in order to arrive finally at a situation where obviously it is understood that the subject who is supposed to know is no longer on the side of the analyst and that what is in question is indeed a truth which can only be that of the subject. I believe that we find

a quite identical problematic to the one that I tried to analyse in what concerns the oracle among the Greeks.

Doctor Lacan: I will try to give still more precise formulae but this one seems to me to be really massive and to be quite fundamental. Would you like, Stein, to reply right away or indeed, which is quite conceivable, for I am telling you already now that I will give three seminars in February: two open seminars and then I will give a closed seminar, on the fourth, I will in principle be gone to the USA. It is quite conceivable that the fourth seminar of February could be spent in pursuing a discussion that has begun so well which will allow you leisure enough to delay giving your response to today's interventions the next time, unless you wish to say a few words right away.

Doctor Stein: I do not think that it would be easy for me to give a substantial introduction the next time on the basis of the remarks that have been made today because it would lead nowhere.

Doctor Lacan: No, but the next time a number of people can give you their names, it would be more simple if a certain number of people who having allowed to mature what they have heard today would offer to come to discuss it with you on the fourth Wednesday.

Doctor Stein: Yes, but I cannot advance much further on ...

Doctor Lacan: No, that is not what is in question. It is a matter of whether you say a word which you think is very important...

Doctor Stein: Yes there is a word that I would like to say. It is the following. In this whole discussion and this should not astonish us, one always arrives at the temptation to reduce this remainder that Audouard spoke about and that Green took up again.

In the argument of Green which I do not wish to reply to in its totality because it is very important, very interesting, I would like all the same simply to point out to him that by attributing to me the intention of establishing an equivalence between different pronouns, he reduces precisely what I had left in a way as a remainder for I did not designate an equivalence between the different pronouns but precisely a confusion between the different pronouns in the imaginary register, which is quite different.

And this leads me, to be very brief, to Audouard who, in my opinion admirably defined something which refers, which is in what I told you today, that one is making use of a (53) really excellent instrument. I would like all the same, like that, for the pleasure of the story to recall that a certain congress in Amsterdam which if I remember correctly was held in 1950, no, the first Amsterdam Congress was in?

Doctor Lacan: In 1948. In 1948 I gave the speech that I had prepared, at that time we were not yet at the beginning of any teaching whatsoever on my part, which was, which turned around, not at all simply some grammaticalisation or other but precisely that of the personal pronouns I and me, a speech in which I must have exhausted the interpreters because I was forced to say in ten minutes what I had prepared for twenty, since Madame Anna Freud thought she was entitled to go a long way over her time.

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I am concerned to know whether those psychoanalysts to whom I have taught something will correctly transmit what I have said. This is the sort of test that is set by the sessions devoted to a seminar to which I cannot admit so many people for the reason that this attendance itself would be an obstacle to this verification.

If it is true that the primary aspiration of the psychological subject is to present to the desire of the other this fallacious object which is his self-image, we cannot take too rigorous precautions in order never, in any form whatsoever, to see, in what is called analytic treatment, which is an experience that is properly speaking transcendent with regard to what was expressed up to then in the order of ethics, we will never be able to take too many precautions to define the paths through which this formula of the relationship of the subject to the desire of the other which I have just given first and

which was never gone beyond in any philosophical doctrine, should effectively be gone beyond, broken through in a radical fashion.

This is why, since I am not able to be at the fourth Wednesday at which there will be (2) pursued the debates which were inaugurated on the last two Wednesdays on the subject of the formulations of Monsieur Stein who is present here in the front row of this gathering, I will question him so that the ball may be put into play again about what he understands by this so-called masochism imputed to the patient in the measure that he submits himself to a severe rule, why so quickly define as masochism something after all of which we have nothing to say at the beginning, except who wants it. It is all that we are able to say about it. He wants it (*il en veut*). Not a vague but a minimal formula for desire. Is all desire then to be desire and in itself masochistic? Undoubtedly, if the question is worth posing, it is also worth not settling too soon, especially if we remember the formula that I gave in speaking about desire and its interpretation that, in a certain sense, given the conditions of the analytic experience, desire is its interpretation.

To expose oneself to this situation which is really fundamental that any demand can only be disappointed, this is no doubt what the patient has to affront and what he cannot at the beginning foresee, and, besides, what masochism in this case to offer oneself to disappointment, as another one of my interlocutors has very well formulated it. The analyst is in effect the subject who is supposed to know, supposed to know everything except what is involved in the truth of the patient.

(3) And much more than a situation being established on a given whose high point I am indicating to you here, does the patient who offers himself to analytic experience not say to us: “it is you who, if you demand the truth from me, will fall under this law that every demand can only be disappointed. You will not rejoice in my truth and that is why I suppose you to know. It is because this is what obliges you to be deceived. The epistemological drive is the truth which offers itself as *jouissance* and which knows that it is prohibited by that very fact, for who can enjoy the truth (*jouir de la vérité*)?”

A drive then that is rather mythical (*plutôt mythique*), let me stick together these two terms in a single word and receive, psychoanalysts the investiture of what is imposed on you here: the adjective in a single word, the *plutôtmythique*.

What the patient does to us is that he makes us abandon our Pyrrhonian position. “You would like to know more about it. I am arousing your most reflective desire, that is the most unrecognisable one. The predicate with which you affect me, is your own downfall, if you qualify, you qualify yourself, I triumph.”

No doubt there is here, as Stein perceived, the point and the birth of a guilt in the patient. But you, if you accept yourself as judge, are thereby rejected as subject henceforth in the ambiguity of having to judge yourself.

(4) Recognise in the harmonic slippage of the tongue, this subject which has to judge itself (*le sujet qui a à se juger*), one of the forms of which every tongue, in its fashion, offers us the indication. No doubt, here, at the same time, there is the warning not to go, of there being no need to go too far for, says the patient, of course you will make me into a masochist, namely, a lover of your anxiety that you take to be a *jouissance*. I have become the other for you, and if you are not on your guard, you cannot avoid getting everything wrong.

Because it is enough for me to identify myself to you for you to see clearly that it is not me that you will enjoy. The hey presto! has happened and that by taking your reality, *Wirklichkeit*, what I efface down to its very trace in the real, *Realität*, is precisely what I chose in you to sanction this effacement.

So then, the idea of a subsistent and graspable being, grounding subject to subject relations, is precisely the terrain of slippery traps to which, from the start, an inadequate theory is irremediably committed, but that is the reason why it is so important for us to elaborate the structure which allows us to conceive in a radical fashion, how progress is possible for the one who offers himself in the position of knowing subject and who must, nevertheless, initially, and in a Pyrrhonian fashion, renounce any access to the truth.

(5)“No more this than that” [Greek quotation], this nodal formula in which there is expressed the position of the Pyrrhonian or the Sceptic, Pyrrhon being the leader of one of these philosophical sects that I have also, on occasion, described as schools, in order clearly to recall that the practice of philosophy in a certain context was something different to the one in which there came to completion a certain socially defined order of the ancient world. Just imagine the discipline of those who precisely imposed it on themselves in the introduction of any predicate into any question whatsoever about the truth, not simply to reject by a “neither... nor” the members of an alternative, but always to forbid themselves the very introduction of the disjunction, the one most apparently imposing itself, the refusal precisely to break through the bar of its establishment and to reject entirely the demands of the disjunction.

The fundamental position, then, of a subject imposing on himself an arrest at the threshold of truth, is here something that would no doubt deserve a longer explanation, a return to the texts, which are no doubt sparse, insufficient, full of problems, but whose whole breadth is given us by a reading of Sextus Empiricus, a reading which is not limited simply to reading a summary of it in some some manual or other, but to following the detours of a text that must be taken page by page in order to grasp the weight, the reality, of the operation that is engaged in it.

(6) It is not for nothing that I am putting forward this reference that I am giving, and which is directed to the more studious, were it only to indicate to them that they will

find in the excellent work by Victor Brochard, *Les sceptiques grecs*, the complement, the situation, the fruit of a real meditation in a modern spirit. It is not by chance that I am putting it here on the threshold of what I announced today as being my subject which, no doubt, is not a matter of indifference to the enormous attendance that I attract, namely, Pascal's *Wager*.

Pascal's *Wager*, I hope that there are none of you who have not heard something about it before today. I do not doubt that Pascal's *Wager* is something, I mean as a cultural object, infinitely more diffused than one might suppose, and if one marvels at the fact that there have been some texts of philosophers, after all, if I had here to give you the bibliography, I would manage, God knows, to exhaust it rather quickly, when I had reached fifty references on the side of those who write and who think it worth while to communicate their thinking to us, I would have seen the end of it and everything that has been said about it - I apologise for having to announce such a depressing formula, I regret it all the more since this concerns, as I might say, the reputation of a corporation described as philosophical - all this does not go very far.

I cannot but recommend to you one article which is to be commended for the excellent (7) procedure of starting at the level, I cannot say, of the text, of what is written on this little sheet or rather on these two little sheets of paper covered front and back which is what Pascal left us in what one could call his scribbling, and which from there, starting from there, for it is very necessary not to see there something which was done to be addressed to us but which, nevertheless, and perhaps all the more, deserves to be retained as giving us, in a way, a sort of substitute or real substance concerning this singular incorporeal reality which is properly the one which I am trying, with the resources of an elementary topology, to valorise for you as regards what we can take from it at the level of our articulations.

In this respect, the article by Monsieur Henri Gouhier which appeared in an Italian journal and whose reference, after all, I would like to leave you here, an Italian journal which is published as *Archivio di filosofia*, number 3, 1962, the organ of the institute of philosophical studies, *Di studii filosofici* in Rome, the article by Monsieur Henri Gouhier on Pascal's wager deserves your attention, if you can obtain the volume of this journal.

It is, as you see, one of the last to appear. In the past there were many others ranging from the astonishment of Voltaire, the specifications of Condorcet, the wanderings (8) of Laplace, the scandal of Victor Cousin which I will not develop here, not having the time to tell you what was the true function of what is called eclecticism, more recently the valuable remarks made by Lachelier which, undoubtedly, are worth reading. I would not say as much about something of which I will give you a sample later on, the article by Dugas and Riquier in the *Revue philosophique* of 1900.

Since then things have been taken up at the level of what we will call the wager considered at ground level. Should one wager? To wager, as Pascal indicates to us, if

this indeed is what we are dealing with, what would certainly be the good of our life conceived at its most ordinary level, for the uncertainty of a promise, whose incommensurability with regard to what we might be abandoning the articulation of Pascal seems to be entirely directed to demonstrate to us, an introduction it is said, to invite us to the wager of belief, undoubtedly, discern now what is proposed in the putting forward of something, after all, which is not so far from the most common consciousness, this vague anxiety about the beyond, which is not necessarily a beyond of death, is it not necessary for it to exist in order for it to be supported in all sorts of references which, for the most exigent, take shape in these hopes to which people consecrate themselves and which are only in this perspective, with regard to religion, (9) something that we would at the very least qualify as analogical. In a short and substantial chapter, the author of *Dieu caché*, Monsieur Goldman does not seem, for his part, to be at all reluctant to make of Pascal's *Wager* the prelude to the faith that the Marxist commits himself to in the advent of the proletariat.

I would be far from reducing to this limit, of which the least one can say is that it is a little bit too apologetic, the import of a chapter whose value as a discussion is undoubtedly enriching enough, no doubt, for us to rate this part of the enterprise as more than *bricolage*.

But it seems to me that nowhere has anyone gone into the text of the *Wager* from this point of view, that it is not a "one" that it is a matter of convincing, that this wager is the wager of Pascal himself, of an "I", of a subject who reveals to us his structure, a structure that is perfectly verifiable and to be verified not at all from such and such an incident which confirms it in the biographical context, Pascal's deeds in a life in which it is only right to manifest the extremely complex steps, the gestures that are brought to completion with the approach of death in one or other wish which may appear exorbitant to us, the one to be brought to the incurables to end his existence there, this would mean pinpointing them very quickly and picking out in them the theme of (10) masochism. Whether a subject, whether a thinking which is able so admirably to distinguish, as you are going to see, in the strict formulation of essential positions, yields to us in a way its structure, is something which for us is only to be linked up to other points in which, also, the structure of the subject as such is manifested by him in a certain radical position, and if we have the honour of seeing there being affirmed, without for all that there being anything to say that there was here any message whatsoever, for after all we have these pieces of paper, almost after his death, death is perhaps not the limit of any beyond, it is undoubtedly one of the easiest limits to use when it is a question of pickpocketing. Pascal's pockets were picked. It has been done, let us take advantage of it.

Let us take advantage of it, if there is something that can allow us to articulate one of the most singular projects, one of the most exceptional sorts of enterprise that has ever been given to us, and which might appear to be one of the most banal as you are going to see.

“Infinity -Nothing”, he begins. Uninterpretable. “Our soul is cast into the body where it finds number, time, dimensions; it reasons about these things and calls them natural or necessary and can believe nothing else”. A reminder of the powers of the imagination.

“Unity added to infinity does not increase it at all, any more than a foot added to an infinite measurement. The finite is annihilated in the presence of the infinite and becomes pure nothingness.”

“So it is with our mind before God, with our justice before divine justice. There is not so great a disproportion between our justice and God’s as between unity and infinity.” - I cannot resist the pleasure of not cutting what follows - “God’s justice must be as vast as his mercy. Now his justice towards the damned is less vast and ought to be less startling to us than his mercy towards the elect.”

“We know that the infinite exists without knowing its nature, just as we know that it is untrue that numbers are finite. Thus it is true that there is an infinite number, but we do not know what it is. It is untrue that it is even, untrue that it is odd, for by adding a unit it does not change its nature. Yet it is a number, and every number is even or odd. (it is true that this applies to every finite number). Therefore, we may well know that God exists without knowing what he is.”

Such is the introduction that is subsequently developed. I would ask you, starting from there, to refer to the text whose starting point is properly that Pascal, the thinker, and if you wish a religious, integrated thinker, at the thought that the damned like the (12) elect are entirely at the mercy of divine grace, posits nevertheless as an inaugural step that God can in no way be known in his being.

He even highlights properly speaking that one is not able through the power of reason to know that he exists. The important thing I am going, I hope, to show you and after all I do not think that I am contributing here for any of you something all that surprising, you have heard enough spoken about the problems of existence, even though they are suspended in thin air, for you not to be surprised if I point out, if I point out in passing for want today of being able to dwell any longer on it, that the important thing is not at all this suspense in so far as it is radical, but the division that it introduces between being and existence.

The “he [it?]exists” which gave so many difficulties to Aristotelian thinking in so far as, after all, the being that is posited is self-sufficient, he exists because he is being and, nevertheless, the intrusion of religious revelation, that of Judaism, poses, I mean among philosophers starting from Avicenna, the question of how to pigeon-hole this suspending of existence in so far as it is necessary for religious thinking to remit its decision to God.

(13) This impossibility of pigeon-holing in a categorisable fashion the function of existence with respect to being, even if it is the same as what is going to come back into question about God himself by keeping us on this question of whether it is enough to say about God that he is the supreme being. Have no doubt about it. For Pascal the question is settled. Another little piece of paper sewn more deeply than in a pocket, under a lining, “not the God of the philosophers but the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob” shows us the step that has been taken, and that what is at stake is not at all the supreme being.

So then, clear away, scour clean these preliminary questions which would undoubtedly render precarious any reference to a given as sufficiently constituting by itself a certainty. When Monsieur Dugas and Riquier at the end of their article - read it, I am not claiming that it should be judged entirely from the sample that I am going to give you of it - question themselves: “And now what should be thought of an experience which presents itself as follows: in order to enter into the state of mind of the believer, you strip bare your nature, you make a *tabula rasa* of your instincts, of your feelings, of your conceptions of happiness. By considering the wager only from the point of view of logic, the refusal to wager for,” - this is called in the argument, I have not read enough of it for you to be up to speed with the vocabulary, to take the cross, that means odd or even, heads or tails, it is not a matter of the Christian cross - “but if we put ourselves before the real conditions of the wager, we have to say that on the contrary it would be madness to take heads (*la croix*), for faith is not as Pascal sometimes presents it. It is not simply superimposed on reason; it does not have as an effect to push back the limits of our mind without hampering its natural development and give it access, therefore, to a world which would naturally be closed to it. In reality it requires the abdication of our reason, the immolation of our feelings. Is not this annihilating of our personality the greatest danger that we can run as human beings. Pascal nevertheless looks on this danger with an indifferent eye. What do you have to lose, he asks us. Full of his theological ideas” - we are here in psychology - “he does not enter into the mind of man as purely man and ‘his discourse’ is exclusively addressed to the one who already admits if not original sin and the fall of man and the whole of this more pessimistic philosophy that he himself has drawn from Christian dogma. But any mind which has only reason as a guide and which believes in the natural dignity of man and the possibility of happiness cannot fail to consider the argumentation of the wager at once as a logical monstrosity and a moral outrage. The harshness of such a judgement would, if needs be, find its justification or its excuse in (15) Pascal’s celebrated remark about the difference between men or the originality of spirits.”

I will skip a few lines in order to arrive at this indulgent absolution: “his sincerity is obvious, his frankness is absolute and whatever may be the immorality of his theses and the weakness of his reasoning, one continues to respect his character and to admire his genius.”

So that is settled. Poupoule give me my slippers. I have finished with him. Nevertheless, I would like if, appealing to all of this which, after all, gives a tone which is properly speaking never quite absent at least as a state from those who have pushed furthest the analysis of Pascal's wager, to whom I would not like, for fear of forgetting him afterwards, fail to join to those whom I already quoted earlier the chapter devoted by Monsieur Souriau to Pascal's wager in his book, *L'ombre de Dieu*. Here also you will see glimpses that are altogether suggestive and valid from our perspective with respect to the fashion in which we should handle this testimony.

A wager. Many things have been said about this wager and, in particular, that it is not one. We are going to see later what a wager is. What makes people afraid at the beginning is the stake (*l'enjeu*) and the way Pascal speaks about it. "Let us then examine this point, and let us say: 'either God is or he is not'. But to which view shall (16) we be inclined? Reason cannot decide this question. Infinite chaos separates us. At the far end of this infinite distance a coin is being spun" - pay attention to this phrase - "which will come down heads or tails." Never has this infinite distance, namely, what it means, been really taken into consideration.

"How will you wager? Reason cannot make you choose either, reason cannot prove either wrong." It is Pascal who speaks. "Do not then condemn as wrong those who have made a choice, for you know nothing about it." "No", replies the interlocutor, who is also Pascal himself, "but I will condemn them not for having made this particular choice, but any choice, for although the one who calls heads and the other one are equally at fault, the fact is that they are both at fault: the right thing is not to wager at all".

"Yes, but you must wager. There is no choice, you are already committed. Which will you choose then? Let us see: since a choice must be made let us see which offers you the least interest. You have two things to lose". (No one seems to have noticed that it is a matter purely and simply of losing them) "the true and the good; and two things to stake: your reason and your will, your knowledge and your happiness."

When one commits something in a game, in a game played by two, there are two throws: your reason and your will is the first. Your knowledge and your happiness is (17) the second which is not at all wagered by the same partner. Later on we will discuss what is at stake, namely, that to wager that he is, without hesitating, since there is an equal chance of gain and loss, if you stood to win only two lives for one, you could still wager.

After which we are promised, in a formula whose text should not be misunderstood, an infinity of lives at first, which displaces, of course, the conditions of what is at stake. It is not at all two lives instead of one, one life on each side which are at stake, but a life on one hand and, on the other hand, what Pascal calls first of all an infinity

of lives, then afterwards an infinity of infinitely happy lives. This is what we will have to take up in a moment when we study what such a wager signifies.

But first of all I would like to question the following which has never been retained, namely, what is meant by committing one's life and how is it brought into the reckoning? We see Pascal alluding to it at several stages of his reasoning.

- 1) that it cannot not be committed,
- 2) the way in which it must be judged if, at the end, the wager is lost.

"I reply," says Pascal "that you have lost your life" and here he articulates, "but in losing it you lose nothing". The singularity of this nothing. At first it is a matter of a (18) life at least for a time, in the average case, this choice is not made on one's death bed, even though again this is not unthinkable, a life that you could have lived.

This life is evoked at other moments as involving more than one pleasure, pleasures that he describes as foul, no doubt, but which are nevertheless there, providing a certain weight because they may create an obstacle to the one to whom this reasoning is addressed sensing its conviction. The ambiguity, then, of this life, between the fact that it is the heart of the resistance of the subject to become committed to the wager and that, on the other hand, compared to what is involved in the wager, it is a nothing, this is properly what ought to be remembered by us in order to make us question ourselves about what distinguishes this nothing.

This nothing has all the same this property of being the stake, and we are going to see right away what it involves as regards a wager, this remark is precisely the something which is going to allow us to give its true place in the structure to this supposed nothing of the stake.

And if, when breaking through the term of "discourse" to put them as Messieurs Dugas and Riquier, about Pascal, Pascal, to the one who has consented to submit himself to the rules of the wager nevertheless says, you must not believe that the effects of my wager can be identified to my belief. Pascal's reply: "Become more (19) docile (*abêtissez-vous*)", which horrified Monsieur Victor Cousin, the first one to have extracted it with the writing of the scandal of the direct papers of Pascal to which he had direct access, this "become more docile" is nevertheless clear enough. This "become more docile" is exactly what we can designate by the renunciation of the traps and the envelopes, the clothing of narcissism, namely the stripping of this image, the only one that the beasts do not have, namely, self-image.

What falls, what collapses at the proposed goal of a certain asceticism, of a certain stripping away, is properly speaking what links up in its situation in the individual (*l'être*), at the level of what is affirmed of it as I am in the field of the other, of what, in the subject, comes from self-miscognition. Does that mean that we should take as

being equal to nothingness (*néant*), the nothing (*rien*) which remains? How then could it play its role as a stake?

Could we not identify this nothing, I am introducing the question here, to this always fleeting, always hidden object, to what is after all hope or despair the essence of our desire, to this unnameable, ungraspable, unarticulatable object and, nevertheless, that Pascal's wager is going to allow us to affirm, according to the formula that Plato employs in *Phaedo*, concerning what is involved for being as something to which there corresponds an invincible discourse.

(20) The (o) as cause of desire and value which determines it, is what is involved in the Pascalian stake. What allows us to confirm this? Undoubtedly, I have just said it, the fact that it is engaged as a stake in the wager. For this it would be well to clarify the obscurities about what a wager is. A wager is an act that many people engage in. I say that it is an act; there is in effect no wager without something which does away with decision. This decision is remitted to a cause that I would call the ideal cause, and which is called chance.

Moreover, let us pay careful attention to avoid here the ambiguity which would consist in putting Pascal's wager in terms of the modern theory of probability which was not yet born at that epoch.

Probability is something that the development of our science encounters at the final term of a certain vein of investigation of the real. And to manifest the permanence of the presence of this ambiguity whose profile I only evoked earlier concerning the relationship to being, I can only recall here how, as Pascal would say, the difference of minds is marked which is not at all a psychological remark but a reference to the structure of the subject. The repugnance marked, for example, in a letter from Einstein to Max Born, for this final reality who would only be a thrower of dice, the (21) fundamental and proclaimed attachment on the part of a spirit who committed the highest scientific authority of his time to the supposition of a being who is no doubt clever but who does not deceive, namely, a certain form, still perfectly subsistent at the centre of a scientific thinking, of a divine being, is something that deserves to be recalled at the threshold of what we are going to commit ourselves to and which is, properly, this can only be defined at the moment of this threshold, of this step, of this radical break-through by Pascal, namely, the term strictly opposed to a defined chance (*hasard*).

What is chance? Chance is attached essentially to the conception of the real *qua* impossible, I have said, an impossible which I would complete today as impossible to question, impossible to question because it answers at random (*au hasard*).

What does this say about this form of the real? We may consider, if only for an instant, and to situate the sense of what we articulate as the wall, the limit, the point

that we are trying, in the final analysis by scientific exploration, to end up by getting to, the point where there is nothing more to be extracted from it but a random response. Science is not complete. But the progressive rise of a thinking that is quite improperly called indeterminist, in as much as the level of the real that we are questioning forces it (22) on us, may allow us at least to suggest this perspective in which there would be inscribed scientific knowledge if it is precisely what I am telling you, namely, the renunciation of knowing, and at the same time of being, is it not in the measure that what is involved is to construct, in the form of scientific instruments, what in the course of this goal of rejoining the real, the point of chance (*le point de hasard*), was recommended to us as an instrument which is capable of rejoining it.

What is a dice if not an instrument designed to give rise to pure chance. In the investigation of the real all our instruments might be conceived as only a scaffolding thanks to which, by ploughing on, we arrive at the term of absolute chance.

I am not at all saying that I am settling this matter. No doubt, they could not be sufficiently articulated except by entering in a more precise fashion into the elaborations that our link with physics obliges us to give to the principle of probability. But here we are at a much more elementary level. Before this theory of probability is born, does it not guarantee to this register, as I might say, its scientific seriousness? We ought not to question ourselves about what is meant by this first speculation about chance, that is always indispensable to put as an exergue to all speculation on probability.

(23) Open any book whatsoever: there are good ones and there are bad ones, there is a good one that I mention to you in passing: *Le hasard* by Monsieur Emile Borel simply because of the fact that he collects in passing for you a series of objections, of absurd questions, there is nothing more interesting for us than *stultae questiones*.

You will see there that, for those who begin to give shape, to give body to this question about chance, when I said earlier to give body, and evoking this edification of our science, there comes as an echo to me the formula which had in a way, when I was taking my notes, sprung from my pen, that in the mapping out on the wall of chance, our science, in its instruments, would give body to the truth.

But what is it that haunts anyone limited to the most accessible and the most elementary level of this operation of chance. How long will it take monkeys working on a typewriter to produce with their machines a verse of Homer? What are the chances that a child who does not know the alphabet will right away put the letters in the correct order? What chance is there that a poem will emerge from a succession of throws of the dice? These questions are absurd. In all of these eventualities, there is no objection to them being realised on the first occasion. Simply the fact that we think of them when we introduce this function of chance, proves what the aim of this cause (24) signifies for us. It is aiming at the same time this real from which it has

nothing to expect, what a poet in 1929 wrote in a little journal that can no longer be found: “the blind and deaf evil, the God deprived of sense”, and at the same time it is waiting for it to manifest itself as subject. But after all, where do we get to? Even if the stakes are equal, which is where one always starts to begin to appreciate what is at stake in a game of chance, that the chances, as they say, or again the mathematical expectancy, a very incorrect term, are equal to a half, it is beginning from here that it is worth the trouble to play. And, nevertheless, it is quite clear that if the chance is only a half, all you will do in an equal bet is recuperate your own, which means nothing.

The fact is, therefore, that in the risk something else is involved. What is involved, what is at the subjective horizon of the passion of the gambler is the fact that, at the end of the act, for it is necessary that there should be an act and an act of decision, at the end of this, whose conditions a certain signifying framework must first of all have defined, I have not yet tackled it up to now because this is what we are going to go into subsequently, a pure response gives the equivalent of what, in effect, is always committed as nothing since the bet is placed there to be lost, that it incarnates, in a word, what I called the object lost for the subject in every commitment to the signifier, (25) and that beyond another chain that is supposed to be signifying and of another order of subject, something which does not involve the lost object, which because of this fact restores it to us in a successful sequence.

Such is the pure principle of the passion of the gambler. The gambler refers himself, in a certain beyond which is the one which the framework of the game defines, refers himself to a different mode of relationship of the subject to the signifier which does not involve the loss of (o). This is why he is capable if he is a gambler, and why should you belittle him if you are not one, you have no doubt, going on the most important testimonies of the literature that there is here an existential mode and that if you are not one it is perhaps simply because you have not perceived the degree to which you also are, this is what I hope to show you soon, as Pascal does, who tells you that you are committed whether you wish it or not.

Here, we have to dwell for a moment on the way in which, before the wager, Pascal properly speaking tried to give substance, as I might say, to this reference which may appear bold to you, that I give you about the presence of the object which is found in a random sequence. I will explain to you - no doubt not today but the next time given the fact that I will be limited by the clock - why Pascal, in the wager, evokes only one (26) game and especially that one, and especially that one for, let us say quickly, it is late, a Jansenist, is played in several stages.

But one thing, at the very time when he began to write the *Pensées* and when no one knows whether he had already written the little bits of paper on *The wager*, one thing had been well worked over by him of which he was very proud. It is essential to recall that in the triad which comes from his own pen and which summarises the three

moments of the wager, of which I have only gone through two today, reserving for the next time the third, the Pyrrhonian one, no access to the truth, the geometer, geometry of chance. It is in these terms that Pascal addresses himself to the Parisian mathematical society before whom he is presenting some results of his arithmetical triangle. He himself describes as stupefying this capture, this halter of geometry that he has put on chance. He dialogues at length with Fermat, a great mind no doubt but whose position in the magistrature of Toulouse distracted him, no doubt, from the strict firmness necessary for mathematical speculation. For they are not at all in agreement on what will be called, you will see what it is subsequently, the value of parts, the fact is precisely that Fermat, too prematurely, intends to treat them in the name of probability, namely, of the series of events arranged according to the (27) succession of combinatorial results, between what they give let us say with Pascal, heads or tails. Pascal has a completely different procedure. This is what is called in Pascal the rule of parts. I am going to try to put it, all the same, within hand's reach. Naturally you will think that you understand. I would advise you nevertheless to read very seriously in the Boutroux, Gazier, Brunschvicg edition in book three of volume three, to read what is involved not simply about the rule of parts but of the mathematical triangle. Because you will see, then, that this does not deliver itself up immediately even though it is, as I am going to tell you, the first time that Descartes presents it to Fermat or to Monsieur de Carcavie, I do not remember.

A game is played out in two throws (*coups*). This presupposes that the bets are already on. We say provisionally that they are equal. One plays one throw. I win. My partner wants to stop the game here. I underline this scansion which is abbreviated in Pascal. He speaks immediately of a common agreement. Now, as we will see, this common agreement deserves to be questioned. I agree. Are we going, since nobody has won, if the chance in question is for example that the coin gives heads twice in succession, which I would have bet on, let us suppose. I have not won and, nevertheless, Pascal says and affirms, in a development which gives its whole weight to (28) the articulation that is at stake, for there results from it a mathematical theory whose developments are very wide-ranging, and it is this extensiveness that I would ask you to refer to later while you are waiting to hear me again next week. Pascal says: "Thus ought to reason the winner in order to give his agreement. He ought to say: I won one game."

This is nothing compared to the wager because the wager is that I have won two and nevertheless this is worth something, for if we now play the second either I win the lot, the stake, or indeed if you win, we are at the same point as at the beginning, namely, that if we separate, I repeat, by common agreement, each one takes back his bet.

Thus for me, who am now winning, to agree to the interruption of the game, there are those who leave and what must be divided up: *partituri* *partitura*, until I have either to take back my bet or I win everything, I ask you, as is legitimate, to take

half of your bet. It is from there that Pascal begins to give his sense to what is meant by a game of chance. What is not highlighted, is that if it were I the winner who interrupted things, my adversary would be quite right to say: "Excuse me, but you have not won."

(29) And then, you have nothing to say about my bet. The substance, the incarnation that Pascal gives of the value of the very act of gaming, separated from the sequence of the game, is where there is designated that what Pascal sees in the game, are precisely one of these objects which are nothing and which can, all the same, be evaluated in function of the value of the bet, for, as he articulates very well, this object, definable in all correctness and in all justice in the rule of the game, he says, is to get the other person's money.

It is two o'clock, and the things that I am going into, as regards which you will see that at the final term, the wager is nowhere in what I told you today, because the wager is Pascal's wager on the existence of the other. That this wager holds to be sure, the two lines separated by a bar: God exists, God does not exist, namely, that not, as has been said, Pascal's wager remains suspended, because if God does not exist, there is no wager, because there is no other, nor any bet, far from it, the structure that Pascal's wager puts forward is the possibility that is not simply fundamental but I would say essential, structural, ubiquitous in every structure of the subject, that the field with respect to which there is established the claim of (o), the object of desire, is the field of the Other *qua* divided with respect to being itself, it is what is in my graph as S, signifier of \emptyset .

Seminar 10: Wednesday 9 February 1966

Since it sometimes happens that at the beginning of one of my lectures I give some references to what is happening elsewhere in the sphere of my teaching, I will evoke today, at the beginning, something whose entire (*en pierre*) relevance, of course, will only be obvious to those who attended a session of our Freudian School last evening, but which, nevertheless, for all the others will represent an introduction to the focusing, in the photographic sense of the term, that my discourse today will

constitute, with which I will complete, I hope, what I have to say about Pascal's *Wager*, as regards the essential it conditions.

Relationships engaged in in psychoanalysis, this then is what I will begin from as a preamble which is at the same time a parenthesis, it is a remark that is very brief, necessarily, concerning the phantasy that is called, and which is in question under the name of feminine masochism.

Let me be understood if I state that feminine masochism is, in the last resort, the profile of the *jouissance* reserved for the one who enters into the world of the Other, in so far as this Other is the feminine Other, namely: the Truth.

Now the woman, if one can speak about the woman, the woman that someone tried last evening to make depend on a typical essence which is supposed to be that of femininity, a fragile enterprise, the woman, let us say that in so far as Freud develops and articulates as having a start that is distinct from that of man in this game which is (2) engaged where what is in question is her desire, the woman is no more in this world than the man. No doubt it can happen that she represents it for him in the form of the *o*-object; but it has to be said, that this is what she energetically refuses to be, since her goal is to be *i(o)* like every human being, that the woman is narcissistic like every other human being; and that it is in this distance, this tearing apart that there is installed, between what she wishes to be, and what one puts into her, that there is established this dimension which is presented in the relationship of love as deception.

Let us add that this narcissism, is the impasse, the great impasse of the love described as courtly, that by putting her in the position of the I of the ego ideal in the field of the other as a point of reference, by organising this status of love, one only exalts this narcissism, namely accentuates the difference.

In these few terms there is located the impasse of trying to define femininity as a function that can be isolated.

Nothing, here, then can be located to say that in this term there is a feminine pole of the relationship, of the relationship to the thing and that the feminine is this term of truth. The feminine is radically deceiving under all the forms in which it is presented.

This will serve us as a start to map out the three distances in which there can be accommodated this field of research that the ambition of philosophers has always signalled as a search for truth.

Is the danger that the analyst assumes in taking the place of guide on this path, the one that the myth of Acteon signals as the impossibility of surprising the domain where (3) our destiny is sketched out as the one which is commanded by the three Parcae, Clotho, Lachesis, Atropos, a Trinitarian form of the fundamental, archaic, ancestral

God, the one from which the other revelation separates us, the one whose reference we will later have to take up, through Pascal's *Wager* which adapts onto the function of the father what holds us in a particular interdiction with respect to the final *jouissance*.

It is already the inaugural statement of Freud's thinking that signals for us the importance of its suspension, of the suspension of all his thinking around this interdiction of the father whose formula we will see appearing later in a different form.

If, in the preceding years, I taught you to dwell on the Cartesian *cogito* in order to represent to yourselves how there is sketched out the *squeeze*, the *Entzweiung*, the radical division in which the subject is constituted, to recognise in the formula of the "I think" itself, the point at which it emerges that the rupture between the being of the "I think" can only be affirmed from a point of doubt, it is to approach, in a surer fashion, this purer formulation, that the same function of the subject, this time radically in function of desire that is given to us by Pascal's *Wager*. For undoubtedly what is already in the Cartesian *cogito* is sufficient to ground the being of the subject in so far as the signifier determines it as being only able to grasp itself at the point that around the affirmation of "I think" it has been reduced to this point of doubt of being, it has no longer any sense except that by opening the inverted commas of the conclusion which (4) gives it all its substance, the "therefore I am" as content of the thinking in so far as it rejects into a retro-position the "je suis d'être" of the "I think", I am the one who thinks "therefore I am". Now, if we rediscover Freud's path by considering that in this doubt there is the whole substance of the central object which thus divides the being of the "I think" itself in so far as in this doubt, Freud in his praxis, makes us recognise the point of emergence of this fault (*faille*) of the subject which divides it and which is called consciousness.

The suturing point, the unnoticed closing point in the "I think therefore I am", is where we have to reconstruct the whole elided part of what is opened up, that we open again this gap (*béance*), which can only in any form of discourse which is a human discourse, appear in the form of a stumbling, of an interference, the breakdown of this discourse which wants to be coherent.

Nevertheless, what grounds this discourse is not at all grasped in this manner, a discourse of desire, we are told, but what is it that ensures that we can say that that by which we supply for it, is what takes the place of representation. You will clearly understand that this is to indicate here the place where there functions what sustains as divided everything of the subject that is realised in discourse, that this is the place where we have to search for the function of the *o*-object.

Pascal's doubt is still in this passage of a balancing operation, *tute dubo dubito*, it is habit, I busy myself in making the scales of this balance oscillate. It is around a

testing of knowledge with respect to the truth, of what is involved or what is not involved in (5) true knowledge.

Naturally, Heidegger has the easier role in representing that there is abandoned the irremediably repressed basis of the *Alethia*, the *Urverdrängung*, if this is not how he names it, this is how we can identify it.

But this reminder is a fragile one since it only represents a return to a domain with no way out, in conformity with the term employed at the origin of Greek thought it is *Lethos* that is involved, it is the *echt*, the authentic.

Descartes installs at the same time as he reveals, unknownst to himself, the division of the subject around the operation of putting to the test, a negative operation, it is impossible to recognise how the scales tilt around true knowledge. He gets nothing from it except the certainty of the test that he has tried and it is in this doubt of the subject that certainty is inserted. To take things up again and take a further step, he has to bring forward again the ancient argument, through which what impresses the idea of perfection onto the order of our thinking, ought to guarantee the path of our research. Undoubtedly, one can highlight and outline already here the distance taken with respect to the ontological argument whose form, nevertheless, you recognise here; and even though it has had its value in the exploration of the field of being, it no longer deserves, for us, to be recaptured in this form which appears certain here, to which his reflection will have sufficiently shown that the idea of perfection is only delineated and formed on the model of a competition between prize animals (*bête de concours*) and that its substance is nothing other than that of which the pig may dream (6) as regards the obesity of his castrator. I do not like vain blasphemy and you should know what I am aiming at in this way, is certainly not the aim of some people, of a certain deviation concerning a questioning about the divine being, but the one in which a certain philosophical detail seems determined to remain stuck.

So that it must be remarked that Descartes' approach allows the subject to get away scot-free with regard to a supposedly deceiving God and that by turning towards the other God in order to remit to him, to his arbitrariness, the entire charge of grounding the eternal truths, the question which is important for us is to know whether in this operation, since already he has got off scot-free, it is indeed the subject who doubts and that even the deceiving God would not for his part be able to withdraw this privilege from him. The one towards whom he turns is not in that case - even if he is perfect - and I am saying it strengthened by what Pascal thought before me, is not in that case a deceived God. This sensitive point is important for us and in our research, in so far as it is by the trap of the ideal form, as in a way preformed, placed beforehand in the path where we have to guide the research of the subject is properly such that the ideal of perfection has to be deceived. "(Greek quotation) what is to be done concerning the act of the doctor," Plato well says, "is this image (Greek quotation) that he the doctor has in his soul." Is this not to express the exact

importance that there is, the representation that we have to make, that we have to make for ourselves, about the nature of what is at stake when we are dealing with the order of the relationship to the truth, which is only accessible and defined by the conditions (7) under which we put into practice the experience to which there is limited the thesis where the subject is formed in dependence on the signifier as such.

This opens up the structure of Pascal's *Wager*. Somewhere, in one of these numerous points where there is prefigured, in these dialogues of Plato which are very far of course from giving us a doctrine that is, in a way, unilateral, the relationship of everything that is, everything that is idea to this *aethos* of which I spoke earlier, which is supposed to bring to birth everything that subsists in being, very far from that at every moment we will find references designed to orientate us and specifically the following: between the eternal being which does not exist, and what is born and dies but which is not.

The sign, the touchstone ought to be given to us in the fact that if the first subsists he must be supported by an invincible discourse, this indeed is what we are still searching for, except for the fact that this discourse is the one which ought to allow us to recognise in the field which is ours of an existence circumscribed between birth and death, what this discourse may contain that is of this invincible order.

And this is what Pascal's discourse introduces us to. It is no surprise that he does not begin from this reference to the beyond, of life and of death but it is not, I would not say, as it appears but well and truly as each and every one sees and is scandalised by, all these gentlemen with a spiritualist ideology rear up here and pout, how can one speak about something that is of such high dignity in terms of these gamblers who are the dregs of our society. In Victor Cousin's time only the bourgeois have the right to (8) devote themselves to the *agio*; and those to whom there is given in society the responsibility of thinking about what is happening, can warn the people of what is effectively at stake in what is called the mark of progress, are requested to enter into this order of decency to which I wanted to give earlier, in a scandalous form, its outrageous enseign, that of the castrated pig, in other words, to remain within the limits of decency of the thinking that is called eclecticism.

Have you not noticed that in this wager about the beyond, Pascal does not speak to us, no one has ever seen that, about eternal life. He speaks about an infinity of lives that are infinitely happy. That is an awful lot of lives! And in the final analysis by calling them that, he preserves for them their horizon of life and the proof is that he begins by saying: would you not wager simply in order that there should be another one? The person that I called earlier, I mean the last time, the good Lachelier, well he is very nice, he stops there; he says all the same, who would wager in order simply to have a second life? Find the passage, I was searching frantically for it earlier, you will easily find it - the fact is that I do not reproach him for this lack of imagination, but is it not true, simply, that by covering his little everyday man with the sifter of chance

involved in the *Wager* he invites us, for our part, to really pose the question to ourselves.

What happens, effectively, and would it not be worth the trouble to commit oneself to a wager, only with some chances as regards this life between birth and death, this life (9) of ours, in order perhaps to have a second one?

Let us allow ourselves, let us allow ourselves to dwell for a moment on this game, perhaps a little bit better equipped than others, in order to grasp the irreducible difference, the breakthrough that is involved in being able to think in this way. For it is necessary that these two lives should each be between birth and death, but it is also necessary that it should be the same subject. Everything that will have been played out precisely in the first, we can as we know play differently in the second. But we will not know for all that what the stake is. This unknown object which divides us between knowledge and truth, how can we not hope that the second will give us a view of the first, that for a subject the signifier would not be what represents the subject to infinity for another signifier, but for the other subject that we would also be? How can we not hope for the privilege that this other subject will be the truth of the first one? In other words, do we not see here in this imagining, a phantasy of a phantasy, there being clarified what under the name of phantasy plays in secret with this life which indeed is such that we only have one and that up to the end the stake may be hidden from us.

This supposition implicit to the *Parcae*, as we read it, if we read it in the candlelight of the lack of reflection on which our whole fate is suspended, this supposition, that after death we will have the final word on it, namely, that the truth will be obvious whether yes or no the God of the promise will be there to keep it, who cannot see that this supposition implicit in the whole business, is what really keeps it in suspense. Why, (10) after death, if something perdures, should we not still wander about in the same perplexity?

