

I. Seminar 11: Wednesday 11 May 1976

Good, I am beginning five minutes early. There you are.

The last time, I confided to you in short that, that the strike would have suited me very well. I mean since I had no inclination to tell you anything at all, because I was myself embarrassed. Can you hear me? – Good, can you hear me like that? Huh? Because I am not going to talk any louder! I find that... Is that working or is it not working? It's working? Huh? Is it working? Because it would be very easy for me to find another pretext. The pretext that this is not working, for example! Not that this time I do not have something to tell you. But anyway, it is certain that the last time, I was too tangled up, between my knots and Joyce, for me to have the slightest inclination to talk to you.

I was embarrassed, now I am a little less so, because, because like that I believe I have found some knacks, anyway some transmissible knacks. Obviously I am rather active. I mean that difficulty provokes me! So that during all my weekends, I persist in racking my brains about something which is not self-evident, is that not so.

It is not self-evident that I found what is called, in short, the so-called Borromean knot. And that I am trying to force things, in

short. Because Joyce had no idea of any kind about the Borromean knot. Not that he did not make use of the circle and of the cross. People talk about nothing but that, even. And someone called Clive Hart who is an outstanding mind who has devoted (162) himself to commenting on Joyce, makes a great deal of this use of the circle and the cross, makes great use of it in the book that he has himself entitled *Structure in James Joyce*. And very especially in connection with *Finnegans Wake*.

So then the first thing that I can tell you, is that the expression 'must be done' (*faut le faire*) has a contemporary style about it. I mean that it has never been said so much. And this is lodged quite naturally in the fabrication of this knot.

'It must be done! It must be done', means what? It comes down to writing. What is striking, curious, is that this knot, like that, that I described as Borromean, you should now know why, is a support for thinking. This is what will allow me to illustrate by the term, by the term that I must write like that: *appensée*. That allows thinking to be written differently. It is a support for thinking. Which justifies the writing I have just put for you on this little sheet of white paper.

It is a support for thinking, for a-thinking (*appensé*). But it is curious that this support must be, if I can express myself thus, it is curious that *it must be written* in order to get something from it. Because it is quite apparent that it is not, that it is not easy to represent for oneself this chain - since what is at stake in reality, is not a knot but a chain - this Borromean chain. It is not easy to see it functioning even by only thinking about it this time, by cutting the term, in cutting the *la* from *penser*. It is not easy. It is not easy even at the simplest level. And this is why this knot carries something with it. It must be written to see how it functions, this *noeud bo*. This makes one think of something that is evoked

somewhere, in Joyce, *on mount Nebo the law was given to us*. A writing, then, is a doing which gives support to thinking.

To tell the truth, the *noeud bo* in question completely changes the meaning of writing. This gives to the aforesaid, the aforesaid writing, this gives an autonomy. And it is an autonomy that is all the more remarkable in that there is another writing which is the one on which Derrida has insisted. Namely, the one that results from what could be called a precipitation of the signifier. Derrida insisted, but it is quite clear that I showed him the path because, because the fact that I did not find any other way of supporting the signifier than to write it capital S, is already a sufficient indication.

But what remains, is the signifier. Namely, what is modulated in (163) the voice has nothing to do with writing. This in any case is what my *noeud bo* perfectly well demonstrates. This changes the meaning of writing. It shows that there is something that signifiers can be hooked onto. And how are these signifiers hooked on? Through the intermediary of what I call: *dit-mension*; here again, because I am not at all sure that this may not have escaped you. This is how I write it: *mension du dit*. This way of writing has an advantage. It is that this permits *mension* to be extended into *mensionge* and that this indicates that what is said is not at all obligatorily true.

There you are!

In other words, the saying that results from what is called philosophy is not, is not without a certain lack. A lack for which I am trying, I am trying, I am trying to supply, by this recourse to what can only, only be written in the *noeud bo*. Which cannot but be written in order for it to be turned to account. It nevertheless remains that the *philia* in *philo*, the *philo* that begins the word philosophy, the *philia* that is involved can take on weight. It is

time *qua* thought. Thought, not thinking, but the thought time. The thought time, is *philia*. And what I am allowing myself, in short, to put forward, is that writing, on this occasion, changes the meaning, the mode of what is at stake, and what is at stake is this *philia* of Wisdom. What is Wisdom? This is what is not very easy to support otherwise than by writing, from the writing of the *noeud bo* itself. So that in short, pardon my infatuation, what I am doing, what I am trying to do with my *noeud bo* is nothing less than the first philosophy that it appears to me can be supported.

The simple introduction of these *noeud bo*, of the idea that they support a difficulty (*un os*), in short, a difficulty which sufficiently suggests, as I might say, something that I will call, on this occasion, *osbjet*, which is indeed what, what characterises the letter with which I accompany it, this *osbjet*, the letter small **o**. And if I reduce this *osbjet* to this small **o**, it is precisely to mark that the letter, on this occasion, only bears witness to the intrusion of a writing as other, as other with, precisely, a small **o**.

The writing in question comes from somewhere other than from the signifier. It is all the same not today or yesterday that I have interested myself in this affair of writing and that I in short promoted the first time that I spoke about the unary trait, *einziger Zug* in Freud. I gave, by reason of the Borromean knot, a different support to this unary trait. A different support that, like (164) that, I have not yet brought out for you, that in my notes I write as DI. DI, are initials and they mean infinite straight line (*droite infinie*). The infinite straight line in question, this is not the first time that you have heard me speak of it, it is something that I characterise by its equivalence to the circle (XI-1), it is the principle of the Borromean knot. The fact is that in combining

two straight lines with the circle, one has the essential of the Borromean knot (XI-2).

Why does this infinite straight line have this virtue, this quality? It is because it is the best illustration of the hole.

Topology indicates to us that in a circle, there is a hole in the middle. And even that we start to dream about what constitutes the centre, which extends into all sorts of vocabulary-effects: the nerve centre, for example, which no one knows exactly the meaning of. The infinite straight line has as a virtue having the hole all around. It is the most simple support of the hole.

So then, what does this give us if we refer to practice? The fact is that man, not God, is a trinitary compound; a trinitary compound of what we will call *elements*.

What is an element? An element is what makes One. In other words, the unary trait. What makes One, on the one hand, and what, because of making One, initiates substitution. The characteristic of an element, is that one proceeds to a combinatorial of them. So then Real, Imaginary and Symbolic, is just as valid, after all, it seems to me, as the other triad of which, in listening to Aristotle, anyway, the gravy to compose man was made up of, namely, *nous*, *psuche*, *soma*. Or again: will, intelligence, affectivity.

There you are. What I am trying to introduce with this writing, is nothing less than what I will call a logic of sacks and of cords. Because obviously, there is the sack, there is the sack whose myth, as I might say, consists, consists in the sphere. But no one it seems, has sufficiently reflected on the consequences of the (165) introduction of the cord. And that what the cord proves, is that a sack is only closed by tying it. And that, in every sphere,

we must indeed imagine something which, of course, is in every point of the sphere and that knots this thing into which one blows, and which knots it with a cord.

People write their childhood memories. This has consequences. It is the passage from one writing to another writing. I will speak to you in a moment about the childhood memories of Joyce, because obviously I have to show how what is described as a logic of sacks and cords is something that can help us. Help us to understand how Joyce functioned as a writer.

Psychoanalysis is something different.

Psychoanalysis gets across by a certain number of statements. It is not said that psychoanalysis puts one on the, on the path of writing. This indeed is what I am in the process of, of imposing on you by my language. The fact is that you should look twice when someone comes to ask, because of some inhibition or other, to be put in the position of writing. For my part I look twice at it, when I happen, like everyone else, to be asked that, to remove some inhibition or other about writing. Because it is not at all clear that with psychoanalysis this will happen. This presupposes properly speaking an investigation of what is meant by writing. And very precisely, what I am going to suggest to you today, concerns Joyce.

It has come like that into my head (*boule*), a head which on this occasion is far from being spherical, because it is attached to, to what you know - huh? No one is listening - it has come into my head like that that Joyce is something that has happened to him. And that it has happened to him along a path that I believe I can account for. Something that happened to him, and which meant that in his case, what is called, like that, generally, the ego, played a quite different role than the simple role, one that is imagined to

be simple, than the simple role that it plays in what are called common mortals, rightly called mortal. The ego, in his case, fulfilled a function. A function that of course I cannot account for except by my style of writing.

It is all the same worth the trouble of signalling what put me on that path. It is the fact that writing is altogether essential for his ego. And he illustrated it, when, in an encounter with some layabout or other [Frank O'Connor!!] who came to interview him - I haven't found the name, not that I did not look for it. But it is a well known episode, it is perhaps in Gorman, anyway, I did not find it in Ellmann which is surely the better, the most careful of the biographies of Joyce. I did not find it, not that it certainly is not there, it is because I did not have the time, this morning, to look for it. It is a matter of something that some biographer or other of Joyce makes a big deal. Someone, one day, came to see him and asked him to talk about something that concerned a particular picture. It was a picture that reproduced a view of the town of Cork. So then, Joyce who knew how to catch out this chap, answered that it was Cork. To which the guy replied, but it is quite obvious that, that I know what it is, a view of the town, indeed the principle square, let us say, of Cork, I recognise it. But what is that framing it? To which Joyce, who was waiting to catch him, answered: Cork, which means, namely, translated into French, *liège*.

This is given as an illustration of the fact that, in Joyce, in what he writes, he always skips it - it is enough to read the little table that he gave of *Ulysses*, that he gave to Stuart Gilbert, that he also gave, even though a little different, to Linati, that he gave to some others, that he gave to Valery Larbaud. The fact is, that in every one of the things that he collects, that he recounts to make of it this work of art that *Ulysses* is, in each one of these things, the frame has always, at the minimum, at least a relationship of homonymy

with what he is supposed to recount as, as relationship to an image. And that each one of the chapters of *Ulysses* is intended to be supported by a certain kind of framing which, on occasion, is called dialectical, for example, or rhetorical or theological. It is indeed what is for him linked to the very stuff of what he recounts.

And then, this, of course, does not fail to evoke my little rings (*ronds*), which, for their part also, are the support of some framing.

The question is the following. What happens, when in consequence of a fault, not uniquely conditioned by chance - because what psychoanalysis teaches us, is that a fault never happens by chance, that there is behind every slip (*lapsus*), to call it by its name, a signifying finality. Namely that, that the fault tends, if there is an Unconscious, to want to express something, not simply that the subject knows, since the subject resides - this is what I expressed to you in its time by the relationship of a signifier to another signifier- the subject resides in this very division. That it is the life of language, life for language being something completely different to what is simply called life. That what signifies death for the somatic support has just as much place in the drives that stem from what I have just called life of language. The drives in question stem from a relationship to the body. And the relationship to the body is not, in any man, a simple relationship. Besides the fact that the body has holes, is even, according to what Freud says, what should have put man on the path, on the path of these abstract holes, because this is the abstract, of these abstract holes that concern the stating of anything whatsoever.

So then there is something which is, in short, suggested by, by this reference, which is that one must try to extricate oneself from an essentially confused idea which is the idea of eternity. This is an

idea which is only attached to times past; *philia* of which I spoke earlier. One thinks, and it can even be that one speaks about it without rhyme or reason, one thinks about an eternal love. One does not truly know what one is saying. Because one means by that the other life, if I may express myself thus. You can see how everything gets involved. And where, in short, this idea of eternity, and nobody knows what it is, this idea of eternity leads you.

There you are. As regards Joyce, I would like, I could have read you sometime, but anyway you should know that it exists, it exists and that you can read it very easily in French, because there was a translation, a translation of *A portrait of the artist as a young man*, a portrait, not of *the artist*, because there I naturally made a slip, of *an artist (sic)*. Joyce confides something to us concerning this, which is that, in connection with Tennyson, Byron, anyway things that referred to poets, it happened that his pals tied him to a fence. Not just any fence, it was a barbed wire fence, and gave him, Joyce, James Joyce, the pal who was directing the whole adventure was someone called Heron which is not an altogether indifferent term, this *Eron* had beaten him then for a certain time, helped of course by some other pals. And after the adventure, Joyce questions himself about the fact that, when the thing was over, he had nothing against him. Joyce expresses himself as one might expect from him in a very pertinent way. I mean that he metaphorises something which is nothing less than his relationship (168) to his body. He notes that the whole affair has drained away. He expresses this by saying that it is like a fruit skin.

What does this indicate to us? This indicates to us that this something that is already so imperfect in all human beings, the relationship to the body - who knows what is happening in his body? It is clear that there is here indeed something which is extraordinarily suggestive and which, even for some, is the

meaning they give, it is certain, these people in question, it is the meaning they give to the Unconscious. But there is something that I, from the beginning, have articulated with care, which is precisely the fact that the Unconscious, has nothing to do with the fact that one is ignorant of a lot of things concerning one's own body. And that what one knows is of a quite different nature.

One knows things that that have to do with the signifier; the old notion of the Unconscious, of the *Unbekannte*, was precisely something based on our ignorance of what is happening in our bodies. But Freud's Unconscious, is something that is worthwhile stating on this occasion, it is precisely what I said. Namely, the relationship, the relationship between a body which is foreign to us which is a circle, indeed an infinite straight line, which in any case are one and the other equivalent, and something which is the Unconscious.

So then what meaning are we to give to what Joyce bears witness to? Namely, that it is not simply the relationship to his body. It is, as I might say, the psychology of this relationship which... for after all, psychology is nothing other than that, namely, this confused image we have of our own body, but this confused image does not fail to include, let us call them what they are called, affects. Namely, that, in imagining precisely that, this psychic relationship, one has, there is something psychic that is affected, that reacts, which is not detached, as Joyce testifies, after being beaten by his four or five pals. There is only something which asks for nothing than, than to go away, to be shed like the skin of a fruit.

There is here something striking that there should be people who have no affect in response to the corporal violence they have undergone. There is here a sort of, of thing which moreover is ambiguous. It perhaps gave him some pleasure. Masochism is not

at all to be ruled out from the possibilities of Joyce's sexual stimulation. He insisted enough on it in the case of Bloom. But I will say that what is rather striking are the metaphors he employs. (169) Namely, the detaching of something like a fruit skin. He did not enjoy (*joui*) on that occasion. He, he had, it is something that is psychologically valid, he had a reaction of disgust. And this disgust concerns his own body in short. It is like someone who puts in parenthesis, who drives away the bad memory. This is what is at stake. This is altogether left as a possibility; as a possibility of the relationship to his own body as foreign.

And this indeed is what is expressed by the fact of using the verb 'to have'. One has one's body, one is not it to any degree. And this is what leads to belief in the soul. As a consequence of which there is no reason to stop there. And one also believes that one has a soul, which crowns it all. This form of letting drop, of letting drop the relationship to one's own body, is very suspect for an analyst. This idea of self, of self as body has something weighty about it. This is what is called the ego. If the ego is said to be narcissistic, it is indeed because there is something at a certain level which supports the body as image. But in the case of Joyce is the fact that this image, on this occasion is not involved, is this not what marks that on this occasion the ego has a quite particular function. How can that be written in, in my *noeud bo*?

So then here, I trace out, I am breaking through something which you might not necessarily follow. How far, as I might say, does this *père -version* go? As you know since the time I have been writing it, that is what the *noeud bo* is. It is the sanction of the fact that Freud makes everything depend on the function of the father. The *noeud bo* is only the translation of this, the fact is, as I was reminded last evening, love and, into the bargain, the love that one can qualify as eternal, is what is referred back to the function of the father, which is addressed to him, in the name of the fact that

the father is the carrier of castration. This at least is what Freud put forward in *Totem and Taboo*, namely, the reference to the first horde. It is in the measure that the sons are deprived of women that they love the father.

It is in effect something quite singular and breathtaking and that is sanctioned only by Freud's intuition. But to this intuition, to this intuition, I am trying to give a different body, precisely, in my *noeud bo* which is so well designed to evoke Mount Nebo or, as they say, the Law. This Law which has absolutely nothing to do with the laws of the real world, the laws of the real world being moreover a question that remains completely open, and the Law, (170) on this occasion, is simply the law of love, namely, perversion.

It is very curious that learning to write, learning to write at least my *noeud bo*, is of some use. And, what I am going right away, what I am going to illustrate it with right away is the following: suppose that there is somewhere, specifically here, suppose that there is here, somewhere an error (XI-3), namely, that the cuts here are mistaken. What results from it? The Borromean knot has this aspect. Namely, as you will certainly not have imagined in taking things like that, naturally, imaginary. Namely, that as you see, the capital I here can simply clear off. It slips away exactly like, like what Joyce feels after having received his beating, it slips away. The imaginary relationship, well it has no place. It has no place in this case and, if it allows us to think that if Joyce was so interested in *père-version*, it was perhaps for a different reason. Perhaps after all, the beating disgusted him. He was perhaps not a true pervert.