The Pascalian game about this infinity of lives, multiplied by the infinity of happiness which must certainly have some relation to what is hidden in ours, cannot but have another sense which has nothing to do with the retribution of our blind efforts and this indeed is the reason why it is consistent that the man whose faith was completely suspended on this something about which we no longer even know how to speak, which is called grace, is in a consistent position when he unfolds his thinking about the stake, the stake which is that of happiness, namely, everything which causes what is perishable and failed in our desire, that this stake of happiness is of a nature to make us look for what is the basis of the wager.

This *o*-object that we have seen emerge in this imaginable beyond, already in a very proximate way by simply imagining a second life, is not something that religious thinking has not already plumbed.

It is called the communion of saints. None of those who live within a community of faith, which has some relationships with this foundation of happiness, is uninterested in the fact that somewhere this happiness has been conquered by others of whom we know nothing. This conception is consistent with the fact that each one of our lives, those of us common people, is nothing other than a test of endurance suspended on the merit of some unknown people and that what is traditionally expressed in this theme exploited by a whole theatre which goes further in dignity than you may first be able to measure, if you think that the theatre of Shakespeare himself takes up the one whose (11) theme is that life is a dream.

As compared to this perspective Pascal's *Wager* signifies an awakening. The very closeness of the relationship to the other concerns this doctrine of predestination and grace to which, from my Rome report on, I indicated that instead of a thousand other futile occupations, psychoanalysts should turn their gaze. Here there is already outlined the point of impact where we can, just as at the end of an article entitled "Remarks on a certain discourse" - which I would ask you to consult - marked the point to which I already wanted to direct you with respect to the function of this wager.

Because now we can see what is meant by this *Wager*, which is unique in that the stake is the existence of the partner. If Pascal can put in the balance this something which is not the all, but the infinite which opens out, by simply being able to recognise it at this point where we learned last year to designate substantially the function of lack, namely, number where the indefinite is only the mask of the real infinity which is dissimulated in it and which is precisely the one opened up by the dimension of lack, to put it in the balance with what is designated in the field of the subject as object cause of desire, which signals itself by being apparently nothing, and from this very confrontation of the balancing carried beyond, into the field of the other, of this field where for us there is outlined the whole signifying putting into shape at which Pascal tells us: you cannot escape, you are already on board; this is what the signifier supports, everything that we (12) grasp as subject, we are in the wager and it is for the one to whom there belongs, as was given to Pascal, the power of recognising the purest forms of it, those closest to this function of lack, it is here, around this oscillation that affects the other and putting him between this question that I already formulated and that I allow myself to recall because some people here may remember it, this question of "nothing perhaps" and this message of "perhaps nothing". That the answers come, to the first; not surely nothing; to the second, in so far as the stake for a Pascal is precisely that of this nothing grounded in the effect on us of desire: surely not nothing.

I want to clearly illuminate the topology of what I am designating here. I found, there were many other ways to bring it out, but I would like to take the neutral path, a logician of grammar, what matter. There are excellent things, among others that are more mediocre, in a book by Willard Van Orman Quine which is called : *Word and*

Object. You will find in it, in the chapter referential untranslatable, vagueness some remarks. They begin from the fact that the Fregian position, to which our exercises of last year have accustomed us, about the difference between what is *Sinn* and what is *Bedeutung*; of what makes sense, of which I gave you an intimation in the example: “green colourless ideas”, and of what concerns the referent.

At the moment of this parenthesis that Pascal’s *Wager* constitutes in the progress of my topology, at the moment that having presented to you, in the cross-cap, the surface (13) in which we can discern there being joined together the two elements of the phantasy, those which only function from the moment that the cut ensures that one of the elements, the *o*-object finds itself in the position of being the cause of an invisible, ungraspable, indiscernible division of the other, the subject. A question, and one supported by us in this model of the wager, of conceiving not what this phantasy is but how we can represent it for ourselves. It is quite clear that it is unapproachable in its immanence and that it is a matter of explaining why analysis allows the little (*o*) in question to fall into our hands; it is in so far as another shape, the one that I have not brought forward this year, the one which, topologically, contingently - as I might say - delivers it to us from the Klein bottle. The function of the other in this possible *Erscheinung* which cannot be the representation of the *o*-object, this is what the final explanations, on which no doubt my discourse today will dwell, are going to try to illuminate.

Let us go right away to what is in question: namely, belief. When I spoke to you earlier about this second life, there might have appeared this reflection, display, disjunction of the phantasy; did you not at all reflect incidentally that this would give our existence a little elbow room that would allow it to relax its seriousness a bit? There is only one problem, which is that this second life, which does not exist, and that I tried for a moment, within the seriousness of Pascal’s *Wager*, to bring alive for you, (14) well then, we believe in it. We do not wager, but precisely, if you look closely at it, you will see that you live as if you believed in it; this is called the lining which psychologists delight in so much and which is called on this occasion the level of aspiration, nobody understands as well as the psychologists how to give a status to all the dirt with which our fate is perverted; this is called our ideal life - the one precisely that we spend our time indolently dreaming about. Mr Willard Van Orman Quine quotes with some astuteness, in connection with a little example that I do not see at all why I should change, what happens in what are called propositional functions which have as a model the following: - I am leaving the names - Tom believes that Cicero denounced Catiline. The matter takes its interest, it is because of his limited information that Tom believes that the one who, in the tragedies of the sixteenth century, one would in fact have designated by a Frenchified name, not Tullius but Tulle, namely, that for us who of course are erudite people it is the same Cicero. Tom believes that Tulle is really incapable of having done such a thing. So then what about the reference to the signifier Cicero as regards the statement: “Tom believes that Cicero denounced Catiline”, if he maintains that Tulle - he does not

know that it is the same person - had nothing to do with it? It is around this suspension that a grammarian contributes very interesting specifications about the way it is appropriate to measure by the ell of logic one or other form of grammar. For it becomes interesting to remark that if in the same form you substitute for nomination an (15) indefinite form - which might appear then to see the reference being made more opaque, on the contrary, the “referential”, namely, the opacity that the propositional function: “Tom believes” introduces; here it cannot be a matter of saying that the reference becomes vague from the moment you say that: “Tom believes that someone denounced Catiline” Undoubtedly one can go further and note that it is not at all the same thing to believe that someone denounced Catiline, or to say that someone existed whom Tom believed denounced Catiline. But you see that we are beginning to enter here into a system of double doors which, perhaps, would take us a bit too far.

But to bring you back to the question of the existence of God, this will make you grasp the difference there is between saying: “he believes that God exists”, especially if we were to find it in the text of someone who tells us that one can think out the nature of God. Now precisely Pascal tells us that he is properly speaking not alone unknowable but unthinkable and thus that there is a world between believing that God exists in the sense that contrary to what the representatives of the ontological argument think there is no referent of God, and that on the contrary to say, about the indeterminate that God becomes in “I wager that God exists”, is to say something completely different for this implies beneath the bar that God does not exist.

In other words, to say: “I wager that God exists or” (the or must be added) is to introduce this referent in which there is constituted the Other, the big Other, as marked (16) by the bar, which reduces him to the alternative of existence or not, and to nothing else.

Now this indeed is what is recognisable in the original message through which there appears in History the one who changes both the relationships of man to the truth and of man to his destiny, if it is true - one could say that I have been dinning it into you for some time - that the advent of Science, of science with a capital S - and since I am not the only one to think what Koyré has so powerfully articulated - this advent of Science would be inconceivable without the message of the God of the Jews. A message that is perfectly legible in the following: given that when he who was still not properly disentangled from his functions as a magus in communication with the Truth; because they were in communication with the truth - there is no need to treat yourself to the ten plagues of Egypt to know it; if you had your eyes open you would see that the least of these pieces of pottery which are inexplicably for us the legacy of ancient times, breath magic, this is indeed why ours do not resemble them.

If I put so much in the foreground some tiny apologues like those of the mustard pot, it is not for the simple pleasure of parodying the stories about the potter.

But when Moses asks the messenger in the burning bush to reveal to him this sacred name which must act in the field of truth, He only answers him the following: *Eyè asher eyè*, which as you know - at least those who have been listening to me for some time - is not without posing certain difficulties of translation, of which undoubtedly the worst of all because it is formally accentuated in the sense of ontology would be: "I am (17) who am"; *asher* has never meant anything of the sort; *asher* is "that which"; and if you want to translate it into Greek it is

"I am that which I am"; which means you will know nothing about my truth between this: I am appointed and the one who is to come, opacity, the stroke of *that which* subsists which remains as such irremediably closed.

I mark on the big O this bar; which means that it is here, at the beginning that we have struck in order that there may fall from it what, henceforth, in Pascal's *Wager* cannot be conceived of as anything representable, but as the real transparently seen as compared to this subjective fog of what is outlined in a misty and incoherent fashion of a dream about the field of the other in what solicits us on awakening, namely, this small (o), it is true that it is real and not represented, that it is graspable in a way by transparency, according as we ourselves have been able to organise the field of the other with more or less signifying rigour.

This small (o) that we know well through what I shall have to explain to you, and only now, about its relationship to the super-ego. It is when it is beyond the wall of shadow represented by this other suspended around the pure interrogation about his existence, that awakening is here what permits to make it fall, what is more, subsequently but antecedently with respect to this opaque field of the dream and of belief, and that the relationship of the analyst to this other whose definition, at the end of last year, I already gave you, it is here that the position of the analyst is to be defined; the partner, the respondent, the one starting from whom there is inaugurated the possibility of there (18) entering into the world a golden order which is not submitted to the eternal lure of the false captures of being, and depends on the realisation of the fact that this other, that this partner, the one who is not the one whose place we are occupying but with whom we have to engage ourselves in a three-sided game with the analysand and even with a fourth, the Other knows that he is nothing.

SEMINAR 11: Wednesday 23 February 1966

Lacan was not present at this seminar.

French manuscripts are available for those who are curious about what was discussed.

Seminar 12: Wednesday 23 March 1966

I would like if we could open the window, because it is true, I am noticing for the first time that you cannot breath in here.

I will see you afterwards, Jean-Paul.

Good, well I do not know how broadly the news has spread of something that I let those who are in a position to transmit it know about, namely, that this seminar today is an open seminar. Perhaps the fact that you do not, for all that, fill the room is due as much to the strike as to the fact that the news was not spread.

I had in effect, God knows, a rather strong desire to make contact again with my whole audience after this interruption for which I apologise. It is a lack on my part, no doubt. But, after all, I had to choose and to do, for once, what I ought to have done a long time ago, namely, visit the USA. It seemed to me, and again just a moment ago, that you expected, at least that some of my listeners expected me to say something to you about it.

I will try then to satisfy this desire, at least in part, and in a fashion that is improvised.

(2) Before doing so, nevertheless, I want first to state the pleasant surprise, which is not a complete surprise, the final satisfaction that I had, let us say, of the pleasant surprise that I already had before my departure. To say what is involved, I will show you immediately the last number of *Temps Modernes*, the article by Mr Michel Tort, who is present here, which appeared in two parts, and is called *De l'interprétation ou la machine herméneutique*.

I did not speak to you about it before leaving you since I was waiting for the end of this article, which I may say brings me great satisfaction. It seems to me to be appropriate that someone who bears the name of Tort is the one who takes up the gauntlet so well on my behalf.

In effect, I would say that, to describe this article, which is really a work, I think that it is a great encouragement for me to see on the part of someone whose quality I will not specify yet, as such, on the part of someone, a correction, [of] something that I will call right away, that I will highlight in a fashion which might perhaps be better qualified, but after all I cannot find a better term than that of philosophical misappropriation, or again misappropriation of thought.

Someone in my immediate circle thought he ought to highlight - this required a certain courage - the elements that were borrowed, not necessarily recognised as such for a (3) long time by the author, the elements borrowed from my teaching. At which he drew on himself a singular response, whose incorrectness a certain number of you at least will be able to measure by reading a certain number of *Critique*.

The term of plagiarism, which my pupil had not written, was put forward in this response and its juridical background was even discussed, undoubtedly, this is not the question. I have spoken about this question of plagiarism for a long time, and underlined that in my eyes there is no such thing as intellectual property.

Nevertheless, after having been for a very long time not simply an assiduous attender but even a confidant of the particular plan of my teaching with regard to psychoanalysis, after having made use of it, and this for a very long time, after having made use of it in lectures given in America which moreover had a great success, then in a work whose goals are properly speaking goals that are contrary to those which constitute the foundation of psychoanalysis, my teaching being a teaching which properly speaking, claims to re-establish this teaching of psychoanalysis on its true foundations, this is what I qualified just now as a misappropriation of thought. I can do so all the more in that the article by Mr Michel Tort is precisely the exact demonstration of this scandalous operation which reflects, moreover, the general tone which, in our times, is the one of what is called, more or less vaguely, philosophy. (4) That is the reason why I hesitated to describe Mr Michel Tort as a philosopher, since the operation that he devotes himself to has nothing in common with what is usual in this field.

The firm, the rigorous, implacable distinction that he makes between what is involved in psychoanalytic interpretation and this vague and flabby field that I already designated as being properly that of all the swindles of our epoch, which is called hermeneutics, once this distinction has been fixed, it is really the type of operation that I most wish for from those who come to listen to me and who listen to me in an appropriate fashion, I mean understanding the import of what I am saying. The work of Mr Michel Tort in this regard represents a milestone, an essential milestone upon which really one could ground oneself to qualify what I meant to say about what is involved in psychoanalytic interpretation.

In effect if you refer to what I put forward at the end of my seminar last year, about the situation created by the advent of science, and that this advent was possible in the measure in which a position was taken up which used the signifier, as I might say, while refusing to it any compromise in the problems of the truth.

(5) If one thinks that because of this, a situation is created by which the question is posed to science about the field of truth, by each of those who find themselves affected by this fundamental modification.

What about the truth? That it is properly in this field of truth, effectively, that religion responds. But what today cannot be eliminated from any philosophical position of beginning from this fact, of the distinction, of the radical opposition between religion and science, that it is impossible, that it is untenable to try, as Whitehead did, to apportion the domains of science and of religion as two distinct domains with an objectivity that could have anything whatsoever in common, that their difference lies very precisely in the two essentially, radically, different approaches to the position of the subject.

Henceforth, it proves, that if I say that psychoanalysis is properly speaking the interpretation of the signifying roots of what constitutes the truth of the destiny of man, it is clear that analysis places itself on the same terrain as religion and is absolutely incompatible with the responses given in this field by religion for the very appropriate reason that it brings a different interpretation to them. Psychoanalysis is in an essentially demystifying position with respect to religion.

(6) And the essence of analytic interpretation cannot in any way be mixed up at any level whatsoever with the religious interpretation of this same field of truth. It is in this sense that I would say that Mr Michel Tort, in articulating this up to the point where this rejects into the same field by demystifying almost the totality of the philosophical tradition, including the Hegelian dialectic, has proved on this occasion that he is what I can only qualify in the final analysis by one word, because there is no other one within reach for the moment, a Freudian.

And those who deserve to be qualified by this term can, to my knowledge, properly speaking to be counted on the fingers of one hand.

Well then, after having done justice to Mr Tort, after having thanked him, after having offered him on this occasion everything that might be appropriate for him to adopt his work in any way possible that may come within my orbit, as a way of republishing it, after also having drawn it to the attention of all, and having asked everyone to consult it, and I would say line by line, well then, good God, I will try to say a little about what I have been told you are expecting, namely my impressions of this short visit to America, since I spent twenty-eight days there.

(7) To tackle this experience, especially like this, in a way that is a little impromptu, is not all that easy. First of all because there are practical consequences to this, and projects that I cannot give you an account of without having conferred with my closest collaborators, and which after all, I ought to confide only in them, it is, nevertheless, all the same in the field of what I encountered over there in terms of psychiatric, indeed university reality in its totality, that you expect from me, perhaps even, why not, you expect from me about the memories of my travels.

To make contact with what is after all no longer a new world' except for me, since I waited until I was at an advanced age to set foot in it, may suggest to some people a certain curiosity. I am certainly not going to set about playing the Keyserling before you in connection with this encounter.

And, right away, I would say that prudence and, indeed, respect for the real require of me, after such a short journey, to abstain above from making judgements. I think, moreover, fundamentally, and not from today, that the benefit to be drawn from a journey is that, on returning, you see what is well known, familiar to you with a different eye. This is the real discovery of a journey. And it is in this sense that this journey is a great discovery because I do not yet know how far will go the fact that I

(8) see things here with a different eye, but I am certain that, in that respect, this voyage will not be without consequences.

How can one try to say it? My first feeling about it? It is a matter of what I am going to tell you about my experience. You see clearly how I am situating it. It is not a matter of a judgement on the United States of America. It is simply a matter of what I, for my part, saw there, and which all of a sudden, allows me to foresee everything that I am going, for example, to drop from my discourse from now on.

A tendency, an indication it is not sure that I will go so far as I am going to say. The beginning of such an effect, I am going to try to summarise in a short sentence. It seemed to me that I encountered a past, an absolute, compact past, a past that could be cut with a knife, a pure past, a past that is all the more essential in that it never existed, either in the place that it is established for the moment nor where it is supposed to come from, namely, from us.

Obviously, this may come perhaps from too much tourism. The fact that in New York I encountered Gothic churches and even cathedrals at every street corner, I am saying at every street corner, there are people who have been there who can tell you that it is true, it has not been sufficiently underlined and that is how, nevertheless, the fact that the University of Chicago at which I thought I ought to end up, finishing there in fact the six lectures that I gave over there, I really wanted to do that because Chicago is an (9) elective place in my history. There were woven there very interesting things, things which were supposed in principle to be designed to withdraw from me, henceforth, any possibility of speaking. I was therefore not at all unhappy to carry the word there myself. In Chicago I saw an entire university, but a university over there, as you know, is very big, entirely constructed in Gothic. A hundred buildings of, I must say, perfect Gothic. I never saw a more beautiful Gothic, a purer Gothic, it is very well done. The false Gothic is well equal to the real I assure you.

We know that university methods in every country in the world remain dated from the Gothic epoch. The Sorbonne, for example, is still structured as it was at the time of its birth which was a Gothic epoch. It distinguished itself already by a violent, manifest opposition to anything new that might be created, as we know in connection with this condemnation, that I recalled for you recently, that it thought it should bring against St Thomas Aquinas who was an audacious little innovator.

When I speak about the Gothic quality of the university, I am not for all that saying that it always kept to the same principles: it has rather fallen away from them. At the Gothic epoch, precisely, people maintained very severely this principle of two truths that I spoke to you about earlier. When people did philosophy, it was not in order to defend religion; it was in order to separate itself from it. In our day we have gone into this mixing whose results of course are spreading. This is only a reminder of what I was saying earlier.

In any case, there is one thing certain, it is that the Sorbonne at the time that it was properly Gothic, was not constructed in Gothic, at least not in this perfect Gothic of the University of Chicago.

It is not so impressive. You have all the same the same feeling when you see piled up in a mass in these museums, these formidable and unimaginable collections of Impressionists which seem to be exiled, as it were, to be prisoners, torn from the atmosphere of this Parisian light of the end of the last century in which they blossomed, which are visited in a sort of ceremonial way by hordes of women and children who file past, I must say, at any hour of the day, at any day of the week that one comes, before this sort of incomparable and heart-rending brilliance that they take on from their very accumulation, as if here, in effect, were the place where there ought to end up the brilliant product, after all, of an art that we have, it has to be said, here, particularly disdained, I mean at the moment that it emerged and it is once again our past in a massive way which is found over there, I would say in a certain fashion which weighed, weighed very heavily on anything else which might seem, after all, to be called to be born in a society which has existed for a long enough time to have its own cultural masters.

Obviously, there are little shoots from time to time. I cannot hide from you the satisfaction I had to see an apartment entirely furnished with tiny samples of these little outpourings, like that, of creative fever which has described itself with the rubric of Pop Art. It was a chap who had made a fortune in the taxi business and who found himself effectively to be one of the first to finance, namely, to give here and there two hundred dollars to this group, up to then dispersed, of people who had launched themselves into a certain register, I do not want to describe to you either the principles, or the appearance, or the style or indeed what radiates from this Pop Art, what I mean is that this character who remained there, entirely furnished, adorned his apartment, his walls covered with the works, with the fruits of Pop Art gave me a long speech full of clap-trap to explain to me how he had spotted, helped, sustained this Pop Art. I find this extraordinarily appealing. Indeed something appeared to me in this Art in relation to the society that it sustains. Unfortunately, when I, without any particular sense of paradox, God knows, for I had taken a rather lively pleasure in this experience, I shared it with some very distinguished people that I met in New York, I sensed a (12) certain reserve. People looked at me a little strangely. I mean that people were asking themselves whether I was not pushing the joke a little bit too far, because Pop Art for the moment seems to have already gone underground, and even what has succeeded it, namely, Op Art.

In short, I have just illustrated for you what I called earlier the dominance of the past, I am improvising, I apologise for being so long, I have illustrated it for you in these fields which are not properly speaking those which interest us, but that is perhaps because I did not want to say too much about it, that I wanted to spare you what, after

all, I only know imperfectly and necessarily from people who, for their part, aspired rather for some change in what we will call the method of teaching psychology, indeed of psychology in medicine, of what was the status, the style of life, the way of being of the psychiatrist.

After all it is extraordinary, I take the very terms of someone who spoke to me, the ease of life of a psychiatrist over there is extraordinary, one really has no need, I was told, to put oneself out in order to have a clientèle.

And, starting from there, I was quoted names which are not the least important, which are quite capable of being ones to whom I could pin remarks like the following: “Good God, why ask oneself questions, and especially if they are any bit metaphysical when (13) God knows, after all, everything is going so well, that you finish work at half-past five, you have a whiskey, you read a novel, usually a spy one and you settle down in front of television”. I do not see why one should reproach what constitutes a social class for having its comforts, simply that it is for us to see what this involves, of course, in terms of inertia, and of being too settled.

Well then, whatever about appearances, it must nevertheless not be believed that on this basis, that on this very particular basis which is perhaps, as I might say, the opposite of the sky-scrapers, of this monumental verticality, which is moreover, a singular thing, the exclusive privileges of banks. Alongside this, there is a whole horizontal world which is precisely the one inhabited by people of the class that I have just evoked, namely an infinite world, a sea of little two-storied houses, perfectly imitated from the English style, in which there live, with, God knows, what one might call all the amenities of existence, a considerable group of people which is precisely the one which interests us on this occasion, because it is the one in the midst of which I was called to move about as a pilgrim or as a pioneer, as you wish. Detroit where I spent some time, is a city of twenty-five kilometres wide and eighteen kilometres long, which means that when you are looking for a good restaurant it involves a considerable time, after all, in order to cross it in a motor car.

(14) Even though, again, the heart of this city is made up of a knot of motorways. Within this network of motorways, you have the streets that I am speaking to you about with innumerable little houses and all of those I entered, of course, given the class of people that I was seeing, were very well furnished and rather encumbered with *objets d'art* brought back from the peregrinations across the world of the people involved which are, as you know, numerous.

So much for the style and the complement of what I called earlier this sort of inertia of the past and of a singular past, I am coming back to it, for this suggested to me this form of questioning: that there is a dimension of the past which is to be defined as essentially, radically, different from the one which interests us under the rubric of repetition. The past into which there does not intervene to any extent, and it is a

feeling of this sort that I had on encountering this extraordinary past, the fact is that it is a past without any underlay of repetition.

It is perhaps this singular, striking, impressive aspect, I assure you, which gave me, at least, which gave me the feeling of a dough that is absolutely impossible to stir. For this is not to say, for all that, that I did not encounter over there numerous occasions for dialogue. And I would say that of the six audiences that I had, specifically, at the (15) University of Columbia, on my arrival, at MIT (The Massachusetts Institute for Technology), at Harvard University, (Centre for Cognitive Studies), The University of Detroit where I spoke before the college of professors, after one of these ceremonies which consists in a lunch taken in a comfortable room which is distinguished by the absence of any wine, which is not the privilege of the United States, at the University of Ann Arbor some fifty-five kilometres from there, which is a city - when I spoke about the University of Chicago the word city was a metaphor, while for the University of Ann Arbor it is not one - the population of some thirty thousand students who live there in a city that is, as it were, specialised to receive them and finally at the University of Chicago, the audience was mixed differently in different places, more linguists and philosophers, very few doctors at Columbia but, on the contrary, an almost entirely medical audience at Chicago, this because of the fact that the parts of the University to which my friend Roman Jakobson, to whom I want now to render homage here for the whole enterprise of which he was at once the initiator and the organiser, well then, I must say that of the six audiences, I had, in reply to what I articulated before them which I will not perhaps have the time to give you an idea of, (16) in reply, God knows, the most relevant, the most interesting questions from professors of different specialities, with whom, thanks to their welcome and their charming hospitality, I subsequently had throughout the whole day, or on the occasion of meetings, dinners or other festivities, the opportunity of explaining myself, I had the feeling of a very great openness to the things that I was bringing them and which, to their ears, were nevertheless, undoubtedly, unheard of. I am speaking here about the university milieu. I except, here as elsewhere, what we will call the high-brow milieu, the intelligentsia, localised, for me at least, to those whom I met in New York. For at New York my teaching is unpublished, perhaps, but it probably will not always be so. It is far from being unknown. But as you have often been told no doubt, New York is not America. At New York they know perfectly well what is happening here and the small place that I hold in it is not unknown. But to return to my contacts with the American University, my feeling was confirmed moreover by my interlocutors, who told me what I ought to expect and what I should not expect, my feeling is that there is a very large field of places and of points where you could gain attention, establish links, elaborate contacts which would be followed up, recorded, published. I brought back some samples of journals that are properly speaking internal to the universities and which I even read *en route* with very great interest because there are excellent (17) articles of all sorts and of all kinds, and one could say that everything remains to be done. One could also say that nothing is to be done because undoubtedly with so much openness, welcome, even success, the feeling, at least the

present general feeling, I mean among my interlocutors, I would not allow myself to have a feeling, is that in any case nothing will be changed in the equilibrium currently attained, which leaves plenty of liberty for everyone, that someone who can bring along a sufficient number of collaborators is certainly not prevented from working, and everything is thus installed in a juxtaposition of living co-existence which seems indeed for the moment to exclude, even if one aspired to it, a renewal of style and especially in what interests us, in what interests me, namely the status of the teaching of psychoanalysis, that one will not arrive at anything like a reversal of the current, at a reflux, a change of tide, at anything at all that may resemble a fundamental change. Nevertheless, between this everything to be done and nothing to be done, I believe that my tendency for the moment is undoubtedly, God knows, even if it were only as a way of taking up a challenge, and then there are other things in the world besides the North American United States, to do there all the same at least something in the form of a publication, and this is what I will reserve for my closest pupils as regards my project.

(18) Might I add, in two words, the complement, the following secret that, in the course of this little “*travel*” which is almost nothing but a little “*trip*”, I reserved a week for myself at the end for my personal pleasure and that having planned first of all to spend it in the American West, I changed my project, suddenly not being able to resist the proximity of a country full of magic, I think, for some of you, which is called Mexico and I spent eight days there.

I will not speak to you about it at length now. I did not at all have there the life of a missionary. I had that of a tourist, it must be said, nothing more. In any case, the things that I saw touched me at two points.

The fact is that one cannot but be very impressed to see something, me in any case, something which is indeed, the ancient religion, since earlier we were talking about religion, of these peoples who are still there, absolutely unchanged, the face and I would dare to say the look of these Indians, still the same, whether it is those who serve you discreetly in the corridors of hotels or who inhabit cabins which are still thatched at the side of the road, these Indians who have the same figure, exactly, that we see fixed in basalt or in granite, these vague fragments that we collect of their ancient art, these Indians have there something or other, in terms of a relationship which persists, with the simple presence on the monuments of what are incorrectly (19) called pictogrammes, ideogrammes or other incorrect designations of what we can call hieroglyphs, and moreover not always deciphered but whose taking up again by contemporary painters or architects, because at Chicago there are on the walls of an ultra-modern library, for example, four entire facades decorated in what we could call the usage of the flotsam of these signifying forms. What is conveyed by this seems to me to be something that is at once enigmatic and, at the same time, so impressive because of this sort of invisible link across an irremediable break which subsists between the generations which are growing up and those of the students who populate

the University of Mexico, which I would say is the most enormous of all of those that I have seen, with these signs, these signs with which something has forever been broken and which nevertheless are there, translating in a visible fashion what I could only call, because I am before this audience, a relationship preserved to what is so tangible in everything that we know about these ancient cults, this thing which was not at all understood, except as something horrible, by the first conquerors, and which is nothing but visible everywhere, everywhere present, everywhere attached in the form of charms, as it were, all the forms of the divinity which is nothing other than the o-object.

We will no doubt, perhaps, have to allude to it later and perhaps I will have the opportunity of giving it to you as indeed a simple marginal illustration, but one that (20) undoubtedly is not without its importance for what I will continue to say to you about it.

Well then, there is no point, in the middle of all of that, marking for you what I thought I saw being sketched out of it there as a consequence.

I have given myself an awful lot of trouble, through the numerous years of my teaching, to bring to a *milieu* which was not specially prepared to receive it, a certain amount of information, more especially about the field of linguistics. You have already sensed for a long time the slight nostalgias that I may have about this, the result is that after fifteen years of this teaching, I put, perhaps a little bit before the others, this little *milieu* which was the one that I was operating on, alerted them to something which now you can find everywhere at every cross-roads, at every street corner, indeed under the more or less appropriate name which will soon be absolutely, even impossible to clean up such is the degree to which it is going to be covered with these different encrustations of shells that cover a wreck, the word structuralism. It is here, rather, that it is going to be a matter of carrying out a very serious cleansing operation in order to be able to say all the same what structuralism is for us.

This effort that I also made to recall the conditions of the birth and the evolution of (21) science in terms of how decisive it may be for us, for us to conceive ourselves as determined by it. It must be said, I was surprised in the United States to find a large part of my programme, of what is in my seminar, spread out on walls about ten metres long in the form of little diagrams, which moreover no one even looked at, but which contained in an absolutely decisive fashion, the dates, the turning points, and perfectly well explained in every line of descendency of the classification of sciences and which, if I ought to say it, I ought also to say if I had been teaching over there, would have saved me a lot of trouble. For when all is said and done, all of these things can be bought over there in a paperback.

This is the interest, the importance of what I might call from a certain angle, the evacuation of the past which is, at the same time, possible if we clearly see its proper dimension, this aspect of inertia, one can leave its manipulation to men with shovels.

It must be said that this is not at all a perspective of “*despise*”, of *mépris*. What on the contrary appears there to be most certain, is what it separates out as regards our own essence. Because from the very moment that the past, at the state of pure past, exists there block-like, in its perfect form, for as I demonstrated to you earlier, the portrayal of the University of Chicago exists more perfectly than it ever did exist. The (22) impressionist creation is there like a fly in amber, in a state of perfection that it never had here.

With respect to this past which is, in a way, what we are delivered from, there is all the same an aspect of ourselves which remains part of it, which is indeed ourselves as we are today and which is only a miscarriage of it. In order to see it raised to the level of caricature you have again, in Mexico, to go to the Hotel Del Prado and install yourself before a fresco, which is the height of the wall of our room here, by Diego Rivera and which is called *Un rêve de dimanche après-midi sur l'Alameda*. The Alameda is a sort of Tuileries of Chicago, and the figure that we cut in this panel, I am not going to describe it for you, you can get photographs of it, is very instructive.

Here then is what I believe we can learn by going to the United States and, moreover, on the entire soil of this noble America, there is the figure of everything that failed in the past, it is a kind of retroactive figure of an adherence to something which was never lived, and which, as such, cannot be, in any shape or form, if one lets oneself go a little to any movement whatsoever of hope, of vivacity, of creation, undoubtedly the only thing that remains for you from such a contact is a really crushing impression of (23) what is difficult to raise up in our world.

What did I speak to them about? It is quite certain that I did not properly speaking do a seminar with them. Even though my roots in a certain style are not so easy to break all of a sudden, it is to this *penchant*, this habit, even this need that I have acquired of a certain way of hooking my audience that I owe, to my astonishment I must say, the fact of not being able in any case to make up my mind to speak to them in French, and it is a curious thing, to really manage to speak to them in English.

The habit that I have of following on your faces the rather peculiar effect of this word, did not seem to me to be extremely different to what I experienced before these audiences, namely, that their captive, if not illuminated faces gave me the feeling that something in this English was of such a kind that they did not reject the impression of it being an articulated language.

There you are. So I spoke to them - I am going to tell you about what in two words because in a few moments we are going to have to separate - I centred things a little, because I had to make myself understood, on something which seemed to me to be striking. And then I, as you understand, for my part I am taken up with my o-object for the moment, I am trying to bring it to you like that, to slip it into a certain number (24) of stockings from which it will emerge in one way or another. We will see that,

we will take it up the next time. I had to return to fundamentals. And after all, this allowed me to gather these fundamentals together. Not at all, of course, that I allow them like that to go with the stream. But after all why not? This allowed me perhaps to take up the module of a discourse that was more condensed, more simple also, more striking even though the hammer-blow is never absent from what I have to tell you.

Perhaps, after all, I will make a little collection of them which will perhaps not be all that badly adapted to American ears since I adjusted it to American ears.

Well then, I thought I should begin from something which is all the same a tangible feature, a feature that it is easy to make understood and which is not new, of course, for you, it is that of the distinction between demand and desire.

Obviously in English, I prided myself on making myself understood, it is obviously with a vocabulary and syntactic refinements that are more reduced that I was led to speak. It is quite easy to make understood to people who are listening to you, that when something is demanded of them they have to be careful, that it is not always what is demanded of you that is precisely what people desire you to give. It is enough to (25) have the slightest experience of it. It is enough to have a girl friend for this truth to be immediately perceptible, and after that you can go into structural considerations.

Yes. Because starting from that moment, of course, you can show that desire ought to be extracted from the demand and that there is this second phase, that the demand is articulated in the unconscious. It is enough here to refer to the truths that I have always reminded you of and which consist simply in opening the first books of Freud. When all is said and done, it is not impossible, even before an American audience, to introduce the inscription of the formula in the top right-hand corner of my graph, namely $\$ \bar{D}$ (\bar{D} barred in its relationship to demand), namely, that it is precisely to this that the division of the subject is attached.

Which is obviously to reintegrate this division of the subject onto the same plane, at the same level that Freud introduced the division between the unconscious and the pre-conscious, to eliminate the distance which separates this beginning of his work from the point that he ends up with, the *splitting* of what he calls the ego, namely, the *splitting* of the subject, and to show for example on this occasion that this remark that Freud makes that the principle of contradiction does not function in the (26) unconscious, is a remark which is only a first approach and is inadequate in a sense if it goes as far as to imply that there is no sign of negation in the unconscious because we all know, and from reading the texts of Freud himself, that negation has, I am not saying in the unconscious, that would mean nothing, but in the formations of the unconscious, representatives that are clear and well mapped out.

The so-called suspension of the principle of non-contradiction at the level of the unconscious, is simply this fundamental *splitting* of the subject. There is something else that I put in the foreground of my discourse and which follows, as one rosary bead follows the other, this approach through the difference between demand and desire, it is the designation of the point which is the same meeting point from which I began earlier, moreover, concerning the relationships of knowledge and truth, the fact is that what Freud contributed to us is the designation of the locus of incidence of a particular desire which is the point through which sexuality comes into play as fundamental in the domain that it is a matter of defining and that this point is called: the desire to know.

It is because sexuality first comes into play from the angle of the desire to know that the desire involved in the Freudian dynamic is sexual desire. It is because it comes into play under the species that had already been located, not without reason, by religious minds, it is because the *cupido sciendi* was situated where it should be by Freud that everything has changed in the dynamics of ethics.

(27) That the other desires, the desire for *jouissance* and the desire for domination, prove not to be on the same level. That one is found to be in a dependent position by being at the level of narcissism, that the other, the desire for *jouissance* is precisely there to manifest for us what I would call the duplicity of desire.

For, far from desire being desire for *jouissance*, it is precisely the barrier that keeps you at the distance that is more or less correctly calculated from this burning hearth, from what is precisely to be avoided by the thinking subject and which is called *jouissance*.

Will I go so far as to tell you that I began for them something that will be the next step of what I am going to have to present to you. Namely, taking into account the following of which, of course, I was only able to speak from the angle, namely, from the locus of the Other, the positioning point of the truth, as a locus where there is put in question the truth of the demand, as a locus also where there appears and emerges at the same time the dimension of desire, I was able to begin what, as I have just told you, is going to be the continuation of my discourse and which, consisting of specifying the fact that desire, this desire whose locus I articulated for you at first by saying that desire is first of all the desire of the other, topology is going to teach us to make function this sort of turning [inside-out, back-to-front] (*retournement*) which is (28) properly the one that I will try to display, at the level that I will show you, such as they are, as it can be done, as one turns a glove inside out, at the level of the structure of the torus, that if desire is to be located, to be measured in function of a demand of the other, the structure is going to allow us to see, the structure which is the structure of the torus, the fact is that there is a structural foundation that is perfectly - I am minimising in saying that it is illustrated by the structure of the torus, it is sustained by the structure of the torus, the torus is the substance, the *upokeimenon* of the structure

in question concerning desire, the torus may appear, obviously, this is what I will show you with a piece of chalk the next time, that there is inscribed in it in the clearest fashion the relationship that there is of the sustaining of a desire, not at all by a demand but by a repeated demand or by a double demand.

And the fact that this figure which is properly the one that I am drawing for you here, the turning inside-out (*retournement*) of the structure of the torus can display, materialise before your eyes what can be obtained from it and we will see what



turning inside-out signifies in function of what happens to turning inside-out when we are dealing with other topological structures, namely, the cross-cap and the Klein bottle.

(29) This turning inside-out having been performed, we have two desires in relation to one demand. This duplicity of desire with respect to demand is at the root of everything that in the analytic field extends as far as to what is called confusedly ambivalence, which can find its reason only there. This is what I will have the opportunity of developing for you in a fuller fashion the next time. And you see already that what is involved is the function of a cut, that in the three shapes that I will have to take up from this angle, it is the same shape of cut, namely, what I called the S or the inverted eight, which gives us its key and its shape and that there are different functions. In short, to conclude and to say what I was trying above all to get across to the ears of my audience in America, that there is a domain that can be isolated in the field called psychological up to now which is the domain of what is determinable as the field of language and excels in this field which is the word, that this is definable. It is the function of the subject, the function of the subject which is not, as I saw written recently, a function of absence but on the contrary a function of the intense presence of something hidden, which is what brings us back to the Freudian foundation of the unconscious and it is on this that I will leave you today and give you a *rendezvous* for the open seminar next week.

Seminar 14: Wednesday 20 April 1966

I am going, after this vacation which has separated us, I had to meet you again on a pre-arranged Wednesday to hold a closed seminar which, because of this fact, reduces you to a number of chosen pupils, which I do not find to be a bad way of our getting together again today, for the things that I am going to have to say to you.

In effect, contrary to what is the principle of these closed seminars, namely, that it ought to be, it can be in any case, someone else other than myself who, at first at least, poses the question; well then, I shall be the one who speaks to you today, even if only in order to compensate, to tie together again what was interrupted by my month's absence in the last trimester, and also, I hope, in order to begin for the next time, a collaboration which will give to this closed seminar the next time, its proper character as a seminar.

I will begin, because moreover this time of vacation brought me back to the problems, already present in my first remarks, of my relations with my audience, well then, I said to myself, because it was yesterday evening that I got it to be corrected, that I was going to see in that a sign, and that I was first of all going to read you something (2) which you see here is still a galley-proof which is meant for the year book of the Ecole des Hautes Etudes. Every year there appears, from each of those who collaborate in the teaching of the Hautes Etudes, a little summary of their course. This summary is not of course that of this year, it is that of last year; it is not ahead of time, as you can see. But after all, there is still enough time since, moreover, it is going to give me the opportunity of sharing it with you.

I am going to share it with you because, as you are going to see, in drafting it, I thought of you. Not of reading it to you, I had no way of knowing that this would happen. But as you are going to see, I thought of you.

With no further preamble then, I begin this reading. What is in question is what, last year was called: *Crucial problems for psychoanalysis*. "The problem placed at the centre," I say, in this little summary which you may well imagine is ultra-condensed, "the problem placed at the centre, can be described in these terms: the being of the subject." (I pre-suppose that I am addressing people who attended this seminar last year.) "Terms to which the high-point of our previous references brought us. That the being of the subject" - it is still relevant this year - "that the being of the subject is split, was something that Freud repeated, in all its forms, after having discovered that the unconscious can only be expressed in a knot of language, [and] has therefore the

being of a subject. It is from the combinatorial of these knots that there is broken through the censorship, which is not a metaphor, brought to bear on the material of these knots of language.” (As regards these two little paragraphs, even though a summary is not a didactic object, all the same I recall the very solid foundations that we start from, (3) which is precisely the fact that the unconscious has the structure of language. That censorship is not a metaphor, means that it cuts into something material and this is where we start from with Freud. I think I have summarised it here in five lines.)

“Right away, Freud” - this is for the use of people who might find my summary too obscure if it elided these primary truths - “right away Freud affirms”, this is a complement, “that any conception of a of consciousness towards the obscure, the potential, indeed automatism, is inadequate to account for its effects.” (A reminder, then, that everything which tries to make of the unconscious a lesser, a virtual, an ante-, a pre-consciousness is not the unconscious.) Three lines again then. Which I specify: “This is only recalled to separate off any ‘philosophy’ from the use that we made this year” (this year that I am giving an account of) “of the *cogito* which is legitimate, we believe, since the *cogito* does not ground consciousness, but precisely this splitting of the subject.”

“It is enough to write: ‘I am thinking “therefore I am”’ - I repeat: ‘I am thinking “therefore I am”’, this is what I think: “*I am thinking, therefore I am*”, and to note that this enunciating obtained from an asceticism,” (naturally it does not fall from the Heavens), “consists first of all in an arranging, in a great clearing-out of all the knowledge that was actualised in the time of Descartes who undertakes this asceticism, that this enunciating splits the individual (*l’être*), these two ends” (I am thinking therefore I am at the end) “only connect up by manifesting some torsion that it underwent in its knot”, (its knot to enunciating.)

“Causation? Reversal? Negativity?” (with question marks) “it is the topology of this torsion that must be carried out.”

(4) (I recall here, in the following paragraph, the angle from which I touched on Piaget and Vigotsky who, I say, illustrate between the first to the second, the advantage that is to be gained by rejecting any psychological hypothesis about the relationships of the subject to language, even when we are dealing with the child. For this hypothesis is only the mortgage (*hypothèque*) that a being of knowledge takes on the being of truth that the child has to incarnate, starting from the signifying battery that we present him with, which Vigotsky faithfully presents to him, as such, and which constitutes the law of the experiment.)

“But this is to anticipate on a structure which must be grasped in its synchrony, and an encounter which is not simply a chance one. This is what is provided for us by this meshing of the one with the zero which came to us from the point at which Frege set

about founding arithmetic.” (A summary therefore in three lines, of the function which our study of the foundations of arithmetic played in this last year. The one numbers the null class. The reference is to the lectures of Messrs Miller and Milner)

“From this, it is perceived that the being of the subject is the suturing of a lack, specifically of the lack which, hiding itself in number, sustains it by its recurrence - this is the idea on which there is founded the theory of number - of the successor, but in this only supports it by being, when all is said and done, what is lacking to the signifier to be the One of the subject, or in terms that we have called in another context, the unary trait, the mark of a primary identification which will function as ideal.”