Because one must really try to imagine for oneself why, why Joyce is so unreadable. If he is unreadable,

it is perhaps because he evokes no sympathy in us. But could something not be suggested in our affair by, on the contrary, the obvious fact that he has an ego of a quite different nature than the one that does not function, precisely at the moment of his, of his revolt. Which does not function immediately, just after the aforesaid revolt, because he manages to disengage himself, that's a fact. But after that, I would say that he does not retain any gratitude to anyone whatsoever for having received this beating.

And then, what I am suggesting, is the following (XI-4), is that, it is not complicated to see, suppose that here, there I am marking it clearly there to show that it passes above, suppose that the correction of this error, of this mistake, of this slip than which after all there is nothing more ordinary to imagine - why should it not happen that a knot that is not Borromean should fail? I made errors ten thousand times on the board in drawing it. Here exactly is what happens and where I am incarnating the ego, here, the ego as a corrector of this lacking relationship, of what does not knot in a Borromean way to what constitutes the knot of the Real and the Unconscious, in the case of Joyce.

Good. Through this artifice of writing, I would say that the Borromean knot is restored. And as you see, what is at stake is only one face of the Borromean knot, it is about a thread. The difference between ordinary geometry which is the one from which there comes the word face, geometry, is, is among the things that operate on faces. Polyhedrons are full of faces; of faces, of edges and of apexes. But the knot introduces us - the knot which is a chain in this occasion - the knot introduces us to another dimension, of which I would say that, in contrast to what is obvious, in the face, in the geometrical face, it is emptied out. And precisely because it is emptied out, it is not obvious. There is someone who, at one time, challenged me. Why does he not tell

us the *true about the true*? He does not say the true about the true, because to say the true about the true, is to say, it's a lie. The true intensional that will allow me here to write: *in-tension*. I already distinguished in-tension from the word ex-tension. The true intensional written like that, may from time to time touch on something real. But that, for the moment, is by chance. One cannot imagine the degree to which one makes mistakes in writing. The *lapsus calami* is not first with respect to the *lapsus linguae*, but it can be conceived of as touching the Real.

I know well that my knot which is that through which, and uniquely that through which, the Real as such is introduced - don't get excited! – it does not go all that far, I am the only one who knows how to handle it. But it is as well to make use of it, because it serves me in explaining something to you. You may well tolerate, since that is the situation you are in, my fooling around with my meagre resources. But it is a way of articulating precisely the fact that all human sexuality is perverse if we clearly follow what Freud says. He never succeeded in conceiving of the aforesaid sexuality otherwise than as perverse. And this indeed is why I question what I would call the fecundity of psychoanalysis.

(172) You have heard me state very often that psychoanalysis had not even been capable of inventing a new perversion. It's sad! Because after all if perversion is the essence of man, what infecundity in this practice! Well then I think that, thanks to Joyce, we are touching on something that I had not dreamt of, I had not dreamt of it right away but it came to me in time, it came to me in time in, in considering Joyce's text. The way in which it is constructed. It is constructed altogether as a Borromean knot. And what strikes me, is that he was the only one that this escaped. Namely, that there is not a trace in his whole work of something that resembles it. But that seems to me rather a sign of authenticity.

I have dwelt on the fact that what is striking when one reads this text and especially its commentators, is the number of enigmas that Joyce, his text, contains, it is not simply something which abounds, but one can say on which he has played. Knowing very well that people would busy themselves with it, and that there would be Joyceans, for two or three hundred years. These people busy themselves uniquely in solving the enigmas, namely, at the minimum, why Joyce had put that there. Naturally they always find a reason. He put that there because just after there is another word, in short, it is exactly like my business, there, of *osbjct*, of *mension* and of *dit-mension* and all the rest of it, is that not so. In my case there are reasons. I want to express something. I am equivocating. But with Joyce, one always loses what one could call one's Latin, all the more so in that he knew a little Latin.

So luckily like that at one stage, I took an interest in enigmas, I write that capital E subscript e - E_e - it is a matter of stating and the stated (*l'enonciation/ l'enoncé*). And the enigma consists in the relationship of capital E to small e; namely, why the devil such a statement had been pronounced? It is a matter of stating. And the stating, is the enigma. The enigma raised to the power of writing, is something which is worthwhile dwelling one.

Might this not be the consequence, the consequence of this joining end to end, which is so badly done that it is an ego with enigmatic functions, with reparatory functions? That Joyce is the writer *par excellence* of the enigma, is what encourages you - I could have quoted many examples, if it were not so late - but I would advise you to go and verify it. *Ulysses* exists in a French translation, it is (173) to be found in Gallimard; if you do not have the old volume from the time of Sylvia Beach.

I am going all the same to highlight some little things worthy of note before leaving you.

You must indeed have realised that what I told you of the relationships of man to his body and which depend entirely on what I have told you: in the fact that man says he has the body, *his* body, he has. Already to say *his*, is to say that he possesses it, of course, like a piece of furniture. And that this has nothing to do with anything whatsoever that allows the subject to be strictly defined. The subject is only defined in a correct way from what ensures the relationship, from what ensures that a subject is a signifier in so far as he is represented to another signifier.

I would like here to tell you something that may perhaps all the same slow down a little bit what creates a gulf, in what we are permitted to circumscribe by the use of this Borromean knot, of this *père-version*.

There is something all the same. There is something all the same that one is quite surprised about: that this not serve more, not the body, but that it does serve more the body as such: it is dance. This would allow to be written differently the term *condensation*. You see that I am letting myself go on this occasion... Yeah!

Is the Real straight? This indeed is what what today I would like to raise as a question before you. I would also like to point out to you that, in Freud's theory, the Real has nothing to do with the world. Because what he explains to us in this something that concerns precisely the ego, namely, the *Lust-Ich*, is that there is a stage of primary narcissism. And that this primary narcissism is characterised by the following. Not that there is not a subject, but that there is no relationship of the inside to the outside. I will surely have to come back to it. I am not saying that it has to be before you, because after all I have no kind of certainty, at the

present time, that next year I will still have this amphitheatre. But suppose that I managed to find somewhere, a place of seventy square metres, well then that would give, that would give, that would give space for eight people counting me. And that is the best option that I would wish.

I must still say a few words, I had prepared them, some words about the epiphany, Joyce's famous epiphany, that you will encounter at every turn. Because I would ask you to check this, it (174) is that when he gives a list of them, all his epiphanies are always characterised by the same thing and which is very precisely the following. The consequence that results from this error; namely, that the Unconscious is linked to the Real. A fantastic thing, Joyce, for his part, does not speak any other way about it. It is quite readable in Joyce that epiphany is there something that ensures that thanks to the mistake, the Unconscious and the Real are knotted together.

This is something that, this is not what I wanted you to hear, there is something that I can all the same draw for you (XI-5). If you know a little, if you have seen a Borromean knot, it indicates the following. The fact is that if here is the ego, as I drew it for you earlier, we find ourselves in the position of seeing there being strictly reconstituted the Borromean knot, in the following form. Here is the Real, here is the Imaginary, here is the Unconscious and here is Joyce's ego.

You can easily see on this schema, you can easily see on this schema, that the rupture of the ego frees the imaginary relationship. It is easy, in effect, to imagine that the Imaginary will clear off, it will clear off along here, if the Unconscious as is the case, allows it. It incontestably does so.

Here are the few indications that I wanted to tell you for this last session. One thinks *against* a signifier. This is the meaning that I gave to the word *l'appensée*. one leans against a signifier to think.

There you are, I am setting you free.

I am setting you free and there will be no next time, of final thing this year. I counted on it being the eighteenth, but since the exams begin on the seventeenth, I wanted to spare you the trouble of travelling.

Seminar 1: Wednesday 18 November 1975

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

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

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

elation that we are told is at the source of some symptom or other that in psychiatry we call mania.

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

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

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

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

(11) Nature, I will say, to be done with it, is distinguished by being *not-one*. Hence the logical procedure for tackling it. To call nature what you exclude in the very act of taking an interest in

something, that something being distinguished by being named, nature, by this procedure, only runs the risk of being characterised as a *pot-pourri* of what lies outside nature.

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

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

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

supposed naming by Adam, she was the first person to make use of it in order to speak to the serpent.

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

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

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

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

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

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

As you know Joyce had a hard time with this *sinthome*. One should state things clearly: as far as philosophy goes, it has never been bettered. It alone is true. This does not prevent the fact - consult Jacques Aubert's book on this - that Joyce does not find his bearings very well in it concerning something that he values

highly, and which he calls the Beautiful. There is in *sinthome madaquin*, something or other that he calls *claritas*, for which Joyce substitutes something like the splendour of Being, which is indeed the weak point of what is at stake. Is this a personal weakness? I do not find the splendour of Being very striking. It is in this respect that Joyce displaces the Sinthome from his *madaquinisme*. And contrary to what may appear of it at first glance, mainly his detachment from politics, produces what I would call *sint-home Rule*. This Home Rule which *The Freeman's Journal* depicted rising behind the Bank of Ireland, (14) which makes it, as if by chance, rise in the north west, which is not usual for sunrise. It is nevertheless, despite the grinding that we see on this subject in Joyce, it is all the same indeed the *sinthome-roule*, the *sinthome* on wheels that Joyce marries together.

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

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

continue to last. He specifically wanted it for three hundred years, he said so. *I want academics to be kept busy with me for three hundred years.* And he will have them, provided God does not blow us to smithereens. This poor devil {*ce hère*) because one can not say *cet hère*, it is forbidden by the aspiration, this does not worry everyone all that much, that it is for that that once says *pauvre hère*, this *hère* is conceived of as a hero. *Stephen Hero*, (15) this is the title explicitly given for the one from whom he prepared *A portrait of the artist as a young man*.

Ah! This is what I would have really wished - I did not bring it, stupidly - what I would have wished you, I would at least have like to have shown it to you, and which being badly informed, I knew that it was difficult, and that is why I am specifying how much you ought to insist. But Nicole Sels, here present, sent me an extremely precise scribble, that's what a letter is called, in

which for two pages, she explains to me that it is impossible to get it. It is impossible, at the present time, to get hold of this text and what I called this criticism, namely, that a certain number of persons, all academics, it is moreover a way of getting into the university, the university sucks in Joyceans, but anyway, they are already in the right place, it gives them grades, in short you will not find neither the .., I don't know how that's pronounced, Jacques Aubert will tell me: is it Beebe or Bibi?

- Ordinarily, one says Beebe.

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

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

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

When we interpret, we should pay attention to it.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The incredible thing, is that men saw very clearly that the symbol could only be a broken fragment. And that, as I might say, from (18) all time. But that they did not see at that epoch, at the epoch

of all time, that this comprised the unity and the reciprocity of the signifier and the signified. Consequently that the signified originally means nothing, and that it is only a sign of arbitration between two signifiers, but by this fact, not arbitrary for the choice of these. There is no umpire to say it in English - this is how Joyce writes it - except starting from empire, from the *imperium* over the body, as all carry the mark from the ordeal [origin?]. Here the one confirms its detachment from the two. It only makes three by imaginary forcing, which requires that a will suggests to the one to molest the other, without being linked to any of them.

Yeah! In order that the condition should be explicitly posited that starting from three rings (*anneaux*) one makes a chain, such that a break in a single one renders the two others, whatever they may be, free from one another. Because in a chain, the middle ring, as I might say, in this abbreviated fashion, brings that about, the freedom of the two others, whatever they may be. It had to be noticed that it was inscribed in the coat of arms of the Borromeans, that the knot, described as Borromean because of that, was already there without anyone thinking of drawing the consequences from it.

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

supposes this enigmatic link of the Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real.

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

If I had a piece of coloured chalk here.

- What colour do you want?

- What?

- What colour?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(23) division, is the division between the symbol and the symptom.

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

If we suppose the consistency, the consistency of any one at all of these functions, symbolic, imaginary and real, if we suppose this consistency as making a circle, this presupposes a hole. But in the case of the symbol and of the symptom, it is something else that is at stake. What makes a hole, is the totality, it is the totality folded over of one onto the other of these two circles (Fig 1-13).

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

This means that we must imagine, in order for these holes to subsist, to be maintained, simply suppose here a straight line, this will fulfil the same role, a straight line provided it is infinite. We (24) will have to come back in the course of the year to what this infinite is. We will have to speak again about what a straight line is, how it subsists, how, as one might say, it is akin to a circle. A circle, I will assuredly have to come back to it, will I not; this circle has a function which is well know to the police. The circle,

is used for traffic and that is why the police have a support that does not date from today or yesterday. Hegel had very clearly seen, in short, what was its function. And he had seen it in a form which is assuredly not what is at stake, what is in question. For the police it is simply a matter of the turning around continuing.

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

II. Seminar 2: Wednesday 9 December 1975

It can't go on like this!

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

I was, my God, I cannot say that I was not very well treated there, but that is, it is not, that is not saying too much, is it. For myself, I

rather felt myself there, to employ a term which is the one I use for what concerns man, sucked in. Or again, if you don't mind hearing it, sucked up, sucked up into a sort of whirlwind, which obviously can only find its warranty in, in what I bring to light by my knot.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Nevertheless, what experience shows us, is that this supposition is always open to what I will call an ambiguity. I mean that the

subject as such is always, not simply double, but divided. What is at stake is to account for what, from this division, constitutes the Real.

How did Freud - since we must come back to him, he was the great ground-breaker in this way of looking at things - how did Freud, of whom in short, if I read it correctly, I think moreover I read it correctly, if I am to believe the last Erich Fromm that you can easily get, if I remember correctly, at Gallimard, and which is entitled something which, at least on the back of the volume, is stated as psychoanalysis apprehended through its errors. A source of unfindable referrals [?], namely, by Freud. How then, if I read it correctly, did Freud, a bourgeois, and a bourgeois stuffed with prejudices, how did he reach something which gives to what he says its proper value? And which is certainly no small thing, which is the aim of saying the truth about man. To which I contributed this correction which has not been for me without trouble, without difficulty: that the only truth is one that can only be said, just like the subject that it comprises. That only half of it can be said. That can only, to express it as I have stated it, be half-said.

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

If we start, in effect, from analysis, we affirm, it is something different to observing, one of the things that most struck me when I

was in America, was my encounter which was certainly not by chance, which was altogether intentional on my part, it was my encounter with Chomsky. I was properly speaking, I will say stupefied by it. I told him so. The idea that I realised he held, is in short one that I cannot say can in a way be refuted. It is even (29) the most common idea, and it is indeed what before my very ears he simply affirmed, which made me sense the whole distance that I was from him. This idea, which is the idea, that in effect is common, is this, which appears precarious to me. The consideration, in short, of something that presents itself as a body, a body provided with organs, which implies, in this conception, that the organ is a tool, a tool for gripping, a tool for apprehending. And that there is no objection in principle to the tool apprehending itself as such, that, for example, language is considered by him as determined by a genetic fact, he expressed it in these very terms before me; in other words, language itself is an organ. It seems quite striking to me, this is what I expressed by the term *stupefied*, it seems quite striking to me that from this language, a return can be made back on itself like an organ.

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

Language moreover eats this Real. I mean that it only allows this Real to be tackled, this genetic Real, to speak like Chomsky, in

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

This whole subtilising of what is involved in the Real by so many of these aforesaid messages, but in which there is only marked the veil drawn over what is the efficacy of language. Namely, the fact that language is not in itself a message, but that it is only sustained (30) from the function of what I called the hole in the Real.

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

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

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

I mean that in substituting the couple of a supposedly infinite straight line and a circle, you get the same Borromean knot. There is something that corresponds to this figure three, which is the dawn, as I might say, of a requirement, which is properly speaking the requirement proper to the knot. It is linked to this fact that in (31) order to account correctly for the Borromean knot, it is starting from three that a requirement especially originates.

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

I mean that these three points at infinity, let us put them here, for example, must be, in whatever form we may suppose them, and we can moreover invert these positions, I mean ensure that, that this first line at infinity, as one might say, is enveloping with respect to the others instead of being enveloped. It is a characteristic of this

point at infinity, not to be able to be situated, as one might express it, on any side.

But what is required starting from the number three, is the following. It is that in order to display it in this imaged way (Fig II-10), one must state, specify, that of these three lines, completed by their point at infinity, there will not be found one - you clearly sense that if there I put all three in red, there are reasons why I had to trace them out here in a different colour - there will not be (32) one of them which, because of being enveloped by another, will not find itself enveloping with respect to the other. For this is properly speaking what constitutes the property of the Borromean knot.