“The subject experiences himself as being, at the same time, an effect of the mark and a support of its lack. Some reminders of the formalisation where this result is found would”, I write, “be appropriate here. However short may be the space reserved for me, I have all the same room to recall, first of all, our axiom grounding the signifier as (5) ‘what represents a subject not for another subject but for another signifier’. This axiom situates the lemma which has just been re-acquired along another path” - what we have just said before - “the subject is what responds to the mark by what it lacks, in which there is seen only the reversal of the formula” - that of the signifier that I have just given earlier as an axiom - “that the reversal of the formula only operates by introducing at one of its poles, the signifier, a negativity.”

“The loop is closed without being reduced to a circle, the supposed, third term,” call it what you wish,” after the axiom and the lemma, that the signifier originates from the effacing of the trace.”

“The power of mathematics, the frenetic pace of our science reposes on nothing other than the suture of the subject, from the thinness of this scar, and after all, in speaking about a scar of this suture, you must not believe that I am using a term that a mathematician would reject, it is Poincaré’s term in his *analysis situs*, or better again of its gap. The aporias of mathematical logic bear witness to this thinness - Godel’s theorem” - you remember the beginning of the sentence). “And always, of course, a great scandal for consciousness.”

“People have no illusions about the fact” - I for my part have no illusions, nor I hope have you - “that a critique at this level will not be able to scour clean the wound of the lack of the subject everywhere except at the level where science maintains it sutured, by the sheer strength of arithmetic. One cannot scour clean the plague of excrement which the order of social exploitation, which takes its stand on this opening in the (6) subject, and therefore does not create, whatever may be thought about it, even in Marxism, alienation, in the order therefore of social exploitation,” I say, “an attempt is made to cover the aforesaid wound, more or less consciously. There are many things which serve that purpose.” A discipline of truth, we would say in

general, but there has to be mentioned, (should I add, should I not add) the servile task, (I did not put it in the text, I put it in as an author's correction for the typist, but I do not know yet whether I will leave it) which is fulfilled there by philosophy, ever since the open crisis of the subject.

I said: since the open crisis of the subject. I am designating a date in the history of philosophy, philosophy, as they say, ever since it has been related to science. And that here it plays its role very badly "It is on the other hand out of the question that any critique directed at society should supply for it" - for this critique, about which I said I have no illusions, as regards the power that we have to scour the wound of excrements, etc. - that no critique then, directed at society can supply for it - it is very important - "because this critique itself can only be a critique coming from society, namely, whatever it may be, implicated in the business of this sort of bandaging up, that we have just spoken about. That is why only the analysis of this object - the bandaging - can confront it in its reality which is to be the object of psychoanalysis. Our project for the current year."

"We will not be content however to suspend, which would be an admission of defeat, [in] our approach to the being of the subject, on the excuse of rediscovering, of course, its foundation of lack."

It is precisely for this reason that I am reading this to you. I would like to throw something like a seed into what I might call your fundamental attitude as a listener.

(7) "This is precisely the upsetting dimension," I did not hesitate to write, "of our teaching, that it puts to the test this foundation, demand, in so far as it is in our audience. For how could we back away from seeing that what we require from structure as regards the being of the subject, cannot be left out of account in the one who represents it in an outstanding way in our discourse, even in order to represent it as belonging or not to thought, just like the *cogito*," (just like the *cogito*, people have sneered (*gauté*) at it, you see that you never waste your time), "namely, the psychoanalyst. It is indeed what we find in the phenomenon notable in that year, of the advance made by another part of our audience, by giving us this success," I say, "of confirming the theory that we believe to be correct, of communication *in* language, which is not the whole of communication." But you know this formula for a long time. It must be the case that mine do not lose all that much by being endlessly repeated, because it is effectively necessary for me to repeat them and to announce them. We express it by saying that the message is only emitted here at the level of the one who receives it. "No doubt a place should be given here, since I make an allusion to another part of my audience, to the privilege that we receive from the place whose guests we are." This is in homage to the Ecole Normale Supérieure. "But it must not be forgotten, that in the reserve that is inspired in some people by what appears to be too easily in this effect of seminar, the resistance that it allows, this reserve" (and I add) "which is justified. It is justified because commitments are part of being and not

of thought, and the two aspects of the being of the subject are diversified here because of the divergence between truth and knowledge. The difficulty of the being of the analyst comes from the fact that he encounters, as being of the subject, namely the (8) symptom, that the symptom is a being of truth, everyone agrees with this in so far as they know what psychoanalysis means, even though it is constructed to confuse the matter.” (I am sure I would obtain the agreement even of those who confuse it most, if I were to throw in their face right away, the fact that the essence of the symptom, our position in the symptom, is that it is a being of truth.)

Henceforth, one sees what it costs the being of knowledge, by recognising the fortunate forms of what he, for his part, only engages with under the sign of unhappiness, the unhappiness of his patient, that this being of knowledge - that of the psychoanalyst - must reduce himself to being only the complement of the symptom, this is horror-provoking, and that by eliding it, the being of knowledge in question is operating towards an indefinite adjournment of the status of psychoanalysis, I mean as scientific.

“That is why even the shock that I produced, by closing the year on this principle, was not able to avoid the short-circuit being repeated in its place.” (And I make an allusion to the form in which this came back to me and which is very important.) “It came back to me with obvious good will, of course, and even adorned with a paradox, as it stated that it is the way in which the practitioner treats it that creates the symptom.

“This appears to be the continuation of what I had put forward before. Nevertheless, there was good reason for me to be startled by it, for, of course, it is true from the experiments of psychologists through which we had introduced our few words (*le grelot*)” - a reference to the paragraph on Vigotsky and Piaget - “but it is also to remain a psychotherapist, and this exactly at the level of saying that,” (to say that which in a certain sense is true, but it is not the truth that we, for our part, have to (9) speak, which is not the one that we have to confront, when I contribute on the subject of the clinic the following, namely, that we, as analysts, have to take part in the symptom.) “It is then to remain, as a psychotherapist, exactly at the level of what ensured that Pierre Janet never could understand why he was not Freud.”

“The divine bottle,” I concluded, “is the Klein bottle. Not everyone can make emerge from its neck what is in its lining. For this is how there is constructed the support of the being of the subject.”

There you are. I only read this little piece for you to give you the opportunity of getting to know it because, in any case, you would never have gone looking for it in this year- book. Who reads year-books? But for

Madame X: Can we get that text?

Dr Lacan: My dear, you can make some off-prints of it. Good. I for my part am going to give it to the year book. I am not going to make off-prints of it. Nobody does that. But after all, in effect, it may be of use to you because it is a tiny little text to which I gave enough care for it to be considered as having a little function as a hinge.

If I begin again, if I take things up again, if I link up, if I recall, starting from this text, to continue, in fact what I will most easily begin from is, of course, naturally, from the end, this will only make it easier to highlight for you something people do not often think about: it is the pride which is hidden behind the promotion, as it is ordinarily carried out, of every step towards relativism. I am proposing, I am indicating that the problem of the analyst is precisely his implication in the symptom which is put before him and questions him, for his part, as a being of knowledge, as a being of truth, I am (10) saying in short that the drama of the analyst, is that necessarily, his being of knowledge is inflected, is implicated in this confrontation, that Oedipus, whatever he does gives his hand, at least for a while, to the Sphinx, since this is what is in question. By having manifested himself, in the final analysis, as superior, as a being of knowledge, it is precisely this which makes a hero of him. Which we are not at every moment. Immediately, this thinking jumps very easily to this function of this presence of the observer in the observation which is also what the progress of our physics indicates to us, and which gives us the idea, as they say, that we are not uninvolved.

But it is the opposite. Even in the theory of relativity in physics, whether it is special or general, it does not at all mean that it is the observer who settles the affair. It means on the contrary that the affair has an eye on the observer.

In other words, no relativist theory gives any kind, as it is habitually experienced, any kind of renewed energy whatsoever to the idea of the subject as subject of knowledge, to the idea of a bipolarity which might be complementary, whether you oppose them or not to the being of the sign, which would in a way be reciprocal and of equal dignity. There is absolutely nothing of the sort.

Everything that is accentuated in this perspective, whether it is that of the progress of science or that of our own experience as analysts, is that it is impossible for us to get out of this illusion, except precisely [by] what we would call a little bit more than very (11) great precautions except for the radical, structural, absolutely total recasting of the topology of the question. And to introduce, into something which cannot in any way be called another kind of knowledge which would get around the difficulty, something which is not at all of the order of knowledge, something which is of the order of calculation, of the combinatorial, something which we no doubt make function but which for all that does not surrender itself to us, to the impulse in such a

way that it would allow us to start again quite simply with a lighter step on the same path considered as enlarged and more perfect.

There are many things to be said, and in particular something to which I would like all the same to give a little bit of care to today, because it is at once to face up to objections that, faith, are not very efficacious, one can always allow it to be said, to get around, when all is said and done, that a fashion like mine of tackling psychoanalysis has something, as people say, that is too intellectual, or even verbal, and then, moreover, about the use that is made in analysis of the famous power of words. As usual, malevolent powers, and this one in particular, the power of the word which is still magical, as they say, with a magical all-powerfulness, whether it is a matter of thinking or of words it comes back to the same thing, it is always the other, of course, who falls into it.

Of course, that we have to deal, always, with this operation of demythification which consists in taking up terms which, traditionally, were grasped in certain words and put them in question.

(12) When Nietzsche, after all, to bring him in here, not that he did really excellent work but, in any case, it was a beginning and it struck a lot of people, when Nietzsche busies himself in rediscovering the trace of what, in the philosophical tradition, gave a consistency to one or other term, whichever you like, the soul for example, what do we have to do with it? Is this really the way? When we go as far as to say, even with our means, which only allow us an extrapolation of an elegance which goes beyond what he had access to, by designating some support for this soul, in the shadow of the body, the one which the character of Charmides left on the way, what more will we do? That to be still on exactly the same path from which the whole affair began, an affair which goes far beyond the particular prostration of the psychology that we have to deal with, namely the apologue, the fable, of the cave in Plato, in the VIth book if I remember correctly, of *la politea*, this shadow is none other than the one which plays on the wall which the captives in cave are facing, necessarily maintained in a whole sort of apparatus, without being able to turn, to see what is behind, and what these shadows on the wall are the projection of. But what does this fundamental fable imply? What it is a matter of knowing is whether one gets out of it or whether one does not get out of it. It implies something which, referring to the text, is designated as a fire, the fire which precisely, from its projected illumination, produces the phantasmagoria, in other words, the fire of fire, the central idea, the source that is well and truly figured elsewhere, in other texts of Plato by the sun itself, the inaugural point (13) where there is indicated the identity of the being of the real and of the being of knowledge. By means of which everything is structured according to this form of envelopes enveloping one another, the topology of the sphere, capable of reduplicating itself as identical from simply what is called in topology, mapping, namely, to overlap like a lining, which goes as far as the terminal point of the envelope of all the

envelopes, on which there is presented, as opposed to the identity of two beings, the content of knowledge.

Only there is a remark which, just by itself, may put the conditions of simply accepting to let fall again into darkness, all of these things that are in suspense, by pointing out to you that if, undoubtedly, the shadow disappears, if there is no longer any sun, the body, for its part, is still there.

One can feel around it in the darkness and recommence the experiment on a new footing. Now this is what is at stake. It is not a matter of knowing what imaginary lure words give a consistency to, by giving them their *cachet*. It is not the lures that deceive. It is the words. But this precisely is their force. And this is what it is a matter of explaining. If the soul, in order to take things up at the key point where we think the affair has been cleaned up, is an entity which has some consistency, it is not, we are saying this year, in so far as we are studying the object of psychoanalysis, it is not because the soul is something which is either the shadow of the body, or its idea, or its form, which is properly speaking what falls away from it, forms a waste scrap, a fall, it is what, from the body, falls under the blade of this something which is produced as an effect of the signifier.

(14) And it is in the measure that the signifier makes its mark on this incarnated subject, that something corporeal, effective, material is produced, which is what is in question. It is not therefore a sanction through the language of some imaginary mirage, which is produced, but an effect of language, which by being hidden under these mirages, gives them their weight.

This is what constitutes the novelty of the psychoanalytic approach, founded on this fact that the effect of language goes beyond, because it precedes it, any subjective apprehension which may authorise itself as being a conscious apprehension.

And every critique of the power of words, as it is put, which attacks it as such, what perdures under the academic label of psychology is never anything other than this voice, it is by beginning from the verbal status, incontestably because it is traditional, of a certain function of the soul, and by putting it in question as word, and by questioning, starting from there, what is real in it, which leaves standing perfectly well the framework of the power of words, while what it is a matter of questioning, is what has language produced as an inaugural effect on which there reposes the whole *montage*, which gives the setting of the state of the subject.

This is not tackled simply by looking at it head-on. That is why the relationship of the being of knowledge to the being of truth is founded on what, to speak here of the very one who is speaking to you, means precisely that my discourse is not sustained by any re-organisation of vocabulary. If I say that there is no metalanguage, I emphasise it by

the fact that I am not attempting to introduce one, a new one, which would always be (15) subject to the fact of being, like every metalanguage, made up of language.

The first condition to grasp that it is indeed a matter of the relationship to a being of truth, is that, in discourse, it is articulated as an enigma, and I greatly regret if this, at all times and to Freud himself who admitted it and recognised it as such when he wrote the *Interpretation of dreams*, *Umschreibung*, he said, enraged at not being able to reproduce the style of his previous little scientific reports, *Umschreibung*, which means: mannerism.

Throughout the historical cases of the crisis of the subject, the literary and aesthetic explosions in general of what is called mannerism always corresponds to a reorganisation of the question about the being of truth. Yes. It is a matter of finding a short circuit to rediscover our **o**-object, since, moreover, an idea of it comes to me: it was furnished me, refurbished, refreshed not too long ago by Guilbaud with whom I have been having weekly conversations for some time now, he reminded me that it was Franckel, I believe, who played this trick on his listeners: 1,2,3,4,5, what is the smallest whole number that is not written on the board? Good, listen, on you go. The smallest whole number written on the board. You naturally believe that someone wants to trick you. But it is not complicated, it is 6. Are you sure that zero is a whole number, that (16) could be debated... (written on the board: the smallest whole number that is not written on the board). So then what is it now? The smallest whole number which is not written on the board? None obviously. What? What are you going to say? Whatever you say I will tell you: it is written on the board. That astounds you? Well then, that it is precisely what is in question, that this should surprise you. This reinstates, this shows you, that reintroduces you since this is what is at stake, it is in the question of language, founded, as you see on writing, the **o**-object. That knocks you? You have absolutely no voice to raise on this occasion? What?

: ... : ... on the board.....

Lacan: Yes, it is very relevant that it is by writing [or not written] of course. One could start from there and make a lot of it. Good.

Does that mean, with that, it knocks you out, if we have here everything that is involved, about castration. I say no. It is only a matter of things at the level of the **o**-object. In order that something written should in fact hold up, you have to pay your dues, namely, that if I only put down written things, for example, my scientific discourse from the start of set theory until nothing stops me up to the end, I will exhaust the whole trajectory of modern physics, this will in no way hold up unless I accompany it with a discourse which presents it to you. There is no means of presenting a discourse, even the most formalised one that you may imagine, there is

no means of presenting if you like, Bourbaki without preface or text. This is what is in question.

(17) And therefore the relationships of language which, incontestably, in effect, are cut and writing, with what presents itself as discourse, ordinary language and which requires this support of the voice, except, of course, that you should not take the voice as simply sonority, which would make it dependent on the fact that we are on a planet where there is air which carries sound. It has absolutely nothing to do with that.

When I think that in the phenomenology of psychosis, we are still at the stage of questioning ourselves about the sensorial texture of the voice, when simply with the six or eight pages of a prelude that I gave in my article on "*A question preliminary to any possible treatment of psychosis*", I designated the quite precise approach from which there can be in our day, at the point that we are at, there can be questioned the phenomenon of the voice. You only have to take Schreber's text and see distinguished in it, as I did, what I called the message of the code and the code of the message, to see that there is here a means of grasping, in a fashion that is not abstract but already perfectly phenomenologised, the function of the voice as such. By means of which one can begin to detach oneself from this really unbelievable position which consists in putting in question the objectivity of the voices of the hallucinator. You objectify the hallucinator. Why should his voices be less objective; why should his voices, on the pretext that they are not sensorial, belong to the unreal, to the unreal. In the name of what? It is a prejudice which dates from some extremely archaic stage of the critique (18) of so-called knowledge. Is the voice unreal, are we going to affirm, are we going to say from the fact that we submit it to the conditions of scientific communication, namely, that he cannot make this voice that he hears recognised. So what about pain, then? Can he make that recognised? And nevertheless. Are people going to start discussing whether pain is real? The status of the voice is properly speaking still to be established, but not alone is it to be established, it has to be brought into the mental categories of the clinician of whom we were speaking, precisely, earlier, who very certainly even when he succeeds, I noted it in the same text, in doing something as fortunate as to perceive things which probably had been seen a long time ago with the naked eye, but that no one ever picked out, namely, that there are these voice phenomena which are accompanied by laryngeal and muscular movements around the phonetic apparatus and that this, of course, has its importance, this certainly does not exhaust the question but, in any case, gives a method of approach to it. This did not advance the status of the voice by a single step, for all that.

Here, I would like all the same to remark that it is a great ingratitude for anyone who has, a little bit, the clear sense of what Nietzsche called, precisely, the genealogy of morality or of something else, it would be complete madness to overlook what the status of science, precisely, I am speaking about ours, owes to Socrates who, precisely, consulted his voice. It is not enough to claim to be rid of it to satisfy oneself or

to believe that one has satisfied a phenomenon like that by the fact that Socrates said expressly that he consulted his voice, in order to say, either yes or no, (19) that there was therefore a little corner, something or other which was out of synch. When it is Socrates who is in question, it seems to me difficult not to grasp the consistency of the totality of his system, given especially that this system functioned all the time in the open. We may have the idea, precisely, that in fact, the question of the subject as I am posing it, is perfectly and totally open at the level of Socrates whatever we may think about the fashion in which there were transmitted to us these conversations which were the basis of his teaching, however they have been arranged, modified, enriched as we may suppose by one or other person and by Plato especially, it nevertheless remains that their schema is clear, that there is a perfect decantation between the being of knowledge and the being of truth.

You have to re-read the whole of Plato with this guiding thread which can be held, something that, of course, I previously taught you to decipher much more fully, by calling things by their name and by saying what was involved in the desire to know, namely, the *agalma*. But let us leave to one side for a moment that what Socrates responds to is the following: what is the being of truth of this desire to know. What does he mean when this supposedly culminates in the Platonic transcription: “take care of your soul”? We will leave it for later. But it is not for nothing that I am evoking Socrates here, that I recall moreover only this key: the being of knowledge and the being of truth.

I will also leave to one side today a remark that I could make about this use of the term key even though I said earlier that my teaching did not contain key words.

(20) It is perhaps precisely because the property of the keys in question is to have no lock. And, in effect, the whole question is there. I want simply to make a remark which is one that, of course, anyone here could bring up. So then, why did Socrates not discover, articulate, the unconscious? The response, of course, is already implied in an earlier part of my discourse: because our established science did not exist. If I underlined the degree to which psychoanalysis depends on an assured, sutured, status of the being of knowledge, I think that this might already be seen as a sufficient response if, precisely, the question did not refer back simply to why there was not in Socrates' time, as a starting point, a science having the status of our science, of the one that I defined in a certain fashion? Precisely the suture on the side of the truth. I will not go very far, given the time today, in this direction, but since it is on the path of something which is very important for us to bring us back to what is involved, namely, the position of the psychoanalyst, namely, what I would want someone here to make some contribution to the next time, let us take one of the best, one of the greatest, and on the point to which he contributed to things their greatest relief, I would ask someone to take up again here my article on the theory of symbolism which was written as a commentary on Jones' article and then connect up with it what is also implied, simply indicated in my article, namely, the way in which Jones had to sort

himself out on the problem of female sexuality in so far as it involves the status of the (21) phallic function. Start from the manifest inconsistencies into which his discourse ceaselessly slips, or from the way the very symptom he is dealing with corrects him and in a way reintegrates, and does more than suggest, imposes, in a way, clearly written and contrary to his intention the same topological formula as ours, I would like if someone were to devote himself to this little manoeuvre and not force me once again to get involved in it myself.

What an extraordinary text is the one that I attacked in this article of which I speak, this article on symbolism. It consists in short of telling us - you will see it in the text - of saying, in conformity, when all is said and done, with things that I managed to say after him, that it is not a metaphor to say that symbolism is constructed like a metaphor, that it is a true metaphor, that here, the metaphor, instead of distancing itself, as he expresses it, from the concrete, approaches it under full sail. What, when all is said and done, is truer than this direction? Except that in the end it is false all the same because it is not a metaphor, it is a metonymy.

For the phallus, with the woman and with what effectively introduces it in an extraordinary relief as regards the determination, the function, even the sense of female homosexuality, one can say that everything is in this text except the author comprehending what he is saying.

(22) Is there not here something in which there is precisely inscribed this relationship to the symptom of which I speak, which is necessitated, that one can from the other aspect consider that he was only able to accede so profoundly to the sense of the symptom because he was missing a theory of it. So we can ask ourselves why it is that science, Greek science, which already knew how to construct such admirable automata, did not take on its status as science. The fact is that there is another voice which plays its role in the Socratic questioning. I think that you can evoke it with what I am designating here. It is the one that he calls on to give evidence from time to time, in a rather exemplary, rather scandalous fashion perhaps, we will never know anything about it, for contemporary ears, it is the voice of the slave. How does it happen that the slave then always responds so correctly, responds always so well and goes straight to the truth, to the quality of the irrational number which corresponds to the diagonal of the square. Do we not grasp here what is at stake and that it is precisely nothing other than the status of desire.

If neither Freud nor Socrates did not, however dissolving their product might have been, did not go so far as a social critique, for, after all, as far as I know, Socrates did not introduce historical materialism, even though he made the statues of the Gods tremble a little on their pedestals. It is quite clear that it was not for nothing that Alcibiades cut his dog's tail, that it was not simply to make people talk because it resembled a little bit too much a certain affair involving the mutilation of Hermes,

which for its part had caused some stir, but so that people might comprehend that this was not quite without some relationship with the dialectic about the being of truth.

(23) And this is not social criticism. Let us call that direct action. It is anarchy, something which, as you know, is no longer our style. Socrates did not engage in social criticism nor did Freud. It is no doubt because both one and the other had the idea from where there was situated an extraordinarily important economic problem, that of the relationships of desire and of *jouissance*. If there was no ancient science, it is because it was necessary, in order that there should be science, that there should be modern industry. And for there to be modern industry, it was necessary that slaves should not be private property. One looks after private properties, one does not make them work so bloody hard as in regimes of liberty. Which means, that the problem of *jouissance* in the ancient world was resolved and in a way that I think you see clearly, the beings devoted to *jouissance*, to pure and simple *jouissance*, were the slaves as, moreover, everything indicates. To the respect, contrary to what is said, that they received, one did not mistreat a slave like that, especially since he was capital, to the fact that it is enough to open Terence, not to mention others, Euripides, to notice that everything that was involved in terms of refined relationships, of courtly relationships, of love relationships, indeed, I do not know if you to beings who are in a servile condition. And that the *nihil humanum me alienum* of Terence, designates that, has no other sense. Why would one utter such an idiocy, if it were not a question of saying: I am going to where there is humanity, to the slaves.

(24) The *jouissance* of the ancient world is the slave. And this reserved park of *jouissance*, as I might say, was the factor of inertia which ensured that neither science nor at the same time the being of the subject were able to emerge. No doubt the problem of *jouissance* is posed for us in different terms. And certainly, because of capitalism, in terms that are a little more complicated, it nevertheless remains that in a certain place, Freud pointed his finger at it, and in connection with *Civilisation and its discontents*, we will have to take that path again, in order to take up our thread.

Seminar 15: Wednesday 27 April 1966

Good. *Inter*, as they say, *inter* in Latin. It is Saint Augustine who begins like that, a sort of statement which has finished by becoming eroded, by doing the rounds so much, *inter urinas et faeces nascimur*.

He was a delicate person. This remark which, of itself might not seem to involve infinite consequences, since moreover, since you are born from this perineum, it must all the same be said that you chase after it.

It is certain that if Saint Augustine had reason to remember it, it was for other reasons, for reasons other than the ones that interest all of us, in this sense, that it is not *qua* living being, body, that we are born *inter urinas et faeces*, but *qua* subject.

This is why it is not limited to being a bad memory, but is something which solicits us, at least those of us who are here, at present this year, to interest ourselves vitally in the *o*-object, since it happens that at least one of them is found to be connected to its surroundings.

At least one of them, and even two, the second, namely the penis, having being found to occupy in this determining of the subject, an altogether fundamental place.

(2) The way in which Freud articulates this knot introduces a great novelty as regards the nature of the subject. It is particularly opportune to remind oneself of it when the necessity of the becoming of this subject made us have it come from a completely different direction, namely, from the “I think”. And you ought really to sense that if I take so much trouble to articulate it for you starting from the “I think”, it is, of course, to bring you back to the Freudian terrain which will allow you to conceive of why it is the subject that we grasp in its purity at the level of the “I think”, has this close connection with two *o*-objects which are so incongruously situated.

It must be said moreover that we, who do not have a set purpose, we do not have the special aim of humiliating man, we will notice that there are two other *o*-objects, a curious thing, which remained, even in Freudian theory, half in the shadow, even though they play their role in it, with an active agency, namely, the look and the voice.

I think that the next time I will come back to the look. I gave two or even three celebrated seminars, as they say, in the first year of my lectures here, in which I tried to make you sense the dimension in which there is inscribed this object that is called the look.

Some of you surely remember this. Those who have been coming for a long time to my seminar could not have failed to notice their importance. And since I will have the opportunity, I think, the next time, to put the whole emphasis on it, I would like, from today, for those who represent the sacred battalion of my audience, namely yourselves, (3) to recommend between now and then, because this will render much more intelligible the references that I will make to it, what has appeared in the very brilliant book that our friend Michel Foucault has just published, what appeared in the first chapter of this book under the title: *Las Meninas (les suivantes)*, Chapter I of Michel Foucault's book entitled for those who are hard of hearing today, en-ti-tl-ed *Les mots*

et les choses [The order of things]. It is a beautiful title. In any case, this book will not disappoint you and in recommending you to read the first chapter, I am, in any case quite sure of not doing him a disservice, for it will be enough for you to read this first chapter, for you to throw yourselves voraciously into all the others.

Nevertheless, I would like a certain number of you at least to have read this first chapter between now and the next time, because it is difficult not to see inscribed there, in an extraordinarily elegant description, something which is precisely this double dimension which, if you remember, I had represented formerly by two opposing triangles, that of vision, with here this ideal object that is called the eye and which is supposed to constitute the vertex of the plane of vision, and what is inscribed in the opposite sense in the form of the look. When you have read this chapter, you will be able, you will be much more at ease in understanding what I will contribute as a continuation to it the next time.

Another little read, to distract you, to read in the shower, as they say, there is an (4) excellent little book which has just appeared with the title of: *Paradoxes de la conscience*, written by someone whom we all esteem, I imagine, because we have all, at some moment or other, opened one of his books, which are nourished by great scientific erudition, who is called Monsieur Ruyer. It is pronounced Ruyer, it appears. Raymond Ruyer, a professor at the faculty of letters in Nancy, Monsieur Ruyer who, in this provincial retreat, has pursued for long years a work of development that is extraordinarily important from the epistemological point of view, gives you here a sort of collection of anecdotes, which, I would say, in my eyes, have a quite extraordinary cathartic value, that of reducing, in effect, what one could call the paradoxes of consciousness, to the form of a sort of *almanach Vermot*, which is all the same rather interesting, I mean, puts them in their place, in their place, in short, as good stories. It seems that for a good while the paradoxes which attract us must be something other than paradoxes of consciousness.

In short, under this rubric, you will see there being summarised all sorts of paradoxes, some of which are extremely important, precisely because they are not paradoxes of consciousness, but when one reduces them to the level of consciousness, they become nothing more than trifles. This is an extremely invigorating read, and it seems that a good part of the philosophy programme ought to be put definitively outside the field of teaching after this book which shows the exact import of a certain number of problems which are not such.

(5) What else can I recommend to you? There is in the last two numbers of *Esprit* a commentary by someone whom I am told is a reverend Dominican father and which is signed by Jacques M Pohier, and which is devoted to the examination of a book which has been much spoken of here and to which Monsieur Tort has given his definitive sanction.

It nevertheless remains, that there is the other point of view to tackle it from, and that the religious point of view is not at all to be neglected, and I would ask you to read this article. You will see in it the way in which my teaching can be used on occasion in a religious perspective, when it is done honestly.

It is in happy contrast with the use that was made of it, precisely, in the other book that I am only designating for you here in an indirect fashion.

What else to advise you? Well, good God, I believe I have exhausted my few resources. All the same, you are going to see that today we are going to put on the agenda the examination of an article by Jones, for the interest of these closed seminars is that we should devote ourselves to the work of study and of commentary in so far as they may furnish materials, references, and also sometimes an initiation into the method of our research, and this article by Jones that we are going to see today which is called "The early development of female sexuality" and which appeared in 1927. I point this out to you, I point it out to you, because Jones wrote two other articles just as important as this one, and because the second like the first, not the third but, after all, (6) one can dispense with it, were translated, I was reminded in a happy enough way, because I had completely forgotten it, were translated in number seven of *La psychanalyse*, consecrated to female sexuality, numbers which are not perhaps out of print, so that, God knows, for those of you who are not too familiar with the English tongue, this will make it easier for you, retrospectively, I think, for those who have not yet read this first article, to grasp clearly what we will manage to say today about this article, and in reading the other one, to find in it the beginning of future works that I hope, since I hope that I will obtain just as much good will for the next closed seminars as I obtained for this one, while going at it in a rather short term fashion which deserves to be underlined here, to introduce the people who were willing to devote themselves to it, at my request.

You will find also in this number on female sexuality under the title of *Womanliness as masquerade*, which is exactly the translation of the English title, an excellent article, from an excellent psychoanalyst, called Madame Joan Riviere, who always took up the most relevant positions on all the subjects of psychoanalysis and, very especially, I mention it to you in passing, on the subject of child psychoanalysis.

You see that you will not be short of things to work on, the most urgent being to read Michel Foucault for the next time.

(7) So then, since I am very keen on this collaboration *from the floor* as they say, in the closed seminar, I am going to give the floor right away to Mademoiselle Muriel Grazien who was kind enough to make this sort of presentation, introduction, for your use, of this article by Jones which is called precocious development or early development, as you wish, of female sexuality.

You are going to see first of all what it comes down to, and I hope that I will manage to show you the use that I intend to make of it.

Mademoiselle Grazien

(On the board: *unseen man, unseeing man*)

“Unseen man” is a term that is present in the original text of Jones, and which is translated very correctly in French, but which, necessarily, lacks a little bit of ... spice.

What is there in women which corresponds to the fear of castration in men? What differentiates the development of the homosexual woman from that of the heterosexual woman? These are two questions that Ernest Jones asks himself, and that his article “The early development of female sexuality”, which appeared in the *International journal of psychoanalysis* in 1927, aims at elucidating.

Very quickly, by circumscribing the first question, Jones centres the problem around the concept of castration, and it is at this point that he pauses in order to try to elaborate a more concrete and more satisfying concept for the unfolding of a certain guiding thread of this article which is announced from the first paragraph. It is here that Jones evokes the notions of mystification and prejudice among the authors writing on the subject of female sexuality, that analysts diminished the importance of the female genital organ and had therefore adopted a phallo-centric position, as he says, in (9) connection with these questions. That these guiding threads are for Jones the opportunity to put in question again the whole concept of castration, by bringing out the points at which he is himself dissatisfied about the formulation given at that time to the concept, will not prevent Jones himself taking up this thread, at the different moments when he speaks about biological reality as fundamental.

When he underlines the primordial role of the male sexual organ, “the all important part normally played in male sexuality by the genital organs”, when he speaks about the partial threat represented by castration, “castration is only a *partial* threat, however important a one, against sexual capacity and enjoyment as a whole”, when he points out that the woman is closely dependent on the man for what concerns her gratification: “for obvious physiological reasons the female is much more dependent on her partner for her gratification than is the male on his. Venus had much more trouble with Adonis, for example, than Pluto with Persephone.” Finally, when he specifies what is for him the very condition of normal sexuality: “In both cases,” (in speaking about inversion), “the situation of prime difficulty is the simple but fundamental one of union between penis and vagina.”

This unconscious bias, as Karen Horney called it, has contributed, Jones tells us, to considering questions touching on sexuality far too much from the masculine point of view, and has thus thrown into an unknown position what he calls the fundamental conflicts.

“In attempting to answer this question - *ie*, to account for the fact that women suffer from dread at least as much as men - I came to the conclusion that the concept ‘castration’, has in some respects hindered our appreciation of the fundamental conflicts.” (557) The undoubtedly more general and abstract concept, at which Jones ends up, is that of *aphanisis*. This *aphanisis* is the total, irrevocable, disappearance of all capacity for the sexual act or for the pleasure of this act. It would thus be the fear (*dread*, which in English is even more...), the fear of this situation, which is common to both sexes.

In connection with *aphanisis*, I have been thinking that this term could correspond, at the clinical level, to nothing other than the disappearance of desire, as we understand it. In that case, the fear of *aphanisis* would be expressed by a fear of the total disappearance of desire, which appears to us to be the other side of one of these coins, either the desire not to lose desire, or else the desire not to desire.

In any case, Jones will not go much further in the development of this concept that he applies to this useful end and we can suppose that it did not seem to be sufficient, either for himself, or for a more rigorous formulation of what is represented by female castration.

We will now follow Jones in the second question which he approaches through a glimpse of the normal development of the girl, the oral stage, the anal stage, the identification to the mother at the mouth-anus-vagina stage; soon followed, as he says by penis envy.

(11) In specifying the distinction between the pre- and post-oedipal, or auto- and allo-erotic penis envy, Jones recalls the function in regression of defence against a privation at this final stage, a privation of never being able to share the penis in coitus with her father, which will send the little girl back to her first penis envy, namely, to have her own penis for herself.

This is the moment at which the little girl has to choose, it is a point of bifurcation between her incestuous attachment to the father and her own femininity. She must renounce either her object or her sex, Jones underlines. It is impossible for her to keep both. I believe that it is worthwhile at this point to read for you the paragraph where he specifies it.

“There are only two possible ways in which the libido can flow in this situation, though both may, of course, be attempted. The girl must choose, broadly speaking, between sacrificing her erotic attachment to her father and sacrificing her femininity -

ie, her anal identification with the mother. Either the object must be exchanged for another one or the wish must be; it is impossible to retain both. Either the father or the vagina (including pregenital vaginas) must be renounced. In the first case feminine wishes are developed on the adult plane *ie*, diffuse erotic charm (narcissism), positive vaginal attitude towards coitus, culminating in pregnancy and child-birth - and are transferred to more accessible objects. In the second case the bond with the father is retained, but (12) the object-relation is converted into an identification, *ie*, a penis complex is developed.”

Girls who renounce the object pursue a normal development, while in the second case in which the subject abandons her sex, the non-abandonment of objects is transformed into identification and this is the case of the homosexual.

“The divergence there mentioned - which, it need hardly be said is always a matter of degree - between those who surrender the position of their object-libido (father) and those who surrender the position of their subject-libido (sex), can be followed into the field of homosexuality itself.”

Jones then makes a division within the homosexual group. “One can distinguish two broad groups here: (1) The women who retain their interest in men, but who set their hearts on being accepted by men as one of themselves. To this group belongs the familiar type of woman who ceaselessly complain of the unfairness of women’s lot and their unjust ill-treatment by men. (2) Those who have very little or no interest in men, but whose libido centres on women. Analysis shews that this interest in woman is a vicarious way of enjoying femininity; they merely employ other women to exhibit it for them.”

It is we who are now underlining that by this first division that Jones makes, there are (13) in the two homosexual sub-groups, all the woman who have chosen to keep their object, the father and to renounce their sex. It is here that it is necessary to follow attentively Jones’ presentation to see what is happening.

It is easy to see that the first group so described, covers the specific mode of subjects who had preferred to abandon their sex; while the second group corresponds to the subjects who have abandoned the father object and substitute themselves for him by identification.

So then, I repeat: while the second group corresponds to the subject who has abandoned the object, the father.

The women belonging to the second group also identify with their love object, but this object then loses all interest for them. Their external object-relations to other women is very imperfect for they represent, henceforth, only their own femininity through identification, and their goal is to obtain from it, by substitution, gratification at the

hands of a man who remains invisible to them, the father incorporated in themselves. And this is the man who remains invisible to them: *unseen man*.

After these descriptions one can only remark that this interest in women, which is fleeting in a way, seems to be brought to bear on an attribute, without there being any real object relationship. What can be understood about it if we have here a double identification, on the one hand to the father, on the other hand to the lover (*l'amante*)? (14) I am proposing that what is at stake in this example here is a symbolic operation.

- 1) That the lover is the symbol of lost femininity rather than the femininity which the subject has renounced,
- 2) This man who is invisible to her, the *unseen man* which does not mean the *unseeing man*, the father, or rather what it is, in him, that sees, that which in him is *seeing*, the eye, a symbol already evoked by Jones in his theory of symbolism and specified by him there as phallic, is the true object, for its presence is necessary, indeed indispensable, for the accomplishment of the ritual designed to render to the father what he did not give.

In order to leave you with a very gripping image of this type of relationship, I would like to read for you an episode which is seen by the narrator, Marcel, in *Swann's way*, at a moment when he, by chance, if you wish is also moreover *unseen*, namely, he has hidden himself, he is hidden by the circumstances and the scene unfolds before him without it being known that he is there. Obviously the whole scene is important. I am giving you simply a few lines:

“In the v-shaped opening of her crepe bodice Mademoiselle Vinteuil felt the sting of her friends sudden kiss; she gave a little scream and broke away; and then they began to chase one another around the room scrambling over the furniture their wide sleeves fluttering like wings, clucking and squealing like a pair of amorous fowl. At last Mademoiselle Vinteuil collapsed onto the sofa with her friend lying on top of her, the (15) latter now had her back turned to the little table on which the old music master's portrait had been arranged.”

Dr Lacan: It is her father.

Mademoiselle Grazien: “Mademoiselle Vinteuil realised that her friend would not see it unless her attention were drawn to it and so exclaimed as if she had just noticed it for the first time: ‘Oh! There is my father's picture looking at us; I can't think who can have put it there; I'm sure I've told them a dozen times that it isn't the proper place for it.’

I remembered the words that M Vinteuil had used to my parents in apologising for an obtrusive sheet of music. This photograph was evidently in regular use for ritual profanations, for the friend replied in words which were clearly a liturgical response:

‘Let him stay there. He can’t bother us any longer. Do you think he would start whining and wanting to put your overcoat on for you if he saw you now with the window open, the ugly old monkey?’ To which Mademoiselle Vinteuil replied in words of gentle reproach - ‘Come, come!’”

And further on: “She could not resist the attraction of being treated with tenderness by a woman who had shown herself so implacable towards the defenceless dead, and, springing onto her friend’s lap she held out a chaste brow to be kissed precisely as a daughter would have done with the exquisite sensation that they would thus between them inflict the last turn of the screw of cruelty by robbing M. Vinteuil, as though they (16) were actually rifling his tomb, of the sacred rights of fatherhood.”

And further on, it is the narrator who is speaking: “I knew now what was the reward that M. Vinteuil, in return for all the suffering that he had endured in his lifetime on account of his daughter, had received from her after his death.”

Dr Lacan

Merçi, Mademoiselle.

Good. Mademoiselle Grazien, in short, has given you an introduction, indeed a very rapid introduction. It is not, and, after all, we have no reproach to make to her because it is an introduction. She highlighted two very important things about this article which, even though it is short, includes, for example, certain detours that she thought she should elide, on, for example, the idea of privation and that of frustration which follows, the relationships between privation and castration, all terms which are for us, those at least who remember what I teach, of some considerable importance.

But, nevertheless, she has not done badly, since for you, who are always in the difficult position of listeners, what has been highlighted are these two terms; on the one hand the notion of *aphanisis* and on the other hand, the way that Freud, no, that Jones with his concern with looking for what is involved in castration in women, sees himself referring back to certain positions which involve references that can be qualified, properly speaking, as structural references.

It is clear - consult the article - that he does not know how to organise these structural (18) references.

He does not know how to organise them because of the same concern as the one that guides his article on symbolism, namely, to highlight in a fashion that is rigorous and valid, what constitutes the moorings of the Freudian theory of the unconscious.

Symbolism took a whole series of threads which had become detached from the principal Freudian trunk, the value of something which allows a symbolic utilisation, in the usual sense of the term, of elements highlighted by the handling of the unconscious.

This symbolic utilisation, the one which means that Jung sees in the snake the symbol of the libido, for example, is something that Freud opposed in the strongest fashion, saying that the snake, if it is the symbol of something, is the representation of the phallus.

Because of this Freud, Jones - twice I have made this slip - Jones makes great efforts to show us metaphor - since when all is said and done he is forced to adopt this linguistic reference - to show us metaphor developing in two directions.

In one direction, of an always greater lightness of content, one cannot refer to another register, even though it is not the term that he employs, but he is forced to employ so (19) many others which are all, which are all of the same order, namely, a sort of rarefaction, of emptying, or abstraction, or generalisation, in short, of respect for this sort of ordering, of hierarchy concerning the consistency of the object of the classical theory of knowledge, that, one can see clearly that what is involved is to show us that in no case does the symbol have this function, that the symbol, on the contrary, is this something which brings us back to what he calls in his language, and as he is able, primary ideas, namely, something which is distinguished by a character that is at once concrete, particular, unique, involving the totality, as one might say, and the specificity of the individual in his very life, we will say, in order not to use the term which, of course, he avoids, and which is none other than the term of being.

It is quite clear, nevertheless, that when he refers to these primary ideas, and when he inscribes precisely in them, terms concerning what being is, namely, birth, death, relationships with near relatives, for example, he designates himself something which is not a biological given, but quite the contrary, an articulation which transcends, which transposes, which transcribes this biological given within conditions of existence which can only be situated in relationships of being.

(20) The whole ambiguity of Jones' article on symbolism comes from that. Nevertheless, what he aims at, and principally his effort to show that what is involved in symbolism, circumscribes something that he does not know how to designate, but that he circumscribes all the same, in a way, by the movement proper to his *élan*, to his own concrete experience, to what is involved in analysis, he arrives at the result of putting forward in such a unique way, symbols which are all in different degrees, symbols of the phallus, that he forces us indeed to ask ourselves the question, when all is said and done, about what the phallus is in the symbolic order.

He does not convince us, far from it, that the phallus is purely and simply the penis. But he leaves open the question of the central value possessed by a certain number of entities among which the phallus is the one which is presented with the greatest incarnation, even though it is only presented behind a veil, a veil that he has not lifted.

That is why I will have this article taken up again by someone who prepared it for today but who prefers, in short, of his own accord, to put it off to a later stage, namely, let us say to our next closed seminar, I will take up, on that occasion, by way of commentary, the details of this article on the theory of symbolism, but I am already advising you that there is an article by me which appeared, if I remember correctly, in *La psychanalyse*, number six. It was in number six that it appeared?

(21) **Mr Safouan:** Five.

Doctor Lacan: Five, on Jones' theory of symbolism.

What we are doing today has, with respect to what I will have to develop then in the next seminars on the function of the **o**-object, a certain value - I would not say of anticipation - but of horizon. For, when all is said and done, there is a relationship between the place of the **o**-object in so far as it is fundamental, that it allows us, in a certain type of structure which has no other name than that of phantasy, to comprehend the determining function, determining in the manner of a support or of a mounting, I have said, which the **o**-object has in determining the splitting of the subject.

This **o**-object, as I indicated to you in my discourse earlier, and of course it is not a novelty, is presented under, not four forms, but let us say four aspects (*versants*), because of the way in which it is inserted on two aspects first of all, demand and desire, on the demand aspect, the objects that we know under the species of breast, in the sense and in the function that we give it in psychoanalysis, and of excrement or again as we express it, faeces.

The other aspect is the one that the relationship to desire has; it is therefore a function of a higher degree. For I point it out to you in passing. The earlier reading of the French text that Mademoiselle Grazien gave, reveals an incorrectness in it, what was translated by *désir* at a certain place, namely, that the homosexual was led to surrender her desire for the object in order not to surrender her sex is incorrect, in English it is (22) "*the wish*", and from the moment it is "*the wish*", it is not desire, it is the *voeu* or the demand.

We have situated the topological place of desire sufficiently with respect to demand for you to conceive of what I mean when I say, I am speaking about another aspect, in connection with the function of two other **o**-objects, namely, the look and the voice.

In these two couples an opposition is made which, from the subject to the Other can be situated as follows: the demand *of* the Other, is the **o**-object faeces, the demand *to* the Other, is the **o**-object breast.

Now then, the same opposition exists, even though it cannot fail to appear still more obscure to you, since I have not explained it to you, there are also some forms, such that the obscurity is not about the desire *of* the Other, which you will already immediately sense is supported by the voice, as this desire *to* the Other which represents a dimension that I hope to be able to open out to you, in connection with the look.

But, at the heart of the function of this **o**-object, it is clear that we should find what is altogether central to the establishment, to the institution of the function of the subject, it is very properly speaking, the function that the phallus comes to occupy at the same place which, precisely, has absolutely not the same character as regards what one can (23) something like a common question englobing in its parentheses the totality of the objects in question; it has not, it does not enter as organ, since, when all is said and done, in all these cases, and however material two of them may appear to you, it is well and truly, in all these cases, a matter of an organic representative.

Undoubtedly, it already seems less substantial, less graspable, at the level of the look and of the voice, but this is not, nevertheless, by reason simply of a sort of difference of scale, of scalar difference, as one might say, in the ungraspable character that we find the phallus here. The phallus enters, as such, in a certain function that it is now a matter of defining and which, properly speaking, can only be defined with reference to the signifier.

The double dimension which is revealed here is, as you will see, something which differentiates the slipping away, ungraspable character of the substantiality of the **o**-object when it is a matter of the look and of the voice, this slipping away, ungraspable character is absolutely not of the same nature with respect to these two objects and with respect to the phallus.

What happens when someone like Mr Jones, I am saying, nourished, inspired by the very purest style of the first analytic research into the value as discovery that the realities of experience had, still could not in any way be reduced to not being able, little (24) by little, to be drawn into a series of paths, of traces, which represent, properly speaking, with respect to this experience, a rationalisation and which is the whole one which made psychoanalysis develop along a path which, in some way, deserves to be situated in some parallelism with respect to the educative reduction, as one might say, that Anna Freud made of psychoanalysis at the level of children.

However masked such a deviation of psychoanalysis may be with respect to the adult, we can say that everything that brings into play in the present state of things and in the

way that this has been expressed, some reference, whatever it may be, to reality or again to the establishment of a better, less distorted, stronger ego, as it is put, all of this only consists in making the paths that analysis has allowed us to imagine, enter into the register of development, in the sense of a fundamental orthopaedics which dissipates, properly speaking, the sense of psychoanalytic experience. Jones is certainly not at that point, and the reality (*fait*) of what he produces before us well represents something which tends to rediscover the supporting points in a certain number of accepted references, this is what Mademoiselle Grazien alluded to in speaking about a certain number of appeals to what one could call a certain number of scientific prejudices, the primacy, for example, of the biological reference, why primacy? There is absolutely no question, of course, of neglecting it, nor even of not saying, when all is said and done, that it is first, but undoubtedly to pose it firstly as first, is where the whole error lies, for what is involved, on this occasion, is to prove it. Now, it is not proved. It is not proved, at least at the beginning, when we find ourselves before a phenomenon as paradoxical as the generality of the castration complex, in so far as generality means also its incidence in both sexes, the two sexes not finding themselves with respect to this something which is first of all presented, and in a fundamental fashion, as outlining the structure of this castration complex, involves something which refers to a part and to a part only of the genital apparatus, in the part which comes to offer itself in a manifest and visible and in a way pregnant fashion from the point of view of *Gestalt*, which in man is the penis. Not a privilege, but a privilege which takes on a value as one might say of *phanie*, of manifestation, and where it is as such, it appears, at least at first appearance, that it is introduced with a prevalent value.

Such, in other words, is the function that the castration complex is going to take on if we examine it from a certain angle. Well then, it is extremely remarkable that Jones' first step should go in the direction of a subjectivication. I am giving to this word the weight it may take on here, given what I announce about the definition of the subject for almost two years already, and for much longer, of course, for those who have more or less always been coming here.

(26) We cannot fail to see, if we are already a little practised in this perspective, the relationship between the introduction by Jones of the term *aphanisis*, in connection with the castration complex, and what I represented for you as the essence of the subject, namely, this *fading*, this perpetual movement of occultation behind the signifier or intermittent emergence, which defines as such the subject in its foundation, in its status, in what constitutes the being of the subject.

There is something twisted which allows there to be approached, in a quite different fashion the relationship of being, non-being, not in a fashion which, in a way, is extracted from it as if a judgement could grasp somewhere the relationship of being and non-being, but in a fashion which is here in some way profoundly implicated, makes us grasp that we will never in any way be able to speculate, reason, structure everything that is involved in the subject, without beginning from the fact that we

ourselves as subject, are implicated in this profound duplicity which is the same as the one the Cartesian *cogito* separates out by fixing itself on a point that is more and more reduced to the ideal, to the point of being itself the nothingness which the “I think” is, “I think” meaning nothing just by itself, which allows there to be set aside, to be divided, to be shown the degree of torsion we must suppose there is, in a way, submitted this subsistence of the subject for it to be able to appear in such a perspective, that being is dissociated between the being prior to thinking and the being that thinking gives rise to.

(27) The being of the “I am” of the one who thinks, the being which is led to emerge, from the fact that the one who thinks says “therefore I am”.

Jones’ *aphanisis* is absolutely not conceivable except in the dimension of such a being. For, how does he himself articulate it for us? What could be the recoiling of anything whatsoever which is not of the order of the subject as regards a fear of losing the capacity of what is called in English:

- 1) *capacity*
- 2) the term *sexual enjoyment*.

I know that it is very difficult to give a support which is equivalent to our French word *jouissance* to what it designates in English. “Enjoyment” does not have the same resonance as *jouissance*, and it would have, in a way, to be combined with the term “lust”, which would perhaps be a bit better.

In any case this dimension of *jouissance* which I told you the last time we were going to introduce, that it is in a way a term which of itself poses essential problems that we can really only introduce after having given its status to the “I am” of the “I think”.

Jouissance, for us, cannot but be identical to every presence of Kant. *Jouissance* can only be apprehended, can only be conceived of with regard to what is body. And from which there could never arise from a body something which is supposed to be the fear (28) of no longer having orgasm (*de ne plus jouir*). If there is something that the pleasure principle indicates to us, it is that if there is a fear, it is a fear of orgasm (*de jouir*). *Jouissance* being properly speaking an opening out whose limit cannot be seen, and whose definition cannot be seen either.

However well or badly it may orgasm, it is only a body that can orgasm or not orgasm, this at least is the definition that we are going to give to *jouissance*. For as regards what constitutes divine *jouissance*, we will put this question off, if you do not mind, until later.

Not that it is not posed. It seems to us that there is a defile that is important to grasp; it is the following, how can the relationships between *jouissance* and the subject be established?

For the subject says "I am". The centre, that I would not describe as implicit, because in fact it is formulated, it is clearly stated in Freud, the centre of analytic thinking, is that there is nothing which has more value for the subject than orgasm (*l'orgasme*).

Orgasm is the moment in which there is realised a privileged, unique, summit of happiness. This merits reflection. Because, what is more, it is no less striking that such an affirmation involves, in a way, of itself a dimension of agreement. Even those who have some reservations about the more or less satisfying character of orgasm in the conditions that we may manage to reach it, are not going, for all that, not to think (29) that if this orgasm is insufficient, there is not a truer, more substantial one that they call by some name, whether what is involved is union, the unitive way, fusion, totality, loss of self, anything you wish, it will still be orgasm that is in question.

Is it not possible for us, even if we keep a question mark attached to what is here taken as a starting point, is it not possible for us, from now on, to grasp the fact that we can consider orgasm in this, let us say, provisional function, as representing a crossing



point, or again a point of emergence, a point where precisely *jouissance*, I would say, surfaces. This takes on a privileged sense for us from the fact that where it surfaces, at the surface *par excellence*, the one that we have defined, that we are trying to grasp, as structural, as that of the subject.

I indicate also for you the references that this may take on in - why not - what we will call our system. I do not reject the word system on condition that you describe as system the fashion in which I systematise things and which is precisely made up of topological references.

We can indeed consider *jouissance*, the one that is in orgasm, as something which will be inscribed, for example, in a particular shape that our torus will take on, if our torus (30) is this cycle of desire, which is accomplished through the succession of the repeated loops of a demand, it is clear that in function of certain definitions of orgasm as a terminal point, as a point of retrogression, as you like, what would be involved is a torus constructed more or less as follows,

but here it has a punctual value, in other words, every demand is reduced to zero in it, but it is no less clear that it deceives (*il blouse*) desire.

It is what one might call the ideal and naive function of orgasm. For anyone trying to define it from introspective data, it is this short moment of annihilation, a moment moreover that is punctual, fleeting, that is represented in the dimension of everything that the subject can be in its tearing apart, in its division, that this moment of orgasm, I said of orgasm, is situated.

It is clear that it is as *jouissance*, which it is not sufficient for us to notice only in the ideal moment, I insist on the ideal, it is realised in sexual union, for us to say that it is (31) immanent in sexual union, and the proof is that this moment of orgasm is exactly equivalent in masturbation.

I am saying in so far as it represents this end point of the subject. We will retain then, in this function, only the character of *jouissance* and *jouissance* which is not yet defined or justified. But this will allow us to comprehend, provided we notice the analogy between the shape of the Klein bottle, as I might say, if in fact one can speak about the shape, but after all, since I draw it, it has a shape, if I represent it in a shape that is inverted with respect to what you normally see, in the drawing that I called its opening, its circle of reversion, the Klein bottle appears above as the point made earlier. This circle of reversion, where I already taught you to find the nodal point of these two aspects of the subject as they can be joined together from the affronting of the stitching of the being of knowledge to the being of truth, I also told you that this was the place where we ought to inscribe, precisely, as a conjunction between one and the other, what we call the symptom, and it is one of the most essential foundations not to be forgotten about what Freud always said about the function of the symptom, the fact is that, in itself, the symptom is *jouissance*.

There are, then, modes of emergence, other than orgasm, structurally analogous to *jouissance* at the level of the subject. I do not need, it would be easy but time prevents (32) me, to refer you to the number of times that Freud highlighted the equivalence of the function of the orgasm to that of the symptom. Whether he is right or wrong is a different question to knowing what he means on this occasion, and what we for our part, can construct on it.

So then, it would be well, perhaps, to look twice at it before making orgasm equivalent to sexual *jouissance*. That orgasm is the manifestation of sexual *jouissance* in man, and one singularly complicated by the function that it comes to occupy in the subject, is indeed what we have to deal with and we would be quite wrong to collapse, in a way, into one and the same reality, these three dimensions.

For this is properly speaking to reintroduce, in a dangerously masked and also ridiculous shape, the old implications of mysticism to which I alluded earlier, into the domain of an experience which in no way requires them.

Once upon a time, a poet who said “*post coitum omne animal triste*” added “*praeter* (because this bit is always forgotten) *mulierum gallumque*”, except women and cocks.

It is a curious thing, ever since what I call psychoanalytic mysticism exists, people are no longer sad after coitus. I do not know whether you have ever noticed that, but it is a fact.

(33) Women, of course, were already not sad but since the men used to be, it is curious that they no longer are so. On the contrary, when women do not orgasm (*ne jouissent pas*) they become extraordinarily depressed even though up to then they accommodated themselves extremely well to it. This is what I call the introduction of psychoanalytic mysticism.

No one has yet definitively proved that it is necessary that a woman must at all costs have an orgasm in order to fulfil her role as woman. And the proof is that people are still quibbling about what this famous orgasm is in the case of women. Nevertheless, this metaphysics has taken on such value, I know a very great number of women who are ill because they are not sure that they really orgasm (*jouissent*), while after all they are not so discontented as all that with what they have and if they had not been told that it was not that, they would not have worried about it.

This makes it necessary to dot the i's a little, about what is involved in sexual *jouissance*. If one posits first that what primarily interests us is to know what is involved at the level of the subject, this is a first way to make the question a healthier one. But one could also ask oneself the question of what is involved in it at the level of sexual union, because here, it is very remarkable that it is a strange phenomenon that we always speak as if, from the simple fact that sexual difference exists among living beings with what it requires in terms of union, the accomplishment of the union (34) is accompanied by a sort of univocal *jouissance*, and univocal in this sense that we ought quite simply to extrapolate from what we, the humans or, if you wish, the most particularly evolved primates, know about this *jouissance*.

Well then, I am not going to go into this chapter today because it is very curious that it is never treated. Indeed it is a fact that it is not. But, indeed, it is quite clear that first of all, it is impossible to define, to grasp, any signs of what one could call orgasm in most females in the animal domain. For the one or two species where one can, which only show, precisely, that one could find signs if they existed, since sometimes one does find them, it is quite clear that everywhere else one does not find them, in any case objective signs of orgasm in the female.

So then, since one could find them and one does not find them, this is already something made to throw a little doubt on the modalities of *jouissance* in sexual union. I am not saying, I do not see why I should except sexual union from the dimension of *jouissance*, which appears to me a dimension that is absolutely coextensive with that of the body.

But that it should be that of orgasm, seems to be in no way required. It is perhaps of a quite different nature and the proof, moreover, is precisely where sexual union is most (35) impressive, where it lasts for ten days, between frogs for example, that one clearly sees that what is involved is something other than orgasm. It is very important all the same.

Here we are full of metaphors. Tumescence, detumescence, is one of those which appear to me to be most extravagant. It is a matter of manifesting in the sequence of behaviours of what one could call, with regard to union, an ascending behaviour or a behaviour of approach, followed by a behaviour of the resolution of charges, after which there is produced the separation .

With the existence of an erect organ, which is very far from being universal, there are animals - I am not going to amuse myself by teaching you biology here but I would ask you to open the big treatises of zoology - there are animals who realise sexual union with the help of an organ of fixation which is completely non-tumescient since it is purely and simply a hook.

It clearly appears that orgasm in these cases, if it exists, must take on, even in the case of the male, a quite different appearance and there is nothing to say, for example, that it is liable to any subjectification. These distinctions appear to me to be important to introduce because if Jones, at the beginning, in a way, sets aside and is astonished at and this is how he introduces his notion of *aphanisis*, the distinct character, in short, (36) there is between the idea of castration as it is substantified in experience, namely the disappearance of the penis, and something which appears to him to be more important, namely a disappearance which is not that of the penis, which for us can only be that of the subject, and that he imagines to be the fear of the disappearance of desire, even though this is in a way a contradiction in terms, for desire precisely is sustained by the fear of losing itself, that there could not be an *aphanisis* of desire, that there could not be in a subject a representation of this *aphanisis* for the good reason that desire is sustained by it.

To persevere with it in the Spinozian being is the same text and the same theme which says: "desire is the essence of man". Man perseveres in being as desire. And he cannot escape in any way from this support of desire. There is precisely the ambiguity of being able to carry on with one's own restraint and one's own fear as being an aspect of defence at the same time as an aspect of suspension, towards *jouissance*.

So then, do we not see here the whole value of the other end of the arch, of the trajectory that Jones accomplishes for us, when very firmly and how correctly, because it is a matter of introducing things at the level of the subject, he puts us, as regards the (37) woman, since she is the one in question, at the heart of the way in which the subjective *impasse* can present itself for her.

Over against the son-mother couple, from which there began, not without reason, the whole analytic exploration, he speaks to us about the father-daughter couple. And what does he tell us? Everything begins here from a privation. Father-daughter incest, as we know, for our part, from all our experience, is in its consequences - analytic ones, I cannot define them otherwise - let us say, neurotogenic, but the term is not enough because it can go so far as to have psychotic consequences; it is infinitely less dangerous, it is even dangerous to a zero degree as compared to mother-son incest, which always has devastating consequences, to which I have alluded.

At the level of the father-daughter couple, the function of interdiction, as it is exercised in its dialectical consequences, in what is called the fundamental interdiction of incest which is the interdiction of the mother, takes on a simplified form which clearly highlights the privileged function of the woman with regard to sexual union. For if the specificity of a certain sort of living being is that an organ which is at once erectile and as such privileged as a support for *jouissance*, is its ambocepteur, well then, what does that mean? It is that for her, there is no problem. To make love, if things had an absolute value, of course, is necessarily alloplastic, as I might say, implies that she should go to the one who has it. If she did not have some of the properties of the little (38) boy there would be no problem. The little boy has other ones precisely because of the fact that he can enjoy himself (*jouir de lui-même*) exactly like a little monkey.

The question would, therefore, be quite simple but this is not what is involved, precisely because there is language and the law, the father is forbidden, and the problem comes into play along this path. Now, what does Jones tell us? What does he cry out to us at the top of his voice in giving an account of his experience? What does he tell us if not that here again the woman is going to keep her advantage, is going to win, but it is necessary to see how, and in order to see how, one must not keep all these prejudices in one's head.

Let us see what he tell us. It is necessary for the woman to choose between her sex and her object. She surrenders the paternal object and she preserves her sex. There exist only two possibilities for expressing libido in this situation and both one and the other of these paths can be taken. *Grosso modo*, between abandoning her erotic attachment to the father and the abandonment of her femininity. She must change either the object or the desire. And what is he going to tell us about what is involved

at this level, let us see, describe it for us exactly, Mademoiselle Grazien, tell me exactly the place of the paragraph where he describes

Here it is. “In the first case feminine wishes are developed on the adult plane - ie, (39) diffuse erotic charm”, (he underlines), “(narcissism).”

What does that mean? The fact is that Freud, here, from his experience, the first thing that he puts forward, as regards what results from the choice that I would not describe as normal but as legal. The one who renounces the paternal object in order to preserve her sex, in short, this is what is at stake, well then, this means it is no use renouncing the object in order to preserve something, because this something that one wishes to preserve at the cost of a renunciation is precisely what one loses.

For, what has diffuse erotic charm, which consists in the manipulation in the narcissistic apparatus, have to do with the essence of femininity, if not very precisely what Madame Joan Riviere pinpointed as womanliness as a masquerade and this must indeed reflect something, which is that, precisely starting from such a choice, the woman has to take the place, for reasons which it is a matter for us of specifying, of the **o**-object.

In the paternal and patriarchalising perspective, the woman, born from the man's rib, is an **o**-object. Submitting to the law in order to preserve her sex not only does not avoid her losing it, but necessitates it.

On the contrary, it is not I who say this, it is Jones, in the other case, retaining the (40) object, namely the father, what will be the result. The result is a homosexual choice. I repeat. I can do no more today than to say: it is Jones who says it. And after all, all our previous experience behind, including the pinpointing that is a little bit incomplete because elided of the whole presence of Proust, which links this case with the whole divinatory character of his intuition and his art, but what matter!

In the other case, namely, in as far as the father-object is retained, the woman finds what? What Jones says then: namely her femininity. For in every homosexual attitude or function, what the woman finds, in place of the object and people say it is in place of the primordial object, is her femininity.

And then, a second moment of what happens within this second choice. Here, Jones' terms are not equivocal, despite himself. It is from stressing the function of what is at stake, namely, a certain object, and this object as lost, that the choice is going to be made, whether this object is going to become an object that is claimed and that the so-called homosexual becomes a woman in rivalry with men and claiming to have the phallus like them, or that in the case of homosexual love, it is *qua* not having it that she loves, namely, to realise what is in fact the high point of love, to give what she does not have.

(41) So that, when all is said and done, we would only have, and, after all, why not admit it, *jouissance* of femininity as such from this homosexual beginning, which only simply illustrates the mediating function that this phallus takes on which then allows us to designate its place.

For if what is involved as regards the status of the subject is to know what the individual (*l'être*) loses of its being by being the one who speaks or who thinks, it is also a matter of knowing what comes to take the place of this loss when it is a matter of enjoying (*de jouir*).

And what is more natural than that the privileged organ of *jouissance* should be employed here, since the fact is, as I might say, that man has it within hand's reach. But in that case, things happen at two degrees. This organ, like every organ, is used for a function. Far from the function creating the organ, there are a whole lot of animals that have organs which they have certainly for a long time never known what to make of, until they have found a way of using them. I could give you a number of them. Naturally, they are not organs absolutely like the liver or the heart. There is one that has a little saw in the oesophagus; you have to go to so much trouble to understand what he can do with it, that you are lost in admiration that he has succeeded in doing something with it. Well, it is the same thing. It is with this penis that there is going to be made something much more interesting, namely, a signifier, a (42) signifier of the loss that occurs at the level of *jouissance* through the function of the law. And what is important, is not its function as signifier. When you look a little bit more closely than most of you have done at what is called in language morphemes, you will see the function of what is called the case or the unmarked form. There can be here a termination or a flexion which indicates that it is the future, the past, the substantive, the partitive or the *torsif*. And that there is sense in the fact that there is precisely no mark in this place. This is the essence of the function of significance (*signifiance*) and if the woman keeps, retains, raised to a higher power what is given to her by not having the phallus, it is precisely by being able to make of this function of the phallus the perfect completion of what is at the heart of castration, the word phallus, namely, castration itself, it is to be able to raise the function of significance to this point by not being marked.

It is on this that I will end today, certainly forced to abbreviate things given the time. I think, at least for those who are here and who I very particularly desire should grasp where we are going to be led by this re-emergence of this castration complex, of which nobody ever speaks any more, for it is rather striking that in the last article that I told you to consult, it is a Dominican priest who is neither analysed nor an analyst who points out that in a certain book there is absolutely nothing said about the castration complex. It is not astonishing. I never taught him what it was. He could not know. But I hope that with, I think, sufficient time, namely, not later than the end of the year, (43) we will have gone a little bit further into it.

Seminar 16: Wednesday 4 May 1966

It is a matter, for us, of situating our topology; to situate ourselves, we analysts, as acting in it. In a closed meeting, a small little group, someone asked me, recently, in connection with what I said about this topology - that it is not a metaphor - what is it then? What does it mean for us to situate ourselves as subjects in a reference which is not metaphorical. I did not answer; the person who was questioning me had not been at the last closed seminar and the elliptical response that I would have been able to give, would have confronted us with *jouissance*, would have been a reply that was not sufficiently commented on.

To be situated in what is no longer the metaphor of the subject, is to go searching for the foundation of its position, not at all in any effect of meaning, but in what results from the combinatorial itself.

What exactly is involved in the subject, in its classical position, from this locus (2) necessitated by the constitution of the objective world? Note that in this pure subject, the subject whose unitary reference the theoreticians and the philosophers have taken to extremes, this subject, I am saying, is not altogether believed in and with good reason. People cannot believe that the whole world is suspended on it. And it is indeed in this that there consists the accusation of idealism.

It is here that the visual structure of this subject ought to be explored. I already approached the material contributed by our analytic experience, and in the first place the screen, the screen that our analytic experience teaches us to be the principle of our doubt, what is seen does not reveal but hides something.

This screen, nevertheless, supports, for us, everything that presents itself. The foundation of the surface is at the source of everything that we describe as an organisation of form, a constellation. Henceforth, everything is organised in a superimposition of parallel planes and labyrinths are established with no exit to representation as such.

In a book that I recommended to the greater part of those who are here since, as a matter of fact, this audience is not much bigger than the one that I had the last time, a

book called *Les paradoxes de la conscience* by Monsieur Ruyer, you will see the consequences of this structural reference. Everything that we conceive of as point by (3) point correspondence of what is on one surface onto another, is imaged by the representation of a point from which the rays start, traversing the two parallel planes manifesting there a trace on a different one to that on a plane to the corresponding plane, a fundamental homothety, homology, so that, however we may manipulate the relationship of the image to the object, the result is that there must indeed be somewhere this famous subject, who unifies the configuration, the constellation, by limiting it to a few brilliant points, who unifies it somewhere, this something in which it consists. Hence the importance of the subject.

But this flight into a mythical unity, in which it is easy to see the requirement of the pure unifying spirit, the path, the path along which I am leading you, which is properly speaking what is called method, culminates at this topology which consists in this remark that it is not at all by seeking something that is going to correspond to this surface at the back of the eye which is called the retina or moreover to any other, at whatever point the image is formed, that it is a matter of referring to as constituting the unifying element. Of course, this begins from the Cartesian distinction between extension and thought. This distinction supposes that extension is space as homogenous, in this unthinkable sense that it is, as Descartes says, entirely to be (4) conceived of as *partes extra partes*, except for something which is hidden in this remark, which is that it is homogenous, that each point is identical to all the others while at the same time being different, which is really what the hypothesis means, namely, that all its parts are of equal value.

Now, the experience of what is involved in this structure of space, not at all when we distinguish it from thought, from thought in so far as the signifying combinatorial supports it uniquely and fundamentally, that this space cannot effectively be at all separated from it, that it is on the contrary intimately consistent with it, that there is no need for an over-arching thought to grasp it again in this necessary coherence, that thought is only introduced into it by introducing measure into it, a measure in a way that is applicable, as in land-surveying, which far from exploring it, constructs it. I have designated here the essence of what is involved in the first steps of geometry, the trace of which is still conveyed by its name, geometry, of Greek, Euclidean geometry, entirely founded precisely on this theme of a measure being introduced, which hides that it is not at all thought which carries it but properly speaking what the Greeks themselves called measure. “Man is the measure of all things”, namely, his body, the foot, the thumb and the cubit (*la coudée*).

(5) Now, the progress of the thinking that has continued to be called geometric and, no doubt, it is not for nothing that *more geometrico* has always appeared to be the ideal for every deduction of thought, the progress, I am saying, of this geometry shows us the emergence of another mode of approach in which extension and combinatorial are closely tied together and which is, properly speaking, projective geometry.

Not at all equality, measure, an overlapping effect, but as you still remember, the often painful effort to ground the first deductions of geometry. Remember the time when you were put through the Hey presto! of a reversal onto the plane. God knows, this is an operation which did not seem to be implied in the premises to ground the status of the isosceles triangle. Displacement, translation, manipulation, even homothety; this whole operation starting from which Euclidean deduction fans out, is transformed, properly speaking in projective geometry, precisely by introducing from figure to figure the function of equivalence by transformation.

Curiously, this progress is marked, historically, by the contribution properly speaking of artists, namely, those who were interested in perspective. Perspective is not optics. (6) It is not at all a matter in perspective of visual properties but, precisely, of this correspondence of what is established concerning the figures which are inscribed on one surface with those which, on another surface, are produced from the simple consistency established of the function of a point starting from which straight lines join this point to the articulations of the first figure, to find themselves, by crossing another surface, making another figure appear.

We rediscover here the function of the screen. And it is not at all implied that between one figure and the other there should appear a relationship of resemblance or of similarity, but simply of the consistencies that we can define between the two. The screen, here, functions as what is interposed between the subject and the world. It is not an object like any other. Something is painted on it. Before defining what is involved in representation, the screen already announces to us, at the horizon, the dimension of the representative of the representation. Before the world becomes representation, its representative - I mean the representative of the representation - emerges. I will not deprive myself of the opportunity of evoking here for the first time, even if only to come back to it, a notion which, although prehistoric, cannot in any way be taken as archaeology in the matter.

(7) Cave picture (*l'art pariétal*) the one that we find precisely at the bottom of these closed spaces that are called caves, is it not a fact that in its mystery, whose principal one is undoubtedly that we still remain embarrassed as regards knowing the degree to which these places were illuminated; they were so only at the opening, to what degree these places were visited, they seem to have been rarely so if we are to believe the traces that we can pick out in the shape of traces of footprints in places which, nevertheless, are capable of carrying such marks.

Cave picture seems to refer us to nothing less than to what, later, is announced in the Platonic myth of the cave, which would then take on a different import, in effect, than a metaphorical one. If it is into the womb of a cave that Plato tries to take us in order to give rise for us to the dimension of the real, is it by chance that no doubt what is found on these walls, where recent explorations by methods which are scientific, and which are no longer breathless before these figures, imagining the man of earliest

times in some anxiety or other about bringing back enough for the midday meal to his bourgeois wife, this exploration which, for its part, being brought to bear not on the imaginative interpretation of what can be involved in the relationship of an arrow and (8) an animal, especially when it appears that the wound carries the most obvious traces of being a vulvar representation, this method which brought into play, with M Leroy-Gourant, a carefully maintained card index, indeed even the use of an electronic machine, shows us that these figures are not scattered around at random, and that the constant, univocal frequency of deer at the entrance, of bison in the middle, introduces us directly, in a way, even though M Leroy-Gourant, and with good reason, does not make use of this reference point which, nevertheless, is very simple, which is immediately given to him by the import of my teaching, namely, that there is no need for those who participated, very obviously, around these pictures which are still enigmatic for us, in a form of worship, that these people had no need to go to the back of the cave for the signifiers at the entrance to represent them for the signifiers at the back, which had no need, on the contrary, to be so frequently visited, as such, outside of the precise time for initiation.

Everything that accompanies these singular processions, lines of points, arrows which appear here to be much more directing of the subject than conveying an alimentary intention, everything indicates to us that a structural chain, that a distribution whose essence is properly speaking to be signifying, and this something which, of itself, can (9) give us the guide of a thinking, that is at once firm and prudent, with respect to what is in question.

The function of the screen as a support, as such, of significance is what we find immediately with the awakening of this something which, as regards man, assures us that, whatever tone of voice he emitted there, he was a speaking being.

It is here indeed that it is a matter of grasping in a closer way the relationship of significance to visual structure which is found, by the force of things, namely, by the fact that it seems, as far as anyone knows, that we will never have any trace of the voice of these first men, it is undoubtedly from the style of writing that we find the first manifestations in him of the word.

I do not need to insist on a very curious fact that these representations also highlight, that people go into ecstasy about the fact that they are naturalist, as if we had not learned from our analysis of realism the point to which, in every art, it is fundamentally metonymical, namely, designating something other than what it presents to us, these realistic shapes represent with a remarkable constancy this oscillating line which is (10) expressed in fact by the shape of this elongated S in which I, for my part, would see no inconvenience to see intersecting that of the S with which I designate the subject for you. Yes. Exactly for the same reason that when Monsieur Hogarth tries to designate what is involved in the structure of the beautiful, it is also exactly and specifically to this S that he refers.

To give body, of course, to these extrapolations, which may, I agree, appear to you to be bold, we must now come to what I earlier called the visual structure of this topological world, the one on which there is founded any establishment of the subject. I said that this structure is logically prior to the physiology of the eye and even to optics, that it is the structure which the progress of geometry allows us to formulate as giving, in an exact form, what is involved - I underline exact - what is involved in the relationship of the subject to extension.

And, undoubtedly, I am of course prevented by simple considerations of propriety from giving you here a lecture on projective geometry. It is necessary then that by a few indications, I stimulate the desire in you to refer to it, by means of some apologies, to make you sense its proper dimension.

Projective geometry is properly speaking combinatorial, combinatorial of points, of (11) lines, of surfaces that can be traced out rigorously, but whose intuitive foundation - what points, lines, planes, evoke for you - is dissipated, is reabsorbed, and finally vanishes behind a certain number of purely combinatorial necessities, such as, for example, that the point will be defined as the intersection of two lines, that two lines will be defined as always cutting one another, for a combinatorial definition is not valid if it involves exceptions of the intuitive order. If we believe that parallels are precisely lines which do not cut, two lines will always cut one another at a point, and one may make out as best one can, but it is necessary for this point to exist.

Now, it appears that precisely this point exists, and that it is even by making it exist that projective geometry is founded and it is indeed in this that there consists the contribution of perspective, the fact is that it is precisely by projecting it onto another plane that one will see appearing, on this other plane, in a way whose interest is not that it is intuitive there, namely, perfectly visible in the joining of two lines on the horizon line, but that it has to correspond, according to strict laws, to an expected equivalence, starting from hypotheses that are purely combinatorial, I repeat, which are the ones which will be pursued in the terms that two points, for example, will only (12) determine a single straight line, and that two straight lines cannot cut one another at two points.

To make you sense what is involved in such definitions, I remind you, that the result is that in encountering the manipulations of Euclidean proofs, the admission of these principles, which are summarised in a form called the principle of duality, a purely projective, non-metrical, geometry can with confidence translate a theorem established in terms of points and of lines, by substituting point for line in its statement and line for point, and by obtaining a statement that is certainly as valid as the preceding one.

This is what emerges in the 17th century with the genius of Pascal, already prepared, without any doubt, by the multiple advent of a mental dimension as it is always

presented in the history of the subject, which means, for example, that the theorem described as Brianchon's which states: "That a hexagon formed by six straight lines which are tangents of a conic" - therefore the hexagon circumscribes, I imagine that you know what a conic is, but I remind you, a conic is a cone, it may be a hyperbola or a parabola, which means, on this occasion, that it is a matter of some of their shapes as they are generated in space and not simply in the form of revolutions; a cone being (13) defined then by the shape that it presents in space, through the enveloping of a line joining a point to a circle, for example, and not necessarily joining it from a point situated perpendicular to its centre - "all of these lines then present the property that the three lines that join the opposite vertices, which is easy to determine whatever the shape of the hexagon may be, by simply counting, these three lines converge in one point."

From the simple fact of admitting the principles of projective geometry, this is immediately expressed by the fact that a hexagon formed by six points which repose on a conic, which is thus an inscribed hexagon, that in this case, the three points of intersection of the opposite sides, are on the same line.

If you have listened to these two statements, you see that they can be translated from one to the other by simple substitution, unequivocally, from point to line and from line to point. There is here in the process of the proof, as you clearly sense, something completely different to what brings into play measuring, ruler or compass, and that, as regards the combinatorial, it is indeed with points, with lines, indeed with planes, in terms of pure signifier and, moreover, with theorems that can be written out simply with letters that we are dealing.

(14) Now this, just by itself, is going to allow us to give a completely different import to what is involved in the correspondence of an object with what we will call its figure.

Here, we will introduce the apparatus which served us already as being essential to confront this mythical image of the eye which, whatever it may be, eludes, elides what is involved in the relationship of the representation to the object, since, in some way or other, the representation in it will always be a double of this object.

Confronted with what I first of all presented to you as the structure of vision opposing to it that of the look, and in a first approach, I put this look where it is grasped, where it is supported, namely, where it is scattered in this work that is called a picture.

The sort of originating relationship of the look with the stain, in so far even as the biological phylum (*phylome*) may make it effectively appear to us in extremely primitive organisms, in the form of a stain, starting from which the localised sensitivity that the stain represents in its relationship to light, can serve us as an image, as an example, for this something where the visual world originates.

But undoubtedly this is only an evolutionary equivocation whose value can only take (15) on, can only be affirmed as a reference by being referred to a perfectly graspable synchronic structure. What is involved in what are opposed as field of vision and as look precisely at the level of this topology?

Undoubtedly, the picture is going to continue to play a role in it, and this should not astonish us, if we have already admitted that something like a *montage*, like a mounting, like an apparatus, is essential for what we are aiming at having the experience of, namely, the structure of the phantasy. And the picture about which we are going to speak, because it is in this sense that we expect it to be of service, and of use, it is indeed as it is mounted on the easel that we are going to take this picture, as something which holds up as a material object, this is what is going to serve us as a reference for a certain number of reflections.

In projective geometry, this picture is going to be the plane that I spoke about earlier onto which, as everyone thinks, the lines that we will call, if you wish, ocular lines, so that there will be no equivocation with visual rays, the lines which join the essential point at the beginning of our demonstration, that we are going to call eye, and which is this ideal subject of identification of the classical subject of knowledge, do not forget for example, in all the schemas that I gave on identification, that it is from an S-point (16) of the eye that there start these lines that I trace out from this point in a straight line, an ocular line which is joined to what, to what we will distinguish as a support, point, line, even plane, in the ground plane (*plan-support*), these lines cross this other plane and the points, the lines where they cross it, indeed the crossing of the plane which will be determined with respect to one of these lines, to contain it for example, these crossings of the figure plane - I am distinguishing therefore ground-plane and figure plane - this crossing of the ocular line, leaving its trace on the figure plane, and this is what we have to deal with in what is involved in the construction of perspective. And this is what ought to reveal, materialise for us, the topology from which it results that something is produced in the construction of vision which is nothing other than what gives us the basis and the support of the phantasy, namely, a loss which is none other than the one that I call the loss of the \mathbf{o} -object, and which is none other than the look and, on the other hand, a division of the subject.

What, in effect, does perspective teach us? Perspective teaches us that all the ocular lines which are parallel to the ground plane are going to determine on the figure plane a line which is none other than the horizon line. This horizon line is, as you know, the major reference point for any construction of perspective.

(17) What does it correspond to in the ground plane? It corresponds also, if we maintain firmly the principles of the consistency of this combinatorial geometry, to a line. This line is, properly speaking, the one that the Greeks, in fact, only missed for reasons that today we will leave to one side, even if we ought one day to put them in

question, that the Greeks could not but miss and what is, properly speaking, this line, a line that is also, and from our principles, also a straight line which is found at infinity on the ground plane and that, intuitively, we can only conceive of as representing, as I might say, the whole of it.

It is on this line that there are found the points where in the ground plane the parallel lines converge, which is shown in the figure plane, as you know, by the convergence of almost all the parallel lines at the horizon.

This is imaged, in general, and one sees it written by the best authors, this is something you know well, when you see a road going off towards the horizon, it becomes smaller and smaller, narrower and narrower. People forget only one thing, the danger of such references, for everything that we know as horizon is a horizon of our terrestrial ball, (18) namely, a completely different horizon, determined by the spherical shape, as is noted elsewhere, moreover, without seeing in this, it seems, the slightest contradiction, as is noted when we are told that the horizon is the proof of the roundness of the earth.

Now, I would ask you to notice that even if we were on an infinite plane, there would always be a horizon line, for anyone who stood upright on it. What troubles and disturbs us in this consideration of the horizon line, is first of all what I will come back to later, namely, that we never see it except in a picture.

We will see later what is involved in the structure of a picture. Since a picture is limited, it does not even cross our minds that if the picture were infinitely extended, the horizon line would be straight to infinity, to such a degree on this occasion, do we satisfy ourselves with having simply to think in a crudely analogical way, namely, that the horizon there on the picture, is a horizon like our horizon, which one can go around.

Another remark is the following: it is that a picture is a picture and perspective is something different. We are going to see later how we get out of it in the picture.

But if you begin from the conditions that I gave you for what must come to be traced (19) on the figure plane, you will notice the following, which is that a picture made under these conditions, those of strict perspective, would have as an effect, if you suppose, for example, because you have to hang onto something, that you are standing on a plane covered by a pattern of squares going to infinity, that this pattern of squares has, of course, stopped - we will see later how - at the horizon.

And above the horizon? Naturally, you are going to say the sky. But not at all, not at all, not at all, not at all. Above, what is there, on the horizon, behind you, as I think that if you reflect on it, you can immediately grasp it, by drawing the line which joins

the point that we have called S to what is behind on the ground plane which you will immediately see is going to be projected above the horizon.

Let us suppose that at this horizon of the projective plane there comes, from the ground plane, to be stitched at the same point of horizon, the two opposite points of the ground plane, one, for example, which is on your extreme left on the horizon line of the ground plane, will come to be stitched to another one which is on your extreme right, also on the horizon line of the ground plane.

(20) Have you understood? I mean No? Let us begin again.

You have a surface in front of you. You have in front of you a plane made out in squares. Let us suppose, for the greatest simplicity that it is horizontal and that you, for your part, are vertical. It is a line joining your eye - I am going to say things that are as simple as possible - to some point or other of this chequered ground plane and at infinity which determines on the vertical plane, let us say, to satisfy you, which is that of projection which is going to determine the correspondence point by point.

To every point on the horizon, namely, at the infinity of the ground plane there corresponds a point on the horizon of your vertical plane. Reflect on what is happening. Of course, it is a matter of a line which, precisely, as I began to say, has nothing to do with a visual ray. It is a line which starts behind you from the ground plane and which goes to your eye. It is going to end up on the figure plane at a point above the horizon. To a point which corresponds to the horizon of the ground plane there is going to correspond another point coming to touch it from above, as I might say, on the horizon line, and what is behind you, on the right, since this passes and is crossed at the level of the eye point, is going to come exactly in the opposite sense to (21) which it would present itself if you were to turn around, namely, that what you would see on the left, if you were to turn towards this horizon, you would see being picked out on the right, above the horizon line on the projective plane, of the projection.

In other words, that a line that we cannot define as round, since it is only round because of our daily apprehension of terrestrial roundness, that it is from this line, which is at infinity on the ground plane, that we will see the points knotting together, coming respectively from above, and from below, and in a way that, for the horizon behind, is attached in a strictly reverse order to what is involved for the horizon in front.

I can, of course, on this occasion, suppose, as Plato does in his cave, my head fixed and, consequently, determining two halves of which I can speak, as regards the ground plane. What you see there is nothing other, moreover, than the pure and simple illustration of what is involved when I represent the projective plane for you on the board in the form of a cross-cap, namely, that what you see, instead of a spherical

world, is a certain ball knotted in a certain way, crossing itself and which means that (22) what presented itself at first as a plane to infinity, comes in another plane, having been divided, to be knotted onto itself at the level of this horizon line; and to be knotted in such a way that to each one of the horizon points of the ground plane, is knotted what? Precisely, what the shape that I already put on the board of the projective plane, namely, its diametrically opposite point. It is indeed for this reason that it comes about that in such a projection, it is the point behind on the right which is knotted to the point in front on the left.

This is what is involved in the horizon line, indicating to us, already, that what gives its consistency to a signifying world with a visual structure, is an envelope structure and not at all one of indefinite extension. It nevertheless remains, that it is not at all enough to say these things as I have just imaged them for you, for I forgot in the question the squares that I had put there uniquely to be of use to you, but which is not indifferent, for a pattern of squares being made up of parallel lines, it must be said that having also admitted the fact that I fixed my head, all the parallel lines of space, as you have, I think, no difficulty in imagining, are going to rejoin at a certain vanishing point at the horizon, one single point, namely, that it is the direction of all the parallel lines in (23) a certain given position which determines the unique horizon point at which they are going to cross in the figure plane.