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

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

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

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

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

This method, since what is at stake is a method, is a method which presents itself as hopeless. Without hope of in any way breaking the constitutive knot of the Symbolic, the Imaginary and the Real.

In this regard, it rejects there being constituted, it must be said, and in an altogether lucid way, a virtue, a virtue even described as theological, and that is why our apprehension, our analytic apprehension of what is involved in this knot is the negative of religion.

People no longer believe in the object as such, and that is why I deny that the object can be grasped by any organ. Since the organ itself is perceived as a tool. And that being perceived as a tool, as a separate tool, it is, in this respect, conceived as an object. In Chomsky's conception, the object is itself only tackled by an object. It is by the restitution as such of the subject, in so far as it can only be divided, divided by the very operation of language, that analysis finds its diffusion. It finds its diffusion in the fact that it puts science as such into question. Science in as much as it makes of an object, that it makes of an object a subject, while it is the subject which is of itself divided. We do not believe in the object, but we affirm desire and from this affirming of desire, we infer the cause as objectivised.

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

The reason why, since today, as you clearly see, I am very weary, very weary from this American ordeal where, as I have told you, I was certainly recompensed, because I was able, with these figures that you see here more or less substantialised, substantialised in writing, in drawings, I was able to create with them what I will call agitation, emotion. The sensed as mental, the sentimental is weak-minded. Because it is always from some angle or other

reducible to the Imaginary. The imagination of consistency goes straight to the impossible of rupture, but this is why the rupture can always be the Real. The Real as impossible and which is no less compatible with the aforesaid imagination and even constitutes it.

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

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

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

(35) the right, or whether it is a matter moreover of the black ring here, or whether it is a matter again of this (Fig II-14), which you

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

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

QUESTIONS

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

Mr X - ...

J. Lacan - Pardon?

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

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

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

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

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

J. Lacan - *oiseuse?*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

J. Lacan - About the alternation...?

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

of a subject? I have the impression that there is a disincarnation of discourse. The discourse being always referred...

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

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

J. Lacan – That indeed, that indeed is what is at stake. It is all the same difficult not to consider the Real, on this occasion as a, as a third. And let us say that that what I may seek as a response belongs to something which is an appeal to the Real, not as linked to the body, but as different. That far from the body, there is a possibility of what I called the last time a resonance, or consonance. And it is at the level of the Real that there can be found this consonance. That the Real, with respect to these poles constituted by the body and on the other hand language, that the Real is here what brings about harmony (*accord- à corps*). Can I expect something from someone else?

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

Lacan - I spoke about?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

J. Lacan - There is no radical reduction of the fourth term.

Namely that even analysis, since Freud, we do not know along what path, in fact, could state, there is an *Urverdrängung*. There is a repression which is never cancelled, is that not so. It is of the very nature of the Symbolic to comprise this hole, is that not so. And it is this hole that I am aiming at when I ... that I recognise in the *Urverdrängung* itself.

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

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

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

imagined since I had to discover it. To make a homologous knot pass under the underlying knot, and on, at each stage, the knot that I will call here underlying. This then easily produces a Borromean knot.

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

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

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

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

J. Lacan – What's that?

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

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

Someone is waiting for a class, excuse me.

A. Seminar 3: Wednesday 16 December 1975

If as much seriousness was put into analyses as I put in to the preparation of my seminar, well then, it would be so much the better. It would be so much the better, and it would surely have better results. For that, for that one would have to have in

analysis, as I have, as I have, but this is part of the senti-mental of which I spoke the other day, the sentiment of an absolute risk.

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

I told you that I had striven for two months to make ex-sist, for this simplest knot, a Borromean knot of four. I also told you that the fact that I had not managed to make it exist proved nothing; (44) apart from my clumsiness. I believe, I am even sure, I remember, I believe I told you that I believed that it must exist.

I had that very evening the pleasant surprise of seeing appearing - it was late, I would even say that I had gone out rather late, given my obligations - I saw then appearing on my doorstep someone called Thomé, to give him his name. He was coming to bring me, and I greatly thanked him for it, he was coming to bring me, as a fruit of his collaboration with Soury - Soury and Thomé remember those names - he came to bring me the proof, the proof that the Borromean knot of four, consisting of four knots of four, did indeed exist. This assuredly justifies my stubbornness; but does not render by incapacity any less deplorable. Nevertheless I did not welcome the news that this problem had been resolved with mixed feelings. A mixture of my regret at my impotence with that

of the success that had been obtained. My feelings were not that. They were purely and simply of enthusiasm. And I think I showed them something of this when I saw them, some evenings later, an evening when, moreover, they were not able to give me an account of how they found it. In fact they had found it, and I hope I have not made a mistake in transcribing as I did on this central paper the fruit of their discovery. I reproduced it more or less. I mean that it is, make no mistake, *textually* what they developed, apart from the fact that the trajectory, the flattened-out trajectory is only slightly different. If this flattened-out trajectory is as I presented it to you, it is so that you will be able to feel, sense perhaps a little better than in the complete figure, that you will sense perhaps a little better how it is done (Fig III-3).

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

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

I saw Soury and Thomé for a long while. As I told you, they did (46) not confide in me how they had got it. I think moreover that there is not just one way. That there is not just this one. And perhaps I will show you the next time how, again, one can obtain it. I would like all the same to commemorate this tiny event, an event moreover that I consider not to be tiny, and I am going to tell you why afterwards, in other words why I was searching, I want to commemorate our encounter a little more.

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

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

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

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

The fact that Soury and Thomé should have been - I am daring to say it, even though after all, I have not had this testimony from them - should have been especially captivated, it seems to me by

what in my teaching, was led to explore, to explore under the influence, under the impact of what was imposed on me by the conjunction of the Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real, that they should have been very specially caught by what must indeed be called this lucubration of mine, is something which is certainly not pure chance. Let us say that they are gifted for this type of thing.

What is strange, what is strange and it is on this point that I am allowing myself, finally, to betray what they have confided in me, what is strange it seems to me, is the fact that - and that gripped me given that you know what I put forward - the fact is that they told me that they made progress in it by talking among themselves. I did not make this remark to them immediately, because, in truth, this confidence seems to me to be very precious. But it is certain that people do not usually think à *deux*. The fact that it should be by talking about it among themselves and that they arrive at results that are not remarkable simply by this success. For a long time what they compose about the Borromean knot seems to me to be more than, more than interesting, seems to be an achievement. But this discovery is certainly not its crowning glory. They will make others. I will not add what Soury in particular told me about the way in which he thinks about teaching. This is a business where I think that in following my example, the one that I qualified earlier, he will certainly acquit himself just as well as I am able to do. Namely, in the same risky way. But that this should have been conquered by such a discovery - I do not know moreover if it is especially this discovery that was conquered in dialogue - that dialogue should have proved to be especially fruitful in this domain, is altogether, I (49) may say, what confirms that I was lacking it. I mean that throughout these two months that I unceasingly worked at finding this fourth knot of three and the way in which it could be knotted in a Borromean way, I repeat, to two others, to three others, it is assuredly because I was alone in the search. I mean putting my

hope in my cogitating. What matter, I will not insist. It is time to say why this research was important to me.

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

It is not by chance that I especially support by the Imaginary - it is the result let us say of a certain concentration - that it should be in the Imaginary that I place the support of consistency. In the same way that it should be from the hole that I make the essential of what is involved in the Symbolic and that, by reason of the fact that the Real, precisely from the liberty of these two from the fact that the Imaginary and the Symbolic - this is the very definition of the Borromean knot - are freed one from the other, that I support what I call ex-sistence, especially from the Real. In this sense that in-sisting outside the Imaginary and the Symbolic, it knocks, it operates very specially in something which is the order of limitation. The two others, from the moment that they are knotted in a Borromean way, the two others resist it. Namely, that the Real only has ex-sistence, and it is quite astonishing that I should formulate it like that - only has ex-sistence by encountering the arrest of the Symbolic and the Imaginary.

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

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

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

My question bore precisely on this point.

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

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

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

It is moreover the same people, the same Soury and Thomé, I already made an allusion to it, explicitly in this seminar, highlighted that, as regards what is involved in knots, the Borromean knots in question, starting from the moment when they are orientated and coloured, there are two of them of a different nature. What does that mean?

In the flattening out, already, it can be highlighted. Here I am abbreviating. I am simply indicating to you the sense in which one can test it. I told you about the equivalence of these three circles, of these three rings of string. It is remarkable that it is only by the fact that, not between them, there is marked the identity of any one. For the identity would be to mark them by the initial letter. To say R, I and S, is already to entitle each one, each one as such, as Real, as Symbolic and as Imaginary. But it is notable that it appears that the efficacious thing that is distinguished among them in the orientation is only locatable from that which by the colour marks their difference. Not from one another, but as I might say their absolute difference in that it is the

difference common to the three. It is in order that there should be something which is one, but which, as such, marks the difference between the three, but not the difference in two's, that there appears in consequence the distinction of two structures of the Borromean knot. Which is the true one? Is the true one with respect to what is involved in the way in which the Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real are knotted together, in what supports the subject?

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

There is something remarkable, which is that the knot of three, on the other hand, bears no trace of this difference. In the knot of three, namely, in the fact that we put the Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real in continuity, it is not surprising that we should see in (51) that there is only a single knot of three. I hope that there are enough people here taking notes. Because this is important. Important to suggest to you to go and verify what is at stake. Namely, specifically that as regards the knot of three that homogenises the Borromean knot, there is on the other hand, only one kind.

Does that mean that it is true?

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

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

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

To clearly understand what I am stating today, one could deduce from it that to the paranoid three there could be knotted, under the heading of symptom, a fourth term which would situate as such, as personality, in so far as it itself would be distinct with regard to the three preceding personalities and their symptom. Does that mean that it would also be paranoid? Nothing indicates it in the case, the case which is more than probable, which is certain, in which it is from a certain indefinite number of knots of three that a Borromean chain can be constituted. Which does not prevent that, with respect to this chain, which henceforth no longer constitutes a paranoia if only because it is common, with regard to this chain the possible flocculation of fourth terms, in this braid which is the subjective braid, the possible terminal flocculation of fourth terms leaves us with the possibility of supposing that on the totality of the texture, there are certain elective points which, are found to be (52) the limit of this knot of four. And it is indeed in this properly speaking that the *sinthome* consists. And the *sinthome* not in the phase that it is personality, but with respect to three others, it

specifies itself by being symptom and neurotic. It is in as much as the *sinthome* specifies it, that there is a term that there is more specially attached to it which, with regard to what is involved in the *sinthome*, has a privileged relationship. Just as here in the knot of three knotted in a Borromean way of four, you will see that there is a particular response from the red to the brown, just as there is a particular response from the green to the black. It is in as much as one of the two couples are distinguished from this specific knot by a different colour, to take up the term I used earlier, it is in so far as there is a link of the symptom to something

particular in this set of four, it is, in a word, in as far (Fig III-7) – we do not know if it is this one or that one- it is in as much as we have a red-green couple here on the left, a blue-red here on the right, that we have a couple. And it is in as much as the *sinthome* is linked to the unconscious and that the Imaginary is linked to the Real that we are dealing with something from which the *sinthome* emerges.

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

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

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

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

On the other hand, the enjoyment described as phallic is situated there, at the conjunction of the Symbolic with the Real. It is in as much that in the subject which is supported by the *parlêtre* in the sense that this is what I designate as being the unconscious, there is – and it is in this field that phallic enjoyment is inscribed – there

is the power, the power in short summoned, supported, the power of marrying what is involved in a certain enjoyment which, by the fact, by the fact of this word itself, marries an enjoyment experienced, experienced by the fact of the *parlêtre*, as a parasitic (54) enjoyment, and which is the one described as of the phallus. This indeed is the one that I inscribe here as a balance to what is involved in meaning, it is the locus of that which, through the *parlêtre*, is designated in conscience as power.

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

Seminar 4: Wednesday 13 January 1976

Voilà.

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

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

There you are. This is the type of thing that when all is said and done, I am bringing to you at the start of this year. Namely, what I will call, it is no bad thing, like that, to start off a year, what I will call first truths. Not of course that in the interval which has separated us now for something like three weeks, not that I have not been working. I worked on these things, a sample of which you see there on the board (IV-1).

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

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

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

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

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

is what is called knowledge (*connaissance*), with this ambiguity that the active is what we know, but that we imagine that in making an effort to know, we are active.

Knowledge then, from the start, shows itself for what it is: deceptive. This indeed is why everything should be taken up again from the start, starting from sexual opacity. I am saying opacity in that the fact is, firstly, we do not see that from the sexual there can be in any way be grounded any relationship whatsoever. This implies, at the whim of (58) thinking, that there is no responsibility – in the sense that responsibility means non-response or a response wide of the mark – there is no responsibility other than sexual. This is something that everyone, when all is said and done, has a feeling for.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What is a fact?

It is precisely he who makes it. There is no fact except by the fact that the speaking being says it. There are no other facts than those that the speaking being recognises as such by saying them. There is no fact except from artifice. And it is a fact that he lies. Namely, that he accords recognition to false facts. This because he has mentality. (60) Namely, self love. This is the principle of imagination. He adores his body. He adores it. Because he believes he has it. In reality he does not have it. But his body is his only consistency – mental, of course. At every moment his body clears off. It is already miraculous enough that it subsists for a time. The time of this consummation which is, in fact, from the fact of saying it, inexorable. Inexorable in that nothing is done in it because it is not resorbative.

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

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

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

A function of haste, huh! I must make haste, huh! Naturally I will not get to the end even though I have not been dawdling. But tying the knot carelessly, that simply means going a bit fast. The knot perhaps that I am making, here, the one on the right (IV-1) or the one the left (IV-4) is perhaps a little insufficient. That is even the reason that I looked for where there were more crossings than that.

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

W w d W

Was will das Weib?

W w e W

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

W w e W.

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

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

In the book that I spoke to you about earlier, that of R M Adams, easier, I hope, to find than this famous *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, that you can find all the

same, on the single condition of not requiring to have at the end the whole criticism that Chester Anderson took care to add to it. *Surface and Symbol* is published by the Oxford University Press, it is easy to get. Oxford University Press also has an office in New York. Good.

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

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

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

But, good God! How is that done?

I made a breakthrough, like that, in something which, which seems to me let us say likely. I said to myself that writing may have always have something to do with the way in which, in which we

write the knot. It is obvious, that a knot is usually written like that (IV-4). That already gives an S.

Namely, something which has all the same a considerable relationship with *The agency of the letter*,

as I support it. And then, and then that gives a body, like that, a likely body to beauty. Because it must be said that there was someone called Hogarth who questioned himself a great deal about beauty, and who thought that beauty, always has something to do with this double inflection. This is feckology, of course. But anyway, this would tend to attach beauty to something other than the obscene, namely, to the Real. In short, the only beautiful thing would be writing. Which...why not? Good.

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

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

But anyway it ends well. Yes. There is 27th April: old Father...this is the last sentence of the *Portrait of an Artist – of the Artist*. You see I made the slip, huh! *Portrait of an Artist – as a young man*; while he believed himself to be *The artist*. ‘Old Father, old artificer, stand me now and ever in good stead’. Keep me warm from now on and forever. It is to his father that he addresses this prayer. His father who precisely distinguishes himself by being, bof! What we can call, in short, an unworthy father, a deficient father; the one that, in the whole of *Ulysses*, he will set about looking for under the species that he will not find him, to any degree. Because there is obviously a father somewhere, Bloom, a father who seeks a son, but Stephen places in opposition to him a ‘not much of a one’. After the father I had, I’ve had a bellyful! No more father. And especially since this Bloom, this Bloom in question is not very tempting.

But anyway it is curious that there is this gravitation between the thoughts of Bloom and of Stephen who pursue one another throughout the whole novel. And even to the

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

In truth, there is a whole chapter, a whole chapter that I have spoken to you about, *Symbol or surface*, there is a whole chapter where strictly speaking nothing is dealt with but that. To the point that it culminates in a Blephen, since earlier I made a slip, Blephen and Stoom, Blephen and Stoom who meet in the text of *Ulysses*. And which manifestly (64) shows that it is not simply of the same signifier that they are made. It is truly of the same material.