If you have this infinite pattern of squares that we are speaking about, what you will see joining together at the horizon, will be all the parallel lines of all the squares at a single point. Which does not prevent it being the same point where all the parallel lines of all the pattern of squares behind, will also join together from above.

These remarks which are fundamental for any science of perspective and which are those that any artist who has trouble ordering anything whatsoever, a series of figures on a picture, or moreover the lines of what is called a monument, which is the arrangement of a certain number of objects around a void, will take into account; and that this point on the horizon line that I spoke about earlier in connection with the pattern of squares is exactly what is usually called, I do not see that I am contributing here anything that is really all that transcendent, the vanishing point of the perspective. This vanishing point of the perspective is properly speaking what represents in the figure the eye that looks. The eye is not to be grasped outside the figure, it is in the figure and everyone, ever since there has been a science of perspective, has always (24) recognised it as such and called it that. It is called the eye in Alberti; it is called the eye in Vignola; it is called the eye in Albrecht Dürer. But that is not all. For I regret that I have been made waste time in explaining this point that is really very accessible, that is not all. That is not at all the whole story for there are also things which are between the picture and me.

The things that are between the picture and me, can also, by the same procedure, be represented on the plane of the picture. Or they will go towards depths that we can

hold to be infinite, none of this hinders us, but they will stop at a point which corresponds to what? To the plane parallel to the picture which passes - I am going to say, to facilitate things for you - which passes through my eye or through the point S.

We have here two traces. We have the trace of that through which the picture has cut the ground (*support*). It is the inverse of the horizon line. In other words, it is what, if we were to reverse the relationships, and we have the right to, constitutes as horizon line in the ground, the infinite line in the figure. And then, there is the line which represents the section of the ground by the plane of the picture. They are two lines.

(25) It is late and I will tell you something much less rigorous because of the little time that remains to me. Things take much longer to explain than might appear at first.

Rigorously, this means that there is another eye point (*point d'oeil*) which is the one constituted by the line to infinity on the figure plane, and its intersection by something which is well there, namely, the line through which the figure plane cuts the ground plane.

These two lines cut one another since they are both on the figure plane. And what is more, they cut one another at a single point for this point is well and truly the same on the line to infinity.

In order to remain in the domain of images, I would say that this distance of two parallel lines which are on the ground plane, the ones that are determined by my fixed position as a looker, and the one which is determined by the insertion, the meeting of the picture with the ground plane, this gap, this gap which, in the figure plane, is only translated by one point, by a point which, for its part, is totally hidden for we cannot designate it as we designate the vanishing point at the horizon.

(26) This point essential for the whole configuration and very specially characteristic, this lost point, if you are willing to be satisfied with this image, which falls in the gap between two parallel lines as regards what is involved as regards the ground, this is the point that I am calling the point of the looking subject.

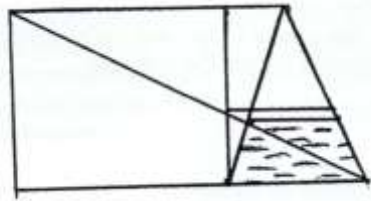
We have therefore the vanishing point which is the point of the subject *qua* seeing (*voyant*), and the point which falls in the gap between the subject and the figure plane which is the one that I am calling the point of the looking (*regardant*) subject.

This is not a novelty. It is a novelty to introduce it in this way, to find in it the topology of \$, with respect to which it must now be known where we situate the (o) which determines the division between these two points. I am saying, of these two points in so far as they represent the subject in the figure.

Going further will allow us to establish an altogether rigorous apparatus, *montage*, which shows us at the level of the visual combinatorial, what the phantasy is.

Where we will have to situate it in this totality, is what will be said later.

But from now, so that you do not think that I am leading you here into abyssal regions (27) - I am not doing depth psychology, I am trying to do geometry, and God knows I have taken precautions, after having read everything that may be referred to this history of perspective, from Euclid, who missed it so completely in his *Aphorisms*, down to the people of whom I spoke earlier, and even to Michel Foucault's last book which directly alludes to these matters in his analysis of *Las Meninas* (*Les suivantes*) in the first chapter of *Les mots et les choses*, I tried to give you something that would



be altogether a support for it, it must be said.

But as regards this perfectly defined point that I have just given as the second point representing the seeing subject in the projective combinatorial, do not believe that I am the one who invented it. But it is represented otherwise, and this otherwise has already been called by people other than myself, the other eye, for example.

It is exactly well known by all painters, this point. For since I told you that this point, in its rigour, falls into the gap as I defined it on the ground plane, in order to situate itself at a point that you naturally cannot highlight, but which is required by the fundamental equivalence of projective geometry and which is found in the figure point, (28) it is all very well for it to be at infinity, it finds itself there. How is this point used?

It is used by all of those who have made pictures by making use of perspective, that is very exactly between Masaccio and Van Eyck in the form of what is called the other eye, as I told you earlier. It is the point which allows there to be constructed any plane perspective in so far as it vanishes, in so far as it is precisely in the ground plane. It is constructed very exactly in this way in Alberti. It is constructed a little differently in what is the *pélerin*. Here it is:

(29) This is what is involved in discovering perspective, namely, a pattern of squares, for example, whose base is supported here. We have a reference.

If I lend myself to this, I mean if I want simply to do things that are simple for your comprehension, I put myself in the middle of this reference of the pattern of squares and a perpendicular line raised on the base of this pattern of squares gives me the vanishing point at the horizon. I will know then, already, that my pattern of squares is going to be arranged like that, with the help of my vanishing point.

But what is going to give me the height from which there is going to come the pattern of squares in perspective? Something which requires me to use my other eye. And what people discovered, rather late because, when all is said and done, the first theory is given of it in Alberti, a contemporary of those whom I have just named, Massachio and Van Eyck, well then, I will take here a certain distance, which is exactly what corresponds to what I gave you earlier, as this gap of my block on the board. On this distance, taking a point situated at the same height as the vanishing point, I make a construction, a construction which, in Alberti, passes through a vertical line situated here. I trace out the diagonal here; here a horizontal line and here, I have the limit at (30) which my pattern of squaring will end, the one that I wanted to see in perspective.

I have therefore complete freedom as regards the height that I will give to this pattern of squares taken in perspective, namely, that inside my picture I choose as I wish the distance at which I am going to place myself from my pattern of squares so that it will appear to me in perspective, and this is so true, that in many classical pictures, you have in a masked form a little stain or indeed sometimes quite simply an eye.

An indication, here, of the point from which you yourself ought to take, the distance that you ought to put yourself from the picture, in order that the whole effort of perspective may be realised for you. As you see, this opens up another dimension which is the following, this one which is exactly the same as the one that astonished you earlier, when I told you that above the horizon there is no sky. There is sky because you put at the back, on the horizon, a strut (*portant*) which is the sky. The sky is never anything but a strut in reality as in the theatre, and in the same way, between you and the sky there is a whole series of struts.

(31) The fact that you can choose your distance in the picture, and in any picture whatsoever in the picture, and already the picture itself is a taking of distance, for we do not make a picture of you in the opening of the window in which you are framed.

Already you make the picture within this frame. Your relationship with this picture and what it has to do with phantasy, will allow us to have reference points, an assured figure for everything which, subsequently, will allow us to show the relationships of the o-object with the \$, this is what I hope, and I hope a little bit more quickly than today, I will be able to present for you the next time.

Seminar 17: Wednesday 11 May 1966

As regards knowledge (*savoir*), it is difficult not to take into account the existence of the knower (*savant*), knower taken here only as the support, the hypothesis of knowledge in general, without necessarily giving it the connotation of scientific.

The knower either knows something or he knows nothing. In both cases, he knows that he is a knower.

This remark is simply made to highlight for you this problem which has been prepared for a long time and, I would even say, presentified not simply since I have been teaching, but since I made my first remarks about the fundamentals that analysis reminds us of, and which is centred around the function of narcissism or the mirror stage.

Let us say, to go quickly, since we began late, that the status of the subject, in the broadest sense, in the sense not yet clarified, not at all in the sense whose structure I am in the process of trying to circumscribe for you, what is called the subject in general, which means simply, in the case that I have just spoken about, there is knowledge therefore there is a knower.

(2) The fact of knowing that one is a knower cannot but be profoundly enmeshed in the structure of this knowledge. To go straight at things let us say that the teacher (*professeur*), since the teacher has a lot to do with knowledge since he transmits knowledge, he has to cart around a certain quantity of knowledge, which he went looking for either in his experience, or in an accumulation of knowledge that has been done elsewhere and which is called, for example, in one or other domain, philosophy for example, tradition.

It is clear that we cannot overlook that the preservation of the particular status of this knower, I evoked the teacher but there are many other statuses, that of the doctor, for example, that the preservation of his status is of a nature to divert, to give a certain direction to what, for him, for his part, will appear to be the general status of his knowledge. The content of this knowledge, the progress of this knowledge, the high point of its expansion cannot but be influenced by the protection necessary for his status as a knowing subject.

This seems to me to be rather obvious if one thinks that we have before us the materialisation made tangible by social consecration of this status which mean that a gentleman is not considered to be a scholar (*savant*) uniquely in the measure that he knows or that he continues to function as a scholar, considerations of productivity (3) come here very far behind those of maintaining a permanent status for the one who has acceded to a scholarly function.

This is not unjustified, and on the whole it suits everyone; everyone adjusts to it very well. Everyone has his place; the scholarly knower in designated places, and one does not look too closely to see if his knowerliness, from a certain moment on, is repeating itself, is getting rusty, or has even become a pure semblance of knowerity.

But as in the case of many social crystallisations, we should not stop simply at what pure social exigencies, what are habitually called group functions and how a certain group takes on a more or less privileged status for reasons which are, when all is said and done, to be traced back to a certain historic origin.

There is indeed here something structural which, as the structural often forces us to notice it, goes way beyond a simple inter-relationship of utility. One may consider that from the point of view of output, there would be an advantage in making the status of the knower less stable. But we have to believe, precisely, that there are in the mirages of the subject, and not in the structure of the subject itself, something which ends up with these stable structures, which necessitates them.

(4) If psychoanalysis forces us to put in question again the status of the subject, it is no doubt because it tackles this problem, the problem of what a subject is, from a different starting place. If, for long years, I was able to show that the introduction of this experience of analysis into a field which can only be mapped out by joining to it a certain putting in question of knowledge in the name of truth, if the scansion of this field is to be sought at a more radical point, at a point prior to this encounter, to this encounter of a truth which poses itself and proposes itself as foreign to knowledge, as we have said, this is introduced first from the angle of demand, which first of all, in a perspective which is subsequently reduced, proposes itself as more primitive, as more archaic, and which makes it necessary to question how there are ordered, in their structure, this demand and something with which it is discordant and which is called desire.

This is how that from this angle, in a certain way in this structural splitting, we have come to put in question the status of the subject, to consider that, far from the subject appearing to us as a pivotal point, a sort of axis around which there would turn whatever may be the rhythms, the pulsation that we might attribute to what turns, around which there might turn, the expansions and the retreats of knowledge.

(5) We cannot consider the drama that is played out, that grounds the essence of the subject as it is given to us in analytic experience, by introducing the angle of desire at the very heart of the function of knowledge, we cannot do it on the foundations of the status of the person which, when all is said and done, is what has dominated up to now the philosophical view which was taken about the relationship of man to what is called the world in the form of a certain knowledge.

The subject appears to us to be fundamentally divided in the sense that to question this subject, at the most radical point, namely, whether or not it knows anything, is Cartesian doubt; we see what is the essential thing in this experience of the *cogito*, the being of the subject when it is questioned, fleeing, in a way, diverging, in the form of these two ranks of beings which only coincide in an illusory form, the being which finds its certainty by manifesting itself as being at the heart of this questioning, “I think”: thinking that I am, but I am what thinks and to think: I am, is not the same thing as being what thinks.

A point that is not noticed but which takes on its whole weight, its whole value by being crosschecked, in analytic experience, with the fact that the one who is that which thinks, thinks in a way that the one who thinks: “I am”, is not aware of.

(6) This is the subject whom there is charged to represent the one who, directing the analytic experience, and being called the psychoanalyst, sees there being posed again for him what is involved in the question of the knower.

The relationship of the psychoanalyst to the question of his status takes up again here, in the form of a sharpness that has been increased tenfold, the one which has always been posed concerning the status of the one who possesses knowledge, and the problem of the formation of the psychoanalyst is really nothing other than, through a privileged experience, to allow there to come to birth, as I might say, subjects for whom this division of the subject is not simply something that they know but something in which they think.

It is a matter of there coming to birth some people who will know how to discover what they experience in psychoanalytic experience, starting from this position that is maintained that they will never be in the position of failing to recognise that at the moment of knowing, as analysts, they are in a divided position.

Nothing is more difficult than to maintain in a position of being what, undoubtedly, for each one if he deserves the title of analyst, had been, at some moment experienced in the experience.

So there you are.

(7) From the moment that the status of the one who is supposed to know is established in the analytic perspective, there is reborn all the prestige of specular miscognition

which cannot but reunify this status of the subject, namely, let drop, elide the other part which is the one that, all the same, ought to be the effect of this unique experience, ought to be the separating effect with respect to the rest of the flock, that some people should not simply know it but should, should at the moment of approaching any experience of the order of their own, should conform to those who at least have a presentiment about what is involved in this divided structure.

It is nothing other than the sense of my teaching to recall this exigency when, undoubtedly, the means of being introduced into it are elsewhere, but that through a structure, I repeat, which goes way beyond its social conditioning, something, whatever the experience may be, from the simple fact of the functioning in which each one is identified to a certain nameable status, in this case that of being a knower, tends to put into the shadows the essential of the *schize* through which alone, nevertheless, there can be opened up an access to the experience which is at the proper level of this experience. It is as divided subject that the analyst is called on to respond to the demand of the one who enters with him into an experience of subject (*expérience de sujet*).

(8) That is why it is not pure refinement, an ornamental detail, the depiction of a particular sector of our experience which might illustrate, in a way, what must be added in terms of information to what we may be able to know, for example, about the scopic drive, that the last time I was led to develop before you the functions of the notion of perspective.

It is in the measure, on the contrary, that it is a matter for you of illustrating what can sustain by its apparatus, around what the subjectivity of the analyst must take its bearings, and in taking his bearings never forget even when the second vanishing point, as I might say, of his thinking, tends to be forgotten, elided, left to one side, at least because of the strength of some schema, sees himself being reminded that he ought to seek out the place where there functions this other vanishing point at the very moment, in the very place at which he tends to formulate some truth which from its very expression, if he is not careful, will see itself falling into the old unitary schemas of the subject of knowledge and will encourage him, for example, to put in the foreground one or other idea of totality which is, properly speaking, what he ought to most distrust in the synthesis of his experience.

(9) The last time, trying by abbreviated paths to presentify for you what the experience of perspective can contribute to us and teach us, even though I chose these paths to be as practical as I could, no doubt, I had the feeling of not always having succeeded in concentrating, if not all your attention, at least to have always succeeded in compensating it.

For want perhaps of some schema, and, nevertheless, this indeed is what I intended to reject, to pull back from in order to avoid some misunderstanding, nevertheless, I am

going to do it today, to summarise it, and to say what, in this experience of perspective, can properly speaking illustrate for us what is involved, namely, the relationship between the division of the subject and what specifies, in analytic experience, the properly visual relationship to the world, namely, a certain *o*-object.

This *o*-object that up to now, and in an approximate fashion, one which moreover was not taken up, I distinguished from the field of vision as being the function of the look, how can this be organised in experience, structural experience, in so far as it establishes a certain type of thinking in geometry, in so far as it is made tangible in all functioning (10) of art and especially in painting.

The last time I made, verbally, a construction which is easy to find as such in a work on perspective. This is not the one in question: it was brought me just a few moments ago. It is the work, for example, or rather the collection of articles by Erwin Panofsky on perspective. There is a German edition which comes from somewhere else in which the articles, I see, are grouped differently to this Italian edition.

I recalled that, in the relationship which is described as projective which is established between the plane of what one could call the picture and the plane of what, in order to be simple today we will call the ground plane (*le sol perspective*), there are fundamental linear correspondences which are established and which imply elements that are properly speaking non-intuitable and which are, nevertheless, fundamental elements of what one can call projective space or extension.

A coherent geometry, establishing a perfect demonstrative rigour, which has nothing in common with metric geometry, namely, on condition of admitting what is happening in what I call today the perspective ground, to replace a term, I realised, that is more (11) difficult to keep in mind, the one that I used the last time, the correspondence of the lines traced, therefore, on the ground plane to lines traceable on the picture, imply that a line to infinity on the perspective ground, is translated by the line on the horizon of the picture.

This is the first step in any perspective construction. I am going to schematise it in the following fashion: suppose that this is the perspective ground here, I will leave the picture in profile for you, I am putting here what I have not yet spoken about: the eye point of the subject. I sufficiently indicated the last time what was involved for you to understand now the sense of the outline that I am going to make. I told you that independently of anything whatsoever that you have to refer yourself to in experience and specifically not the horizon as it is effectively experienced on our globe in so far as it is round, an infinite plane supposes that, from this eye-point, it is at (i), posing a plane parallel to the perspective ground, that you should determine the horizon line on the picture in accordance with the line where this parallel plane cuts the plane of the picture.

The experience of the picture and of painting tells us that any point whatsoever of this horizon line is such that the lines which come together on it correspond to parallel lines whatever they may be, on the ground plane.

(12) We can therefore choose any point whatsoever of this horizon line as centre of perspective. This is what is, in effect, done in every picture that is subject to the laws of perspective. This point is properly what, in the picture, does not correspond only, as you see, to the ground to be put in perspective, but to the position of the point S and as such, in the figure, represents the eye.

It is in function of the eye of the one who is looking that the horizon is established on a picture plane.

To this, as I told you the last time, all those who have studied perspective, add what they call the other eye, namely, the impact on perspective of the distance of this point S to the picture plane.

Now, moreover, one ensures that in the usage that one makes of it in any picture whatsoever this distance is arbitrary, it is up to the choice of the one who makes the picture. I mean that it is open to choice within the picture itself.

Does this mean that from the point of view of the structure of the subject, in so far as the subject is the subject of the look, that he is the subject of a seen world, this is what interests us, does that mean that we can neglect this part of the subject, that it only appears to us in function of an artifice, while the horizon line is structural, the fact that (13) the choice of distance is freely left to my choice, to me who is looking, I can say that what we have here is only an artifice of the artist, that it is from the distance at which I put myself mentally from one or other plane that I choose in the depths of the picture that this is therefore in a way out of date and secondary and not structural.

I am saying it is structural and no one has ever sufficiently noted it up to now. This second point, in perspective, is defined from the remark that whatever may be the distance of the provisional subject, of the subject S, which is precisely what we have to put in suspense and to see how it enters the picture, that whatever may be the distance of this subject from the picture, there is something which is simply the between him and the picture, which separates him from the picture, and this is not simply something which will be noted from the metrical value of this distance, that this distance, in itself, is inscribed somewhere in the structure and that it is here that we ought to find, not the other eye, as the authors on perspective (in inverted commas) say, but the other subject. And this is demonstrated in the way I did it the last time and which, for certain people, was not understood, and which is grounded on the remark that:

1) If we make pass through the point S a plane parallel, not this time to the ground (14) plane (*plan perspectif*) but to the picture, two things result. First of all, that this urges us to note that there exists a line of intersection of the picture with the plane, a perspective sum (*somme*) whose name is known, which is called, if we are to believe the book by Pankofsky, which is called the fundamental line.

I did not call it that the last time and it is this line here. The plane parallel to the picture which passes through the point S, cuts the plane of the perspective ground in a line that is parallel to the first.

From the representation of these two lines on the picture, what I called the last time the figure plane, there is going to be deduced what we will call the second subject point.

In effect, in the triple relationship S, subject point, picture plane, ground plane, we have seen that to the infinite line on the ground plane - I think I sufficiently indicated the last time what this infinite line means - to the infinite line of the ground plane there corresponds the horizon line on the picture plane.

In the same group of three, you can, if you look closely at it, perceive that the line defined here - let us call it line b, the one parallel to the fundamental line - has the same (15) function with respect to the infinite line of the picture plane as the horizon in the picture plane has with respect to the infinite line in the ground plane.

It is therefore represented in the figure by this infinite line, of course, in the picture, and on the other hand, as the fundamental line is already in the picture, the other subject point, while the first was defined thus, any point whatsoever on the horizon line, the subject point can be written as follows: the point of intersection of the infinite line of the picture plane with the fundamental line.

You see here that I represented in a way that is only imaged, that is insufficient, the infinite line by a circle since in short, for intuition, it is this line which is always, from all sides at infinity on any plane whatsoever.

Intuitively, we represent it as a circle but it is not a circle. This is proved by the whole way it is handled and the line by line, point by point correspondences that constitute the essential of this projective geometry. The apparent double point of encounter that it has with the fundamental line is only pure appearance since it is a line, a line to be considered as a straight line like all the other lines, and that two straight lines could (16) only have a single point of intersection.

These are not things that I am asking you to admit in the name of a construction which is my own. I cannot push open the door of projective geometry for you, and

specifically not for those who still have no practice in it. But it is very simple for any one to refer to it and to see that there is nothing to be corrected in what I am putting forward here, namely, that what results from it is that we have two subject points in every structure of a projective world or of a perspective world, two subject points, one which is any point whatsoever on the horizon line, on the plane of the figure, the other which is at the intersection of another line parallel to the first, which is called the fundamental line which expresses a relationship of the figure plane to the ground plane with the line to infinity, in the figure plane.

This deserves to be highlighted by the path along which it came, where we have been able to establish it. But once established along this path, which you will see subsequently does not fail to constitute for us an important trace every time we will have to locate this other subject point, in order to tell you now that if, in the figure plane, we trace out the horizon line which is parallel to this fundamental line, we should deduce from it that the horizon line cuts this infinite line exactly at the same (17) point where the fundamental line cuts it since it is a line which is parallel to the first one.

Whence you will see there being greatly simplified the relationship between these two points, one is any point whatsoever on the horizon line, the other is the point at infinity, in the fact that the point at infinity is not just any point whatsoever, that it is a unique point despite the fact that here, it seems to be two.

This will be for us, when it is going to be a question of highlighting the relationship of the subject in phantasy, and specifically the relationship of the subject to the **o**-object, this will have for us the value of a support, and which will merit your having spent the necessary time, no more, no more than in Descartes' demonstrations, a demonstration once it is grasped is demonstrated, but its rigour and its process must still be maintained. This is what ought to serve us, serve us as a reference every time that we have to operate in terms of the scopic phantasy.

This divided subject is sustained by a common setting (*monture*), the **o**-object which, in this schema, is to be sought for where? It is to be sought for at a point where of course it falls and vanishes, without that, it would not be the **o**-object. The **o**-object is represented here by this something which, precisely, in the figure that I hope to have shown you of it here, with this success of making something tangible out of it for you, (18) the **o**-object is what supports this joint (?), S, which I imaged here by the world of this parallel plane. What is elided in it and what, nevertheless, still exists, is what, under more than one form, I already introduced into the structural relationship of the subject to the world; it is the window in the scopic relationship of this subject at the point S from which there begins the whole construction, there appears specified, individualised in this wall, if I can express myself in that way, that is represented by this parallel plane in so far as it is going to determine the second point of the subject

in this wall, it is necessary that there should be an opening, a split, a view, a look. It is this, precisely, that cannot be seen from the initial position of the construction.

We have already seen this function of the window being of service to us last year as a surface of what can be written from the very first as function of signifier. Let us call it by the name that it deserves, it is, precisely, in this closed structure which is the one that would allow us to knot together with one another all the different planes that we have just traced out and reproduced, the structure of the projective plane in its purely topological shape, namely, under the envelope of the cross-cap. It is this something holed in this structure which, precisely, allows there to be introduced the irruption on which there is going to depend, on which there is going to depend the production of the division of the subject.

(19) Namely, properly speaking, what we call the **o**-object. It is in so far as the window, in the relationship of the look to the seen world is always what is elided, that we can represent for ourselves the function of the **o**-object, the window, namely, just as much the slit between the eye lids, namely, just as much the entrance of the pupil, namely, just as much what constitutes this most primitive of all objects in anything concerned with vision, the camera obscura (*la chambre noire*)

Now this is what I intend to illustrate for you today, to illustrate for you by a work which I told you had been put in the foreground of a recent production by an investigator, whose type of research is certainly not very distant to that of which I have charge here, in the name of analytic experience, even though he does not have the same base, nor the same inspiration, I am speaking about Michel Foucault and this picture by Velazquez which is called *Las Meninas*.

I am now going to have this picture projected before you - close the window - so that we can see in it in a tangible fashion what is allowed by a reading of something which is not at all, in a way, designed to respond to the structure of this picture itself but which, you are going to see, what it is going to allow us - what's happening? This is (20) a slide which has been loaned to me by the Louvre that I was not able to experiment with earlier and which, really, will give here only the weakest support, but which for those who have seen it, or some photograph of this picture called *Las Meninas*, or simply remember a little bit about it, will serve us as a reference point - you don't have a little pointer, something that would allow me to show things? It's not much but I suppose it's better than nothing.

There you are. So then, perhaps you can, you can see something, a little, the minimum? There at the back, can you see anything?

X: As well as earlier. Monsieur Milner tried.

Lacan: You know, its not too bad, is it. Here, you have the figure of the painter. Substitute it right away, so that all the same, you can see clearly that he is there. So, can you focus it?

X: That's it, I can't do any better

Lacan: All right. Go back to where you were. The painter is in the middle of what he is painting. And what he is painting, you see spread out on this canvas, in a way that we are going to return to. Here, this stroke that you see is the limit, the external edge, touched by light, that is why it emerges, from something which goes from here, very (21) exactly to a point which is found there. You see almost the whole height of the picture which represents to us, you see here one leg of the easel, a picture seen back-to-front (*à l'envers*).

It is on this canvas. He is working on this picture and the picture is turned round (*retourné*). What do you have to say?

This is the essential plane from which we must start. And what in my opinion Michel Foucault, whom I asked you all to read, in his very remarkable text, has eluded. It is in effect the point around which one has to make turn the whole value, the whole function of this picture.

I would say that this picture is a sort of face down card and we cannot fail to take into account that it is like a face down card, that it takes on its value by belonging to the module and the model of other cards.

This face down card is really constructed there to make you lay down your own. For in effect there was, I cannot fail to mention it, discussion, debate about what is involved in the fact that the painter, Velasquez in this case, is here at a certain distance from the picture, from this picture that is being painted.

The way in which you respond to this question, in which you will lay down your cards, is in effect absolutely essential for the effect of this picture.

This implies this dimension that this picture subjugates.

(22) Ever since it has existed, it has been the basis, the foundation of all sorts of debates. This subjugation has the closest relationship with what I call this subversion, precisely, of the subject on which I insisted in the whole first part of my discourse today, and it is precisely by being based on it that it takes on its value.

In fact, the relation to the work of art is always marked by this subversion. We seem to have admitted, with the term sublimation, something which, in short, is nothing else. For if we have sufficiently explored the mechanism of the drive to see that what

is happening in it is a return journey from the subject to the subject, provided one grasps that the return is not identical to the outward journey and that, precisely, the subject, in conformity with the structure of the Moebius strip, fastens on to itself there after having completed this half-turn which means that, starting from its front, it comes back and is stitched onto its back, in other words, that it is necessary to make two drive circuits for something to be accomplished, which allows us to grasp what is authentically involved in the division of the subject. This indeed will be shown to us by this picture, whose capturing-value depends on the fact that it is not simply what we always limit ourselves to, precisely because we only do one circuit and that, perhaps, in (23) effect, for the sort of artist we deal with, namely, the ones who consult us, the work of art is for internal use. It helps them to make their own loop (*boucle*).

But when we are dealing with a master like the present one, it is clear that at least what remains from any apprehension with this work is that the one who looks at it is fastened onto it (*y est bouclé*). There is no spectator who simply does anything more than pass in front at all speed and pay his dues to the ritual of the museum, who is not seized by the particularity of this composition, as regards which, all agree in saying that something is happening in front of the picture which makes of it something quite specific, namely, - we express ourselves as we can - that we are caught up into its space. And people give themselves a headache trying to work out the trick of construction and of the construction of perspective, through which this can be produced. Starting from there, people go further, people speculate about what is involved in the function of each of the personages and of the groups, and they do not see that all of this is only one and the same question.

People proceed generally along this path which is in effect the question which is going to remain at the heart of the problem and which is the one to which at the end I hope to be able to give the response. What is the painter doing? What is he painting?

(24) Which implies, and it is most often because it is the art critic who is involved, the form in which the question is posed: What was he trying to do? Because in short, of course, no one, properly speaking, takes seriously the question: What is he doing? The picture is there: it is finished and we do not ask ourselves what he is now painting. We ask ourselves: What was he trying to do? Or, more exactly, what idea does he want to give us of what he is in the process of painting? A point where already we obviously see marked out a relationship which, for us, is quite recognisable: what we desire and desire to know is very properly something which is something of the order of what one can call the desire of the other, since we say: What was he trying to do?

It is certainly the wrong position to take up, because we are not in a position to analyse, I would not say the painter, but a picture. It is certain that the painter did what he wanted to do, because it is there before our eyes. And that consequently, this

question, in a way, cancels itself out because it is on this hither side of the point at which it is posed, since we pose it, in the name of what he has already done. In other words in the loop-like return of which I spoke earlier, and it is already because of this (25) that the picture introduces us to the dialectic of the subject: there is a circuit already made and we have only to make the other one. Only to do that we must not miss out the first one.

The presence of the picture which occupies all this height and which, from the very fact of this height, encourages us to recognise in it the picture itself, which is presented to us by, this is something I note, in a way, in the margin of our progress which goes along a different path, that this discussion for those who have advanced this thesis that I permit myself to consider to be futile, that it is a different picture that is involved, you will see it later, we will discuss it in more detail, namely, the portrait of the king and of the queen whom you cannot, of course, see on this figure, which is of course quite inadequate, that I brought you, they are here in the background and as you know, I hope, on the whole, is present in a frame which we will have to discuss later as regards its significance, but whose testimony some people take as indicating that the king and the queen are here in front of the picture and it is them that the painter is painting.

This, in my opinion, can be refuted. For the moment, I only want to remark that it is against this background that I tell you that the size of the canvas is already an argument that can be brought that this is not the way things are and that this (26) represented canvas is exactly, represents, the picture that we have here, in so far as it is a canvas supported on a wooden easel whose framework we see here, and that, in other words, we have in this picture the representation of this picture as reality.

Here I can indeed push this little door which means that once again we find in it the crosschecking with my formula which means that the pictorial object is a *Vorstellungs-representanz*.

I am not at all saying that the painting is a representation of which the easel, the support, is the representative. If it functions here to make us perceive the truth that is there, it is in the fact that by putting ourselves into the picture which, a curious thing, is done there for the first time, for there were already things like mirrors in the picture. even numerous ones at this epoch, but the picture in the picture, which is not the play within the play, not at all, is something that was done here it seems for the first time and has scarcely ever been done since except at the level of the point where I picked it out for you, namely in Magritte.

Representation is indeed, in effect, what this figure of the reality of the picture is, but it is there to show us clearly that, at the level of reality and of representation, what is (27) traced out here in the picture and the picture mutually saturate one another. And that this is why it is highlighted for us that, precisely, what constitutes the picture in

its essence is not representation, for what is the effect of this picture in the picture: *Vorstellungsrepresentanz*. It is precisely all these personages that you see precisely in so far as they are not at all representations but that they are showing off (*en représentation*), that all these personages, whoever they may be, in their status, as they are here effectively in reality, although long dead but they are still there, are personages who are sustained as showing off and with complete conviction, which means, precisely, that none of them represents anything of what they represent. And this is the effect of this something which introduces into the space of the picture, binds them together, crystallises them in this position of being personages on show, personages of the court.

Starting from there, that Velasquez, the painter, should put himself in the middle of them takes on all its sense. But, of course, this goes much further than this simple touch of what one could call social relativism.

The structure of the picture allows us to go well beyond to the truth, to go beyond, it (28) would have been necessary to start from a question, not from a question but from a completely different movement than this movement of the question, which I told you cancelled itself out from the simple fact of the presence of the work itself, but starting from what the work imposes as we see it here, namely, that the same childhood mouth (*bouche d'enfance*) which is suggested to us by the central character, by this little Infanta who is the second daughter of the royal couple: Philip IV and Dona Marianne of Austria, the little Dona Margherita who was painted fifty times, I would say, by Velasquez, that we should allow ourselves to be guided by this personage who comes, in a way, before us in this space which is for us the question mark as for all of those who have seen this picture, who have spoken about this picture, who have written about this picture, the question mark that it poses us, it is the cries emitted from her mouth, I would say, that it would be well to start from in order to make what I would call the second circuit of the picture and it is the one, it seems to me that is missing in the analysis of the work of which I spoke earlier: "let me see" (*fais voir*) what is behind the canvas as we see it from the back, it is a "let me see" which summons him and that we are more or less ready to pronounce.

Now, from this simple "let me see" may arise what, in effect, starting from there is (29) imposed, that is, what we see, namely, these personages as I qualify them as being essentially personages on show.

But we do not see only that. We see the structure of the painting, its perspective *montage*. It is here that undoubtedly I regret that we do not have here a support that is sufficient to demonstrate for you these features in all their rigour. Here, the personage that you see framed in a door of light at the back is the very precise point where the lines of perspective come together. It is at a point more or less situated according to the lines that are traced out between the figure of this personage - for there are slight fluctuations of intersection which are produced - and his elbow that there is situated

the vanishing point, and it is not by chance if through this vanishing point, it is precisely this personage and a personage who is leaving.

This personage is not someone indifferent. He is also called Velasquez. Nieto instead of being called Diego-Rodrigues. This Nieto is the person who had some say in the vote which allowed Velasquez to accede to the position of *Aposentador* of the king, namely, something like a chamberlain or grand marshal. He is, in brief, a sort of personage who reduplicates him and this personage, here, is designated to us because of this since we do not see and of whom we say "let me see", not alone does he see it from where he is, but that he has, as I might say, seen too much, he is leaving. Is there (30) a better means of designating this high-point as regards what opens out as regards the subject in terms of the function of the eye than something which is expressed by a "seen that" (*vu*) that is, in a way, definitive.

Henceforth, the presence of Velasquez himself in this position where you have seen him earlier and the second photo being no better than the first, you have not been able to see what you could see on better reproductions and what a thousand authors who have spoken about it have born witness to, namely, that this personage who is looking, people underline, towards us spectators - God knows the amount of speculation that has gone on about the orientation of the look - this person has precisely the look that is least turned towards the outside.

This is not an analysis that is personal to me. Several authors, the great majority, have pointed it out. The sort of absent, dreamy, aspect turned towards some *disegno interno*, as the Gongorists express it, I mean the whole theory of baroque, mannerist, conceptist theory, anything you like, and of which Gongora is the example, is the flower, *disegno interno*, this something to which there is referred the mannerist discourse and which is, properly, what I call that in this discourse there is no metaphor, that the metaphor enters into it as a real component, this presence of Velasquez in his (31) canvas, his figure bearing in a way the sign and the support that he is here, at once, as a component and as an element of it, this is the structural, represented point through which there is designated to us what may be involved in it, along what path it can happen that there appears in the canvas itself the one who supports it *qua* looking subject (*sujet regardant*).

Well then, it is something quite striking whose value cannot, in my opinion, be mapped out except from what I introduced to you in this topological structure.

Two features are to be highlighted: that this look is looking and with respect to it everyone says, it is us, we the spectator. Why believe so much in ourselves? No doubt it summons us to something since we respond in the way that I told you. But what this look implies, just like the presence of the turned picture in the picture, just like this space which strikes all those who look at the picture as being in a way unique

and singular, is that this picture extends into the dimensions of what I called the window and designates it as such.

This ensures that, in a corner of the picture, through the picture itself, that is in a way turned onto itself in order to be represented in it, there is created this space in front of the picture which we are properly designated as inhabiting as such, this presentifying (32) of the window in the look of the one who has put himself, not by chance, or in any random fashion in the place that he occupies, Velasquez, this is the point of capture and the specific action this picture exercises on us.

There is a crosscheck for this in the picture. I can only regret once more to have to refer you to images, in general, moreover, I must say, in numerous volumes, all rather bad and either too dark or too clear. This picture is not easy to reproduce but it is clear that the distance between the painter and the picture, in the picture where he is represented, is very sufficiently emphasised to show us that he is precisely not within range to reach it and in this there is an intention, namely, that this part of the group, what is here called *Las Meninas*, *Les Ménines*, namely, Dona Margarita with Dona Maria Agostio Sariato who is on her knees before her, are in front of the painter, while the others, even though they seem to be on an analogous plane, in front, are rather behind, and that this question about this space between the painter and the painting is here not alone what is presented but what is presentified to us by this trace that it is enough to designate to recognise that here a transversal line marks something (33) which is not simply a luminous division, a grouping of the canvas, but a veritable furrow of the passage of this phantastical presence of the painter in so far as he is looking.

If I tell you that it is somewhere at the level of the intersection of the fundamental line and the ground plane and at a point in infinity that the look of the subject is going towards, it is indeed also from this point that Velasquez made, in this ghost-like form which specifies this self-portrait among all the others, one of the traits which is distinguished undoubtedly by the style of the painter. He will tell you himself: "Do you believe that I would paint a self-portrait from this drop, from this oil, with this paintbrush."

You have only to consult the portrait of Innocent X which is in the Palazzo Doria Pamphili to see that the style is not at all the same.

This ghost of the looking subject entered by this trace which is still tangible there and of which I might say that all the personages bear the vibration, for, in this picture, in which it has become a cliché, a common-place and I have heard it articulated in the mouths, I must say, of not only the most authorised but the most high ranking in the hierarchy of creators.

(34) This picture which we are told is the picture of looks which cross one another and of a sort of inter-vision, as if all the personages were characterised by some relation with one another. If you look at things closely you will see that except for the look of the maid of honour Maria Agostina Sariate who is looking at Dona Magarita, no other look fixes on anything.

All these looks are lost on some invisible point, as one might say, "an angel has passed", precisely the painter. The other maid of honour who is called Isabelle de Velasque, is there, in a way, as forbidden, her arms, in a way, spread apart from the trace of this passage.

The idiot, here, the monster Maria Barbola, the dwarf, is looking elsewhere and not at all, as it is said, towards us. As regards the little dwarf, he is occupied here with very precisely doing, with very precisely playing the role that he is made to play *qua* imitation little boy, he is playing the little brat: he is giving the dog a kick in the behind as if to say to him, in a way: "Are you asleep! You didn't smell the mouse that has just passed."

A look, we will be told, if someone still wished to sustain it, but observe that in a picture which is supposed to be a picture about the interplay of looks, there are not in (35) any case, even if we must retain the look of one of the maids of honour, two looks which meet, complicitous looks, intelligent looks, searching looks.

Dona Margarita, the little girl, does not look at the maid servant who is looking at her. All the looks are elsewhere. And, of course, the look at the back of the one who is leaving is nothing more than a look which means: "I am leaving you", and is far from being pointed at anyone.

Henceforth, what can be meant by the fact that is brought to the centre of the theory of this picture, when it is claimed that what is here in the forefront, at our place, and God knows whether the spectator can take delight in such a support, in such a hypothesis, is the king and the queen who are reflected in the mirror which ought to appear here for you and which is at the back?

To this I would object that the painter, from where he shows himself in this picture, where does he intend that we should put it? One of the hypotheses and one of the ones which seduced most among those put forward, is that, since the painter is there, and this is what he has painted, he must have seen all of this in a mirror, a mirror which is where we are and there we are, transformed into a mirror. This does not lack seduction nor does it fail to involve a certain appeal with respect to all I evoke for you (36) as regards the relativity of the subject to the other, except that when you want, it is around such an experience that I would highlight for you the strict difference there is between a mirror and the window; two terms precisely which structurally have no relationship.

But let us stick to the picture. The painter is supposed to have painted himself having seen the whole scene of people around him in a mirror. I only see one objection to it: it is that nothing indicates to us from the testimony of history - and God knows this is the sort of news that history charges itself with transmitting - nothing indicates to us that Velasquez was left-handed. Now, this indeed is how we ought to see him appearing if we are to take seriously the fact that, in a painting supposedly made with the help of a mirror, he represents himself as he indeed was in effect, namely, holding his paintbrush in his right hand.

This may appear to you to be a very slight reason. It nevertheless remains that, if this is how things are, this theory would be completely incompatible with the presence here of the king and the queen. Either it is a mirror that is here, or it is the king and the queen. If it is the king and the queen, this cannot be the painter, if the painter is elsewhere, if the king and the queen are there, it cannot be the painter who is there, as I suppose he effectively was.

You do not understand, Monsieur Castoriadis?

Castoriadis: No

Lacan: In the hypothesis that the king and the queen, reflected back there in the mirror, were here to have themselves painted by the painter, since I have eliminated the hypothesis that the painter was there otherwise than through the art of his brush, it is necessary that the painter be either here or elsewhere. The requirement that the painter should be there and not on the other side of a mirror, which would be ourselves, lies in the fact of supposing that the king and queen are in the mirror.

In other words, we cannot put at the same place any two personages whatsoever of this trio which are: a supposed mirror, the king and the queen, or the painter. We are always forced, in order that this should hold up, to put two of them at the same time, and there cannot be two at the same time.

If the king and the queen are there so as to be reflected at the back in the mirror now it is impossible that they should be represented as being there in the mirror, if only because by reason of scale, of the dimensions in which they are seen in the mirror where they are more or less the same scale as the person who is on the point of leaving next to them. Even though given the distance that we are at, they ought to be exactly (38) twice as small. But this is only another additional argument.

If the king and the queen are there in this hypothesis, then, the painter is here and we find ourselves before the position put forward by tellers of anecdotes, by Madam de Motteville, for example, namely, that the king and the queen were here - and what is more they are supposed to be standing - in the process of being, of posing and are

supposed to have before them the array of all these people whose natural function, you can see, would be if really at this time Velasquez was in the process of painting something quite different to them and, what is more, something that they do not see because they see all of these personages in a position that surround him.

I put forward, in opposition to this obvious impossibility, that what is the essential in what is indicated by this picture is this function of the window. That the fact that the trace is, in a way, marked by that through which the painter can return to it, is really here what shows us how it is there the empty place. That it is in symmetry to this empty place that there appear those, as I might say, not whose look, but the supposition that they see everything, that they are in this mirror exactly as they might (39) be behind a grill or an un-silvered window pane and after all, at the limit, nothing prevents us from supposing that it is something of the kind, namely, what is called a connector, connecting with a large room, one of these places of the type of a place for spying, that they are here in effect, that the fact that they see everything is what sustains this world as being on show, that there is here something which in a way gives us the parallel for the “I think, therefore I am” of Descartes; that Velasquez says “I paint, therefore I am”, and I am the one who is leaving you here with what I have done for your eternal interrogation. And I am also in this place from which I can return to the place that I leave you which is really the one where there is realised this effect from the fact that there is a fall (*chute*) and disarray of something which is at the heart of the subject.