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

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

Exiles, is truly the approach of something which is, for him, in short, the symptom. The central symptom in which, of course, what is at stake is the symptom constituted by the deficiency proper to the sexual relationship, but this deficiency does not take on just any old form. This deficiency must indeed take on a form. And this form, is the one that knots him to his wife, to the aforesaid Nora, to the aforesaid Nora during whose reign he lucubrates *Exiles*, *Les Exilés*, as it has been translated, even though this may just as well mean *Exils*. *Exils*, there could be no better term to express non-relationship. And it is indeed around this non-relationship that everything in *Exiles* turns. Non-relationship is indeed the following, it is that there is truly no reason why he should hold One woman among others to be his woman, that One woman among

others is moreover one who has a relationship with any other man whatsoever. And it is indeed this any other man whatsoever that is at stake in the character that he imagines, and for whom at this date of his life, he knows how to open up, to open up the choice of the One woman in question, who is none other, on this occasion, than Nora.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The fox burying his grandmother under the bush (sic)

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

Yes.

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

The fact is that analysis is that. It is the response to a riddle. And a response, it must be said, from this example, that is quite especially stupid. That indeed is why we must hold onto the cord. I mean that if one has no idea about where the cord ends up, at the knot of the sexual non-relationship, one runs the risk, one runs the risk of talking nonsense.

Meaning! Ah! I must show you that. Meaning results from a field (IV-5) between the Imaginary and the Symbolic. That of course is self-evident.

Because if we think that there is no Other of the Other, at least no enjoyment of this Other of the Other, we must make a suture somewhere. Here specifically between the Symbolic which alone extends there (1), and this imaginary which is here. Of course, here, the small *o*, the cause of desire. Yes.

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

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

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

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

I have not left time for our dear friend Jacques Aubert, whom I had hoped would monopolise the conversation for the rest of the session, to speak to you now; it is time for us to part. But next time, given what I have heard from him, since he was good enough to call me on the telephone last Friday, given what I have heard from him, I believe that he will be able, on what is involved in the Bloom in question - namely, my God, someone who is not any worse placed than another to cop onto something

about analysis, since he is a Jew - that, on this Bloom and on the way in which there is experienced the suspension between the sexes which means that the aforementioned Bloom can only question himself about whether he is a father or a mother. This is something that makes Joyce's text. What assuredly has a thousand radiations in this text of Joyce, namely, that with regard to his wife, he has the feelings of a mother, he believes he is carrying her in his belly and that here indeed in fine, when all is said and done is the worst aberration of what one can experience *vis-à-vis* somebody one loves. And why not! Love indeed must be explained and to explain it by a sort of madness, is indeed the first thing within hand's reach.

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

Seminar 5: Wednesday 20 January 1976

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

This is obviously linked – I can say it because I am experiencing it these days on a daily basis – this is obviously linked to my lack of practice, let us say, to my inexperience of the tongue in which he writes. Not that I am totally ignorant of English. But precisely, he writes English with these special refinements which means that he disarticulates the tongue, the English one on this occasion. You must not think that, that that begins with *Finnegans Wake*. Well

before *Finnegans Wake*, he has a way of, of mangling sentences, particularly in *Ulysses*. It is truly a process by someone who is working in the sense of giving to the tongue in which he is writing a different usage. A usage in any case which is far from being ordinary. This forms part of his know-how and, on this, I already quoted Soller's article. It would be no bad thing, anyway, for you to take the measure of its pertinence.

So then, the result is that this morning, I am going to allow someone to speak whose practical experience goes well beyond mine, not simply of the English tongue, but of Joyce, particularly of Joyce. The person concerned is Jacques Aubert. And so as not to go on and on, I am going immediately to let him speak, since he has kindly offered to take over from me. I will listen to him with the whole measure that I have been able to take of his experience of Joyce. I will listen to him. And I hope that the little reflections, is that not so – I am not advising him to abbreviate, far from it – the little reflections that I will have to add to it will be made, in (70) short, with all the respect that I owe him for the fact that he introduced me to what I called, Joyce the Sinthome.

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

III. Jacques Aubert's intervention

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

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

To situate the point from which I started, by accident, I must say that it is a matter very didactically, I am saying very didactically, that what is at stake is a little piece of Circe. A little part of an exchange in Circe, this chapter that was called *à posteriori* 'the Circe of Ulysses', and which is the chapter, it is said, about hallucination, whose art, it is said, is hallucination, is magic, but the category: hallucination.

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

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

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

So then I will read you the passage, the brief exchange in question. It is found in the French edition on page 429, in the American [Penguin] edition on page 569. Rudolph has first emerged as an elder in Zion. He has the face which is that of, we are told in a stage direction, that of an elder in Zion. And after various reproaches, some reproaches to his son, he says the following:

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

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

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

So then, what is happening here at first sight, for the reader of *Ulysses*, is a phenomenon described several times by Bloom himself, by the expression *retrospective arrangement*. This is a

term that returns rather often in the, let us say, thoughts of Bloom, right throughout this book. So then the reader cannot fail to be sensitive to this retrospective arrangement. He cannot fail to be sensitive to the fact that it deals with an arrangement that starts from a favourite quotation of the father, a quotation from a literary text that had had, to all appearances, certain effects on him.

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

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

We see that what returns here is slightly different. But before separating out this difference, I would like to indicate what appears to me to be the effects on Bloom of this return with a difference. What does he answer? What does he answer in the Circe episode? He responds as follows. I am giving you first the paraphrase, in French: 'Bloom, prudent: I think that is so, father. Mosenthal. All that remains to us of him'. And then I am going to write the English text of this sentence:

A.

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

Bloom being prudent, the English text says: *with precaution*, this is precisely a function of Bloom, described throughout, anyway in a large part of *Ulysses*, as the prudent one. The prudent one, is the side of him, the side which is half Ulysses, because Ulysses is not simply that. And he is described on several occasions, in slightly Masonic language as: *the prudent member*. And it is in his function of prudent member that we find him here. And the prudent member says: *I suppose so*, and not: 'Je crois que oui' as

the French translation says. 'Je sous-pose ainsi', I sup-pose so. I suppose something to answer this question, is that not so: are you not my son?

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

(73) Around this proper name, precisely, something is articulated, and is disarticulated at the same time. Something is articulated and is disarticulated about the sup-position that has been announced. What then is this instrument, what is then more clearly, this function of sup-position, this instrument (*suppôt*) of Mosenthal?

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

One of these displacements is obvious, the fact is that in the text, the first text let us say, that of the Lotus Eaters, is that not so, that of page 93, the name in question, the name of the author, features before the quotation: here it is in the position of a signature. It is

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

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

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

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

*Mr Bloom stood at the corner, his eyes wandering over the multicoloured hoardings. Cantrell and Cochrane's ginger ale (aromatic). Clery's summer sale. No, he's going on straight. Hello. Leah tonight: Mrs Bandman Palmer. Like to see her in that again. Hamlet she played last night. Male impersonator. - a transvestite, and then, this is where there begins precisely a little passage on the problematic of sexes, the English expression is male-impersonator, is it not, an author who had taken then the persona, did he not, the male actor, the male impersonator, but which can just as well be applied to one of the plays, *Hamlet*, as to the other, *Leah*. It is around this that it is going to turn. Transvestite. Perhaps. She played *Hamlet* last night. Male-impersonator. *Perhaps he was a woman. Why Ophelia committed suicide?* (93)*

So then there is at a certain level the fact that *Hamlet*, the role of *Hamlet* was very often played by women. And it so happens that an Anglo-Saxon critic had had the fantasy of analysing *Hamlet* in terms precisely of cross-dressing, by in a way taking transvestism seriously. And in this saying that if *Ophelia* committed suicide, it was because she realised that *Hamlet*, in fact, was a woman. Perhaps he was a woman. Now I am not invoking this critic by chance, I am invoking him by, I mean in the name of my Shakespearean and Joycean knowledge, simply because this (75) reappears elsewhere in *Ulysses*. I am trying to limit external

references as much as possible. Is that why Ophelia committed suicide? The English statement is slightly different: *Why Ophelia committed suicide?* Or indeed: is this the reason why Ophelia committed suicide? This obviously does not get across in the French translation. And I think that it is all the same important enough to note. And what comes afterwards?

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

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

By Mosenthal it is. Rachel is it? No. The scene he was always talking about where the old blind Abraham recognises the voice and puts his fingers on his face. Here then: Nathan's voice! His son's voice! Etc. Every word is so deep...then after the passage:

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

Every word is so deep, Leopold.

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

In this passage there, it happens then that in reality a whole series of questions are in play. Questions then about existence, not (76) simply about being and the name, but about existence and suicide. The question about the name - and here, I must, I am going to come back to this point - about the name which is in fact just as much the name of the father, of his father, as the name of

the play, of the author of the play, let us say, of the central character of the play. And finally the question about the sex that *personates*, which is what within, causes *per-sonnation*.

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

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

So then it appears that the father had changed name. And he changed it in a way which is rather interesting: according to a legal formula, which is called *deed poll*. Deed, namely an act, an act but *poll* evokes, describes in a way what the act is, from the point of view of the document. It is a document that is cut back. It is cut back, this poll describes what is cut back, and also describes what is beheaded, is that not so, what is decapitated. A pollard, an tree that has been treated like that is polled. And poll can also designate the head. So then, the deed poll, is the type of particular act which is cut back. It has this characteristic of only comprising one part. It is an act which is - that is why one says 'by 'decree' is that not so, it has been decreed that - and this is

opposed to, this is distinguished at least from an indenture, which is an act that is torn apart, precisely in accordance with an indentation, to be confided to the parties, is that not so, to the two (77) parties, to two or several parties. This is we are told, Joyce tells us, the way in which the father has changed his name. And he has changed names. What name has he changed?

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

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

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

And one could understand almost that it is the name that has poisoned itself, is that not so. *The father's name*, there is a kind of play on the genitive, which means, as regards the position of the name of the father, which means that it is the name which seems to have been poisoned. Virag. Virag reappears. He is evoked on several occasions in *Ulysses*, he reappears in Circe but what reappears in Circe first of all is a virago, designated as such, Virago. So then it is here that one can, perhaps, remember what a Virago is. Namely, the name which, in the Vulgate, in the translation of the Bible by St. Jerome, serves to designate the woman, from the point of view of Adam. In *Genesis*, the man is led to name the woman: 'You will name her woman'. He calls her Virago. Because she is a little bit of a man. She is *fomme*, if you wish. Except for a rib.

Having got to this point in my lucubrations and my flounderings in, between, the lines of *Ulysses*, I would like to distinguish in these intertwinings what looks like a hole. Because obviously, for an interpretation, with interpretation in mind one is tempted to use a schema which might be drawn from suicide, from change of name, from the refusal by Bloom to see the face of his dead father.

Obviously, it would be very nice and very obliging if all of this were precisely to reappear in Circe in hallucination. Only there you are, it is perhaps not quite sufficient even if there is some truth in it, not quite sufficient to put the text to work. For example, to account for the passage, *Poor papa! Poor man!* Does he not, in (78) the first passage, he said after *every word is so deep, Leopold*, reporting the father's commentary on the play: *Poor papa! poor man!* Which was perhaps not very nice either to the remarks of papa. *I'm glad I didn't go into the room to look at his face. That day! Oh dear! Oh dear! ... Well perhaps it was the best for him.* Anyway in short there are a lot of things like that that one would also have to account for. And one would above all have to manage to account for the effects produced in the dramatic redistribution constituted by Circe. For it holds together, it works, for all the same things happen, precisely alongside what looks like a hole.

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

So then I must give you here the English sentence, what Rudolph says in Circe, is, because he was repeating himself: *Are you not*

my dear son Leopold who left the house of his father and left the God of his fathers Abraham and Jacob? Who left, who quitted, who abandoned then all that's left of him, everything that is, everything that remains of him, everything that is abandoned of him - it is all the same already not bad - all that is abandoned of him, and remains of him and then also, all that's left of him, everything that is on his left.

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

(79) I don't know where to stop in all of this, I tremble, it would be better for me to stop. What is certain is that this gives pleasure to Bloom, to him also - it gave me pleasure for my part when I saw that - that gives him pleasure, this is certain and this is agreed. That is agreed, and how can that be seen? Because papa is far from happy. The reply following that begins by: *Rudolph: (severely) one night they bring you home drunk, etc...* severely, in other words: please, no out of place humour, let us talk rather about your own transgressions.

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

This kind of interplay with respect to the father, about all of these things, I cannot get over it, seems to lead to a sliding towards the

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

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

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

J Aubert: Epiphany? Yes-yes. But here, one could perhaps debate. let us say, its pertinence, perhaps. It forms part of a series of little playlets that Joyce placed, then, in one of the first chapters of *Ulysses*, of, of the *Portrait* and in which the child, the young Stephen is in the process of finding his way about Dublin, starting from a certain number, let us say, of points, of scenes, of places, of houses. He was there, sitting in a house. In general, it begins like that. And we see him sitting on a chair, in his aunt's kitchen, and

his aunt is reading the evening paper and admiring *the beautiful Maybel Hunter*, a beautiful actress. And a little girl arrives, with ringlets, she is on her tiptoes to look at the picture, and says softly.

-*What is she in, mud?*

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

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

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

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

Where now?

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

*I am the boy
That can enjoy
Invisibility.*

Phantasmal mirth, folded away: muskperfumed. (10)

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

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

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

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

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

First of all, I would like to signal this in connection with the epiphany. What is called the epiphany, signifies a whole lot of things that are really rather diverse. There is only one place where Joyce defines it, it is in the *Portrait of the artist* in the- there it is - in *Stephen Hero*, Stephen the hero, it is the only place that he uses the word and people have obviously slightly distorted what he said. He had the good fortune to give a definition. By epiphany, he meant a sudden spiritual manifestation whether in the vulgarity of speech or of gesture or in a memorable phase of the mind itself. Good. Something well polished, very didactic and Thomas Aquinas-like. But how does that all come about? It comes after, it comes in a text which in two pages, makes us pass from a dialogue with the mother, in which the mother reproaches Stephen for his unbelief. By invoking who then? The priests. Saying: the priests... the priests... the priests... And Stephen, at once breaks with her on this plane, and in another sense, skirts around the problem, sets about evoking precisely, slips over to the relationship woman-priest, then slips towards his beloved and all of a sudden starts to say, uh! I don't have the text here unfortunately, because I did not think I would be invoking it, but anyway, you will find it easily enough in *Stephen Hero*, if you're

interested. He says immediately afterwards, a Dublin scene, ah yes, that's it: *a trivial incident set him composing some ardent verses*. Then nothing more about the poem, and he reports the dialogue that he had heard, which is a dialogue between a young woman and a young man. And one of the rare words which appears in it, is the word chapel. Apart from that there is practically nothing but points of suspension in this dialogue.

So then this dialogue, where there is nothing, makes him write a poem. And then, on the other hand, he baptises it, in the lines that follow, epiphany. This is what he wanted to do, to record scenes, (83) these realist playlets which tell so much. A double then, a kind of redoubling of the experience a kind of redoubling on the one hand of, of a realist aspect let us say, to simplify, on the other hand, in a way poetic and, a kind of liquidation, of censoring in the text of *Stephen Hero*, of what was in fact the poetic aspect. And we see that the poem in question is entitled the *The villanelle of the temptress*, is that not so. But precisely this emerges, this emerges in a certain discourse which implies precisely the mother, and the mother in her relationship to priests.

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

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

duties, the confession of his turpitude and then also, the artist, the function of the artist.

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

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

J. Aubert: In *Circe* among other things.

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

J. Aubert: Yes, that's it.

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

anyway, in any case, there had to be names that travel well. Jones travels well.

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

So then the functioning of this text, of these texts, one of the things at least, a certain number of things that make it work, are obviously the names of the father at multiple levels. One can clearly grasp that in the two passages that I have hooked onto, it is the function that is in question, is that not so, it is the function that appears through the forebears, throughout the depth accorded to all that. But in *Circe* and in *Ulysses* as a whole what makes things move, what creates the artifice, is this hide and seek with the names of the father. Namely, that alongside of what appears as a hole, there are displacements of holes and there are displacements of names of the father. We have glimpsed in passing in no particular order: Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Virag. We also see Dedalus. And then we see one of them who is quite funny, because in an episode which is rather central, rather central because there is one eye, it is the Cyclops, there is a character called J.J. J.J. whom we remember, if one has a good memory, (85) we encountered in a preceding episode under the name of J.J. O'Molloy, that is descendent of the Molloys, huh. So then here one must listen carefully. A J.J. son of O'Molloy. But here in the Cyclops he appears under that name. So then this guy has a rather

curious position. Because in principle he is a lawyer, I would not even say one who has collapsed, but is in decline. We are told, and here again the English words are interesting: *practice dwindling*. (159) And what is happening for this lawyer whose practice is clearing out? He is involved in gaming, *gambling*. Gaming replaces in a way his practice. Good, there would be a certain number of things, obviously, to elaborate, starting from that no doubt.

What I would simply like to point out, is the function of this perfectly false father, whose initials are both those of James Joyce, of John Joyce, papa, the papa of Joyce. The talk of this J.J. O'Molloy is particularly about other fathers. He is the one who in a certain passage, links back to the riddle quoted last week by Lacan. He is the one who turns to Stephen, in the episode taking place in the office, turns towards Stephen to give him a fine piece of rhetoric. This is interesting because we know that, first of all, the O'Molloy in question, has turned to gaming. And then all the same in order to survive also, he does literary work in the newspapers. He does literary work in the newspapers, namely, something that may refer you back in the work of Joyce to *The dead*, the last story in *Dubliners*, is that not so, the chap who writes stories in the ... who writes in the papers, reviews, we don't know what exactly. This also reappears in a different way in *Exiles*, is that not so. What kind of literature? Is it literature that remains, does it deserve to survive? Good, so then the O'Molloy in question, the J.J. in question, we are told that he turns towards Stephen, in the editorial office, and presents him with a beautiful specimen of legal eloquence. That can be found, where can we find that? - In the Penguin edition page 176:

*J.J. O'Molloy turned to Stephen and said quietly and slowly:
-One of the most polished periods I think I ever listened to in my
life fell from the lips of Seymour Bushe. Who obviously, to the*

nearest letter, signifies then the bush, but here it is perhaps too early to indicate it - it is also the sexual hair, if you wish.

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

Here then a little Shakespearean interpolation:

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

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

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

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

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

- *Ha!*

- *A few well chosen words, Lenahan prefaced, who is a ...*

Good, I am skipping over certain sentences which would obviously deserve no doubt being dwelt on, but anyhow I don't have the time.

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

- *He said of it: that stony effigy in frozen music, horned and terrible, of the human form divine, that eternal symbol of wisdom*

and prophesy which if ought that the imagination or the hand of sculptor has wrought in marble of soul transfigured and of soul transfiguring deserves to live, deserves to live. (177)

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

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

Stephen goes with his father into an amphitheatre, an amphitheatre in the school of medicine where his father had spent some time,

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

The character, one of the central characters, Gabriel Conroy, is going to make a speech, the traditional speech, is that not so, of the family reunion. He is the one who is there, always there, to write in the newspapers or make little speeches like this and, people have just been talking at table, precisely, about artists whose name has been forgotten, or those finally who have left nothing, except a quite problematic name:

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

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

oeuvre which they will not willingly let die. So then there are joined together in Joyce's discourse, the question precisely of the right to existence, that of the right to creation and that of validity and that also of certitude.

What I would like to add. I would like to add on a first thing about Bush. Bushe, as you see is constructed from a sort of series from Bush starting from the *holy bush*, from the eloquent Bushe who speaking about Moses, also speaks about a *holy bush*, is that not so. The eternal says to Moses that the ground he is walking on before the burning bush is *holy*. The holy bush, is a holly bush, a bush which reveals itself as having a certain relationship to the fox. For when O'Molloy reappears in Circe, when J.J. reappears in Circe, he assumes the... *foxy moustache and proboscidal eloquence of Seymour Bushe*, the lawyer Bushe. The fox, to the fox that, that for its part also, has been noticed more than once in the *Portrait*, for example. It appears there of course because it is, Fox is one of the pseudonyms of Parnell, linked a little to his fall. But it is also a sort of signifier going back to dissimulation. *He was not foxing*, says the young Stephen when he is in the infirmary and when he is afraid of being accused of faking it. And then a little later, when he has renounced entering into holy orders, when he has seen his visiting card, The Reverend Stephen Dedalus, S.J., he evokes the face that may well be on it, is that not so, one of the things that comes back to mind is: *Ah yes! The face of a Jesuit called by some Lantern Jaws, and by others Foxy Campbell.*

There is thus this series *bush, fox*, but there is also, but there is also, and this for its part works, the interplay of Molloy, Moly, which links up with Holy. We have Holly, Holy, Moly, Molloy and another word which does not appear in *Ulysses*, but of which Joyce says - now this is something that I was keeping up my (89) sleeve, rather the letters of Joyce, but after all the letters are things that he wrote, yes - when he indicates, he gives the name of

something which is supposed to make function, come into the functioning of Circe. It is this plant, golden garlic that Hermes gave to *Ulysses* so that he could escape from Circe's clutches; and this is called *Moly*. The funny thing about it, is that there is between the two, between *Moly* and *Molly*, a difference which is of the order of phonation. Which is voiced, I do not know how it should be said, in *Ulysses*, it is Molly with a simple vowel and the *Moly* he is talking about, is a diphthong, a *ditongue*, as was formerly said. And the *ditongue* is transferred, is transformed in consonance, with at the same time as the diphthong, the *ditongue* is transformed into a simple vowel, there is a consonatic redoubling, a redoubling of consonance and it is this consonance that appears in *Ulysses* under the form of Molly. It is too good to be true. So then what he says about Molly, excuse me, about Moly, about this plant, are curious things, he says different things about it. There is one that I believe Lacan will analyse, another that I will be content to point out.

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

The second thing that I would like to add before shutting up, is simply to underline that what is at stake in all these things is, in

particular, certitude. Certitude and how one can ground it. Certitude reappears precisely in connection with the famous Virag. Since I did not tell you everything, I paused at the quotation, the famous quotation where they were talking about Virag, where they were talking, where the others, O'Molloy, tells what was involved in Virag. *Ulysses*, 331. Yes.

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

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

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

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

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

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

grandfather, with the label -huh, label comes right away like that - basilicogrammate, with the king's gramme.

This problematic of legitimacy which is revealed as the problematic of legitimation, has a dimension, may perhaps take on the figure here of imaginary dimension and its recuperation. It seems to me that Joyce uses this certitude, stages it in its relationships with the effects of voice. Even if a word, a paternal word is contested *qua* word in terms of what it says, it seems to me that something, he suggests, gets across in personation, in what is behind personation, is what is on the side of phonation, perhaps, on the side of what is also something that deserves to live in melody. In melody, and why? Perhaps precisely because of something which has effects, despite everything, on the mother, (91) through melody. Gaiety, *phantasmal mirth*, the phantasmatic gaiety of the mother which is evoked at the beginning, on page nine of *Ulysses*, has to do precisely with the pantomime and old Royce, old Royce singing. So then, something gets across through melody. Perhaps not simply sentimentality, since Irish culture, at the turn of the century, is in large part made up of Moore's melodies, that in *Finnegans Wake* Joyce calls *Moore's maladies*. This was the triumph of papa Joyce, of John Joyce. But it is perhaps precisely the case that in this art of the voice, in this art of phonation, enough of him got across for the son.

So then, if certitude, as regards what is fabricated, has always something to do with the mirror, with these mirror-effects that one, that should be enumerated, this has to do also with the voice-effects of the signifier. And I would simply recall the famous short story *The dead*, with which Joyce tied up *Dubliners*, is that not so, at an absolutely crucial moment of his poetic production, at a moment when things in a certain way came unblocked, began to operate. Some people say that *The dead* came to him when his brother spoke to him about a particular interpretation of one of

Moore's melodies about ghosts, that brings ghosts into play and a dialogue between ghosts and the living. And Stanislaus had said to him, the chap who sang that sang it in a very interesting way, in a way precisely that said something. And as if by chance, Joyce set about writing *The dead* starting from that, excuse me, at that very moment. And at the centre, one of the centres, at the very least of this short story, is the moment when the wife of the hero is petrified, frozen like the other Moses there, in hearing a completely hoarse singer singing this famous melody. And what effect does that have on the hero? It symbolises his wife for him. He says at that moment, he sees her at the top of the stairs, he asked himself *what is a woman standing on the stairs in the shadow, listening to distant music a symbol of* (Dubliners 240). He describes her in realist terms, does he not, vaguely realist, but he says at the same time: what does that symbolise? It symbolises a certain listening, among other things.

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

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

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

In the same text there appears a word that I had to look for in the dictionary, *eftsooneries*. I don't know whether this word is common. You don't know it? *Eftsooneries* doesn't mean anything to you? Namely, *eftsoon*, *eftsooneries*, in things that are put off until soon. That's all it means. Not only are these effects put off until soon, but they very often have a disconcerting effect. This is obviously the art, the art of Jacques Aubert who made you follow one of his threads, so that he held you breathless. All of this obviously does not go without grounding what, what I am trying to give consistency to, and a consistency in the knot.

What is it that in this sliding of Joyce, to which I have realised I referred in my seminar *Encore*. I am stupefied at that. I asked Jacques Aubert if this were a starting point for his invitation to speak about Joyce. He affirmed to me that at that time the seminar *Encore* had not yet appeared, so that it could not have been that that invited him to present me with this hole into which I risk myself through, no doubt, through some prudence; prudence as he has defined it. But the hole of the knot nonetheless remains a question for me. If I am to believe Soury and Thomé, since moreover it is to them that I owe the mention of something which no doubt, which no doubt I had glimpsed, of course. If the knot, if (93) the properly speaking Burromean knot, which is not a knot but a chain, if one can locate the duplicity of this knot, I mean that there are two of them, only because the circles, the rings of string are coloured. If they are not coloured, which means that

something distinguishes them - something, the coloured quality - distinguishes each one from the two others, it is only with the help of this messing that we carry on with, that there are two knots. Since this is equivalent to the fact that if they are uncoloured, if in other words nothing distinguishes them, nothing distinguishes either one from the other. You will tell me that when they are flattened out, there is one which is laevogyatory and the other which is dextrogyatory, but it is precisely here that there lies the whole putting in question of flattening out. Flattening out implies a point of view, a specified point of view. And it is no doubt not by accident that the notion of right and left cannot in any way be expressed in the Symbolic.

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

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

Seminar 6: Wednesday 10 February 1976

I repeat once again. Can you hear me?

- No! So then we must try to make this thing work. Can you hear me? Good. It's enough to speak loudly.

Things are not great, I am going to tell you why. I spend my time trying to soak up the enormous literature, for even though Joyce loathed this term, it is all the same indeed what he provoked. And what he provoked willingly. He provoked an enormous blah-blah around his work. How does that come about?

Jacques Aubert, who is there in the front row, sends me from time to time, from Lyon – it is good of him to do it – the indication of some supplementary authors. He is not innocent in the matter. But who is innocent? He is not innocent because he has also perpetrated things on Joyce.

To the point, like that, of what is on this occasion my work, I must ask myself why, why I do this work; this sponging-up work in question. It is certain that it is because I began it. But I am trying, as one tries for any reflection, I am trying to ask myself why I began.

The question, which is worth asking, is the following: from what point on – this is how I express myself – from what point on is one mad? And the question that I am asking myself, and that I am asking Jacques Aubert, is the following, which I will not resolve today: was Joyce mad?

(96) Not being able to resolve it today does not prevent me from beginning to try to find my bearings according to the formula which is the one that I proposed to you: a distinction between the true and the Real. In Freud, it is obvious. It is even, it is even like that that he orientated himself. The true gives pleasure. And this indeed is what distinguishes it from the Real. In Freud at least. The fact is that the Real does not inevitably give pleasure.

It is clear that here I am distorting something in Freud. I am trying to note, to point out that enjoyment belongs to the Real. This leads me into enormous difficulties. First of all, because it is clear that the enjoyment of the Real comprises what Freud had glimpsed, comprises masochism; and it is obviously not from that step that he started. Masochism is the major part of the enjoyment the Real gives. He discovered it, he had not immediately foreseen it.

It is certain that by entering onto this path you are drawn on, as is evidenced by the fact that I began by writing *Ecrits Inspirés*. It is a fact that that is how I began. And that is why I, why I should not be too astonished to find myself confronting Joyce. This indeed is why I dared to ask this question, a question that I asked earlier, was Joyce mad? Which is: what was it that inspired his writing?

Joyce left an enormous quantity of notes, of scribblings, *scribbledehobble*. That is how someone called Connolly, whom I knew at one time – I don't know if he's still alive – entitled a manuscript that he extracted, that he extracted from Joyce.

The question is in short the following: how to know, from his notes, and it is not by chance that he left so many, because anyway his notes, were drafts. *Scribbledehobble* is not random, it must well have been that he wanted that, and even that he encouraged those called researchers to go looking for them. He wrote an enormous number of letters. There are three volumes of them, as thick as that, which have come out. Among these letters, there are some that are quasi- unpublishable... I say quasi because you can well imagine that when all is said and done this is not something that would stop someone from publishing them. There is a final volume, *Selected Letters*, brought out by the priceless Richard Ellmann in which he publishes a certain number of them which had been considered as unpublishable in the first tomes. This whole hotchpotch is such that you cannot find your way in it. In any case, for my part I admit that I cannot find my way in it. I find my way, I find my bearings in it, by a certain number (96) of little threads, of course. I get a certain idea of his goings on with Nora from, from my, I am saying from my practice. I mean from the confidences that I receive, since I am dealing with people that I train so that they take pleasure in telling the truth.

Everyone says that if, if I manage that, anyway, I say everyone, Freud says that if I manage it, it is because they love me. They love me thanks to what I tried to pinpoint about the transference. Namely, that they suppose that I know. Well! It is obvious that I do not know everything. And, in particular, that in reading Joyce, this is the frightful thing about it, the fact is that I am reduced to reading him.

How know from reading Joyce what he believed about himself? Since it is quite certain that I did not analyse him. I regret it. Anyway, it is clear that he was little disposed to it. The qualification of *Tweedledum and Tweedledee* to designate Freud and Jung respectively was, in short, what came naturally to his pen, which does not show that he was inclined towards it.

There is something that you must read, if you manage to find this yoke, the French translation of *The Portrait of the Artist 'en tant que Jeune homme, en tant qu'Un jeune homme'* which was formerly published by La Sirène. But anyway I told you that you could get the English text. Even if you do not have it with what I think you will get, namely, with the whole criticism and even the notes that are added to it. If you read then, more easily, in this French translation, what he is raving on about, what he reports about his chattering, with someone called Cranly who is his pal, you will find many things in it. It is very striking that, that he stops, that he does not dare say what he is committing himself to. Cranly pushes him, harasses him, teases him, even, in order to ask him if he is going to give some consequence to the fact that he says he has lost the faith. What is at stake is faith in the teachings of the Church in which – I am saying the teachings – in which he had been formed. It is clear that he does not dare to extricate himself from these teachings because they are quite simply the framework of his thoughts. He plainly does not take the step of affirming that he no longer believes. What is he recoiling from? From the cascade of consequences that would be involved in the fact of rejecting all this enormous apparatus which remains all the same his support. Read it. It is worthwhile. Because Cranly challenges him, adjures him to take the step, and Joyce does not take it.

The question is the following. He writes that. What he writes is, is the consequence of what he is. But how far does he go? How far does this go whose devices, in short, means of navigating he gives us: exile, silence, cunning?

I am putting the question to Jacques Aubert. In his writing is there not something that I would call the suspicion of being or of making himself, what he calls, in his tongue, a redeemer? Does he go as far as substituting himself for what he manifestly has faith in: the falsehoods – to say things as I understand them – the falsehoods the priests tell him about the fact that there is a redeemer, a true one. Did he, yes or no. And this, I do not see why I would not ask Jacques Aubert, his feeling about the matter is just as valid as mine, since we are reduced here to feeling. We are reduced to feeling because he did not tell us. He wrote. And this is where the whole difference lies. The fact is that when one writes, one may well touch the Real, but not the true. So then, Jacques Aubert, what do you think? Did he believe himself yes or no....

- **J Aubert:** There are traces, yes.....
- **J Lacan:** That indeed is why I am asking you the question. It is because there are traces.
- **J Aubert:** In *Stephen Hero*, for example, there are traces.
- **J Lacan:** In?
- **J Aubert:** In Stephen the Hero,
- **J Lacan:** Yes of course!
- **J Aubert:** The first version, there are very clear traces....
- **J Lacan:** Of that, the fact is, in short, the fact is that he writes but...since...

Listen! If you can't hear anything, get to hell out of here! Get to hell out: I am only asking for one thing, for this room to be cleared. That would give me less trouble!

(99) In *Stephen Hero*, anyway, I have read it a bit, anyway, and then, in *The Portrait of the Artist*, well! The annoying thing is that it is never clear. It is never clear because *The Portrait of the Artist* is not the redeemer, it is God himself. It is God as fashioner, as artist. Yes, on you go.