The very multiplicity of interpretations, one might even say their embarrassment, their awkwardness is there sufficiently designed to underline it. But at the other point what do we have? This presence of the royal couple, playing exactly the same role as the God of Descartes, namely, that in everything that we see, nothing deceives on the single condition that the omnipresent God, for his part, is deceived by it. And it is there, the presence of these beings that you see in the so confused and singular (40) atmosphere of the mirror. And this mirror is there, in a way, the equivalent of something which is going to vanish at the level of the subject O who is there, as a pendant of this small (o) of the window in the foreground, would this not deserve our dwelling a little more on it?

A painter, about thirty years later, called Luca Giordano, a mannerist precisely in painting and who preserved in history the label of “*fa presto*” because he went a little quickly, also extraordinarily brilliant, having contemplated at length this image whose history I have not given you as regards its denomination, uttered a word, one of these words, God knows, that one might expect from someone who was at once a mannerist and very intelligent, he said: “It is the theology of painting”.

And of course, it is indeed at this theological level, where the God of Descartes is the support of a whole world that is in the process of being transformed through the intermediary of the subjectival ghost, it is indeed through the intermediary of the royal

couple, who appear to us scintillating in this frame at the back, that this term takes on its sense.

But I will not leave you without telling you, for my part, what suggests to me the fact that a painter like Velasquez, how much of the visionary there was in him. For who (41) will speak in connection with him about realism, who for example in connection with Philanderus (?) would dare to say that this is painting of a popular crudeness. It no doubt is, which simply means eternalising the *flash* that he might have had one day leaving the royal tapestries factory and seeing there the workers in the foreground providing a frame for what was being produced at the back.

I would ask you simply to consult this painting, which is worth more than what I have shown you there, in order to see the degree to which there can be distant from any realism, and, moreover, there is no realistic painter, undoubtedly, who is not a visionary. And by looking more carefully at what is happening at the back of this scene, in this mirror where these personages appear to us to be twinkling, and for their part undoubtedly distinct from what I called earlier ghostly but really brilliant.

There came to me the following, that in polar opposition to this window in which the painter frames us as in a mirror, he makes there emerge what for us, no doubt, does not come in an indifferent place as regards what happens for us in terms of the relationship of the subject to the o-object - the television screen.

Seminar 18: Wednesday 18 May 1966

I would like to salute the presence among us of Michel Foucault who does me the great honour of coming to this seminar. As for myself I rejoice, for it is less a matter for me of giving myself over, before him, to my usual exercises than to try to show him what constitutes the principal goal of our meetings, namely, a goal of formation which implies several things, among ourselves, first of all that things should not be these things of two sides, yours and mine, and immediately located at the same level, otherwise what use would it be? It would be a fiction of teaching.

It is indeed for this reason that, for the last three of our meetings, I was led to return to the same plane, on several occasions, through a sort of effort of reciprocal

accommodation. I think that already, between the second last time and the last time, a step was taken and I hope that another one will be taken today. In a word, I will return today again to this quite admirable support that is given to us by *Las Meninas*, (2) not that they were brought into the forefront as the principle object, of course, - we are not here at the Ecole du Louvre - but because it seemed to us that there was illustrated there in a particularly remarkable fashion, certain facts that I had tried to highlight and to which I will return again for anyone who has not sufficiently followed me. We are dealing here obviously with things that are not all that usual.

The usual use of teaching, whether it is university or secondary, by which you have been formed, being of course to have put between you and what constitutes, for example, the really essential form of modern geometry, remains not simply unknown by you but particularly opaque, and, of course, I was able to see the effect of this when I tried to bring you some of it by these figures, very simple and exemplary figures when I tried to bring you something that showed its dimension to you.

At this point *Las Meninas* presented themselves, as often happens. One really has to marvel, one is wrong to marvel, things come to you like a ring on the finger, we are not alone in working in the same field. What Monsieur Foucault had written in his first chapter was immediately noted by some of my listeners, I must say before me, as (3) constituting a particularly relevant point of intersection between two fields of research. And it is indeed in this way that it must be seen, and I would say all the more so when one applies oneself to re-reading this astonishing first chapter, which I hope that those who are here noticed was taken up a little further on in the book, at the key point, at the turning point, at the one where there is made the junction between this mode, this constitutive mode, as one might say, of relationships between words and things as it is established in a field which begins with the maturation of the sixteenth century to culminate at this particularly exemplary and particularly well articulated point in his book which is that of the thinking of the eighteenth.

At the moment of arriving at what constitutes its goal, in his perspective, at the point that he has led us to, the birth of another articulation, the one which is born in the nineteenth century, the one which already allows him to introduce us both to the function and the profoundly ambiguous and problematic character of what are called the human sciences, here Monsieur Michel Foucault stops and takes up his picture, *Las Meninas*, again around the personage in connection with whom we ourselves left our discourse suspended the last time, namely, the function of the king in the picture.

(4) You will see that this is what is going to allow us today, if we have the time, if things are set up as I hope, to establish for me the junction between what has been brought forward by contributing this precision that projective geometry may allow us to put into what one can call the subjectivity of vision, to make the junction between

this and what I already contributed a long time ago under the theme of the narcissism of the mirror.

The mirror is present in this picture in an enigmatic form, so enigmatic that the last time I was able to end humorously by saying that, after all, for want of knowing what to make of it, we might see there what appears to be, in a surprising fashion, in effect, something which singularly resembles our television screen. But this is obviously a witticism. But you are going to see today, if we have the time, I repeat, that this relationship between the picture and the mirror, what one and the other not alone illustrate for us or represent for us, but truly represent as a structure of representation, this is what I hope to be able to introduce today.

But I do not want to do it without having had here some testimony of the questions which may have been posed after my earlier discourses. I asked Green who, moreover, (5) since we are in a closed seminar, offered himself spontaneously, in a way, to bring me this reply by bringing it to me from outside this circle. I am therefore going to give him the floor. I believe that Audouard, I do not know if he is here, is also willing to bring us some elements of interrogation, and immediately afterwards I will try in replying to them, perhaps, I hope, lead Monsieur Foucault to make a few remarks. In any case, I will certainly not fail to call on him.

Good. I give you the floor, Green.

My voice is a little tired today. I am not sure that in this room, whose acoustics are as bad as its cleanliness, today at least, I am not sure whether I can be clearly heard at the back. Yes? Anyway it would not be a bad thing if you were to move in a body and come a little closer. I would feel surer.

Dr Green: In fact, what Lacan asked me, was essentially to give him the opportunity to start again on the development that he had begun the last time. And it was starting from certain remarks that I myself made at the time of his commentary, that I had taken the liberty of writing to him.

These remarks related essentially to the conditions of projection which were very directly linked to Lacan's commentary and to his own place, preoccupied as he was by the commentary, and to what he could not perceive from the point at which he was.

The conditions of this projection having been, as you know, very poor, and the lack of sufficient darkness considerably misrepresented the picture and, in particular, certain details of this picture became totally invisible. It was in particular the case for what concerned

Lacan: Green, this is not a criticism, we are going to project it again today. Today it will work. I do not think that it was the lack of the darkness, even though darkness is very precious to us, this is not what was in question.

(7) This is not what was at stake. I think that it was the fact that the bulb was, I do not know why, badly regulated or prepared for some other use.

In short, my negative the last time, I cursed the Ecole du Louvre. I was wrong and I went to apologise. My negative was not only very adequate but, as you are going to see, excellent. It was therefore a matter of the bulb. Naturally, you have to lower these curtains if we want to have the projection. So do it quickly. You are very kind. There you are. Thank you.

So then, on you go, Gloria. Put on *Las Meninas*.

Green: In fact what was effaced on that occasion was the person of Velasquez himself, the painter, and the couple... Today, one can see it better, but the last time, precisely, what was effaced was the personage of the painter and this couple, this couple which appeared to be totally effaced.

I questioned myself about this effacing and I asked myself whether, instead of considering it as a simple inadequacy, we might not consider that this effacement itself signified something, like one of these productions of the unconscious, like a bungled (8) action, like forgetting, and whether there was not here a key, a key which strangely unites the painter and this couple who found themselves in the penumbra, who seemed, moreover, to be uninterested in the scene and to be whispering together.

And it was starting from this reflection that I asked myself whether there was not here something to be explored in connection with this effacing, and the effacing of the trace in the picture, where the planes of light are distinguished in a very precise fashion, by Lacan as well as by Foucault with, notably, the plane of light at the back, of the other Velasquez, the Velasquez at the back, and the plane of light which comes to him from the window.

It is therefore in this between-the-two, in this between the two lights that, perhaps, there would be something to be explored as regards the meaning of this picture.

Now we can perhaps put on the lights again if you do not mind.

These, then, are two remarks that I had made to Lacan in writing without thinking at all that they had any other goal than that of re-launching his reflections.

And then, I took up Foucault's text, this very remarkable chapter, and noted there a certain number of points of convergence with what I have just told you, and particularly what he himself says about the painter, he says: (9)

“His dark torso and bright face are half-way between the visible and the invisible”.

On the other hand, Foucault seems to me to have been very silent about the couple that I have been speaking about. He alludes, moreover, he speaks about the courtesan who is there and he does not speak at all about the feminine character who, from appearances, seems to be a religious, from what one can see.

Here I must say that the reproduction in Foucault's book does not allow her to be seen at all, while the reproduction that Lacan has pin-pointed here, allows one to think that there are strong reasons that she is a religious.

And I re-discovered, obviously in Foucault's text, a certain number of systematic oppositions which illuminate the structure of the picture. Some of these oppositions have already been highlighted and particularly, for example, there is the opposition of the mirror, the mirror as support for an opposition between the model and the spectator, the mirror as an opposition to the picture and to the canvas, and, in particular, as regard this canvas, a formulation by Foucault which reminds us, I believe, a good deal, about the barrier of repression. “It prevents there ever been located or (10) definitively established the relationship between the looks.”

This kind of impossibility conferred on the situation of the canvas, being back-to-front, namely, what is inscribed on it, makes us think, for our part, that there is here an altogether essential relationship.

But above all, as regards Lacan's reflections on perspective, what appeared to me to be interesting, is not to rediscover other oppositions, there are such and I forget some of them, of course, but above all to try to comprehend the succession of different planes from the back towards the surface, precisely in Lacan's perspective on perspective.

Well then, it is certainly not indifferent, I believe, that one can rediscover there at least four planes. Four planes which are, successively, the plane of the other Velasquez, the one at the back, the plane of the couple, the plane of the painter, and the plane constituted by the Infanta and her handmaidens, the idiot, the fool and the dog who are in front of Velasquez. They are in front of Velasquez and I think that one can divide this group itself into two sub-groups: the group constituted by the Infanta where Foucault sees one of the two centres of the picture, the other being the mirror - and I believe that this is obviously very important - and the other sub-group constituted by the animal and the monsters, namely, the idiot and the fool Nicolas Percusato with the (11) dog.

I believe that this division on the style of from the back to the front, with these two groups may make us think, and there, perhaps, I am advancing a little - but it is uniquely to provide matter for your commentaries and your criticisms - as something which makes of this picture, of course, a picture about representation, the representation of classical representation, as you were saying, but also, perhaps, of representation as creation and, finally, as this antinomy of creation with, on the left-hand side, with this individual, absolutely, who in the relationship of the Infanta to her two parents who are behind, represents creation in the most successful, the happiest, human form and, on the contrary, deported to the other side on the side of the window, as opposed to that of the canvas, these failures of creation, these marks of castration that are represented by the idiot and the fool.

So that that then, this couple in the penumbra, would have a singular value with respect to the other couple reflected in the mirror, which is that of the king and the queen.

This duality probably being too directed, at that moment onto the problem of creation, in so far as, precisely, it is what Velasquez is in the process of painting, and (12) where we find this duality, probably, between what he is painting and the picture that we are looking at.

I believe that it is in opposition to these planes and these perspectives and, probably, the fact that it is not by chance, something I did not know, that the personage at the back, and Foucault writes in connection with this personage at the back, whom I did not know was called Velasquez, and of whom one can say that he is the other Velasquez, he says of him, in a phrase that really struck me: "Perhaps he is going to enter the room? Perhaps he is confining himself to spying on what is happening inside, content to surprise without being observed."

Well then, I believe, precisely, that this person because of his situation, is precisely in a position to observe, and he observes what? Obviously everything that is taking place in front of him while Velasquez, for his part, is absolutely not in a position to observe this couple in the penumbra and can only look at what is in front of him, namely, the two sub-groups that I have just spoken about.

I do not want to be much longer in order to give the floor to Lacan but I believe that we cannot but see the degree to which in all of this and in the relationship of the (13) window to the picture that Lacan speaks about, well then, I believe that the fascination-effect produced by this picture, and I think that this is what is most important for us, that this picture produces a fascination-effect, is directly related to the phantasy in which we are caught up and, perhaps, that precisely there is here some relationship with these few remarks that I was making about creation, in other words the primal scene.

(14) **Dr Lacan:** Good. We can thank Green for his intervention and also, God knows, this does not seem very nice, his brevity. But we lost a lot of time at the beginning of this session, I would ask Audouard if he wishes, to make an intervention which I have no doubt will have the same qualities.

(15) **Monsieur Audouard:** Precisely, it seemed to me that in a seminar like this one, speakers ought not to be limited to those who have understood, the most brilliant pupils, but that those who have not understood, and that those who have not understood, should be able to say so.

So I would like to say to Monsieur Lacan and to yourselves, apologising in advance for the rather graceless nature of this intervention, that what I would like to express is above all what I have not understood in the presentation that Monsieur Lacan gave us, about the topology that Monsieur Lacan has made for us, in part in the encounter of the ground plane and the figure plane.

First of all, there are many ways of not understanding. There is one way which is to go out of the seminar saying: "I understood nothing at all. Did you understand anything?" "Me neither" says the other. And one remains with that. And then, there is another way which for once I have adopted which is to put myself in front of a sheet of paper and try to make my own little graph, my own little schema.

(16) Not without some trouble. It was especially this morning because this morning Monsieur Lacan telephoned me to tell me that I might perhaps have something to say. So then I rushed to construct something so that it is really like that, impromptu.

Only I am a little uncomfortable because I would like to have put my little graph somewhere and I see that this would mean destroying the organisation of the session and

Lacan: The paper is there for that. Use that.

Audouard: Thank you very much. So then, what I am going to do, I am simply going to tell you the way in which I saw myself obliged to express things to myself, and I would ask Monsieur Lacan to tell me where I went wrong

Lacan: On you go, my friend, on you go.

Audouard: This will allow us to see better. Good. I am going to image with a circular plane this plane of the look in which my eye is caught, the plane of the look in which my eye is caught, therefore, that my eye cannot see.

Here, there is going to be an infinite line which is going to lead to the horizon. Here, there is going to be the projective repetition of this line which will not only be the (17) projective repetition of this line as if it were a matter of metrical geometry, but which is going to be the possibility, for a metrical geometry, that each one of its points, of course, parallel to this line is going to be projected onto it and constitute a parallel line, but in reality, for my eye situated here in the field of the look, each one of these lines is therefore no longer parallel, and will come to constitute a point, like this, in the perspective offered to my eye.

Good. It is also certain that the infinite line which is traced from the field of the look to the horizon, will itself be, in one way or another, and it is here that, perhaps, my position is a little bit uncertain, in one way or another projected onto this line and therefore, when all is said and done, onto this point.

Every point of this line and every point of this line will in the final analysis be projected onto this point. Here I have the figure plane, namely, what offers itself to me, which offers itself to my look when I look: my field, my field in which the plane that I, for my part, cannot see, namely the ground plane, the plane of the look in which my eye is caught up, in one way or another, is going to be projected. To such a degree and so well that, as Monsieur Lacan has often pointed out to us, I am seen just as much as I (18) see. Namely, that the lines which come here to rejoin the plane of the look or this fundamental line that Monsieur Lacan spoke to us about, at this figure plane, will moreover be invertible, as I might say, like this, by an exactly inverted projection. So that, if I consider that the look-plane is projected onto the figure plane, the look-plane sends me back something which came from the figure plane, there will be at each intermediary point between the plane of the look and the infinite line, the vanishing point, the point at the horizon, there would be at every point of this space, a difference between perspective, if I consider it as vectorialised as it were like this or vectorialised like that, namely, that for example a tree that would have this dimension in this vector, will have that dimension in that vector.

Therefore, there would be here a separation (*écart*), something not seen which is there only to express that at each point of this plane there is also a separation of each point with respect to itself, namely, that this space is not homogeneous and that each point is displaced with regard to itself in a separation that is not seen, not visible, which nevertheless comes strangely to constitute each one of these points that my eye perceives in the perspective plane. Each one of these things, seen in the perspective-plane being sent back by the figure plane, in so far as in this figure plane, the plane of (19) the look is projected; each one of these separations can be called (o) and this (o) is constitutive of the separation that each point of the look-plane takes on with regard to itself.

An absolute non-homogeneity of this plane is thus uncovered, and each object is uncovered as being able to have a certain distance with respect to itself, a certain difference with respect to itself.

And I am struck that in what Green told us, if one considers in effect this sort of intersection of the illuminations of the plane, the figures that he speaks to us about are situated, as it were, at an intersection, to rejoin, in a way, to rejoin what is crossed over here like that. And that, in effect, there is perhaps, one can also say, in the illumination of the faces as compared to the bodies, something which goes further and which could, by way of simple illustration, I am not claiming to do any more, which could indicate to us this little difference, precisely, that the object takes with respect to itself when one opposes (*mets en regard*), it is the moment to say it, the plane of the look and the plane of the figure. This is the way in which I expressed things to myself, and I will leave it to Monsieur Lacan to tell me whether I am completely mistaken or whether I misunderstood a part of what he told us the other day.

(20) **Dr Lacan:** Thank you very much, Audouard.

There we are. It is really an interesting construction because it is exemplary. I find it difficult to believe that there was not mixed up in it for you the desire to reconcile a first schema that I had given when I was speaking about the scopical drive, two years ago, with what I brought you the last and the second last time.

This schema, as you have produced it, and which corresponds to neither one nor the other of these two statements of mine, has all sorts of characteristics, the principal one of which is to want to image, at least this is what I think, if I am not mistaken myself about what you meant, in short, a certain reciprocity between the representation that you have called the figure, and what is produced in the plane of the look from which you began.

I think, indeed, in effect, that it is a kind of strictly reciprocal representation that is involved in which there is marked, as one might say, the permanent vertigo of intersubjectivity. And with this you introduce, in a way that would deserve to be criticised in detail, something or other that I do not want, with which I do not want to burden myself with. From which something would result through which the object, it is (21) indeed an object that is in question since you have supposed a little tree, which would draw in a way, I am going a little quickly but, which would draw all its relief, from the non-coincidence of two perspectives that they grasp, which, in effect, ought to be more or less sustainable in the way in which you have posed things.

And, moreover, I believe that at the end it is not for nothing that you present us, in the plane of the look, with two points separated from one another and which come here,

curiously, without my knowing if it is your intention, but in a striking fashion, evoke binocular vision. In short, you appear, with this schema, to be completely prisoner of something undoubtedly confused, and which takes on its prestige from overlapping rather well what properly optical physiology tries to explore.

Now, - naturally I am going very quickly, it would be worth discussing this in detail with you, but then I think that the seminar today cannot be considered as remaining in the axis of what we have to say - in short, it is easy to locate here the defects of your construction with respect to what I have contributed, the fact that you have started from something which, let us say, you call the plane of the seeing subject or the plane (22) of the look, that you should have started from there is an error that is altogether tangible and extremely determining for the embarrassment that the rest of your attempt to cover what I said left you in. This will only give me an opportunity to express it once more.

To start from there by saying that this, whose horizontal line you drew without specifying immediately what it was, and, moreover, this is something that we remain embarrassed by, because what this line is determined by, what it is determined by is this plane that I called the first time the support plane, and that I subsequently called more simply and to give an image, the ground, the ground plane. You do not specify it but, on the contrary, suppose that anything whatsoever on this plane, on this plane of the look, can go and project itself onto this something that you introduced first and which is the horizon line. This is really to miss, really the essential of what was contributed by the construction that I showed you the last day in a second phase, after having first of all expressed it in a fashion, after all, which could be simply translated by letters or by numbers on the board.

Nothing on the plane of the look, if we have defined it as I defined it, namely, as (23) parallel to the figure plane or again to the picture, is that not so, nothing, very precisely, can be projected there onto the picture in a way that is representable by you, since this is going, in effect, to be projected there, since everything is projected there, but this is going to be projected there in accordance, not with the horizon line but the line at infinity of the picture.

This point here, therefore - I am going to do it in red to distinguish it from your marks - this point there, then, is the point at the infinity of the picture plane. Are you with me?

This is easy to conceive of because, if we re-establish things as they ought to be, namely, I am drawing here - would you please get me some other sheets of paper, Gloria, because it will really be too confusing.

In the meantime, I am, all the same, going to try to say why all of this is of interest to us because, after all, for someone like Foucault who has not been present at our

previous conversations, this may appear to be a little bit outside the limits of the blueprint, it must be said.

But after all, this may be an opportunity for me, this may be the opportunity, to specify what is in question. We are psychoanalysts. What do we deal with? A drive which is called the scopic drive. This drive, if the drive is something constructed as Freud has (24) inscribed it for us, and if we try, following what Freud inscribed about the drive, that it is not an instinct, but a *montage*, a *montage* between realities of an essentially heterogeneous level, like those which are called the pressure, the *Drang*, something that we can inscribe as being the orifice of the body where this *Drang*, as I might say, finds its support and from which it draws, in a way that is only conceivable in a strictly topological fashion, its constancy: this constancy of the *Drang* can only be developed by supposing that it emanates from a surface and the fact that it is supported on a constant edge, finally assures, as one might say, the vectorial constancy of the *Drang*.

From something subsequently which is a return movement, every drive includes in a way in itself, something which is, not its reciprocal, but its return to its base. It is starting from something that we can conceive, at the limit, and in a way, I would say, that is not metaphorical, but fundamentally inscribed in existence, namely a circuit (*tour*), it describes a circuit, it goes around something, and it is this something that I call the *o*-object.

(25) This is perfectly illustrated, in a constant fashion, in analytic practice, by the fact that the *o*-object, in the measure that it is for us the most accessible, that it is literally circumscribed by analytic experience, is on the one hand what we call the breast, and we call it that in sufficiently numerous contexts for its ambiguity, its problematic character, to leap to the eye of everyone.

That the breast is a little object, all sorts of things are designed to show that it is not a matter here of this something carnal which is what is at stake when we speak about the breast, it is not simply this something that the nursing squashes his nose against, it is something which in order to be defined, if it must fulfil the functions and, moreover, represent the possibilities of equivalence that it manifests in analytic practice, it is something which must be defined in a completely different way.

I am not going to put the emphasis here on the function, which also presents the same problems, that is constituted by, however you may call it, by this scybalum, waste, excrement, here we have something which is, in a way, quite clear and well circumscribed.

Now, once we pass into the register of the scopic drive, which is precisely the one that (26) in this article, this article on which I am basing myself - not simply because it is Freud's sacred article - because it is a supreme article in which, for him, there is

expressed precisely some necessity which is along the path of this topological specification that I am striving to give.

If in this article, he particularly highlights this outward and return function in the scopic drive, this implies that we ought to try to circumscribe this *o*-object which is called the look. So then, it is the structure of the scopic subject that is involved and not of the field of vision. Immediately, we see there that there is a field in which the subject is implicated in an outstanding fashion. Because for us - when I say us, I am saying you and I, Michel Foucault - who interest ourselves in the relationship between words and things because, when all is said and done, there is nothing in analysis but that, we also immediately clearly see that this scopic subject is involved in an outstanding way in the function of the sign.

It is a matter, therefore, of something which already introduces a completely different dimension to the dimension that we could qualify as physics, in the elementary sense of the word, which represents the visual field in itself.

At this point, if we do something which, I do not know whether you would accept the (27) title, it is for you to tell me, if we try to construct, on some precise point or from some angle something called the history of subjectivity, it is a title that you would accept, not as a sub-title, because I believe there already is one, but as a sub-sub-title, and that we might define as a field, as you have done in the *Birth of the clinic*, or for the history of madness, or a historical field as in your, it is quite clear that the function of the sign appears there as this essential thing, this essential function that you give yourself in such an analysis.

I have not the time, thanks to these delays that we have had, perhaps to raise point by point all the terms in your first chapter, not at all that I would have anything to object to but, quite the contrary, which seemed to me literally to converge towards the sort of analysis that I am doing.

You end up with the conclusion that this picture is, in a way, the representation of the world of representations, as you consider that it is what the infinite system, I would say, of reciprocal application which constitutes the characteristic of a certain moment of thought. You are not completely against what I am saying here?

(28) You agree. Thank you. Because that proves that I have understood properly.

It is certain that nothing is more instructive for us about the satisfaction that its *éclat* gives us, than such a controversy. I do not in any way believe that I am bringing forward an objection in saying that, in the final analysis, it is only with a didactic end in view, namely, to pose for ourselves the problems that are imposed by a certain limitation in the reference system which is, in effect, important that such a grasp of

what, let us say, thinking was during the seventeenth and the eighteenth century, is proposed to us.

How can we proceed differently if we even wish to begin to suspect from what angle problems are proposed to us. Nothing is more illuminating than to see, to be able to grasp in what, I can say the word, a different perspective there can be proposed in a different context, even if only to avoid errors in reading, I would even say more, simply to allow the reading when we are not naturally disposed to it, of authors like those whose way of working you put forward in such a dazzling fashion, like Cuvier for example. I am not speaking, of course, of everything that you also contributed in the register of the economy of the epoch and also of its linguistics.

(29) I put this question to you: do you believe or do you not believe that, when all is said and done, whatever may be the outline, the testimony, that we may have about the lines on which the thinking of an epoch took its assurance, there was always posed to the speaking being, when I say posed, I mean that he was in and that, because of this fact, we cannot avoid speaking about thinking, that exactly the same structural problems were posed in the same way for them as for us.

I mean that this is not simply a kind of metaphysical presupposition and even, to say it more precisely, a Heideggerian one, namely, that the question of the essence of the truth was always posed in the same way. And that people refused it in a certain number of different ways. This is the whole difference, but all the same, we can put our finger on its presence. I mean not simply like Heidegger by going back to extra-ancient Greek antiquity, but in a direct fashion.

In the sequence of chapters that you give: speaking, exchanging, representing. I must say, moreover, that in this respect to see them summarised in the table of contents is something gripping. It seems to me that the fact that you did not make figure there the word counting is a rather remarkable thing.

(30) And when I say counting of course I am not speaking just about arithmetic nor about "*bowling*". I mean that you have seen that, at the very heart of the thinking of the seventeenth century, something which certainly has remained unrecognised, and which has even been booed, you know as well as I who I am going to speak about, namely, the one who received the cooked apples, who had pulled back from things, and who, nevertheless, remains indicated, for the best people, as having shone with the most brilliant *éclat*, in other words Georges Desargues, is to mark something which escapes, it seems to me, from what I would call the trait of inconsistency of the reciprocal mode of representations in the different fields that you describe to us in order to give an account of the seventeenth and of the eighteenth centuries.

In other words, Velasquez' picture is not the representation of, I would say, all the modes of representation, it is, in accordance with a term which of course is only going

to be there as a dessert, which is the term on which I insist when I borrow it from Freud, namely, the representative of representation.

What does that mean? We have just made, I mean had, a striking testimony - I apologise, Audouard - of the difficulty in getting across the specificity of what I tried (31) to introduce, for example, at one time not too long ago, namely, for two of our meetings.

When what is at stake is the scopic field, the scopic field, it has served for a long time in this relationship to the essence of truth. Heidegger is there to recall it for us, in this work that I can hardly conceive why it was not the first to be translated, as *Wesen* not as *Wesen der Wahrheit*, but of Plato's *Lehre* [?] on the truth, a work which is not only not translated but, what is more, is unfindable, is there to remind us the degree to which in the first information, it is absolutely clear, manifest, as regards this subject of the truth, that Plato made use of what I would call this scopic world.

He made a use of it, as usual, that was much more astute and wily than one might imagine for, when all is said and done, all the material is there, as I recently recalled, the hole, the darkness, the cave, this thing which is so capital, namely, the entrance, what I am going to call later the window and then, behind, the world that I would call the solar world.

It is indeed the entire presence of all the paraphernalia which allows Heidegger to make such a dazzling use of it which, at least you, Michel Foucault, here, you know, because I think that you have read it, and since this work is unfindable there must be (32) few people here who have read it up to now, but I already spoke about it a little all the same, namely, to make Plato say much more than he ordinarily says, and to show, in any case, the fundamental value of a certain number of movements of the subject which are very exactly something which, as he underlines, links the truth to a certain formation, a certain *paideia*, namely, to these movements that we know well, in any case those who follow my teaching know well, the value of the signifier, a movement of turning and of returning, the movement of the one who turns round and who must maintain himself in this turning around (*renversement*).

It nevertheless remains that subsequent times show us the confusion that such a debate can lend itself to, if we are not able to isolate severely in this field of the scopic world, the difference between structures.

And, of course, it is to go about it in a summary way, for example, to make in it one of these oppositions, an opposition from which I am going to begin.

The apologue, the fable of Plato, as it is usually received, only implies something which is a point of radiation of light, an object that he calls the true object, something that is (32) in the shadow.

That the prisoners in the cave see only shadows, this is usually all that is taken from this teaching. I earlier marked the degree to which Heidegger managed to get more out of it by showing what, in effect, is involved.

Nevertheless, this way of starting from this centrality of light towards something which is going to become not simply this structure that it is, namely, the object and its shadow, but a sort of degradation of reality which is going to introduce in a way at the very heart of everything that appears, of everything that is *scheinen*, to take up again what is in Heidegger's text, a sort of mythology which is precisely the one on which there reposes the very idea of the idea which is the idea of good, the one where there is, where there is found the very intensity of reality, of consistency, and from which, in a way, there emanate all the envelopes which will be no more, when all is said and done, than expanding envelopes of illusions, of representations always of representation, it is here moreover precisely, if you will allow me to remind you, I do not know after all if you remember clearly that on January 19th, I illustrated here by making Madame Parisot, here present, give a commentary on two texts by Dante: the (34) only two in which he spoke about the mirror of Narcissus.

Now, what our experience, the analytic experience, brings us is centred on the phenomenon of the screen. Far from the inaugural foundation of the dimension of analysis being something where at some point the primitiveness of light, by itself, makes there emerge everything that is darkness in the form of what exists, we have first of all to deal with this problematic relationship which is represented by the screen.

This screen is not simply what hides the real, it surely is that, but, at the same time, it indicates it. What structures carry this frame of the screen in a way that strictly integrates it into the existence of the subject, this is the turning point starting from which we have, if we want to account for the least terms that intervene in our experience as connoted by the term *scopic*, and here, of course, we are not only dealing with screen memories, we are dealing with something which is called *phantasy*: we have to deal with this term that Freud calls not a representation but a representative of representation. We have to deal with several series of terms, and we have to know whether or not they are synonyms. This is the reason that we perceive that this *scopic* world that is in question is not simply to be thought in terms of the magic lantern, (35) that it is to be thought out in a structure which, happily, is given to us. It is given to us, I must say, that it is present all the same throughout the centuries; it is present in the whole measure that one or other person has missed it.

There is a certain Pappus' theorem which is found in a surprising fashion to be exactly inscribed in the theorems of Pascal and of Brianchon, those on the rectilinearity of the colinearity of the meeting points of a certain hexagon in so far as this hexagon is inscribed in a conic. Pappus had found a particular case of it which is very exactly the one where this hexagon is not inscribed in what we usually call a conic but simply in

two straight lines crossing one another, which was, I must say, up to an epoch which was that of Kepler, people had not noticed that two lines which crossed one another constitute a conic. This indeed is the reason why Pappus did not generalise his invention.

But that one is able to make a series of punctuations which prove that at every epoch, this thing which is called projective geometry was not unrecognised, is already sufficient to assure us that there was present a certain mode of relationship to the scopic world, and I am going to try to say now, and in the haste that we are always in (36) for working, what its structuring effects are.

What are we looking for? If we want to account for the possibility of a relationship, let us say, to the real - I am not saying to the world - which is such that when it is established, there is manifested in it the structure of phantasy, we ought in this case to have something which connotes for us the presence of the **o**-object, of the **o**-object in so far as it is the setting (*monture*) of an effect, not alone, I do not have to say that we know well, precisely, we do not know it. We have to give an account of this first, given, effect, from which we start in analysis, which is the division of the subject, namely, that in the whole measure, I know that you are fully aware of it, that you maintain the distinction between the *cogito* and the unthought (*impensé*), for us there is no unthought. The novelty for psychoanalysis, is where you designate, I am speaking at a certain point of your development, the unthought in its relationship to the *cogito*; where there is this unthought, it thinks (*ça pense*), and this is the fundamental relationship which, moreover, you know very well is problematic since you subsequently indicate, when you speak about psychoanalysis, that it is in this that psychoanalysis radically puts in question everything that belongs to the human sciences.

(37) I am not deforming what you say? What?

Michel Foucault: You are reforming.

Lacan: Of course. And what is more, naturally, in more than one way, which would require more breakthroughs and stages. Now, what is involved is a geometry which allows us, not simply to be a representation, in a figure plane of what is on a ground, but that there is inscribed in it this third term, which is called the subject, and which is necessary for its construction. It is very precisely why I made the construction that I am forced to make which, moreover, has nothing original about it, which is simply borrowed from the most common books on perspective, provided they are illuminated by Desargues' geometry and by all the developments that it made, moreover, in the nineteenth century, but precisely Desargues is here to highlight that in the heart of this seventeenth century, already, this whole geometry that he perfectly well grasped, this fundamental existence, for example, of a principle like the principle of duality which does not mean essentially by itself that geometrical objects are referred to an operation

of symbolic equivalence, well then, with the help simply of the most simple usage of the goal-posts (*montants*) of perspective we find that, in so far as it is necessary to (38) distinguish this subject point, this figure plane, this ground plane - naturally I am forced to represent them by something, you must understand that all of these extend to infinity of course - well then, something is locatable in a double fashion which inscribes the subject in this figure plane which, because of this fact, is not simply an envelope, a detached illusion, as one might say, of what it is a matter of representing, but in itself constitutes a structure which is the representative of the representation.

I mean that the horizon line, in so far as it is directly determined by this point that must not be called the eye point, but the subject point, the subject point, in parenthesis, as one might say, I mean the subject necessary for the construction, and which is not the subject, since the subject is engaged in the adventure of the figure and it is necessary that there should be produced there something which, at the same time indicates that he is somewhere at a point, necessarily, but that his other point, even though it is necessary that it should be present, should, in a way, be elided. This is what we obtain in remarking, I recall - I lack the time to re-do the proof in such an articulated fashion - that if this horizon line is determined simply by a parallel, a parallel plane which passes (39) through the subject point, a plane parallel to the ground plane, everyone knows this, but that this type of horizon, moreover, in the establishment of some perspective or other, implies the choice of a point on this horizon line, and that if everyone knows that, it is what is called the vanishing point and that, therefore, the first presence of the subject point in the figure plane is any point whatsoever on the horizon line, let us say, any point whatsoever, I again underline, in principle there should be one.

When there are several of them, it is when it happens that painters give themselves some licence, when there are several, it is for particular ends. Just as we have several ego ideals or egos ideals - you can say both - it is for certain ends. But that there is, but that is of course one of the necessities of perspective, all of those who are the founders of it, namely, Alberti and Pellerin, otherwise known as Pellegrini, but also Albert Dürer, what he calls the other eye, I repeat, this lends itself to confusion for in no case is it a question of binocular vision, perspective has nothing to do with what one sees and relief, contrary to what is imagined, perspective is the mode, at a certain time, at a certain epoch, as you might say, by which the painter as subject puts himself (40) into the picture, exactly as the painters of the epoch that is wrongly called primitive put themselves in the picture as donors. In the world of which the picture was supposed to be the representative, at the time of these so-called primitives, the painter was in his place in the picture.

At the time of Velasquez, he gives the impression of putting himself into it, but you only have to look at him to see - you have underlined it very clearly - the point to which he is in it in a state of absence. He is in it at a certain point that I precisely describe in the fact that one touches the trace of the point from which it comes, from

this point for you, for you alone, for I have already said enough for the others, this point that I have not up to the present qualified, which is the other point of presence, the other subject point in the field of the picture, which is this point which is determined, not in the way you were told earlier, but in taking into account precisely the fact that there is a point and a single parallel to the plane of the picture which can in no way be inscribed in the picture. And this indeed is what makes leap to our eyes the degree to which the first presence of the point S on the line at the horizon in the form of any point whatsoever is problematic.

This, any point whatsoever, in its form as a point of indifference, is indeed precisely (41) something of a nature to suspend us around what one could call its primacy.

On the contrary, in taking into account the fact that this line that we determine as the line of intersection of the plane which passes through the point S supposed at the beginning, the intersection with the ground plane, that this line on the figure plane has a translation that is easy to grasp, because it is enough simply to invert (*renverser*), which appeared to us to be quite natural to admit as regards the relationship of the horizon with the infinite line on the ground plane here in the other arrangement, it appears immediately that this, if you wish, constitutes a horizon line with respect to which the line to infinity of the figure plane will play the inverse function and that, henceforth, it is at the intersection of the fundamental line, namely, of the point where the picture cuts the figure plane, at the intersection of this fundamental line with this line to infinity, namely, at a point at infinity, that there is placed the second pole of the subject.

It is from this pole that Velasquez returns after having split his little group and the line of cleavage which marks there by its passage, you agree, in a way by what forms his model group, sufficiently indicates to us that it is from somewhere, outside the picture, that it has arisen here.

(42) This, I regret, makes me take things from the most abstract and theoretical point. And time is passing. I can therefore not take things today to the point that I would have wished to take them. Nevertheless, the very form of what was brought to me earlier as an interrogation required me to put it in the forefront.

Nevertheless, if some of you can still make the sacrifice of a few minutes after this 2 o'clock time, I am going all the same to pass, namely, taking things at the level of what I must say is the fascinating description that you have given of *Las Meninas*, to show you the concrete interest that these considerations take on, on the very plane of description.

It is clear that, from all time, the critics as well as the spectators have been absolutely fascinated, disturbed by this picture. The day that someone - I do not want to tell you his name even though I have all the literature here - made the discovery that this little

king and queen that are seen at the back were extraordinary, that this surely was the key to the affair, everyone acclaimed him as if it were really extraordinary, intelligent, to have seen this which is obviously, which is displayed where it can fascinate, not in (43) the foreground, because it is at the back, but after all it is impossible not to see it.

In any case people progressed from heroic discoveries to other discoveries that were sensational in different ways, but there is only one thing that people have not quite explained, it is the degree to which this thing, if it were only that - cuckoo, the king and queen are in the picture - would be enough to give the thing its interest.

In the light, as one might say, because we are not working here on the *photopique* plane, we are not dealing with colour, I reserve it for next year, if next year in fact exists, we are working in the scotopic field in effect, in the penumbra, like here.

What is important, interesting, is what happens between this ritual S point for it only serves for the construction, all that is important for us here is what is in the figure, but all the same it plays its role, it is what happens between this point here in the interval between him and the screen. Now, if there is something that this picture imposes on us, it is thanks to an artifice which is the one, moreover, from which - I compliment you on this - you began, namely, that the first thing you said is that in the picture there is a picture, and I think you do not doubt any more than I do that this (44) picture in the picture is the picture itself, the one that we see. Even though, perhaps, on this point you may lend yourself to perpetuating the interpretation that the picture is the picture on which he is making the portrait of the king and the queen. Can you imagine, he would have taken the same picture of three metres and eighteen centimetres with the same frame to make just the king and the queen, these two little idiots there at the back.

Now, it is precisely from the presence of this picture, which is the only representation in the picture, this representation saturates in a way the picture *qua* reality. But the picture is something else since, I will not prove it to you today, I hope that you will come back next week because, I think that one can say something about this picture which goes beyond this remark which is truly inaugural, namely, what this picture really is.

I sufficiently underlined the last time the space (?) that all the interpretations that have been made of it represent, but obviously one must start from the idea that what is hidden from us and whose function you highlight so well of something hidden, of a face-down card that forces you to lay down your own, and God knows that, in effect, (45) the critics have not failed to lay down their cards and say a series of extravagant things, not that much though. It was enough to bring them together to end up, all the same, by knowing why their extravagances, one of which one is, for example, that the painter is painting in front of a mirror which is supposed to be where we are. It is an elegant solution, unfortunately, it goes completely against this story of the king and

the queen who are at the back because in that case, it would also be necessary for them to be at the place of the mirror. You have to choose.

In short, all sorts of difficulties present themselves, if simply we can maintain that the picture is in the picture as a representation of the love object. Now, this problematic of the distance between the point S and the plane of the picture is properly at the base of the captivating effect of the work.

It is in the measure that it is not a work with a usual perspective, it is a kind of mad attempt which, moreover, is not limited to Velasquez, thanks be to God I know enough painters and, in particular, the one whom I am going to show you something of, like that, to give you a little treat, at the end of this presentation in which I regret (46) that I am always forced to return to the same planes which are too arid, a painter, one of whose works I am going to show you here, as I leave you, one that you can all go to see, moreover, where it is on display, that it is indeed the problem of the painter, and this, consult my first dialectics on this when I introduced the scopic drive, namely, that the picture is a trap for the look, that it is a matter of trapping the one who is there in front and what better way of trapping him than to extend the field of limits of the picture, of the perspective, to the level of what is there at the level of this point S, and what I am calling, properly speaking, what always vanishes, which is the element of fall (*chute*), the only fall in this representation, where this representative of the representation which is the picture in itself, is this *o*-object, and the *o*-object is what we can never grasp and especially not in the mirror, for the reason that it is the window that we ourselves constitute by simply opening our eyes. This effort of the picture to catch this vanishing plane which is properly what we have contributed, all of us, loafers that we are, there at the exhibition, believing that nothing is happening to us when we are in front of a picture, we are caught like a fly in glue; we lower our look as one lowers one's pants, and for the painter it is a matter, as I might say, of making us enter into the picture.

(47) It is precisely because there is this interval between this high canvas represented from behind, and something which puts forward the frame of the picture, that we are ill at ease. It is a properly structural and strictly scopic interpretation. If you come back to hear me the next time, I will tell you why this is the way it is, for in truth I remain here today strictly within the limits of the analysis of the structure, of the structure as you have done, of the structure of what one sees on the picture.

You have introduced nothing into it of the dialogue, as I might say, of the dialogue that it suggests between what and what? Do not believe that I am going to engage in reciprocity, like Audouard, namely, that we are asked for our part to dialogue with Velasquez. I sufficiently said for a long time that the relationships of the subject to the Other are not reciprocal, for me not to fall into this trap today.

Who speaks in front (*en avant*)? Who interrogates? Who is it, rather, who cries and begs and asks Velasquez: “Let me see” (*fais voir*): this is the point from which one must begin, I indicated it to you the last time, in order to know in fact who is, what is there, in the picture?

And that this interval, this interval between the two planes, the picture plane and (48) the plane of the point S, that this interval which cuts the ground plane into two parallels and by that which in Dessargues’ vocabulary is called the axle (*essieu*).