- **J Aubert:** Yes, if I remember rightly, the passages where he evokes the demeanour of the false Christ, are also passages in which he speaks about *enigma of manner*, mannerism and enigma. And then, on the other hand, this seems also to correspond to the famous period when he was fascinated by the Franciscans, with in short two

aspects of Franciscanism which are all the same perhaps interesting. One touching on the imitation of Christ, which forms part of the Franciscan ideology, does it not, when one is on the side of the Son, one imitates the Son, and also poetry, is that not so, the Little Flowers. And one of the texts he looks for, in *Stephen Hero*, is precisely not a text of Franciscan theology, but a text of poetics, of poetry, by Jacopone da Todi.

- **J Lacan:** Exactly. Yes. If I ask the question, it is because it seemed worthwhile asking it. How can we measure the extent to which he believed? What physics can we work with? It is all the same here that I hope that my knots, with which I operate – I operate like that, for lack of any other recourse, I did not come to it right away, but they give me things, things which tie me up, make no mistake.

What should we call that? There is a dynamic of knots.

It has no use (*sert à rien*). But it squeezes (*serre*).

Anyway, it can squeeze, if it doesn't serve. What can it be that it squeezes together? Something that is caught (*coincé*) in these knots.

How can there even be, if one thinks that these knots are the most real thing there is, how can there remain a place for something to be squeezed? This indeed is what is supposed by the fact that I place here a point (VI-1), a point in which after all it is not unthinkable to (100) see the reduced notation of a cord which would pass along here, and go out on the other side (VI-2).

This cord business has the advantage of being as stupid as the whole representation which has nevertheless behind it nothing less than topology. In other words, topology is based on the fact that there is at least – without counting whatever else is there- that there is at least something called the torus.

My good friends, *Soury and Thomé*, noticed that, they managed to decompose the relationships of the Borromean knot and the torus. They noticed the following (VI-3), which is that the couple of two circles folded onto one another, for this is what is at stake, you see clearly that this one, by being folded back, is liberated, this is even the whole principle of the Borromean knot. They noticed that this can be inscribed in a torus made like that. And that this is even why if one (101) makes pass along here the infinite straight line which is not excluded from the problem of knots, far from it, this infinite straight line which is made differently than what we can call the false hole, this infinite straight line makes of this hole a true hole. Namely, something that is represented as flattened out. For there always remains this question of flattening something out. Why is it appropriate?

All that we can say, is that the knots command it, command it to us as an artifice, an artifice of representation. And that in fact it is only a perspective because we must indeed supply for this supposed continuity that we see at the level of the moment where the infinite straight line is supposed to come out. Come out of what? Come out of the hole. What is the function of this hole? This indeed is what the simplest experience imposes on us, it is that of a ring (*anneau*). But a ring is not this purely abstract thing that the line of a circle is. And we must, to this circle, give body, namely consistency; we must imagine it as supported by something physical for all of this to be thinkable. And that is where we find the following, which is that only the body thinks/ bulges (*pense/ pan-se*).

Good. Let us all the same take up what we are attached to today: Joyce's track. I will put the question, the one that I put earlier. The love letters to Nora, what do they indicate? There are a certain number of co-ordinates that should be marked. What is this relationship to Nora?

Curious thing, I will say that it is a sexual relationship; even though I say that there are none such. But it is a funny sexual relationship.

There is something about which we think, of course, but we think rarely about it. We rarely think about it because it is not a habit of ours to clothe our right hand with the glove that goes on our left hand by turning it inside out. It is somewhere in Kant. But anyway, who reads Kant? It is very pertinent in Kant. It is very pertinent. There is only one thing about which – since he took this comparison of the glove, I do not see why I would not also take it! There is only one thing that he did not think about, perhaps because in his time gloves did not have buttons, which is that in the inside-out glove the button is inside. This is an obstacle all the same, to the comparison being completely satisfying! But if you have all the same carefully followed, in short, what I have just said, the fact is that the gloves that (102) are at stake are not completely innocent, the inside-out glove is Nora. This is his way of considering that she fits him like a glove.

I am not proceeding by chance along this laborious path. It is because from all time, with *a* woman, since make no mistake, for Joyce, there is only one woman. She is always based on the same model and he only puts her on like a glove with the most extreme reluctance. It is only, this is tangible, by the, the greatest disparagement that he makes Nora into a chosen woman. Not alone must she fit him like a glove but she must, she must squeeze him like a glove. She is absolutely useless. It even gets to the point that this is quite clear in their relations, in short, when they are at Trieste every time a kid is born (*se raboule*), I am forced to talk like that, anyway, it creates a drama. It creates a drama, it was not foreseen in the programme. There is a real discontent set up with the one who is called, since they are friendly as pigs, who is called Jim and, since that is how he is written about, anyway, he is written about like that because his wife wrote to him using this name. Jim and Nora, things no longer work out between them when there is a kid. That always creates, always and in every case a drama. Yeah!

I spoke a little earlier about the button. This must surely have, like that, a little something, something to do with the way something is called, in short, an organ. Yes. The clitoris, to call it by its name, is something like a blackhead (*point noir*) in this

affair. I say a blackhead, metaphorically or not. This has moreover some echoes in the behaviour, which is not sufficiently noted, of what is called *a woman*. It is very curious that *a woman* is precisely so interested in blackheads. It is the first thing that she does to her little boy. It is to squeeze out his blackheads. Because it is a metaphor for the fact that she would wish that her own blackhead would not take up so much space. It is still the earlier button, of the inside-out glove. Because after all there should be no confusion! It is obvious that from time to time there are, there are women that start delousing like female monkeys. But it is all the same not at all the same thing to crush vermin or to extract a blackhead! Yes.

We must continue with our round.

Imagination by being the redeemer, in our tradition at least, is the (103) prototype of what not unintentionally I write as per-version (*père-version*). It is in the measure that there is a relationship from son to father, and this for a very long time, that there arose this loony idea of the redeemer. Freud had all the same tried to extricate himself from that, from this sadomasochism, the only point in which there is a supposed relationship between sadism and masochism. The sadism is for the father, the masochism is for the son. There is between them strictly no relationship. We must really believe that it happens like this (VI-4), namely, that there is an infinite straight line that penetrates into a torus. I think that I am giving enough of an image like that. One must really believe in the active and the passive to imagine that sadomasochism is something explained by a polarity.

Freud very clearly saw something which is much older than this Christian mythology, which is castration. The fact is that the phallus, is transmitted from father to son. And that even this involves, this involves something which cancels out the phallus of

the father before the son has the right to bear it. It is essentially in this way, which is manifestly a symbolic transition, that Freud refers, that Freud refers to this idea of castration.

This indeed is what led me, which led me to pose the question about the relationships of the Symbolic and the Real. They are very ambiguous; at least in Freud. It is indeed here that the question of the critique of the true arises. What is the true, if not the true Real? And how distinguish, except by using a metaphysical term, the *Echt* of Heidegger, how distinguish the true Real from the false? For *Echt* is all the same on the side, on the side of the Real. Here indeed is where the whole metaphysics of Heidegger is brought to a halt. In this little piece on *Echt*, he admits, as I might say, his failure. The Real is found (104) in the entanglements of the true. And this indeed is what led me to the idea of knot which proceeds from the fact that the true is self-perforating due to the fact that its use creates meaning out of nothing (*de toute pièce*). This because it slides, because it is sucked in by the image of the corporal hole from which it is emitted, namely, the mouth in so far as it sucks.

There is a centrifugal dynamic of the look, namely, which starts from the eye, but just as much from the blind point. It starts from the moment of seeing and has it as a supporting point. The eye sees instantaneously, in effect, this is what is called intuition. In this it redoubles what is called space in the image.

There is no real space. It is a purely verbal construction that has been spelled out in three dimensions, according to the laws of what is called geometry, which are those of the balloon or of the ball, imagined kinaesthetically namely oral-anally.

The object that I have called little **o**, in effect, is only one and the same object. I poured the name object back into it by reason of the fact that the object is *ob*, an obstacle to the expansion of the concentric, namely, encompassing imaginary. Conceivable, namely, graspable by hand. This is the notion of *Begriff*. Graspable in the way a weapon is. And to evoke, like that, some Germans who were far from stupid, this weapon, far from being an extension of the arm, is from the start a weapon for throwing, from its origins a throwing weapon. We did not wait for cannonballs to throw a boomerang.

What appears from this whole survey, is that in short, all that subsists of the sexual relationship is the geometry to which we have alluded in connection with the glove. It is all that remains for the human species as a support for this relationship. And this indeed is why, moreover, it is from the start engaged in the business of blisters (*soufflure*), into which it has made

the solid more or less enter. It nevertheless remains that here we ought to differentiate. The difference between the cut-out of this solid and this solid itself. Leading us to see that what is most (105) consistent in the blister, namely, in the sphere, in the concentric, is the cord. It is the cord in so far as it makes a circle, that it turns around, that it is a loop, a unique loop first of all because it has been flattened out. What proves, after all, that a spiral is not more real than a ring (*rond*)? In which case there is nothing to indicate that in order to join itself together it ought to make a knot, if not what is wrongly called a Borromean knot, namely, a chain knot which naturally generates the trefoil knot (VI-5) which comes from the fact that it is joined here, a, and there, b, and there, c, and that this continues (VI-6).

There is all the same something which is no less striking, that turned upside down like that (VI-7) this does not make a trefoil knot, to call it by its name. And the question that I will put at the end of this chat, is the following: people immediately – for you it is perhaps not obvious – people right away clearly noted, this is not self-evident, people right away very clearly noted that, if you change something in the passage underneath, in this knot, of this, let us call it, wing of the knot, you have right away the result that the knot is abolished. It is entirely abolished. And what I am raising as a question, since what is at stake, is whether yes or no Joyce was mad, why after all would he not have been? All the more so in that this is not a privilege, if it is true that in (106) most, the Symbolic, the Imaginary and the Real are entangled to

the point that they are continued from one to the other, if there is not an operation that distinguishes them in a chain, properly speaking, the chain of the Borromean knot, of the supposed Borromean knot, for the Borromean knot is not a knot, it is a chain. Why not grasp that each of these loops is continued for each one into the other in a way that is strictly not distinguished and that at the same time, it is not a privilege to be mad.

What I am proposing here, is to consider the case of Joyce as corresponding to something which would be a way of supplying, of supplying for this undoing. For this undoing as you see, I suppose, (VI-8) it makes purely and simply a ring (*rond*). It is unfolded; it is enough to fold it over. It is from its folding over that there results this eight. And what has to be seen, is that one can remedy this by doing what? By putting a loop in it, by putting a loop in it thanks to which the cloverleaf knot will not break up, will not break up into flakes (*en floche*) (VI-9 & VI-10).

Can we not conceive of the case of Joyce like this? Namely, that his desire to be an artist who would have a hold on (107) everyone, in any case as many people as possible, is this not exactly the compensator for this fact that, let us say, that his father had never been for him a father.

That not alone did he teach him nothing, but that he had neglected almost everything, except for relying on the good Jesuit Fathers, the diplomatic Church. I mean the plot in which there developed something which no longer has anything to do with redemption which here is nothing more than a spluttering. The term diplomatic is borrowed from the very text of Joyce, especially from *Stephen Hero* where *Church diplomatic* is specifically employed. But it is just as certain that, that in *The Portrait of the Artist*, the father speaks about the Church as a very good institution. And even the word diplomatic is also presented, pushed forward there.

Is there not here something like what I would call a compensation for this paternal resignation? For this de facto *Verwerfung*, in the fact that Joyce felt himself imperiously summoned, that is the word, that is the word that results from a pile of things in his own text, in what he wrote. And that here is the mainspring proper because of which for him the proper name is something strange.

I had said that I would speak today about the proper name, I am belatedly fulfilling my promise. The name that is proper to him, this is what he valorises at his father's expense. It is to this name that he wanted there to be paid the homage that he himself refused to anyone. It is in this, that one can say that the proper name which indeed does everything it can to make itself greater than the S_1 , the S_1 of the master which is directed towards the S that I described as having the index little 2, S_2 which is that around which there is accumulated what is involved in knowledge.

→ S_1 S_2

It is very clear that from all time, this was an invention, an invention which was diffused throughout the story, that there should be two names that are proper to this subject. That Joyce was also called James, is something that only follows on in the use of the nickname, James Joyce nicknamed Dedalus. The fact that we can give, like

that, a lot of them only leads to one thing, which is to make the proper name re-enter into what is involved in the common noun (*nom commun*).

Yes. Well then listen, since I have got to this point at this time, you must have had your fill of it (*votre claque*), and even your Jacques'Laque, since besides I would add to it the *han!* which would express the relief that I experience at having got through today; I reduce my proper name to the most common noun.

IV.

V.

**VI. Seminar 7: Wednesday 17 February
1976**

A.

B. I had a hope. And don't get the idea that this is a matter of coquetry, of titillation, like that. I had a hope, I had put some hope in the vacation. A lot of people go away. It's true. In my clientele, it's striking, but not so here. I mean I see the doors are still as crowded as ever, and in a word, I was hoping that my audience would be thinned out. In return for which, in return for which I, and then what's more, all of that, all of that exasperates me, because it doesn't strike the right note. Anyway, in return for which I hoped we would be able to

Speak in a more confidential way. To set up myself up in the middle of, I don't know, if there were only half this audience, it would be better. I am going to have to return to an amphitheatre, amphitheatre III if I remember correctly, like that. That way, I will be able, I will be able to speak in a slightly more intimate way.

All the same it would be nice if I could get people to respond to me, to collaborate with me, to be interested. It seems to me difficult to be interested in what is in short, in what is becoming a research. I mean that I am beginning to do what the word research implies: to turn round and round. There was a time when I was a little, a little strident like that, I said that like Picasso - because this does not come from me - I do not seek, I find; but now I have more trouble opening up my path.

Good, so then I am going all the same to enter again into what I suppose - it is pure supposition, I am reduced to supposing - to (110) what I suppose you heard the last time. And to enter into the heart of things, I am illustrating it (VII -1).

Here is a knot.

So then it is the knot that is deduced from the fact that it is not a knot, for the Borromean knot, contrary to its name which, like every name, reflects a meaning, there is the meaning that allows meaning to be situated somewhere in the chain, in the Borromean chain.

It is certain that, that if this, (VII-2) we call this element of the chain the Imaginary and this other the Real and this one here the Symbolic the

meaning will be there. We cannot hope for anything better, hope to place it elsewhere, because we are reduced to imagining everything that we think. Only we do not think without words, contrary to what some psychologists, those of the Würzburg, have put forward.

Good, as you see, I am a little disappointed, and I have some trouble getting started. So then I am going to get to the heart of things, and say what can happen, what can happen to a knot. As regards what makes up a knot, namely, at the minimum, the knot of three, the one that I content myself with since it is the knot which is deduced from the fact that the three rings, the rings of string, as I formerly put forward this image, the rings of string of the Imaginary and of the Real and of the Symbolic, well it is clear that, that they make a knot. That they make a knot, namely, that they do not content themselves with being able to isolate, to determine a certain number of fields of squeezing (*coincement*), places where if one puts ones finger, one is pinched. One is pinched also in a knot. Only the knot is of a different nature.

(111) So then, if you clearly remember- naturally I do not hope for so much- if you clearly remember, I put forward the last time this remark, this remark which is not self evident. That it is enough for there to be one error somewhere in the knot of three; suppose, for example, that instead of passing underneath, here, it passes over (VII-1). Well then, this is enough to ensure, of course, this is self-

evident, because everyone knows that there is no knot of two, it is enough then for there to be an error somewhere, for this, I think that this is staring you in the face, to be reduced to a single ring.

This is not self evident, because if, for example, you take the knot of five, this one (VII-4), since there is a knot of four which is well known, which is called *Listing's knot* (VII-3), I had the crazy idea of calling this one *Lacan's knot* (VII-4). It is in effect the one that is most appropriate. But I will tell you about that another time. It

is in effect the one that is most appropriate. Yeah! It is absolutely sublime. Since every time one draws a knot, one runs the risk of (112) making a mistake, just now, just now when I was drawing these things to present them to you I had to deal with something analogous, which forced Gloria to put a piece back here. And since it is something analogous, because, in drawing it like that, one makes mistakes.

So then, this knot here, if you make a mistake at one of these two points, it is the same thing as for the knot of three: everything is freed. It is manifest here that this only gives a single ring.

If, on the other hand, you make a mistake at one of these three points there 1,2,3, you can see that this maintains itself as a knot, namely, that it remains a knot of three. This in order to tell you that it is not self-evident that by making a mistake at one point of a knot, the whole knot evaporates, if I may express myself thus.

Good, so then, what I said the last time is the following. Alluding to the fact that the symptom, what I called this year the sinthome, that the sinthome is what in the Borromean, the Borromean chain, is what allows, in this Borromean chain, if we no longer make a chain of it, namely, if here (figure VII-5) we make what I have called an error. Here and also here.

Namely, at the same time if the Symbolic is freed, as I clearly marked formerly, we have a way of repairing that, which is to make what for the first time I defined as the sinthome. Namely, the something that allows the Symbolic, the Imaginary and the Real, to continue to hold together, even though here no one of them is held by another, thanks to two errors.

I have allowed myself to define as sinthome not what allows the knot, the knot of three, to still make a knot of three but what it preserves in such a position that it seems to be a knot of three. This is what I put forward very gently the last time. And, I re-voke it for you incidentally, I thought - you can make what you wish of my thinking – I thought that it was the key to what had happened to Joyce. That Joyce has symptom which starts, which starts from the fact that his father was lacking (*caerent*): radically lacking, he talks of nothing but that.

I centred the matter around the name, the proper name. And I thought that - make what you wish of this thought - and I thought that it was by wanting a name for himself that Joyce compensated for the paternal lack. This at least is what I said. Because I could say no better. I will try to articulate that in a more precise way. But it is clear that the art of Joyce is something so particular, that the term *sinthome* is indeed what is, what is appropriate to it.

It so happens that last Friday, at my presentation of something that is generally considered as a case, a case of madness assuredly. A case of madness which, which had begun with the *sinthome*: imposed words (*paroles imposées*). This at least was how the patient himself articulated this something which is the most sensible of things in the order, in the order of an articulation that I can describe as Lacanian. How can we not all sense that the words on which we depend, are in a way imposed on us? This indeed is why what is called a sick person sometimes goes further than what is called a healthy man. The question is rather one of knowing why a normal man, one described as normal, is not aware that the word is a parasite? That the word is something applied. That the word is a form of cancer with which the human being is afflicted. How is it that there are some who go as far as feeling it?

It is certain that Joyce gives us a little taste of this. I mean that the last time I did not speak about his daughter, Lucia, since he gave his children Italian names, I did not speak about the daughter Lucia with the intention of not getting into, into what one could call gossip. The daughter Lucia is still alive. She is in a nursing home in England. She is what is called, like that, nowadays, a schizophrenic.

But the matter was recalled to me during my last case presentation, by the fact that the case that I was presenting had undergone a deterioration. After having had the feeling, a feeling

(114) that I consider, for my part, as sensible, the feeling that words were imposed on him, things deteriorated. He had the feeling, not simply that words were imposed on him, but that he was affected by what he himself called telepathy. Which was not what is usually meant by this word, namely, being made aware of things that happen to others, but that on the contrary everyone was aware of what he was formulating himself, in his own heart. Namely, his most intimate reflections, and quite especially the reflections which came to him in the margin of these famous imposed words. For he heard something: 'dirty political assassination' (*sale assassinat politique*). Which he made equivalent to 'dirty political assistantship' (*sale assistanat politique*). One can clearly see here that the signifier is reduced to what it is, to equivocation, to a torsion of the voice. But to 'dirty assassination' or to 'dirty assistantship' described as political, he said something to himself, in reply. Namely, something which began with a *but*, and which was his reflection on the subject. And what really terrified him, was the thought that in addition, the reflection he was making, in addition to what he considered as these words that were imposed on him, was also known by all the others. He was then, as he expressed it, a telepathic broadcaster. In other words, he no longer had any secrets. And this very thing, it was this that made him to attempt to end it all; life having become for him by this fact, by this fact of no longer having any secrets, by no longer having anything in reserve, led him to make what is called a suicide attempt. Which was moreover the reason why he was there and why I in short had to be concerned with him.

What pushed me today to speak to you about the daughter Lucia, is very exactly the fact, I was really careful about it the last time, in order not to get involved in gossip, is that Joyce, Joyce fiercely defended his daughter, his daughter the schizophrenic, what is called a schizophrenic, from being taken over by doctors. Joyce

only articulated a single thing, which was that his daughter was a telepath. I mean that, in the letters that he wrote about her, he formulated that she is much more intelligent than anybody else, that she informs him, miraculously is the word to be understood, about everything that is happening to a certain number of people, that for her these people have no secrets.

Is there not here something striking? Not at all that I think that Lucia was effectively a telepath, that she knew what was happening to people about whom she did not have, about whom she did not have any more information than anyone else. But that (115) Joyce for his part attributes this virtue from a certain number of signs, of declarations that he, he understood in a certain way. This is really something where I see that in order to defend, as one might say, his daughter, he attributes to her something, an extension of what I will momentarily call his own symptom. Namely - it is difficult in his case not to evoke, not to evoke my own patient and how this had begun with him – namely, that with respect to the word, one cannot say that something was not imposed on Joyce. I mean that in the more or less continuous progress that his art constituted, namely, this word, the word that had been written, to break it to dislocate it, to ensure that at the end what seems in reading him to be a continual progress - from the effort that he made in his first critical essays, then subsequently, in the *Portrait of the Artist*, and finally in *Ulysses* and ending up with *Finnegans Wake* - it is difficult not to see that a certain relationship to the word is more and more imposed on him. Imposed to the point that he finishes by, by dissolving language itself, as Philippe Sollers has very well noted, I told you that at the beginning of the year, to impose on language itself a sort of breaking, of decomposition which means that there is no longer any phonological identity.

No doubt there is here a reflection at the level of writing. I mean that it is through the intermediary of writing that the word is decomposed in imposing itself. In imposing itself as such. Namely, in a distortion as regards which there remains an ambiguity as to whether it is a matter of liberating oneself from the parasite, from the wordy parasite of which I spoke earlier, or on the contrary something which allows itself to be invaded by the properties of the word that are essentially of the phonemic order, by the polyphony of the word.

In any case the fact that Joyce articulates in connection with Lucia, in order to defend her, that she is a telepath, seems to me - by reason of this patient whose case I was considering the last time when I made what is called my presentation at Ste. Anne - seems to me certainly indicative. Indicative of something as regards to which I will say that Joyce, that Joyce bears witness at this very point (VII-6), (116) which is the point that I designated as being that of the paternal lack. What I would like to mark, is that what I am calling, what I designated, what I am supporting by this sinthome which is marked here by a ring, by a ring of string, which is supposed, by me, to be produced at the very place where, let us say, there is an error in the layout of the knot.

It is difficult for us not to see that the slip is what, in part, the notion of the unconscious is grounded on. That the witticism should also be so, is not, it is to be paid to the same account as I might say. For, after all, it is not unthinkable that the witticism should result from a slip. This at least is how Freud himself articulates it, namely, that it is a short circuit; that, as he puts forward, it is an economy with a pleasure, a satisfaction in view. That it should be at the place where the knot fails, where there is a sort of slip of the knot itself, is something that we should clearly

retain, that I for my part, as I showed here, happen to fail on occasion. This indeed is what, in a way, confirms that a knot can fail. A knot can fail, just as much as the Unconscious is there to show us that it is starting from, that it is starting from its own consistency, that of the Unconscious, that there are a whole lot of failures.

But, if here the notion of transgression (*faute*) is renewed, is transgression, what conscience turns into sin, of the order of a slip? The equivocation of the word is moreover what allows it to be thought of; to pass from one meaning to another. Is there in this transgression, this first transgression which Joyce makes so much of, is there something there of the order of a slip? This, of course, does not fail to evoke a whole imbroglio. But this is where we are, we are in the knot, and at the same time in an entanglement.

What is remarkable, is that in wanting to correct the slip at the very point where it happens, what is meant by the fact that it happens there? There is an equivocation since at two other points, we have the consequences of a slip which has happened elsewhere. The striking thing is that, elsewhere, it does not have the same consequences. This is what I am illustrating by the way that here (VII-7) I tried to draw it.

You can, if you pay attention, you can see from the way in which the knot responds, you can see that by repairing with a sinthome at the very point where the slip has happened, you will not get the same knot by putting the sinthome at the very place where the transgression happened, or indeed by correcting it even by a sinthome at the two other points. For in correcting the thing, the slip, at the two other points, which is also conceivable, since what is at stake, is to ensure that something of the primitive structure of the knot of three subsists. The something which subsists because

of the intervention of the sinthome is different when it happens at the same point of the slip, is different from what happens if, corrected in the same way at the two other points of the knot of three by a sinthome.

A striking thing, is that there is something in common in the way in which there are knotted, things are knotted. There is something which is marked by a certain direction, by a certain orientation, by a certain, let us say, dextrogyratoriness of the compensation. But it remains no less clear that here (VII-7), what results from the knotted compensation, from the compensation by the sinthome, is different to what happens here and there. The nature of this difference is the following. It is that between this and this, namely, the sinthome and the loop which is made here, as I might say, spontaneously, can be inverted from this to that, namely, let us say the red eight and the green ring, is strictly equivalent.

Inversely, you only have to take a knot of eight, made thus, you will obtain very easily the other shape. There is nothing simpler. It is even imaginable. It is enough for you to imagine that you pull things in such a way, I mean on the red, in such a way as to ensure that the red here makes a ring. Nothing easier than to see, to sense that there is every chance that what is then at first a green ring will become a green eight. And with use, you will see that it is an eight exactly of the same shape, of the same dextrogyratoriness. There is then strict equivalence and it is not, after what I have (118) opened up about the sexual relation ship, it is not difficult to

suggest that, when there is equivalence, it is indeed in that there is no relationship.

If, for a moment, we suppose that what is involved in what henceforth is a failure of the knot, of the knot of three, this failure is strictly equivalent, there is no need to say it, in the two sexes. And if what we see here as equivalent is supported by the fact that, just as much in one sex as in the other, there was a failure, a failure of the knot, it is clear that the result is that the two sexes are equivalent. Except for this nevertheless, that if the fault is repaired at the very place (VII-8) two sexes, here symbolised by the two colours, the two sexes are no longer equivalent. For you see here what corresponds to what I earlier called equivalence (VII-9), what corresponds to it is this which is far from being equivalent (VII-7). If here, one colour can be replaced by the other, inversely here (VII-7) you see that the green

(119) ring is, as I might say, internal to the totality of what is here supported by the double red eight and which, here, is found again in the double green eight.

These, and I intentionally inscribed them in this way, so that you would recognise them as such, the green is internal to this double

eight, here, the red is external (VII-7). This is even what I made my dear Jacques-Alain Miller work on while he was at my country house, at the same time as I was cogitating this. I put forward to him quite rightly, contrary to what I told him, this form while asking him to discover the equivalence that might have been able to be produced. But it is clear that the equivalence cannot be produced as there appears from the following. That the green, with respect to the double eight and the red eight, is something which cannot break through, as I might say, the external strip of this double red eight (VII-10).

Thus there is not at the level of *sinthome*, there is no equivalence of relationship between the green and the red, to content ourselves with this simple designation. It is in the measure that there is a *sinthome* that there is no sexual equivalence, namely, that there is a relationship. For it is quite sure that if we say that the non-relationship stems from the equivalence, it is in the measure that there is no equivalence that the relationship is structured. There is then at once sexual relationship and non-relationship. Except for the fact that where there is relationship, it is in the measure that there is *sinthome*. Namely where, as I said, it is from the *sinthome* that the other sex is supported.

I allowed myself to say that the *sinthome*, is very precisely the sex to which I do not belong, namely, a woman. If *a* woman is a *sinthome* for every man, it is quite clear that there is a need to find (120) another name for what is involved in the case of a man for *a* woman; since precisely the *sinthome* is characterised by non-

equivalence. One may say that man is for a woman anything you please, namely an affliction, worse than a *sinthome*, you may well articulate it as you please, a devastation even, but, if there is no equivalence, you are forced to specify what is involved in the *sinthome*.

There is no equivalence, it is the only thing, it is the only *redoute* where there is supported what is called in the speaking being, in the human being, the sexual relationship. Is this not what is demonstrated by what is called, it is a different use of the term, the clinic, make no mistake, the bed (*lit*)? When we see people in bed, it is there all the same, not simply in hospital beds, it is all the same there that we can form an idea for ourselves of what is involved in this famous relationship. This relationship is linked (*se lie*), make no mistake, *l-i-e* this time, this relationship is linked to something about which I could not put forward, and this indeed is what results, good God, from everything that I hear on another bed, on the famous couch where I am told things at length. The fact is that the link, the close link of the *sinthome*, is this something that it is a matter of situating in terms of what it has to do with the Real, with the Real of the Unconscious, if it is indeed the case that the Unconscious is real.

How know whether the Unconscious is real or imaginary? This indeed is the question. It shares in an equivocation between the two, but from something in which, thanks to Freud, we are henceforth engaged, and engaged under the title, under the title of *sinthome*. I mean that henceforth, it is with the *sinthome* that we have to deal in the relationship itself, held by Freud to be natural, which means nothing, the sexual relationship.

It is on this that I will leave you today, since moreover I must mark in some way or other my disappointment at not having encountered fewer of you here.

VII. Seminar 8: Wednesday 9 March 1976

Good. Well here I am, here I am reduced to improvising. Not at all of course that I have not worked since the last time, and in full measure. But since I did not necessarily expect that I would have to speak since, in principle, we are on strike, here I am then reduced to doing what I all the same prepared a little, and even a lot. Today I am going to, I hoped that you would be less numerous as usual, today I am going to show you something. It is not necessarily, what, what you are expecting. It is not unrelated. But, I took along, before leaving, something that I really wanted to think about because I had promised the person who is not uninterested in it. This is what I would like you to get to know, or to recall for those who know it already, that there is someone that I am very fond of called H  l  ne Cixous. This is written with a C at the beginning, and it ends with an S. Here it is pronounced Cixous.

So then the aforesaid H  l  ne Cixous had already produced, it appears - for my part it had remained a little vague in my memory - had already produced, it appears in the out-of-print issue of *Litt  rature*, to remind myself of it, I was completely ignorant of it, that I had produced *Litturaterre*. In this out-of-print issue, which will not make it easy for you to rediscover it, except for those who

already have it, she produced a little note on Dora. And then, since that, she has made a play out of it, *The Portrait of Dora*. This is the title. A play that is on at the Petit Orsay. Namely, in an annex of the Grand Orsay. Everyone can easily imagine it. The Grand Orsay being occupied by Jean-Louis Barrault and Madeleine Renaud.

(122) Now I did not find this *Portrait of Dora* too bad at all. I said what I thought of it to her that I have called H  l  ne, ever since I have known her, and I told her that I would talk about it.

The Portrait of Dora, we are dealing with Freud's Dora. And this indeed is why, in short, I suspect that this may interest some people in going to see how it is produced. It is produced in a real way. I mean that reality is what, the reality of rehearsals, for example, is what at the end of the day, dominated the actors. I do not know how you will appreciate it. But what is sure is that there is here something quite striking. What is at stake is hysteria, Dora's hysteria, precisely, and it happens that she is not the best hysteric in the cast. She who is the best hysteric is playing a different role, but she does not show at all her hysterical virtues. Dora herself, anyway, the one who plays her role, shows them not badly; at least this is my feeling. There is also someone in it who acts, who plays the role of Freud. He is, of course, very embarrassed. And he is very embarrassed and, and this can be seen, in short, he tackles it with great precaution. And it is all the less successful, at least for him, because he is not an actor, he offered himself up to do that. So then, he is afraid the whole time of charging Freud. Anyway, this can be seen in his delivery. Anyway, the best thing I can tell you, is to go and see it. What you will see is something that, all the same, is marked by this precaution of Freud, of the actor Freud.

So then, there results, on the whole, in short, something which, which is quite curious when all is said and done. One has there hysteria - I think that this will strike you, but after all, perhaps you will appreciate it differently- we have here hysteria which I could describe as *incomplete*. I mean that hysteria, has always been, anyway since Freud, has always been two. And there, one sees this hysteria being in a way reduced to a state that I would call - and that is why moreover that in short this will not go too badly with what I have to explain to you - in a way to its material state. It lacks this element which has been added on for some time, and since before Freud, when all is said and done, namely, how it ought to be *comprehended*. This produces something very striking and, and very instructive. It is a kind of rigid hysteria.

You are going to see, because I am going to show you what is meant on this occasion by the word *rigidity*. Because I am going (123) to talk to you about a chain which is what I happen to have put forward for your attention, the chain, to call it like that, the Borromean chain. And it is not for nothing that it is called a knot. Because it slides towards the knot. I am going to show you that right away. But, but there what you will see, is a sort of implanting of rigidity before this something from which it is not ruled out that the word chain representifies it for you, as one might say. Because a chain is rigid all the same. The trouble is that the chain in question can only be conceived of as very supple. It is even important to consider it as completely supple. That to, I am going, I am going to show you.