For, what is more, as a way of making himself more unpopular, a vocabulary which was not the same as that of everyone else.

In the axle of the earth what is happening? Certainly not what we will say today and that the picture is made to make us sense this interval, is what is doubly indicated in our relationship to being nabbed by this picture on the one hand, and in the fact that in the picture Velasquez is manifestly so much there in order to mark for us the importance of this distance, that he is not, notice, you must have noticed it but you did not say it - he is not within range, even with his elongated brush, of being able to touch the picture.

Naturally, people say he stood back to see better. Yes. Of course. But after all, the fact that obviously he is not within reach of the picture is here the capital point, in short, that the two key points of this picture are not simply the one who for his part is also escaping towards a window, towards a gap, towards the outside, posed there as if in parallel to the gap in front, and on the other hand Velasquez whose (49) knowledge, what he tells us there is the essential point. I will make him speak in order to end, not to end because I still want you to see Balthus’ picture all the same, to say things in a Lacanian language since I speak in his place, why not?

In reply to “Let me see”: “You do not see me from where I am looking at you” (*tu ne me vois pas d’ou je te regarde*). It is a fundamental formula to explicitate what interests us in every relationship of looking, it is a matter of the scopic drive and very precisely in exhibitionism as well in voyeurism, but we are not here to see whether, in the picture, people are tickled nor whether something is happening.

We are here to see how this picture inscribes for us the perspective of the relationships of the look in what is called phantasy is so far as it is constitutive. There is great ambiguity about this word phantasy. Unconscious phantasy, all right, that is an object. First of all it is an object in which we always lose one of the three pieces that are in it, namely, two subjects and one (o). Because do not believe that I have the illusion that I am going to bring you the unconscious phantasy as an object. Without that, the drive of the phantasy would spring up elsewhere. But what is disturbing, is that every time (50) people speak about unconscious phantasy, they also speak implicitly about the phantasy of seeing it. Namely, that the hope, from the fact that people are chasing it,

and this introduces a lot of confusion into the matter. I, for the moment, I am trying to give you, properly speaking, what is called a frame (*bati*), and a frame which is not a metaphor, because unconscious phantasy depends on a frame, and it is this frame that I do not despair, not only of making familiar to those who listen to me but of making it get under their skin. This is my goal and this is an absolutely risky exercise which, for some people, appears to be derisory, that I am pursuing here, and that you only hear distant echos of.

I am now going to pass around among you, thanks to Gloria, Monsieur Balthus' image. There is a Balthus exhibition on at the moment. It is at the Pavillon de Marsan, I am giving you the information free. For a modest sum, you can all go and admire this painting.

Well then, it is a little homework that I am giving to some people. I am giving them the whole vacation for it. Let us see. Look at this picture. I hope to get some reproductions of it but it is not very easy. I owe this one to Madam Henriette Gomez who happened, it was moreover for her astonishing, who found that she had it in her (51) filing index. There you are, there is a slight difference in the picture that you will see, you see, contrary to what happens in Velasquez because obviously there are questions of epoch.

Here, in this picture, people are being tickled a little and to ensure the tranquillity of the present owner this hand has been slightly raised by the author.

I showed it to him again last evening, I must say that he told me that, all the same, it was very much better composed like that. He was sorry for having made a concession that he thought he ought to, it was a sort of counter-concession. He said : "After all, perhaps I am doing that to annoy people, so why not drop it", but it is not true. He had put it there because it ought to be there. In any case, all the other things which are there ought also to be there and, when all is said and done, when I saw this picture, I had seen it once previously and I no longer remembered it, but when I saw it this time, in this context, you will attribute this to what I do not know, to my lucidity or to my delusion, you have to decide, I said: "That is *Las Meninas*". Why is this picture *Las Meninas*? This is the little piece of holiday homework then that I am leaving to the best of you.

I am going to begin, *sotto voce*, by reading to you, rapidly, something which represents a short account of my seminar, that I have been asked for, as is done at this time of the year. It will be less long than the one that I gave you, already developed for you, about last year's seminar, but as I know that this first reading was of some service as regards last year's seminar, I am going to begin things today by giving you, by recalling to you what the situation of this year's seminar is.

"This seminar which is, for us, still in progress," I write, "was concerned, following its path, with the function long mapped out in analytic experience under the title of object relations. It is held in it, for the analysable subject, it dominates his relation to the real, and the oral or anal object are promoted in it at the expense of others whose status, even though manifest, remains uncertain in it.

(2) "The fact is that, if the first - of these objects - depend directly on the relationship of demand, very suitable for a corrective intervention, the others require a more complex theory, because there cannot fail to be recognised in them a division of the subject impossible to reduce by the simple efforts of good intentions, being the very division by which desire is supported."

"These other objects, specifically the look and the voice, if we leave for what is to come the object at stake in castration, are an integral part of this division of the subject and presentify in the very field of the perceived the elided part of it as libidinal.

"As such, they push back the appreciation of the practice that threatens the overlapping of these objects by the specular relationship with the ego identifications which people want to respect in it."

"This relationship is enough to justify our having insisted this year, by preference, on the scopic drive and on its immanent object, the look. We have given the topology which allows there to be conceived the presence of the *percipiens* himself in the field where as unperceived, he is nevertheless perceptible when he is even too much so in the effects of the drive which manifest themselves as exhibitionism or voyeurism."

(3) "This topology which is inscribed in projective geometry and the surfaces of the *analysis situs*, is not to be taken, as in the case of the optical models in Freud, under the heading of metaphor but indeed as representing the structure itself. This topology accounts, finally, for the impurity of the scopic *perceptum*, by rediscovering what I believed I was able to indicate in one of my articles, very precisely the one on the *Question preliminary to any possible treatment of psychosis*, what I believed I was able to indicate in terms of the presence of the irreducible *percipiens* from the mark

that it carries there of the signifier, when it shows itself to be minted in the never conceived phenomenon of the psychotic voice.”

“The absolute requirement in these two scopical and invocatory points of a theory of desire, brings us to a rectification of deviations in practice, to the necessary self-criticism of the position of the analyst, a self-criticism which is directed at the risk attached to his own subjectification, if he wants to respond honestly, even simply to the demand.”

I am going, today, to pursue this exemplary object that I chose three seminars ago, to take, in order to fix before you the terms in which there is situated this problematic, the problematic of the *o*-object and of the division of the subject, in so far as I have just (4) said, that since the obstacle in question is the one procured by specular identification, it is not without reason, it is by reason of the particular role, at once through its latency and the intensity of its presence, that the *o*-object constitutes at the level of this drive.

Would you mind letting us see again the picture of *Las Meninas*? Here is this picture. You already saw it enough the last time, I think to have since had the curiosity to come back to it, this picture, you now know, by the thematic that it furnished, in the dialectic of the relationships of the sign with things, specifically in the work of Michel Foucault around whom my whole statement the last time was produced, through the numerous discussions that it has provided within what one could call art criticism, this picture, let us say, presents us, reminds us of what was advanced in its connection, in terms of a fundamental relationship that it suggests with the mirror, this mirror which is at the back and where people wanted to see, in a way, and, as it were, in treating lightly the trick which consists in representing in it those who are supposed to be there in front as models, namely, the royal couple, this mirror, on the other hand, is put in question when it is a matter of explaining how the painter could situate himself here, and (5) painting for us what we have there in front of us, can, for his part, see it. The mirror, therefore, which is at the back and the mirror at our level.

Lights please.

This, the mirror and the picture, introduces us to the reminder by which today I want to enter into the explanation that I hope to be able to make complete today, complete and definitive, as regards what is in question.

The relationship of the picture to the subject is fundamentally different to that of the mirror. When I put forward that in the picture, as a perceived field, there can be inscribed both the place of the *o*-object and its relationship to the division of the subject, that this, I showed it to you in introducing my problem, by the putting in the foreground the function, in the picture, of perspective, in so far as it is the way in which, starting from a certain historically situatable date, the subject, specifically the

painter, makes himself present in the picture, and not simply in so far as his position determines the vanishing point of the aforesaid perspective. I designated the point where there is, not at all as people say, the artists speaking as artisans, the other eye, this point which regulates the distance at which it is proper to place oneself in order to appreciate, to receive the maximum effect of perspective, but this other point that I (6) characterised for you as being the point at infinity in the picture plane.

This, just by itself, is sufficient to distinguish in the scopic field the function of the picture from that of the mirror. They both have, of course, something in common, it is the frame, but in the mirror, what we see is this something in which there is no more perspective than in the real world; organised perspective means the entry into the scopic field of the subject himself. In the mirror, you have the world unadorned, namely, this space in which you locate yourself, with the experiences of ordinary life, in so far as it is dominated by a certain number of intuitions in which there is joined, not simply the field of optics, but where it is joined to the practice and the feel of your own movements.

It is in this respect, and in this respect first of all, that one can say that the picture, so differently structured and in its frame, in its frame which cannot be isolated from another reference point, the one occupied by the S point dominating its projective, that the picture is only the representative of the representation. It is the representative of the representation in the mirror. It is not, in its essence as being, the representation. And modern art illustrates this for you: a picture, a canvas, with a simple piece of shit (7) on it, a real piece of shit, for after all what else is a big splash of colour? And this is manifested in a provocative fashion, in a way, by certain extremes of artistic creation. Duchamp's *ready made* is as much a picture as it is a work of art, namely, moreover, the presentation before you of a portmanteau hanging on a rod.

Its structure is different to any representation. It is in this connection that I insist on the essential difference constituted by this term of representative of the representation, *Vorstellungsrepresentanz*, borrowed from Freud.

The fact is that the picture, through its relationship to the point S of the projective system, manifests this, which, parallel to it, exists, framing this point S itself in a plane, therefore, parallel to the plane of the picture and what I call the window, namely, this something that you can materialise as a frame parallel to that of the picture, in so far as it gives its place to this point S, that it frames it.

It is in this frame, where the point S is, that there is, as I might say, the prototype of the picture, the one where, effectively, the S is sustained, not at all reduced to this point which allows us to construct perspective in the picture, but as the point where (8) the subject itself is sustained in its own division around this present o-object which is its setting. This indeed is why the ideal of the realisation of the subject would be to make present this picture in its window, and this is the provocative image that a

painter like Magritte produces before us when, in a picture, he in fact inscribes a picture in a window. It is also the image to which I had recourse to explain what is involved in the function of phantasy. The image which implies this contradiction, that if ever it were realised in some room, like this one, lit by a single window, the perfect realisation of this ideal would plunge the room into darkness.

This indeed is why the picture must be produced somewhere in front of this plane where it is established as a place of the subject in its division, and that the question is to know what happens to this something which falls in the interval, because the subject separates (*écarte*) the picture from himself. What happens, what the exemplary object around which I am working here before you manifests, is that the subject, in its divided form, can be inscribed in the figure plane, in the plane separated from the plane of the phantasy where the work of art is realised.

The artist, like every one of us, moreover, renounces the window in order to have the picture, and this is the ambiguity that I gave the other day, that I indicated about the (9) function of phantasy, phantasy is the status of the being of the subject and the word phantasy implies this desire to see the phantasy being projected, this space of withdrawal (*espace de recul*) between two parallel lines, thanks to which, always insufficient but always desired, at once do-able and impossible, the phantasy can be summoned to appear in some way in the picture.

The picture, nevertheless, is not a representation. A representation “can be seen”. And how can we express this “can be seen” (*ça se voit*)? “Can be seen”, it is anyone at all who sees it, but it is also the reflexive form; because of this, there is immanent in every representation, this “to see oneself” (*se voir*). Representation as such, the world as representation and the subject as support of this world which is represented, this is the subject transparent to itself in the classical conception, and it is there precisely what we are asked by the experience of the scopical drive, what we are asked to come back on.

That is why, when I introduced the question of this picture with the “show me” (*fais voir*), put in the mouth of the personage to whom we are going to return today, the central personage of the Infanta, Dona Margarita Maria of Austria, “show me”, my reply was first, the one that, in my terms, I gave to the figure of Velasquez, present in (10) the picture: “You do not see me from where I am looking at you”.

What does that mean? As I already put forward, the presence in the picture of what, simply in the picture, is representation, that of the picture itself which, for its part, is there as representative of the representation, has the same function in the picture as a crystal in a super-saturated solution, the fact is, everything in the picture is manifested as no longer being representation but representative of representation.

As it appears, in seeing - do I have to produce this image again - that all the personages who are there, properly speaking, represent nothing to themselves, and precisely not the fact that they represent. Here, the figure of the dog that you see on the right, takes on all its value. None of the other figures, any more than him, does anything other than show off (*être en représentation*), be court figures who mimic an ideal scene where everyone is in his function of showing off, while hardly being aware of it. Again, that here lies the ambiguity which allows us to remark that, as you see on the stage when an animal is brought onto it, the dog, also, is for his part also a very good actor.

“You do not see me from where I am looking at you”: since it is a formula minted in my style that is in question, I will allow myself to point out to you that in my style I did (11) not say: “you do not see me, there, from where I am looking at you” (*tu ne me vois pas, là, d’où je te regarde*), that the “there” is elided, this “there” on which modern thinking has put so much accent in the form of the *dasein*, as if everything were resolved about the function of being open to the fact that there is a being there. There is no “there” that Velasquez, if I make him speak, invokes, in this “you do not see me from where I am looking at you”. In this gaping place, in this unmarked interval, there is precisely this “there”, where there is produced the fall of what is in suspense under the name of *o*-object. There is no other “there” involved in the picture, than this interval that I showed you in it, expressly drawn, between what I could trace out but that you can, I think, imagine as well as I can of two grooves which would outline the trajectory in this picture, like on a stage in the theatre, of the way in which there arrive these stays or practicables, of which the first is the picture in the foreground, in this slightly oblique line that you see being easily prolonged by seeing simply from the figure of this large object on the left, and the other, traced across the group - I taught you to recognise its furrow - which is the one through which the painter introduced himself as one of the phantasmagoria personages which are made in (12) the great theatrical machinery by having himself placed at the right distance from this picture, namely, a little bit too far for us to be in any ignorance about his intention.

These two parallel grooves, this interval, this axle that this interval constitutes, to take up again the term from the baroque terminology of George Desargues, there and there alone, is the *dasein*.

That is why one can say that Velasquez the painter, because he is a real painter, is therefore not there to traffic with his *dasein*, as I might say. The difference between good and bad painting, between the good and the bad conception of the world, is that, just as bad painters never do anything but their own portrait, whatever portrait they do, and that the bad conception of the world sees in the world the macrocosm of the microcosm that we are supposed to be, Velasquez, even when he introduces himself into the picture in a self-portrait, does not paint himself in a mirror, any more than this is done in any good self-portrait.

The painting, whatever it may be, and even the self-portrait, is not a mirage of the painter but a trap for the look. It is therefore the presence of the picture in the picture (13) which allows the remainder of what is in the picture to be freed from this function of representation. And this is why this painting seizes us and strikes us. If this world that Velasquez gave rise to in this painting - and we will see what his project was - if this world is indeed what I am telling you, there is nothing excessive in recognising in it what it manifests, and what it is enough to say for it to be recognised.

What is this strange scene which has had for centuries this problematic function, if not something equivalent to what we know well in the practice of what are called parlour games and what is other than a parlour game, namely a *tableau vivant*.

These individuals who are here, no doubt, because of the very necessities of the painting projected before us, what are they doing, if not representing to us exactly this sort of group which is produced in this game of the *tableau vivant*. What is this almost gourmet attitude of the little princess, of the maid on her knees who is presenting to her this strange useless little pot on which she is beginning to put her hand, these others who do not know where to place these looks, which people persist in telling us are there to intersect when it is manifest that none of them meet, these two (14) personages of whom Mr Green made something the other day and among whom, let this be said in passing, he would be wrong to think that the female personage is a religious, she is what is called a *guarda damas*, as everyone knows, and even that her name is Dona Marcella de Ulora.

And there, what does Velasquez do if not show himself to us, as a painter, and in the middle of what? Of this whole gynaeceum. We will come back to what it means, to the really strange questions that one can pose oneself about the first title that was given to this picture, I saw it still written in a dictionary which dates from 1872: *The family of the king*. Why the family? But let us leave this for a moment, when there is obviously nobody except the little Infanta representing it here?

This *tableau vivant*, I would say, and it is indeed in this fixated gesture which makes life into a still-life, that no doubt these personages, as has been said, are effectively presented. And this is the reason why, however dead they may be, as we thus see them, they survive themselves, precisely because they are in a position which, even during their lives, never changed.

So then, we are going to see, in effect, what first of all suggests to you this function of the mirror. Is this individual, in this position of fixed life, in this death which, for us, makes it across the centuries, rise up as almost alive, like a geological fly in amber, do we not, by having made her pass over to our side to say her "let me see", evoke in her connection, this same image, this same fable of Alice's leap which would join our

own by plunging, in accordance with an artifice which the literature of Lewis Carroll and up to Jean Cocteau was able to use and abuse, the passage through the mirror.

No doubt, in this sense, there is something to traverse which, in the picture, is, in a way, preserved in a congealed way for us. But in the other? Namely, from the path which, after all, seems to be open to us and summons us to enter, ourselves, into this picture; there is none, for this indeed is the question which is posed to you by this picture, to you who, as I might say, believe that you are alive, simply because, which is a false belief, it is enough to be there to be numbered among the living. And this indeed is what torments you, what grabs everyone in the gut, at the sight of this picture, as in every picture in so far as it summons you to enter into what it truly is and what it presents to you as such; the fact that the individuals are not at all represented there, but showing off (*en representation*). And this, indeed, is the basis of what makes it so necessary for everyone to make emerge this invisible surface of the mirror (16) which one knows one cannot go through. And this is the real reason why in the Prado, you have, slightly to the right and at three quarters, so that you can hang onto it if you become anxious, namely, a mirror for it is necessary for those whom this may make dizzy to know that the picture is only a lure, a representation.

For after all, in this perspective, it must be said, at what moment do you pose yourself the question or do you distinguish the figures in the picture in so far as they are there, naturally, showing off without knowing it? Thus, in speaking about the mirror in connection with this picture one is no doubt getting warm. For it is not there simply because you add it on. We are going to say, in effect, the degree to which the picture is that very thing, but not from the angle that I believed, just now, I had to set to one side. Of these little *Meninas* with their *dasein* time still sharpened - but I do not want here to be telling you anecdotes, to be telling each one of you what, at this point where they are caught here, they still have to live, that would only be a detail that would lead you astray and it is not appropriate, remember, to confuse the reminder of the little pickings of observation and of anamnesis with what is called the clinic, if one forgets the structure in it.

(17) We are here today to sketch out this structure. What is involved then in this strange scene where what holds you yourself back from jumping, is not simply the fact that in the picture there is not enough space? If the mirror holds you back, it is not by its resistance or by its hardness. It is by the capture that it exercises, which means that you show yourself to be very inferior to what the dog in question is doing, since it is he who is there, let us take him, and, that moreover, what he shows us, is that he very quickly goes around the mirage of the mirror once or twice, he has clearly seen that there is nothing behind it.

And if the picture is in a gallery, namely, in a place where if you make the same circuit, you will also be very reassured, namely, you will see that there is nothing, it is nonetheless true that, in a way completely opposite to the dog, if you do not recognise

what the picture is the representative of, it is precisely by missing this function that it has, of reminding you that with respect to reality, you yourself are included in a function analogous to the one the picture represents, namely, caught up in phantasy. So then, let us question ourselves about the sense of this picture: the king and the queen at the back, and, it seems, in a mirror, such is here the indication that we can draw from it.

(18) I already indicated the aim of the point where we ought to seek this sense. The royal couple, no doubt, has something to do with the mirror. And we are going to see what.

If all of these personages are showing off, it is within a certain order, the monarchical order whose major figures they represent.

Here, our little Alice, in her sphere, a representative, is indeed in effect like Carroll's Alice, but with at least one element which - I already employed the metaphor - presents itself like figures on a playing card. This king and this queen whose unbridled exclamations are limited to the decision: "Off with her head".

And moreover, to give here a reminder of what I had to pass over earlier, observe the degree to which this room is not simply furnished with these personages whom I hope I have illuminated for you, but also with innumerable other pictures; it is a room of paintings and people have played the game of trying to read on each one of these cards what value the painter may well have inscribed on them. There again, there is an anecdote which I am not going to wander off on, on the subject of Apollo and Marsyas at the back, or again of the dispute between Arachne and Pallas in front of the tapestry of this carrying off of Europa that we find at the bottom of the neighbouring painting (19) by Hilanderas which is displayed here.

Where are they, this king and this queen around whom, in principle, the whole scene is properly speaking suspended? For there is not only the primal scene, the inaugural scene, there is also this transmission of the scene function which does not stop at any primordial moment.

Let us observe why and for whom the representation is made? For them to see; but from where they are, they see nothing, for here it is well to remember what the picture is, not at all a representation around which one turns and for which one changes one's angle. These personages have no back, and if the picture is turned round there, it is in order precisely for that which is in front of it, namely, what we see, to be hidden from us. This is not to say that, for all that, it presents itself to the prince. This royal vision is exactly what corresponds to the function, when I tried to articulate it explicitly, of the big Other in the narcissistic relationship. Consult my article entitled *Remarks* on a certain discourse which was given at the Royaumont Congress. I recall for those who no longer remember it, or for others who do not know it, that what was at stake then

was to give its value, to restore in our perspective two themes which had been put (20) forward by a psychologist, and which put the accent on the ideal ego and the ego ideal, functions that are so important in the economy of our practice; but where seeing the incorrigible psychology of these consciousness references enter into the field of analysis, we saw there being produced again, the first as the ego that one believes one is and the other as the one that one wants to be.

With all the kindness of which I am capable when I am working with someone, I only collected what, in this beginning, seemed to me right to recall, what was in question, namely, an articulation which makes it absolutely necessary to maintain in these functions their structure, with what this structure imposes from the register of the unconscious, that I imaged it through this image of the point S, with respect to a mirror, effectively, whose ambiguous function it is now a matter of getting to know.

By putting oneself, therefore, with the help of this mirror through which I define in this schema the field of the Other, in a position to see, thanks to the mirror, from a point which is not the one that he occupies, which he cannot see otherwise because of the fact that he keeps to a certain field, namely, what it is a matter of producing in this field, what I represented for you by an upside-down vase under a little board, and taking advantage of an old experiment in physics-for-fun that was taken as a model.

(21) Here it is not at all a matter of structure but, as in each case that we refer to optical models, of a metaphor, of course, a metaphor which is applied, if we know that thanks to a spherical mirror a real image can be produced of an object hidden under what I call a little board. And that, then, if we have there a little bouquet of flowers ready to welcome this circumscribing, the neck of this mirror [vase?], there is here an operation which is precisely the one which constitutes this little physics-for-fun trick, on condition that in order to see it one is in a certain field of the stage which is outlined starting from the spherical mirror. If one does not occupy it, precisely, one can, by having oneself transferred as seeing into a certain point of the mirror, find oneself there in the conic field which comes from the spherical mirror.

Namely, that it is here that one sees the result of the illusion, namely, the flowers surrounded by their little vase. This, of course, as an optical model, is not at all the structure, any more than Freud ever thought of giving you the structure of any physiological functions whatsoever in speaking to you about the ego, the super-ego, the ego ideal, or even the Id. It is nowhere in the body, the body-image, on the contrary, is in it. And here, this spherical mirror has no other role than to represent that which, in effect, in the cortex, may be the system necessary to give us, in its (22) foundation, this image of the body.

But it is a matter of something quite different in the specular relationship, and what gives this image its value for us in its narcissistic function, is what for us it has both encompassed and hidden in terms of this function of (o).

Latent in the specular image there is the function of the look. And nevertheless, I am astonished, without knowing what to refer it to, to distractedness, not I hope to a lack of work, or simply to the desire not to embarrass oneself, is there not here some problem that is at least raised ever since I told you that (o) is not specular. For, in this schema, the bouquet of flowers comes from the other side of the mirror. The bouquet of flowers is reflected in the mirror. This indeed is the whole problematic of the place of the **o**-object.

To whom does it belong in this schema? To the battery of what concerns the subject here in so far as it is involved in the formation of this ideal ego, incarnated here in the vase, of the specular identification on which the ego is based, or indeed to something else, of course, this model is not exhaustive. There is the field of the Other, this field (23) of the Other that you can incarnate in the child's game, that you see being incarnated in the first references that he makes as soon as he discovers his own image in the mirror, he turns around, to have it, in a way, authenticated by the one who, at that moment, is holding him, is supporting him, or is in the neighbourhood.

The problematic of the **o**-object remains entire, therefore, at this level. I mean, that of this schema. Well then, do I need to insist very much in order to allow you to recognise, in this picture from the brush of Velasquez, an image that is almost identical to the one that I have presented to you here.

What resembles more this sort of secret object, in a brilliant garment (*vêture*) which is on the one hand, here, represented in the bouquet of flowers hidden, veiled, taken, encompassed, around this enormous dress of the vase, which is both a real image and a real image seized in the virtual due to the mirror, than the clothes of this little Infanta, the illuminated personage, the central personage, the preferred model of Velasquez who painted her seven or eight times, and you have only to go to the Louvre to see her painted the same year. And God knows that she is beautiful and captivating!

(24) For us analysts, what is this strange object of the little girl that we know well. No doubt, she is already there, in accordance with the good tradition which would have it that the queen of Spain has no legs. But is this a reason for us to ignore it: in the centre of this picture is the hidden object, and it is not because of having the deviant mind of an analyst - I am not here to push you towards a certain easy thematic - but to call it by its name, because this name remains valid in our structural register, and is called the slit (*fente*).

There are many slits in this picture, it seems, and we could set about counting them on our fingers beginning with Dona Maria Agostina de Sarniente, who is the one on her knees, the Infanta, the other who is called Isabelle de Velasquez, the idiot, the monster Maria Barbola, Dona Marcella de Ulora also, and then I do not

know, I do not find that the other personages are of any other kind than that of being personages to remain in a gynecium in complete security for those who protect them. The quaint *guarda damas*, who is on the extreme right, and why not the pooch too, who however much of an actor he may be, seems to me to be a rather tranquil individual. It is really curious that Velasquez should have put himself there, in the middle. He really must have meant it.

(25) But going beyond this anecdote, what is important is the contrast of the fact that this whole scene, which is only supported by being caught in a vision and seen by the personages who, I have just underlined for you, see nothing because of their position. Everyone turns their back on them and only presents to them in any case what is not to be seen there.

Now, everything is also only sustained by the supposition of their looks. In this gap there lies, properly speaking, a certain function of the Other, which is precisely that in which the soul of a monarchical vision at the moment that it empties itself, just as on several occasions, as regards the conception of the classical, omnipresent, omniscient, all-seeing God, I ask you the question: "Is this God able to believe in God, or does this God know that he is God?".

In the same way, what is inscribed here in the structure, is this vision of an other who is this empty other, pure vision, pure reflection, what is seen, properly speaking, at the mirror-like surface of this other void, of this other complementary to the "I think" of Descartes, as I underlined it, of the other in so far as it is necessary that he should be there to support what does not need him in order to be supported, namely, the truth which is there, in the picture, as I have described it for you.

(26) This other void, this God of an abstract theology, pure articulation of a mirage, the God of Fenelon's theology, linking the existence of God to the existence of the ego, is here the point of inscription, the surface upon which Velasquez represents for us what he has to represent for us.

But as I told you, in order for this to hold together, it remains that it is necessary that there should also be the look. This is what is forgotten in this theology, and this theology still lasts in so far as modern philosophy believes that a step forward has been taken with Nietzsche's formula which says that God is dead. So what?

Has this changed anything? God is dead, everything is allowed, says this old imbecile called Karamazov *père* or indeed Nietzsche, we all know well that ever since God is dead, everything is as always in the same position, namely, that nothing is lost, for the simple reason that the question at stake is, not the vision of God and his omniscience, but the place and the function of the look. Here, the status of what has become of God's look has not been volatilised. That is why since I was able to speak to you as I

did about Pascals' wager since, as Pascal says, "we are all committed", and the story of this wager still holds up.

(27) And that we are still playing ball between our look, God's look, and some other tiny objects like the one that the Infanta presents us with, in this picture.

This will allow me to end on a point that is essential for the continuation of my discourse. I apologise to those who are not used to handling what I earlier advanced in the order of my topology, namely, this tiny object called the cross-cap or the projective plane, where there can be cut out, with a simple circuit of a scissors, the fall of the **o**-object, making appear this doubly rolled up **S** which constitutes the subject.

It is clear that in the gap realised by this fall of the object which is, on this occasion, the painter's look, what comes to be inscribed is, as I might say, a double object, for it involves an amboceptor. The necessity for this amboceptor I will demonstrate to you when I take up my topological demonstration; on this occasion, it is precisely the Other.

In place of his object, the painter, in this work, in this object that he produces for us, has placed something which is made up of the Other, of this blind vision which is that of the Other, in so far as it supports this other object.

(28) This central object, the split, the little girl, the *girl* = phallus, which is what, moreover, I earlier designated for you as the slit.

What is involved in this object? Is it the object of the painter or in this royal couple whose dramatic configuration we know, the widower king who marries his niece, everyone is amazed (*s'esbaudit*), twenty-five years in the difference. It is a good gap in age but perhaps not when the husband is around fortys year old. We have to wait a little.

And, between the two of this couple where we know that this impotent king preserved the status of this monarchy which, like his own image, is no longer but a ghost and a shadow, and this woman, jealous, as we also know from contemporary testimony, when we see that in this picture which is called The King's Family, even though there is another one, who is twenty years older, called Marie-Thérèse and who will marry Louis XIV. Why is she not there if it is the family of the king? It is perhaps because the family means something different. It is well known that etymologically, family comes from *famulus*, namely, all the servants, the whole household. It is a household well centred, here on something. on something which is the little Infanta, the **o**-object, (29) and we are going here to remain on the question in which it is brought into play, in a perspective on subjectification as dominant as that of a Velasquez, of whom I can only say one thing, which is that I regret having abandoned its field in the Meninas this year, since moreover, you see clearly that I also wanted to talk to you about something else.

When there is produced this something which is not of course the psychoanalysis of the king since, first of all, it is the function of the king that is in question and not the king himself.

When there appears, in this perfect shot, this central object where there come to join together, as in Michel Foucault's description, these two crossed lines which divide up the picture in order to isolate for us, in the centre, this brilliant image.

Is this not done so that we analysts, who know that here is the meeting point of the end of an analysis, should ask ourselves how, for us, there is transferred this dialectic of the *o*-object, if it is to this *o*-object that there is given the term and the rendezvous in which the subject must recognise himself. Who ought to provide it? Him or us?

(30) Do we not have as much to do as Velasquez did in his construction? These two points, these two lines which cross one another, bearing in the very image of the picture, this frame of the setting, the two up-rights (*montants*) which cross one another.

This is where I want to leave suspended the rest of what I will have to tell you, but not without adding to it this little feature. It is curious that if I end on the figure of the cross, you might tell me that Velasquez is wearing it on this kind of blouse with slashed sleeves in which you see him dressed.

Well then, you are going to learn something that I thought was very good. Velasquez had demonstrated (*démontré*) for the king the setting of this world which depends entirely on phantasy. Well then, in what he first painted, he did not have a cross on his chest and for a simple reason which is that he was not yet a chevalier of the order of Santiago. He was named about a year and a half later and one could only wear it eight months after that. In any case that brings us, all of that brings us to 1659. He died in 1660 and the legend says that after his death, it was the king himself who came, through some subtle revenge, to paint this cross on his chest.

Seminar 20: Wednesday 1 June 1966

We are advancing towards the end of this year, which I see that, as compared to the greater part of my colleagues, I am prolonging with unusual zeal. It is not the custom to ask you to be present after the beginning of June, but, nevertheless, you know that my custom is different, and it is probable that I will not modify it much this year. It all depends on the place that I will give to the closed seminar: one or two

There remain, therefore, two occasions for me to speak to you in today's position, that of the open lecture. This will, of course, be to try to gather together the sense of what I brought before you this year under the title of the object of psychoanalysis, which you know is not at all this sort of vague opening which is offered by a simple reading of the title, but that it very specifically means what I articulated in the structure as the **o**-object.

You can also note that, if the **o**-object is indeed the one which is found to include in its embrace the totality of the objects that psychoanalysts made function under this rubric, (2) I would certainly have failed a little, or even a lot, in my descriptive or collective function. I enumerated them, from time to time, one after another, but one could not say that I dwelt too long on them as a bunch, and since the other day I recalled their representation precisely in the form of a bouquet of flowers, I have not overdone the botanical aspects of each one.

Above all, I spoke about topological elements, and topological elements in which in short, I have not, up to the present, in an explicit fashion, completely highlighted where to put this **o**-object. Naturally, those who listen carefully to me were able, more than once, to gather that the **o**-object is a topological structure, the one that I imaged for you by the figures of the torus, the cross-cap, the mitre, even the Klein bottle, one can detach it from them with a pair of scissors.

They were also able to understand that this is an operation about whose nature one would be completely wrong if one believed that to detach it from them with a pair of scissors in the form of some rings, represents anything whatsoever.

Here, again, the term of representative of the representation would be appropriate, for the representation is absolutely not at all in this operation of isolation, of cutting out, (3) and it is easy to notice that, if these structures on which I operated in order to highlight the articulation of this operation, these structures have as I might say their own resources at points which, curiously, with respect to what they represent, can scarcely be designated, precisely, except by the term of hole.

If our torus is effective in representing something, a repetitive, successive, rolling around, like this famous amphisbaena serpent which represented a symbol of life for the ancients, in short, if this torus has any value it is precisely because it is the topological structure which is marked by this central thing, which is undoubtedly very

difficult to circumscribe somewhere, because it simply seems to be only a part of its exterior but which, undoubtedly, structures the torus very differently to a sphere.

Well then, the **o**-object, I was saying earlier, those who paid attention to what I say and who were even, incidentally, able to see me explicitly pronounce it, the **o**-object is here, in this kind of hole that it is, properly speaking, let us say, representable, properly by the very fact that it is in no way represented.

We are going to see these things coming together later on. Namely, why, in short, we (4) come to a reference that is properly situated in the topological field, but from now on you can see that there is surely some consistency between the fact that in the last phase of the preceding seminars, including the closed seminars, which were entirely spent in developing, in connection with a very outstanding painting, to allow there to be manifested, accentuated in a way, by the painter, the function of perspective, we found ourselves, I must say in a way in which you can have the greatest confidence, I mean that I pushed there as far as possible the rigour with which there can be stated in the case of the scopic field, how the phantasy is composed, indeed, that it is for us the representative of any possible representation of the subject.

You can sense very well that there is a relationship between the fact that I focused the whole spotlight on the scopic field, on the scopic **o**-object, the look, in so far, it has to be said, as it has never been studied, never been isolated, I am speaking here where I have to speak, namely, in the psychoanalytic field, where it is all the same very strange that people did not perceive that there was here something to isolate otherwise than by evoking it, and again, without naming it, in crude analogies. An author whose name is (5) a little bit hackneyed in analytic teaching, Mr Fenichel, demonstrated for us the analogies between scopophilic identification and manducation. But analogy is not structure and it does not isolate within scopophilia what object is involved and what its function is - something quite different again by means of which the look would have been able to make its entry.

At the point that we are at, and where at least some of you were able to hear me the last time, after having situated this look, at the very centre of the picture, hidden somewhere under the robes of the Infanta, to give them, as I might say, from this enveloped point, their radiation and I pointed out that it was there through what function?

If it is true, as I told you, that what the painter represents to us is the image that is produced in the empty eye of the king, this eye which, like all eyes, is made to see nothing and which supports in effect this image, as it is painted for us not at all in a mirror but well and truly its image in the proper sense, right side out (*à l'endroit*). Here the look is elsewhere, there in the object which is the **o**-object with respect to those who, right at the back, the royal couple in the position both of seeing nothing and of seeing by their reflection somewhere at the back of the scene, there where we (6) are, this **o**-object before this, in short, inexistent mirror of the other, we have posed the question of who does it belong to, to those who support it in this empty vision, or

to the painter placed here as a looking subject, who gives rise to the transmutation of the work of art.

This ambiguity of the belonging of the **o**-object, is here what allows us to refer it back to, to link it up to, the preceding thread that we left hanging about the function of the stake in so far as we have illustrated it by Pascal's wager.

The **o**-object rejoining here its most universal combinatorial, is what is operating between the S and the O in so far as neither of them can co-exist with the other except by being marked with the sign of the bar, namely, of being in a position of being divided, precisely, by the impact of the **o**-object.

The impasse, the splitting apart, in which the function of the subject is put, precisely, into the function of the wager, this really crucial, absurd, wager for all of those who have devoted themselves to its analysis, I recall that I made it the introductory chapter, in the course of my presentation this year, about the **o**-object. Today, it is a matter of placing what I am putting forward in this way, of replacing it in the economy of what you know, what serves as a support for you in Freud's doctrine.

(7) For, moreover, it ought not to be forgotten in order to situate the import of what I am teaching you about the procedure of my teaching, that it is nothing other than what it declared itself to be at the beginning, and what gives it its flesh, and its link, for otherwise, one might be astonished at one or other detour in my journeying. And for anyone who takes up what I have been enouncing now for almost fifteen years, in the collection which has been made always with care if not with success, and which will at least allow the general network of it to be preserved, it will be seen that there is nothing there which was not each time, very exactly determined by the fact that what is demanded of me is what? To rethink Freud. This is how I will put it forward first, lending in this way to all sorts of ambiguities or even misunderstandings. *Zurück zu Freud*, return to Freud, I said first of all, at a moment when this took on its sense from the confused manifestations of a colossal deviation in analysis.

It is of secondary importance whether it appears or not, that to what ever little degree, I obviated it. It was less from this contingency that I authorised myself. The very classical ideal, in all sort of idealisations, of a return to the sources was not what I affected (*me poignait*). To rethink, that is my method. But I prefer the second word if, precisely, you study it in order to take it apart a little bit, you realise what the word (8) method can mean exactly: a path taken up again afterwards. The word *meta*, like all Greek prepositions and, in truth, like prepositions in every tongue provided one takes an interest in them, is always an extraordinarily rewarding object of study. If there is a kind of word in connection with which one can say that any kind of pre-eminence given in the study of linguistics to meaning is destined to lose itself in an inextricable labyrinth, it is indeed all the prepositions.

The exploration of the richness and the diversity of the range of senses of the word *meta*, you can yourself try to test out with the dictionaries, and you will see that nothing prevents this word *meta* - I am passing over what is properly necessitated by

the structural forms that I put forward for you this year, and specifically in showing you on the Moebius strip which, apparently, plays in two of these shapes the function of an altogether fundamental, exemplary, relationship, the function of a support for what is their structure, and which is also latent in the third, this Moebius strip which exemplifies for us what I would call the necessity, in the structure, of a double circuit. I mean that with a single circuit, you will only apparently loop around what is circumscribed in it, since you only get back to your starting point on the single (9) condition of having reversed your orientation in it. A non-orientable surface, which requires that after, as I might say, having lost it twice, you will only rediscover it by making two circuits.

This is very exactly the sense that I would give to my method with respect to what Freud taught. If there is, in effect, something strange which is the fastened, closed, completed character, even though marked by a twist, through something which connects up with itself in this point which I have for a long time underlined in his writing, as the *Spaltung* of the ego, and which returns fully charged with the sense accumulated in the course of a long exploration, that of his whole career, towards an original point with a completely transformed sense, an original point from which he started, almost, from the completely different notion of the duplication of personality.

Let us say that he was able to transform completely this current notion by the reference points of the unconscious, it is to it that at the end, in the form of the division of the subject, he gave his definitive seal.

What I have to do is very exactly to describe the same circuit a second time, but in such a structure, doing it a second time has absolutely not the sense of a pure and simple reduplication.

(10) And this structural necessity has something so primary about it that we are only allowed to accede to it along a path that is difficult to map out, something which, I would say, almost requires a sort of compass in which I have to, in the fashion in which I have to operate, speaking to practitioners, I had to trust you to trust mine, very properly in so far as it is supported by a combination of analytic experience and the reading of Freud, but whose trigonometry has all the same a sanction, namely, let us say the word, whether it fits or not.

All of those who come here to listen to me may effectively cross-check that with a construction which, many times, seems to be decked out with elements quite foreign to Freud, it is precisely at these important meeting points that I find myself re-centring him, and in a fashion which illuminates from a completely new perspective the points to which Nietzsche gave the accent of value.

I said earlier that it was not so important that during the time that I am pursuing this operation, there is quite clearly manifested something which from what is announced from the mainstream of psychoanalysis is an overturning of the movement.

It is necessary in any case for me to resign myself to the fact that what I am teaching (11) will not immediately deliver what it is designed to generate, that it be content in the first place to gather together those who can find material in it.

For, moreover, there is a certain order of operations to which I am not going to give a general name, except to say that it is properly the one which is exemplified by what I have just defined, namely, the completion of a structure of which it can be said that it is not so essential that it should be immediately sanctioned by the effects of communication.

To the great astonishment of someone that I am evoking here in my memory, I was able to state that what I had said one day before an audience which was certainly not you, before an audience which was not of too bad a quality, but before an audience that was very little prepared, what I was able to put forward under a title like "*Dialectic of desire and subversion of the subject*". "How", it was said to me, "can you believe that there is the slightest interest in stating what you are stating here in front of people who are so little prepared to understand it? Do you think that this exists in a sort of third or fourth space?"

Undoubtedly not, but that a certain loop (*boucle*) had been effectively looped and that something of it, however little it may be, remains indicated somewhere, this is something which is perfectly sufficient to justify one giving oneself the trouble to state it.

(12) It is here that the notion of intersubjectivity becomes quite secondary; the plan of the structure can wait; once it is there, it is sustained by itself and in the fashion, I would say, - the metaphor only comes to me here extemporaneously - in the fashion of a trap, of a hole, of a ditch. It is waiting for some future subject to be caught in it.

Therefore, there is no need to be disturbed about what one could call the failure of a certain community, on this occasion the psychoanalytic one, or rather one should map out, in this connection, what this failure consists of, precisely in the measure, as I sometimes do, that one can map out that it gives testimony in favour of the structure that has to be sketched out in it.

You will say to me: "Where are the criteria of the one who gives the right structure?" But, precisely, it is the structure itself. In the field where what is in question is the subject, if the structure is only such in the outline, the project that you make of a field of objectification, it is not implied as necessary that you should find the brand, the imprint, the bloody and divided trace of the subject himself, if it is excluded in advance, as I might say, in the name of this false experimental modesty which, believing that it (13) can authorise itself from what has been achieved in the physical

sciences, believes that it can allow itself to project into this field that is described as psycho-sociology this sort of full objectification, and that by right, in the name of some fashion or other of standing back from the game at the beginning, protected by this false experimental modesty, we will say that there is a criteria, a register of proof, which is valid, logically, that I would describe in these terms. There are initial structures in the progress of thinking about which one can say nothing more than that they can or cannot be suspected of being true. That is the test of the structure.

However falsely modest may be the one which is advanced in its field, the one that I named earlier, in a fashion which does not present in itself the necessity of this tearing apart, of this gap, of this wound which will be found, it is the sign in a certain number of paradoxes and, moreover, the field of this no doubt successful science, which ours is in so far as in the whole of its physical field it has succeeded in foreclosing the subject, can only give its foundation, its mathematical principle, by rediscovering the same gap, in the form of a certain number of paradoxes. From this point of view, it continues to be able to be suspected of being true.

(14) But this whole wound that we allow to spread, in the name of not being able to justify what is meant by the fact that it cannot in any case be suspected of being true, this is what leaves the field free to what I called this wound that you can pinpoint again with the term of medico-pedagogical.

Here indeed is the gravity of the case of the psychoanalyst. For this is their whole strength, and I think that the words that I am speaking have enough weight and import, in order that, as regards their place, you will give its sense to this prestige - they have no other one - in the field of science, that they really want to be suspected of being the representatives of a representation that is true.

It is indeed in this register, and what gets caught up and comes to a halt before what is supposed to be normal, a pure and simple position of rejection since moreover, we have not yet succeeded in giving a valid status to the material they bring us.

Now, it is really there and the slippage is the alibi that a formation corresponds to a definition of structure through which it can be suspected of being true. Which, since there is only a suspicion, does not mean sufficiency but implies an "it is necessary" beyond which, perhaps, nothing additional can contribute decisively as sufficiency.

(15) Such is this sign which is the definition of this suspicion, and this is indeed our problematic before what the symptom proposes to us as a question about the truth. Every time, camped in different ways in knowledge, we have to deal with this question about the truth, the same ambiguity is presented that the term of the representative of representation supports and incarnates.

And this is the way in which there has always failed, on the lure that I am going to mention, the critique of religion by the *Aufklärung*.

These representatives know very well the error in which this representative of the truth consists, from attacking it in the representations, in the representations that it gives of it, and this the representatives themselves, namely, the personages that are sacralised in different ways, know very well. They encourage the besiegers of the citadel to discuss the likelihood of the stopping of the sun in Joshua's battle, or one or other little story of the kind in the sacred text. The question is not to be directed at the structure which claims to involve the question of the truth of the representations, whatever they may be, at those that may be the representations of this structure, but at the representatives of the representation.

- (16) That is why of course they prefer that the battle should be waged on the themes that are all the more impregnable in revelation that one can cleave them in twain as long as you wish, since they have the same material as the structure, namely, not the same materiality as the swords that go through them, they will be in the best of health for a long time to come.

So that, what we could call the betrayal of psychoanalysts is the inverse of this. The fact is that even though they are representatives of a position which may be suspected of being true, they believe that they have a duty to embody (*donner corps*) by every other means than the ones which ought to flow from the strictest circumscribing of their function as representatives; they strive on the contrary to authenticate representations in all the ways that are most foreign, and they seek to give them the seal of the generally accepted.

Here then is the goal of what we are trying to construct, the criteria of the structure in so far as they respond to these exigencies, given what is being tackled, namely, the structure of the subject, that a doctrine may be suspected of being true, which implies in those who are its representatives something different than to base themselves on foreign criteria. This is what justifies not alone the method but the limits according to which we ought to approach certain key elements of this (17) structure, and concerning such and such an *o*-object, the one for example of the scopic field, undoubtedly, to impose this discipline on ourselves which does not exclude a certain Puritanism, to make little of the richness of what is offered here to us, for moreover, how can one not note what a point of agreement is this look, around which already Freud, for his part, and he alone, has taught us to locate its function, its value, from the sign of *Unheimlichkeit*, for you can note by taking up his study, that in the works that he brings in as bearing witness to this dimension, the role, the function played in it by the look in this strange form of the eye that is blind because it has been torn out.

..... some attributes which may represent a close equivalent, glasses, for example, or again a glass eye, a false eye. This is the whole thematic of Hoffman, and God knows that it is even richer than what I can evoke here; the reference to *The devil's elixir* is there within your reach.

There is a whole history of the eye, it has to be said. And those who have here their ears open to what may be disguised information, know what I am alluding to in speaking about the history of the eye.

- (18) It is a book published anonymously by one of the most representative personages of a certain essential uneasiness, in our own day, which is supposed to be an erotic novel.

L'histoire de l'oeil is rich in a whole texture that is well designed to remind us, as one might say, of the fitting together, the equivalence, the interconnection of all the o-objects and their central relationship with the sexual organ.

Of course, it is not without effect that we could recall that it is not in vain that it is at this point of the slit between the eye-lids that there is produced the phenomenon of tears, which it cannot be said we do not have to question ourselves about, on this occasion, as regards its relationship to the structural meaning given to this slit.

And how can we not see also that it is not in vain that the eye, or rather this slit, plays the role also, for us, the function of the gateway to sleep.

This is a lot, and enough to make us go astray. Too much richness and too many anecdotes are only designed to make us fall back into the rut of some developmental reference or other or to seek once more the specific moments in history which, whatever may be the interest of these reference points, only dissimulate from us what it is a matter of defining, namely, the function occupied by (19) the scopical field in a structure which is, properly speaking, the one which involves the relationship of the subject to the Other.

It is quite strange, precisely, that while in the course of all this time we have promoted the function of communication in language as being that which, essentially, ought to centre what concerned the unconscious, while from every angle we have not ceased hearing again and again this objection which is really not one, namely, that there is the pre-verbal, the extra-verbal, the ante-verbal, while people were making great play, we are saying, of gesture, of mimicry, of paleness and all the other vasomotor, kinaesthetic, or other forms, where supposedly there is exercised some ineffable communication or other as if we had ever contested it, that no one has ever put forward what was nevertheless the only point on which there was really something to say, namely, the order of communication which passes through the look.

This, in effect, is not language. It is precisely what supports the importance of my recentering of the handling of the unconscious upon language and the word, the fact is, precisely, that Freud inaugurated the analytic position by excluding the look from it. It is a primary truth which one is all the same forced to take into account, because the fact precisely that one elides them and forgets them, proves the degree (20) to which one is missing the point.

Now this **o**-object, the one in question in the scopic field, why is it that this is the one that we have, in a way, put forward in the forefront, and this year found ourselves focusing, what is called, on this occasion, our attention.

The **o**-object is the stake (*l'enjeu*) of what is foundational for the subject in his relationship to the Other. Our question is suspended on the subject of its belonging. Let us look more closely at what is involved, and starting from the most elementary things that are given to us in experience in connection with what analysts call object-relations.

If they have clearly allowed this relationship of the subject to the Other to deviate by reducing it to the register of demand, let us take advantage of it.

The two best known of these objects, the typical objects, as I might say, in the function, the account that analysis gives of them, makes of the good breast, as it is called, an object of the demand made on the other; it is the object of the demand which comes from the other that gives its value to the excremental object.

It is clear that all of this leaves us locked in a perfectly dual relationship, when I say perfectly, I am not writing it here with any accent of getting a good mark but of being closed, of being completely closed.

(21) And one know what results from it in terms of the reduction of every perspective whether it is theoretical, comprehensive, practical, clinical, psychological and even pedagogical to lock oneself into this cycle of demand that is consistent with that of frustration or gratification, frustration or non-frustration.

The restitution that is, in a way, internal, immanent to the function of demand, of what ought to emerge from it as another dimension, from the very fact that this demand is expressed by means of language in so far as it gives primacy to the locus of the Other, and allows sufficient status to be given to the dimension of desire.

In the dimension of desire, there comes to be manifested the specific character of the **o**-object which causes it, in so far as this object takes on an absolute value, this *cachet* which ensures that what we discover in effective terms in experience, is that it is not properly speaking the satisfaction of need that is at stake, it is not that the child is filled, nor that having been filled he sleeps, that counts, it is that something which takes on such a particular accent, an accent of a such absolute condition that it has been isolated in terms that are differently described, that is called the *nipple*, the tip the breast, the good breast, the bad breast, it is not its biological shape that is at stake but a certain structural function which, precisely, allows us to find

(22) whatever equivalent one wishes in a soother, for example, a feeding bottle, or any other mechanical object, or even the little corner of a little piece of a handkerchief, provided it is the mother's dirty handkerchief, will give, will make present the function of this oral object in a fashion which deserves to be specified, structurally, as being there, the cause of desire.

This function of absolute condition to which a certain object is raised, and which is only definable in structural terms, this is what it is important to put the accent on, in order to give it its characteristics.

For, in effect, it is something which is borrowed from the carnal domain and which becomes the stake in a relationship that, to speak quite incorrectly, one could call intersubjective.

But what is the correct status of this object? It is precisely what we are in the process of trying to define. For the first two objects that I highlighted are in operation in the demand but, nevertheless, not without involving the desire of the Other.

The value taken on by the object claimed in the oral as well as in the anal dialectic, plays on the fact that in giving it or in refusing it the partner, in any case, highlights (23) what is involved in his desire in his consent or his refusal.

The dimension of desire arises with the advent of this object which, I repeat, is not the object of satisfaction of a need, but of a relationship of the demand of the subject to the desire of the other. It is at the inauguration of the function of desire and it introduces, into this dimension of demand, which originates in need, the absolute condition of the relationship to the desire of the Other.

This is why these two objects find themselves so prevalent in the structure of neurosis and why, by remaining within a horizon that is all the more easily limited in that it is they themselves who limit it, when I say horizon, it has a sense, since I have been speaking, in a certain fashion, about the scopic object, the psychoanalysts content themselves, so easily, with a theory which puts the whole accent on demand and frustration, without noticing that it is a specific characteristic of neurosis.

The neurotic has this relationship to the Other, that his demand is aimed at the desire of the Other, that his desire is aimed at the demand of the Other. In this interlacing which is linked - I accentuated it several times - to the properties of the structure of the torus, lies the limitation of the neurotic structure.

(24) Another dimension is involved for the objects that I already introduced into a certain foursome which, perhaps, constitutes a dial, namely, the voice and the look.

It is certainly remarkable that I have not [laid stress], this year, given the predilection that I have for the field of the effects of the word, on the voice. No doubt I had some reasons for that, if only that the limits of time imposed on me the necessity perhaps of having to take something from it in order to make understood and to put forward the new things that I contributed, precisely in the scopic field.

That as regards what is involved in the voice, in any case, the **o**-object is directly and immediately implicated at the level of desire, is something obvious. If the desire of the subject is founded on the desire of the other, this desire as such is manifested at the level of the voice. The voice is not alone the causal object but the

instrument in which there is manifested the desire of the Other. This term is perfectly consistent and constitutes, I might say, the high point with respect to the two senses of the demand, either to the Other or coming from the Other.

How then could we situate this object and this scopic field?

(25) Is it not here that we see it allow us, as it were, to be guided by the parallelisms of the terms desire, demand, of, to, that we see there being opened out this singular dimension that is already offered to us by the evocation of the window which, moreover, is willingly itself called a look, in this dimension of the desire of the Other, of openness, of aspiration by the Other which is properly speaking what, at this level, is at stake.

It is then that we can see why it takes on, in topology itself, this privileged function, since, when all is said and done, to whatever combinatorial reduction we can push these topological shapes which I make such a play of before you by making an image of them, it seems that there remains in them some residues of what, perhaps falsely, one calls the intuitive, and what is properly this **o**-object that I call the look.

I am going, to end today, and in order simply to provide a point of scansion, to evoke in a form which will have the advantage of showing you the polyvalence of recourses that one has at the level of structure, evoke for you another just as topological a shape which will crosscheck with the paradigm, the exemplification (26) that I gave you of this scopic structure at the level of *Las Meninas*.

I am going to end my lecture today, in order to find a finishing point, on what I presented to you as the amusing joke of the king sticking the Cross of Santiago on the chest of the painter in the picture *Las Meninas*, whether or not it was, as legend says, by putting his own hand to the brush.

This little feature, if I am to believe the echoes, has moved some good souls in the gathering here, who see in it a secret allusion to what I myself have to carry around. Let these good souls be consoled, I do not feel myself to be crucified, and for a simple reason, which is that the cross from which I began, that of the two lines which divide the picture of *Las Meninas*, the one which goes from the horizon point which loses itself, passing through the door, the person who is leaving, to the foreground at the foot of the big picture, the representative of the representation, and the other line, the one which starts from Velasquez' eye in order to go towards the extreme left, where it connects up with its natural locus where I situated it, namely, at the line to infinity of the picture, are two lines which, quite simply, and however crossed they may appear, do not cross one another for the good reason that they are on different planes.

(27) So that, if it is a cross that I have to deal with in my relationship with the analysts, namely, it has been represented to you like that in an interrupted fashion. We have therefore two lines which are not on the same plane. Well then, you should know, it is a little discovery, made a very long time ago by people who are

occupied with what are called conics, that when one takes as an axis any third line whatsoever between these two preceding ones, which are thus like that, and one turns the whole lot like a top, what is produced?

One produces something to which very few people seem, indeed, in the preceding minutes to have thought about, since I do not hear any cry to tell me what is involved, one produces something like that, which in order to make you understand, because God knows what is still going to be produced, I would ask you to picture to yourselves what is called a diabolus. In other words a surface modelled in this way except for the fact that, of course, since it is a straight line, it goes off to infinity.

What is this surface? This can be shown. It is what is called a hyperboloid of revolution. What does a hyperboloid of revolution mean? It is quite simply what one obtains by making a hyperbola turn, rotate around a line that is called its (28) derivative. A hyperbola, then, is what is there, namely, these two lines that you see here in profile but that now I am isolating on a plane. What is a hyperbola? It is a line, all the points of which have the property that their distance from two points, which are called the foci, have a constant difference. What results from this is that the measure of this difference is exactly given by the distance which separates the two vertices of this curve, the points at which they approach to the maximum without managing to touch one another.

It is remarkable that precisely at the surface of what is obtained by such a revolution one can trace the series of straight lines which have as a property to go off to infinity.

I hope that you are paying a little attention to what I am doing here for it is precisely the key point and a quite amusing one: it is always straight lines that can thus be drawn, as I might say, making there be deployed around the surface defined in a fashion which, starting from its origin as a plane, appears in effect complex and to be what is called a conic, we find then on a hyperbola, on a hyperbola with different revolutions, the same property of straight lines that can indefinitely (29) prolong themselves, as we would find in a cone which is another form of conic of revolution.

What results from that? That precisely each one of the points of what is on this hyperbola, even when it is deployed in space by this revolution, has this property of having with respect to each one of the foci such a distance that the difference between the two distances is constant.

We are now then in a position to illustrate something which is represented by a sphere which might be characterised, exactly, by the fact of having as a diameter the measure of this difference, that this represents something which, within this hyperbolic surface, is precisely what has passed here at its point of maximum narrowness.

This is, if you wish to see another representation of the relationships between S and of O, what would allow us to symbolise the **o**-object in a different way.

But what is important in it, is not this possibility of finding a structural support, it is the function in which we can include it.

This will be the object of our next meeting. No element can have the function of **o**-object if it cannot be associated to other objects in what is called a group structure.

(30) You already see clearly what is possible. For we have other elements. Again, this group structure implies that one can employ any one of these objects with a negative sign.

What does that mean? And where does this lead us? This is what will allow us, this is what I hope to do the next time, to finish this year with something which completes the structural definition implying the combinatorial of the **o**-object and the value that it can take on as such in what is the very foundation of the properly Freudian dimension of desire and of the subject, namely castration.

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..... Take it as having the value of these kind of cork markers, floating on more or less calm water, which can help you to locate where you have left a net hanging. Moreover, neither this schema on the right, nor these bizarre words - whose resonance, I hope, already says something to you - have a strictly operational value; they are reference points, floaters that concern what I have to tell you today, and where, of course, I will try to bring things to the stopping point which is involved in the fact that this is my last open seminar for this year.

To preserve the note of gravity that some people have had the good sense to perceive in some of the things that I was saying the last time, I am going to start again from, start from an analogous point which is, which was provided for me by a conversation that I had this week with one of my mathematician friends: "In mathematics," said this excellent friend, whose name I am not giving because, after all, I do not know whether I have any right to publish these sorts of revelations of the (2) heart - they are not common among mathematicians, they are people who, on the whole, lack a little dash in this department, this is not the case for this distinguished person who said to me: "In mathematics," - in short, and perhaps after all this avowal

was torn from him by a certain fashion that I have of harassing him, of trying to get out of him the most I can for these sorts of vermicular shapes that I afterwards twiddle in front of you in the shape of my topology - "in mathematics," he remarked, "one does not say what one is speaking about (*on ne dit pas de quoi on parle*)", - everything is in this "one does not say" - "one quite simply speaks it; hence a certain air," he said textually, "of pretence (*de faire semblant*)", and this is what he called in a tone, like that, in a style that is not usual in this sort of dialogue, this is what he called, "some air or other of hypocrisy that exists in mathematical discourse". I would not dare myself to put forward something like that, if I had not garnered it from the mouth of a mathematician, who himself, it must be said, is someone who, in this respect, is very (3) exigent. It is as if the person stated, that taken at a certain level, this mathematical discourse always found itself in the position of hiding something; but here my mathematician is lowering the tone a little (*n'est pas sans baisse*) because of the fact that he is expecting something from this confidence, which also depends, perhaps - let us not omit any of the aspects of the situation - on the net that he is offering me, namely, what he also from his side, wants to extract from this knowledge that I am supposed to possess, he comes back all the same on his feet, to his position, and adds that, after all, what he the mathematician conceals is strictly what he ought to conceal. The trick in rational discourse is always to manage to leave concealed what one does not say about exactly the matter, the subject of mathematics what, in any case, one is speaking about, one quite simply speaks it.

A little parenthesis, the result of this is that the thickest people and only those, only those, you should realise, believe that mathematics speaks about things that do not exist. And if I announce that I am making a little drawing, some pencil marks in the (4) margin, it is a pleasure that I am giving you, just like that, in passing, but it is not at all the axis of what I am going to continue to tell you, only I am going to point out to you, for example, that if you open Musil's book, the one of which a very nice film has been made, even though it misses out a little, *Young Toerless*, you will notice that when the schoolboy is a little subtle, there are the closest relationships between the day when his schoolmaster flounders about lamentably in giving him an account of what imaginary numbers are, and the fact that he rushes headlong, as if by chance, around that time, into a properly perverse configuration in his relationships with his little pals.

All of this is only a note in the margin. I wanted to take things up again and to say what is at once the difference and the kinship between the position of the psychoanalyst and that of the mathematician.

When all is said and done, and we will see it in a precise way, at a certain level, he does not say what he is speaking about either. Only, it is for reasons that are a little different to those of the mathematician.

(5) In truth, as everyone knows, if he does not say what he is speaking about, it is not simply because he does not know anything about it, it is because he cannot know it. This is properly what is meant by the fact that there is an unconscious, an irreducible unconscious, and an *Urverdrangung*.

But can one say, as the mathematician says, that he quite simply speaks it? It is quite obvious that he is not at all in the same position. In a certain fashion someone speaks what is at stake, only it is the one to whom he gives the floor, namely, the patient. It is a matter of knowing where he is because he has some responsibility for the position in which he is, in so far as he ensures that the patient speaks. For when the patient speaks, he speaks in his own way about what he has to say, what he speaks about and which cannot be said.

The curious thing is that it is also necessary for psychoanalysts to speak, and that the result of this is not that they speak as the mathematician does, quite simply, what he does not say he is speaking about, but that he speaks about it inexactly. There is a (6) little syndrome that the psychiatrists found a long time ago, which is called Ganser's syndrome. This inexact speaking which characterises the discourse of the analytic community, will perhaps allow us to illuminate in a curious lateral or ambient light, I do not really know, one would have to look carefully at what is involved in Ganser's syndrome, which is called precisely that, the inexact reply.

In short, the psychoanalyst is led to have a sort of discourse which returns to this fundamental necessity, of course, of discourse, namely, that it is short and really to enter further into this subject, it is to metaphors about the usage of money, not even metaphorical, that I should be told, namely, about the difference between a certain discourse which has a forced currency, within this circle, and on the other hand the way in which it has in short to show its value on the exchange markets of outside circles. It is something that I tried to tackle when I wrote an article that I found myself reading for reasons that were not completely contingent, because it is going to (7) reappear with a whole collection, an article about the variations of technique, to which you can refer.

The question is, all the same, the following, a practical one for you analysts. It is formulated in a very nice, very naive, way: Is it really necessary to learn topology in order to be a psychoanalyst? For, when all is said and done, it is not with babies that these dialogues are exchanged, it is at this sort of question that a certain impasse ends up, even though I have to decide between the much more nuanced notes that I had put down on this theme, but one has to cleave the waves, and I have other important things to tell you today in order to cleave them and respond to this question. Whoever poses it is already prepared for me to give him this response. Topology is not something that he must learn as an extra, in a way, as if the formation of the psychoanalyst consisted in knowing with what colour one was going to paint oneself; one does not have to ask oneself the question as to whether or not one ought to learn

something about topology, with the abbreviated and, I would say, imprecise label by (8) which I designate the little bit of it that I bring here, the fact is that topology is the very stuff into which he cuts (*taille*), whether he knows it or does not know it, it does not matter whether he opens a book on topology or not, from the moment that he does psychoanalysis, this is the stuff into which he cuts, into which he cuts the subject of the psychoanalytic operation. Pattern, dress, model, and that what may be at stake, in what he has to unstitch and to restitch, if his topology is constructed in a mistaken way, will be at the expense of his patient. It is not today or yesterday, of course, that I tried to form this construction, these networks, these written indicators, these orientated networks that are called successively Schema L or Schema R or the Graph or finally, this year let us say, for some years, the usage of the surfaces of the *analysis situs*; after all those who have been able to see me working, bringing along these things, know that I constructed them, certainly against wind and tide, but not uniquely from a desire to displease my audience, either the old or the present one, but because I only had to follow this plan to develop, in the very discourse of my (9) patients, or in each one of those at least as far as I could test it, who come within my reach to do what is called in psychoanalysis, a supervision, bring to me in a raw living form these very formulae which on occasion are my own; patients say them strictly, rigorously, exactly as they are said here. If I had not had a little hint of this topology, already, my patients would have made me re-invent it.

The question then is clear, a legacy that one can take from one or other reference to this something as regards which the mathematician does not say what it is, but that he speaks, well then, there is every chance that this will clear the path a little for us, that it will give us instruments, or, on occasion, help us to recognise what we are dealing with, what I posited from the beginning when I got myself involved in speaking about psychoanalysis, namely, the function of language and the field of the word.

And for those who still keep in their heads this kind of objection: yes, but that is not (10) everything! I would repeat once again, ever since the time I first had to repeat it, that in effect it is not everything, but that everything which comes within our horizon in psychoanalysis, comes through this. In other words, as regards what remains hidden about it, much more than hidden, limitless, unknown, scarcely approached at some access points, I said, something that we also only say very rarely; even to the point that it is better not to say it, I am speaking about *jouissance*.

We would have no idea of any kind about this dimension, about this depth, as regards which one cannot say that it offers itself to us since it is prohibited, but at the very least we can name *jouissance*. We would have no idea of any kind of it, were it not the foundation of the subject in language which by way of repercussion in so far as it grounds in us this order, this barrier, this defence, which is called desire, which by repercussion, I am saying, did not force us to question: against what are we defending ourselves? What is involved in this *jouissance*? A question, of course, that no being (11) who is not a speaking being, asks itself! What is profiled for you by the

unfolding of this line at the right? But, if something remains to you from the schema SI, IO, you can see the fundamental arrangement which goes from S to the field of the big Other which designates for you what I am going to remind you of later: namely, that it is from this field that there is withdrawn by the subject, as a belonging, the *o*-object. That something is at stake more on this hither side, concerning another function of the Other, since this Other here, behind the subject, completely hidden from him and perceived only as in a mirage where he projects it, onto the field of the Other, J, *jouissance* is to be placed. This is the general orientation of what I have to say to you today.

In effect, the fundamental value of the object of *jouissance* is to show us by what meshing together, for we have nothing else up to the present, I would defy any philosophy whatsoever to account to us, at present, for the relationship between the emergence of the signifier and this relationship of the individual (*l'être*) to *jouissance*. (12) There is necessarily one. What is it? Effectively, it is in the net of subjective topology that there is collected something from this field of *jouissance*. The fact is, very precisely, that the thing is in suspense at this point where Freud told us, this is the sense of what he says. In this subjective net, in what ensures that the subject is not immanent, but latent, vanishing, in the network of language, within this is *jouissance* caught in so far as it is sexual *jouissance*. This is the originality and the abrupt accent of what Freud tells us. But why is it this way? No philosophy, I am saying, meets up with us at present. And these miserable abortions of philosophy that we drag around behind us, like clothes that are coming apart, are nothing other, since the beginning of the last century, than a way of fooling around rather than attacking this question, which is the only one about truth, and which is called, and what Freud named the death instinct (*instinct*), the primordial masochism of *jouissance*, namely, metaphors, the lightning reflections that our experience projects onto this question. The whole (13) philosophical word deviates and slips away. We do not know, then, anything about what is caught in this net, in this frightening field which had been nevertheless already announced in the whole phantasy of tragedy; we do not know why something comes into our experience in a contingent fashion, perhaps, with Freud, who tells us: what is taken from the field of the word and of language is that part of *jouissance* which has a relationship with this other mystery that has been left intact, I would ask you to note, in the whole development of analytic doctrine, and which is called sexuality.

So then, what I call getting your finger caught in the machine, is the fact that what is at stake is something quite different than accounting for, we are not at the stage of trying to master the why of this adventure, it is already a lot for us to know how to get into it, how we are caught by the little finger; it is perhaps here, by making some reflections, the ones that are required about the topology of this mechanism, that some light about these relationships and these limits may come to us. All the more so, since (14) this whole mechanism has already been functioning for some time, by perceiving things from this angle, we can, perhaps, come to know a good deal, by seeing the way in which, previously, people obliged themselves not to see.

So then, the way in which one enters into it is, obviously, the whole sense of the *o*-object. In this relationship to what we have inscribed as necessary from the locus of the Other, in this relationship which is established by demand and which pushes us towards it starting from need, something very simple comes into play; the fact is that, from this field of the Other, we manage to recuperate our own body in so far as it is already there, that the breast is only an appurtenance of this body which has strayed into this field of the Other by what we will call, provisionally, from our point of view, a biological contingency which is called, simply, being a mammal. We, my little friends, are mammals and we can do nothing about it! And this has many other consequences. It is, in general, accompanied by the following fact: that of having this bizarre apparatus which is called a penis, which ensures that copulation is sustained by a (15) certain *jouissance*. This is nothing very extraordinary (*Ça ne casse pas les manivelles*), as they say, what! After all it is one of them; one of the things that one has within hand's reach. I am making you laugh, but it is the centre of psychoanalytic teaching. It began by starting from there. "Don't touch that or it will be cut off". This was one of the first truths. This was how there was made in the the same wave, this formidable discovery which is called the Oedipus Complex. It is all the same necessary to see that it is at this level of trivial truth, that this other little boat about the relationship with the penis is attached to, in the enormous business of the Oedipus Complex; that ought, all the same, make us reflect a little. Is that everything? In other words, we are faced with the task of what must be taught about castration.

This has a relationship with two terms that I have just put forward: the short cycle of sexual *jouissance* in the mammal. Now, I did not waste my time this year in explaining to you how this might work for bugs. It must be unplumbable! Compared to that, your own can always be overhauled! It is very important, this remark. The second, in (16) effect, is like a lot of things, a lot of things for man, it is within hand's reach for the reason that there are not many beings, outside him, who have a hand. The primates habitually, all day long, make the use of it that I evoked earlier and, consequently, have much simpler questions about *jouissance*. But one should point out that, for example, simply in a dog who has the advantage over the primate of entering into the field of the human word, everything that refers to this rubbing (*frottis-frotta*) takes on a further degree of complication; one can only admire one thing: how well brought up dogs are. It is from this that one must begin. You see that, very quickly, we find ourselves engaged in a kind of collusion, which is indeed the one short-sighted people have precipitated themselves onto, the collusion between the *o*-object of demand and something which concerns what one refuses *from* or *to* the object of *jouissance*. The fact is precisely, that by remaining there, one will not get very far; one will not get very far because, by remaining at this level of demand, at that which some appurtenance of the body. I did not speak about the other one, namely, about the most (17) trivial, the one of which it is said that it is demanded from us by the Other, and by means of which we give her what we have to give with our bodies, by putting it at the locus of the Other, considered as a refuse dump, as a

sewage farm, namely, what we modestly call faeces, the scybalum, “*scubalon*”, what one rejects, it is a very elegant word and, in truth, let us say that it is, in general, the function of bodily waste. By limiting, as tends to happen within a certain analytic horizon, the whole dialectic of the relationships of the subject to the Other to demand, one ends up at this sphere limited to frustration, at the prevalence of the maternal Other, just about raised to the degree of complication that is called the composite parent, and one obtains, in effect, something rather closed which has really only one draw-back, which is that people ask themselves, after that, why the Oedipus Complex was invented, even though, precisely, this invention was original, that it emerged *bille en tête*, fully armed, from Freud’s brain. It is quite certain that it is to this there is referred this dimension of desire, in so far as Freud, for his part, also set it up at first, and that it is only around it that there (18) was built up, that there was discovered the mechanism of demand, and that there is no demand, which not only does not evoke, but which, literally, can only be evoked from the formation at its horizon of the summons of desire.

Let us say that the Other, instead of being this inert field in which one recuperates something, namely, this breast which is the ideal object that is always missing, that human machinery tries to reproduce in all sorts of apparatuses, when all is said and done, whether it is the person who travels in a submarine or the one who flies off into the “cosmos”, as one says nowadays, it is always from a little nursing apparatus he has with him, forming a closed circuit that delimits him, there is no need for that to imagine his nostalgia for the maternal uterus within which, precisely, his equipment was, in this respect, singularly deficient - I mean in the register that I have just evoked - and very poor from the symbiotic point of view. The field of the Other is what it is a matter of involving in desire; desire comes to involve the Other. And this is the different essence of the two other *o*-objects.

(19) That is why, this year, I highlighted, and even isolated, the paradigm of the first of these objects, namely, the look as representing the advanced phase of my presentation; I did not delay on the others that we are able to handle sufficiently well - even though we will have to come back to that - but I spoke about the look. The look has this privilege of being that which goes to the Other, as such. It is, of course, there is here a whole phenomenology on which one can delay, or even feast on, but since it is a slit, at what moment does it function? When it is opened or closed? There is a dream in the *Traumdeutung* on this, which is called “to close the eyes”. Consult it, a little bit, everything is already there, there are a host of questions to be asked; but as regards this function of the look, I put the picturesque completely to one side, I did not ask why it is from the moment that he is blinded that Tiresias becomes a seer. Idiocies which make our curious milieu so full of joy. I gave the structure. And how, with the look, there enters into play, still complete, a topology that I described and which (20) cannot be gone back on, which is the one which justifies the existence of the screen. In the field of the Other, the look is what introduces the screen and the necessity - that one of my pupils, Melman, remarked to me recently, is inscribed in the

article by Freud, “*Über Deckerinnerungen*”, on screen memories - the necessity that the subject should inscribe himself in the picture. There is not described there, of course, this topology which is so essential, so fundamental to the whole Freudian development that it is as important as that of the Oedipus Complex, this topology which is the real foundation and which gives its consistency to this function that is called - why? - the primal scene.

What is it, if not the necessity of these frames, of these struts, that I tried, this year, to set up before you, in order to make you notice in them the structural condition which is only, perhaps, - this is what has to be confirmed - the other side (*l'envers*), the lining, the second circuit, thanks to which, already complete in Freud, but not completed up to now by anyone, not completed because not followed in the order of (21) its double circuit, establishes, alongside the law of desire, in so far as it is the desire conditioned by the Oedipus Complex, this law which links from that through which the subject is attached to the locus of the Other, makes necessary this certain order constructed around the object of the look, which means that when this object of the Other erects itself on something that we are calling, as you wish, the picture, the scene or the screen, what is the attachment, precisely, related to a term whose origin I think you know from André Breton, that I would call the Other, in so far as it is characterised by this little reality (*peu de réalité*) which is the whole substance of phantasy but which is also, perhaps, the whole reality to which we can gain access.

This is why we have left until later, and, not unintentionally, for the requirements of presentation, this other object, which is strange, in short, because it is linked to the object of the look, I mean the voice. But in the measure that, even though it obviously comes from the Other it is, nevertheless, within that we hear it. If the voice, of course, is not simply this noise which is modulated in the auditory field, but what falls (*choit*) (22) in this retroaction of one signifier on the other, which is what we have defined as the fundamental condition for the apparition of the subject. In other words, in the whole measure that you hear very little of all the things that I am telling you, it is because you are busy with your voices, like everyone else.

And now, it is a matter of knowing what is meant, in all of this, by the function of castration. Castration seems to me to be linked to the function of desire in so far as, in this field of the Other, it is literally projected to a limit point, sufficiently indicated in the myth by the murder and the death of the father, and from which there results the dimension of the law. One forgets too easily that, in the myth, it is not only the mother that the father takes over, but all the women, and that after the enunciation of the law of incest, what is at stake is nothing other than to signify that all women are prohibited, just as much as the mother; in other words, the story of the Oedipus Complex needs so many extensions, namely, that it is through transference that the other women etc. It is an accident, as if it were an accident! In short, that the Oedipus myth would, (23) otherwise, have no meaning. In other words, castration presents itself when it is taken from this angle, as something which suggests to us that

we should ask ourselves about the object through which the subject is involved in this dialectic of the Other, in so far as this time it does not respond either to demand or to desire, but to *jouissance*, since we are starting from a question posed by Freud, about the *jouissance* of woman. In a first phase, let us repeat that *jouissance*, here, then, opens out for the first time as a question, in so far as the subject is barred from it, what we have called formerly, in our discourse on *Anxiety*: embarrassed! Of course, all of this has remained a little bit in the air, it is certainly by far the best seminar that I gave; those who took care to nourish themselves on it again in the vacation which followed can bear witness to it. But at that time, I had in the very front row, NCO's who enthusiastically took down what I was writing, but they were thinking so much about something else that one can understand that none of it remained with them.

The subject is embarrassed before this *jouissance*. And this barrier which embarrasses (24) him is very precisely desire itself. It is precisely for that reason that he projects into the Other, into this Other whose mannequin Freud picks out for us in the form of this murdered father, in which it is easy to recognise Hegel's master, in so far as he is substituted for the absolute master. The father is at the place of death and he is supposed to have been able to sustain all *jouissance*. It is true in Freud, except for the fact that, also in Freud, we can perceive that it is a mirage. It is not because it is the desire of the father which, mythically, is posed at the origin of the law, thanks to which what we desire has as a better definition what we do not want, it is not because things are that way that *jouissance* is there, behind the support of the Oedipus myth then what I called its mannequin. It appears, on the contrary, so well that it is only a mirage here, that it is here also that we have no trouble in highlighting the Hegelian error, I am speaking about the one which, in the *Phenomenology of the spirit*, attributes to the master, to him of the fight to the death for pure prestige, - you know the tune I hope - (25) attributes to the master the keeping, in his presence, of the privilege of *jouissance*, this on the pretext that the slave, in order to preserve his life, renounces this *jouissance*. I think, already, on one occasion, a few seminars ago, that I highlighted a little bit the question from this aspect. For where does one get the laws of this singular dialectic. That it would be enough to renounce *jouissance* in order to lose it! But you do not know the laws of *jouissance*!

It is probably the opposite, it is even certainly the opposite. It is precisely on the side of the slave that *jouissance* remains, and, precisely, because he renounces it. It is because the master erects his desire that he comes to grief on the margins on *jouissance*. His desire is even only made for that, to renounce *jouissance*, and that is why he engages in the struggle to death for pure prestige. So that the Hegelian story is a good joke, which is sufficiently justified by the fact that it is totally incapable of explaining what can be the cement of the society of masters; while Freud gives the (26) solution just like that: it is quite simply homosexual. It is the desire, that is true, not to undergo castration, which means that the homosexuals, or, more exactly, the masters are homosexual and this is what Freud says. The starting point for society is the homosexual bond, precisely in its relationship to the prohibition of *jouissance*, the

jouissance of the Other, in so far as it is what is involved in sexual *jouissance*, namely, that of the feminine other. This is what, in Freud's discourse, is the masked part. It is extraordinary that however masked it may be, this truth, which displays itself all over the place, it must be said, in his discourse for anyone who, in any case, comes from our experience, namely, that the whole problem of sexual union between man and woman on which we have emptied all the idiocies about our so-called genital stage, our fabulous oblativity, this problem which is really the one on which analysis has played the role of the most furious obscurantism and this problem reposes entirely on the following, it is the difficulty, the extreme obstacle to the fact that in inter-sexual union (27) - the union of man and woman - desire should be in agreement; in other words that feminine *jouissance* - this is what has always been known, ever since Ovid: read the myth of Tiresias, there are here twenty verses of Ovid that I put in my first report, that of Rome, because it is an essential point and one that I tried to get across again since, when people were speaking about feminine sexuality in Amsterdam. There were some lovely things said! How can one forget the profound disparity that exists between feminine *jouissance* and masculine *jouissance*! This, indeed, is why in Freud everything is spoken about, activity, passivity, all the polarities that you wish, but never masculine-feminine, because this is not a polarity, and that moreover since it is not a polarity, it is altogether useless to try to speak about this difference. There is a single intermediary for this difference: the fact that in feminine *jouissance* there can enter as an object the desire of the man as such. This means that the question of phantasy is posed for the woman. But since she knows a little bit more about it, (28) probably, than we do, about the fact that phantasy and desire are precisely barriers to *jouissance*, this does not simplify the situation. It is a pity that such primary truths in the analytic field, can take on such an air of scandal; but it is necessary for them to be put forward, because it is properly this that justifies the precise moment that we are at in our presentation, namely, contrary to the fact which would have it that it is one or other appurtenance of the body, an object fallen from the body in a certain field which organises demand and desire as regards what is involved in the relationship of desire to *jouissance*, in so far as it involves the subject of the opposite sex, the intermediary is no longer from an object nor even a prohibited object - from the pedantic prohibition, as I might say, which is a whole register of Freudian castration which goes from the prohibition brought to bear on the hand of the little boy or of the little girl, up to the formation that you receive at the university, it is always a matter of preventing us from seeing things clearly - but the other function of castration that is confused with the first one is much deeper, it is the one through which, if an agreement is possible - an (29) agreement you should understand in the way in which I may try to make a sample of colour which will reproduce, alongside this one, something of the same shade. It is thanks to the fact that this object which is the penis, but that we are forced to raise to this function of being pin-pointed as phallus and be treated in such a fashion as the one which is the same as when one gives oneself over to this exercise of agreement, they are things which, out of discipline, I did not develop this year: but it is a different register to the visual and the look. With any coloured pencil whatsoever one can make a little mixture which

reproduces any other one whatsoever - I am saying: *any one whatsoever* and *any one whatsoever* (*n'importe quel et n'importe quelle*) - except what one allows oneself when it does not work - what is produced on a large enough margin - to make use, to make use of one of the colours of the trio in order to subtract it from the sample on the other side. In other words, there are certain qualities, certain objects, which we must get to take on a negative sign; in other words, it is necessary that in the man-woman relationship, the contingent object, the decrepit (*caduc*) object (30) of mammal *jouissance* should be capable of being negated; it is necessary for the man to perceive that masturbatory *jouissance* is not everything, and, inversely, that the woman should open out to the dimension that this particular *jouissance* is lacking to her. There is no wizardry in what I am saying; but this is the true foundation of the castration relationship, if we want to give it any sense whatsoever as regards the fashion in which it really functions. Saying it as I have just said it to you, ends up by being a common- place. In this case you do not see where the problem lies, namely, what is the nature of this negative sign which must be given to this object, the phallus. These are not, of course, things that I will even try to tackle in the last minutes of my seminar of this year, but it is precisely to respond to such questions that next year's, if God grants it his favour, will be called *The logic of phantasy*.

Nevertheless, I would like, as of now, to point out to you, as an introduction to this (31) logic, that the question of what is involved in the negative, as they say, or of negativity, would deserve us taking an orientation which is not simply fragmentary. And in order, not so much to decipher it, but to clear the way, I will begin, as I have always begun, with instruments: the wooden plough opening up a summary furrow, of course, and it is the one I have amused myself with for a long time, I do not know whether I ever even brought it out in front of you as an audience, by highlighting these three registers which are:

- - the first, the imaginary, which I write like that, in a little Chinese spelling, which we all say when what? When in a field we find the void. And if you think that it is easy to explain that: this notion of field and of void! Of course, the Gestaltist register proposes itself immediately, only the rapidity with which it is contaminated in the direction of a symbolic version in the notion of class, for example, which takes on, precisely, from its presence, all the density which ought to make us extremely prudent in handling it. In any case, to write it with this baroque spelling, (32) of which I am making nothing except an occasion to make it memorable as a transitory instrument, I called that the "hiarien", written as you see here. There is something which is in any case completely settled, and which has nothing to do with the "hiaren", it is the one which I express on
- - the second line, and in this form there are, after all I have no reason to withhold the anecdote from you, this form borrowed from the language of a little boy who was very intelligent since he was my brother. He *gniakavait*, he said to me, conjugating bizarrely in this way a verb whose root would be "*gniaka*". Well

then, a register of “*gniaka*” is absolutely essential! Something through which a present state is supposed to derive from something which ensures that it is amputated from something. This is the most radical form by which there is introduced a whole category where we will, precisely, have to orientate ourselves as regards the properly symbolic constitutions of negation. For “*gniaka*” goes very far, it can be a lack, it can also be a starting point: “*gniaka*”, to take a starting point, one might call that zero, the neutral element. With nothing except this “*gniaka*” here you (33) have what is called an Abelian group. This in order to indicate to you the path along which we will be led to order our reflections next year; but, undoubtedly, this “*gniaka*” does not fail to indicate to us to come back on what we said last year as regards the function of zero as suturing the agency of the subject and of articulating the relationship of the subject to desire and also to castration. “*Gniaka*”, by putting the negative sign onto the penis and the phallic function, is established with all the absolutely blind usage that we know how to make of it.

- - and then there is something for which there is no word, or pin-pointing, at least in my register and this for a good reason: it is because if I named it, or if I supposed it, there would be some relationship with this imaginary function or that of symbolisation. This third term, the one that for the three years that I have been here I have taught you to know along some path that I could not say to be that of palpating, it is much more, I am trying, I solicit, I summon from you so that you (34) may identify yourselves to what one could call in mathematical language the *tor* (t.o.r.) factor which means what there is in the real, in this real that we have to deal with and which is precisely what is beyond, outside this necessity which constrains us to conjoin to *jouissance* only this little reality of phantasy; this real bears witness to a certain torsion. This torsion is not the *ananke* that Freud speaks of, for *ananke* and *logos* are both of the order of the symbolic. The only constraining necessity is the one that the *logos* imposes. And the real only enters beyond, as is manifest in experience, so as, amongst these necessary solutions - for there are always several of them - to designate the one that is impossible. Such is the function of the real and its torsion. This torsion is the very one that we are trying to grasp in our field and I have, at least, this year, tried to bring you the material which will allow you, for the continuation of what we are going to have to say, to map out how there is cut out, in a stuff which is common, this relationship of the (35) subject to the Other, this advent of the subject in the signifier, thanks to which there is sustained this phantasy in its relationship to the real, thanks to which opacity appears to us to be an indefinite *jouissance*.