Anyway, I will not tell you any more, then, about the *Portrait of Dora*. I hope, I hope what? To have some echo of it from people who, for example, come to see me. That happens.

Good, so then, let us talk about what is at stake: the chain, and the chain that I was led to articulate, indeed to describe, by joining to

it as I was led to do, the Symbolic the Imaginary and the Real.

What is important, is the Real.

After having spoken at length about the Symbolic and of the Imaginary, I was led to, to ask myself what the Real might be in this conjunction. And the Real, it is clearly understood that it cannot be a single one of these rings of string. It is a way of, of presenting them in their knot of a chain which by itself entirely makes up the Real of the knot. So then I ask you to pardon me for stepping away from the microphone. You should all the same already have copped on a little to what I, that with which I try to support the Borromean chain.

Here in short is what this is like (VIII-1), something that would be (124) a little like that. I was not inclined to complete it. But it is obvious that it must be completed to sense what is at stake. Here is the typical chain.

It is certain that the fact that I draw it like that (VIII-2), you have seen sufficiently how it can be transformed, in a flash, into something which has the appearance of well, of better deserving the name of chain. Namely, of producing between the blue for example, and the red, something – here one no longer knows how to put it - which makes a chain or which makes a knot (VIII-3).

Because this is after all what most resembles - I inverted things but it doesn't matter- what most resembles what one usually puts, what one usually considers to be a chain.

Which has the advantage, finally, of representing it like that (VIII-4), normally representing the three rings in a way, in short, that must be called *projective*. This moreover is valid. It nevertheless remains that, that what is presented thus (VIII-5), will be, careful here, you see clearly that we are forced to place the three rings in a way that respects the arrangement of what I first drew. As can be

seen, the advantage which results from the way that I am thus presenting it, is that it simulates a sphere, as I pointed out to Dali with whom I talked to about that sometime or other. The difference there is between this Borromean chain and what is always drawn in an armillary sphere when one has it, when one tries to make it travel on three levels, what can be called respectively transversal, vertical (*sagittal*), horizontal. We have never seen an armillary sphere being represented in the way in which this knot, this Borromean knot, is presented.

So then, this false sphere, this false sphere that I drew there on the extreme right, there is a way to manipulate it. To manipulate it as taken at the level of what constitutes an eighth of it, that consists there, this, because this sphere is supported by circles, there is a way to turn it inside out, to turn it back on itself.

A sphere, as such, it is difficult not to conceive that it is linked to the idea of All. It is a fact that the fact that one very easily represents a sphere by a circle links the idea of All, which is only supported by the sphere, links the idea of All to the circle. But it is an error. And it is an error because the idea of All implies closure. If one can turn this All inside out, the inside becomes the outside. And this is what happens from the moment that we have supported the Borromean chain by circles, the fact is that the Borromean chain can be turned inside out. It can be turned inside out because the circle is not at all what is believed, what symbolises the idea of All, but that in a circle there is a hole. It is in the measure that beings are inert, namely, supported by a body, that one can, as has been done, under the initiative of Popilius, say to someone: *You will not get out of there because I made a ring around you, you will not get out of there before promising me something or other.*

(126) We rediscover there, in short, something for which I put forward that concerning what I called by the name of the woman: she is not-all (*pas-toute*). She is not-all, means that women constitute only one set. In effect, with time, we have come to dissociate the idea of All from the idea of a set. I mean that we have arrived at the thought of the fact that a certain number of objects can be supported by small letters. And then the idea of All is dissociated, namely, that the circle that is supposed in a quite fragile representation to gather them together, the circle is outside the objects a, b, c, etc (VIII-7).

Specifying that the woman is *not-all*, implies an asymmetry, an asymmetry between an object that one might call capital A - and it is a matter of knowing what it is - and a set with one element. The two, if there is a couple, being reunited by being contained in a circle which by this fact is found to be distinct (VIII-8). This is usually expressed in the following form, one uses brackets that are written as follows $\{A\{B\}\}$. On the one hand there is an element and on the other hand a set with one element. As you see, I did something stupid.

So then I must admit the following to you, which is that after having assented to what Soury and Thomé had articulated for me, namely, namely that a Borromean chain of three shows itself as supporting two different objects, on condition that the three rings that constitute the aforesaid chain are coloured and orientated; the two being required. What distinguishes the two objects in question in a second phase, namely, after having assented to what they said, but superficially in a way, I found myself in a rather (127) disagreeable position of having imagined that simply to colour them was enough to distinguish two objects. Because I had not, I had consented quite superficially to what they had brought me the affirmation of.

In effect, it seems to be sensed that if we colour in red one of these three rings, this is all the same not the same object if we colour this one in green and this one in blue, or if we do the opposite (VIII-9).

It is nevertheless the same object if we turn the sphere inside out.

We will very easily obtain, I am going, good God, to draw it rapidly for you, we will obtain very easily a contrary layout. Namely, that in order to start from what is there, from what is there to represent it thus (VIII-10), where, once again, it is turned inside out in the following way.

(128) It is in effect, if we do not consider this as rigid, quite plausible to make of the red ring the following presentation. If here as is also more that plausible, we make the ring (*anneau*) so as to bring it there where it is quite obvious that it can be, you get the following transformation (VIII-11).

And starting from the following transformation, it is highly plausible to make this ring slip in such a way that what it is a matter of obtaining, namely, that the green ring should be internal, instead of it being the blue ring, should be inside the red ring. And that on the contrary, the blue ring should be outside, this can be obtained (VIII-12).

These things, I can after all say it, are not so easy to demonstrate. The proof is that what is immediate by simply thinking that the three rings can be turned inside out with respect to one another, what is immediate and obtained by manipulation, is that not so, obtained as easily as that. The proof is that the aforesaid Soury and Thomé, in short, who very rightly represented this manipulation for me, only did it by getting a little entangled. I

tried to represent for you there how this transformation can effectively be said to operate. Good.

In short, what stops us? Stops us in the immediacy which is another sort of obviousness (*evidence*), as I might say, this (129) obviousness that, as regards the Real, I make a *joke* that I support by hollowing out (*l'évidement*). What resists this obviousness-hollowing out, is the nodal appearance produced by what I will call the chain knot (*chaîn-noeud*), by equivocating on the chain and the knot. This nodal appearance, this form of knot, as I might say, is what gives assurance to the Real. And I would say on this occasion that it is then a fallacy, since I spoke about appearance, it is a fallacy which bears witness to what the Real is.

There is a difference between the pseudo-obviousness, because in my stupidity I first held as obvious that there could be two objects by simply colouring the circles, what is meant by the fact that in short I demonstrated for you this series of artifices? This is where the difference between showing and demonstrating is shown.

There is, in a way, an idea of downfall (*déchéance*) in the demonstrating with respect to the showing. There is a choice of showing. All the blah-blah starting from the obvious only produces the hollowing out on condition of doing it significantly.

The *more geometrico* which was for a long time the ideal support of proof, is based on the fallacy of a formal obviousness. And this is altogether of a kind to remind us that geometrically a line is only the intersection of two surfaces, two surfaces which are themselves cut out of a solid. But a different kind of support is provided by the ring (*anneau*), the circle, whatever it may be, on condition that it is supple. It is a different geometry which is founded on the chain.

It is certain that I remain extremely struck by my error that I quite rightly called stupidity (*connerie*), that I was affected by it to a degree that is difficult to imagine. It is indeed because I want to recover that I am now going to oppose to what I believe to be, as they expressed it to me, the opinion of Soury and Thomé, who pointed out to me that it is not simply that the three circles should be the one coloured, the others oriented, or another oriented, here I am formulating, and I think I can prove, in the sense that proving is still close to showing, what is at stake.

Soury and Thomé proceeded by way of a combinatorial exhaustion of three colourings and three collocated orientations on each of the circles; they believed they should carry out this exhaustion to demonstrate that there are two different Borromean chains. I believe that I can oppose this here. Oppose it by something that emerges from the way, from the way in (130) which precisely I represent this chain. The way in which I represent the Borromean chain (VIII-13), to maintain the same colours which are those I have made use of, here is how I represent, here is how I usually represent what you have seen there. I represent it by this differently to the way in which I made operate there two infinite straight lines. There, the use of these two infinite straight lines as against the circle that conjoins them, is enough to allow us to prove that there are two different objects in the chain. That there are two different objects in the chain on this condition that a couple is coloured and a third orientated (VIII-14).

If I spoke about infinite straight lines, the fact is that the infinite straight line which, prudently, Soury and Thomé do not use, the infinite straight line is an equivalent of the circle. It is an equivalent of the circle, at least as regards the chain. It is an equivalent whose point, one point of which is at infinity. What is required from two infinite straight lines, is that they should be concentric. I mean that between themselves, they should not make a chain. This is the point that Desargues had highlighted a long time ago, but without specifying this last point, namely, that the straight lines which are at stake, straight lines described as infinite, must not be linked

together. Because nothing is specified in what Desargues formulated, and which I evoked at one time in my seminar, nothing is specified about what is involved about this point said to be at infinity.

We see then the following point: let us orient the ring that we say has no need to be of one colour. This obviously already isolates it. And because of the fact that it is not said to be of one colour, this is already to make something different. Nevertheless, it is not indifferent to say that the three must be oriented. If you proceed starting from this orientation, this orientation which, from where we see it is dextrogyratory. It must not be believed that an orientation is something that is maintained in every case. The proof, the proof is easy to give. It is, namely, that by turning inside out, and turning inside out will imply the inversion of straight lines, by turning the ring inside out the red ring will have, after being turned inside out, an exactly inverse orientation. I said that a single one is enough to be oriented. This is all the more conceivable that by making infinite straight lines, starting from where will we give an orientation to the aforesaid straight lines?

It is altogether possible to display the second object starting from what I, which was at the principle of my illusion about colouring starting from here (VIII-14a), that by taking the first, while inverting the colours, by taking the first of what I drew there, namely, by putting here the green colour and here the blue colour you get an undoubtedly different object (VIII-15a) on condition of leaving the orientation of this one which is oriented, of leaving it the same. Why in effect would I change the orientation? The orientation has no reason to be changed if I change the couple of colours. How will I recognise non-identity, the non-identity of the total object, if I change the orientation? And even if you turn it inside out, you will notice that this object is well and truly different. Because what it is a matter of comparing, is the object constituted by this, namely, by making it turn through here (VIII-15b). Compare it with this object with is there (VIII-14b) and, in short, we notice that here, is the orientation, the maintained orientation of this object, the maintained

orientation which is opposed, which differentiates this triple from this in (132) which it could be said to have the same presentation.

This allows us to distinguish the difference between what I called earlier the Real as marked by fallacy, from what is involved in the true. Only what has a meaning is true.

What is the relation of the Real to the true?

The true about the Real, if I may express myself thus, is that the Real, the Real of the couple here has no sense. This plays on the equivocation of the word sense (*sens*). What is the relationship of sense to that which here is inscribed as orientation? One may ask the question and one can suggest a response, namely, that it is time. The important thing is the fact that we bring into operation on this occasion the couple described as coloured, and that this has no sense. Is the appearance of colour from vision, in the sense in which I distinguished it, or from the look? Is it the look or vision that distinguishes colour? It is a question that today I will leave in suspense.

The notion of couple, of coloured couple, is there to suggest that in sex, there is nothing more than, I would say, the being of colour. Which in itself suggests that there can be *woman the colour of man*, I will say, or *man the colour of woman*. The sexes on this occasion, if we support with the red ring what is involved in the Symbolic, the sexes on this occasion are opposed as Imaginary and Real, as Idea and Impossible to take up again my terms.

But is it quite sure that it is always the Real that is at stake? I put forward that in the case of Joyce, it is the idea and the *sinthome*, rather, as I call it. Hence the illumination that results from it about what a woman is: *not-all* here, by not being grasped, by remaining to Joyce, specifically, foreign, by not having a meaning (*sens*) for him. Besides, does a woman ever have a meaning for a man?

(133) Man is the bearer of the idea of the signifier. And the idea of signifier is supported in *lalangue* from syntax, essentially. It nevertheless remains that if something, in History, can be supposed, it is that the totality of women who, before a tongue that is decomposing, Latin on this occasion, since it is what is at stake at the origin of our tongues – that it is the totality of women who engender what I have called *lalangue*.

It is this expression (*dire*) questioned about what is involved in *lalangue*, about what was able to guide, guide one sex of the two, towards what I will call this prosthesis of equivocation. For what characterises *lalangue* among all others, are the equivocations that are possible in it. This is what I illustrated by the equivocation of *deux* and *d'eux*. A set of women in every case has engendered *lalangue*.

I would all the same like to indicate something to you about this. It is that we have spoken about a lot of things today, except what is proper to the Borromean chain. The Borromean chain would not take place if there were not this thing that I am drawing (VIII-17), and that, as usual, I am drawing badly because that is how it ought to be drawn, what is proper to it and what is what I will call the false hole (*faux-trou*).

In a circle, as I underlined earlier, there is a hole. The fact that one can with one circle by uniting another with it, make this hole which consists in what is happening there, in the middle and which is neither the hole of one nor the hole of the other, this is what I call the false hole.

But there is something on which there is based the whole essence of the Borromean chain, which is that infinite straight line or circle, if there is something that traverses what I called just now the false hole, if there is (134) something, I repeat, straight line or circle, this false hole is, as one might say, verified (VIII-18). The function of this, the verification of the false hole, the fact that this verification transforms it into the Real, is what ... and I will allow myself on this occasion to recall that I had occasion to reread my *Meaning of the phallus*. I had the pleasant surprise of finding

from the first line the evocation of the knot. This at a date when I was very far from having, from having interested myself in what is called the Borromean knot. The first lines of the *Meaning of the phallus* indicate the knot as being what is the mainspring on that occasion, it is this phallus which has the role of verifying, of the false hole, which is the Real.

It is inasmuch as the sinthome makes a false hole with the Symbolic, that there is some kind of praxis. Namely, something which is related to saying, to what I will call moreover on this occasion the art of saying (*l'art-dire*), indeed, which slides towards ardour.

Joyce, to end, did not know that he was making the sinthome. I mean that he simulated it. He was unconscious of it. And it is by this fact that he is a pure artificer, that he is a man of know-how. Namely, what is called moreover an artist.

The only Real which verifies anything whatsoever is the phallus, in so far as I said earlier what the phallus is the support of; namely, of what I underlined in this article, that is to say the function of the signifier in so far as it creates every signified. It is still necessary, I would add, in order to take it up the next time, it is still necessary that there should only be it to verify this Real.

This is the last thing that Soury and Thomé gave me. It is my kind of Borromean knot, made of two infinite straight lines and of something circular (IX-1).

You can see for yourselves, with a little effort, no doubt, that it is Borromean. There you are. So then, the only excuse, because in truth I need excuses. I need excuses at least in my own eyes. The only excuse that I have for saying something to you today is that it is going to be sensible. As a result I will not realise today what I would like – and you will see that in short I will illuminate this – what I would (136) like, is to give you a bit (*bout*), it cannot be called otherwise, a bit of Real.

I am reduced to telling myself that there is something sensible that can be of use, provisionally; but this provisional is fragile. I mean that I am not sure about how long it will be useful. There you are.

I have been very preoccupied with Joyce these days, I am going to tell you that, how Joyce, as one might say, is stimulating. The fact is that he suggests, he suggests but it is only a suggestion, he suggests an easy way to present him. As a result of which, and this indeed is where his value lies, his weight, as a result of which everyone breaks their jaw on him. Even my friend Jacques Aubert who is there in the front and before whom I feel unworthy. I said that he himself had broken his jaw there, because, because Jacques Aubert cannot manage, any more than anyone else, moreover, any more than someone called Adams who achieved great things along this line, does not manage to present him in this easy way. I am going perhaps later, to indicate to you myself, not to suggest to you, indicate to you what this stems from.

Naturally I also, I dreamt, and this is to be taken in the literal sense, of this easy way to present him. I dreamt about it last night. You obviously, obviously as they say,

you obviously were my public, but I was not there, I was not an actor. I was even not the slightest bit an actor. What I was telling you about was the way in which I, not at all an actor, a scribbler, I would rather call it, the way in which I judged characters other than my own. In this way, obviously, I got out of my own, or rather, I had no role. It was something along the lines of a psychodrama; which is an interpretation.

That Joyce made me dream of, of functioning like that must have a value; an easier value to extract moreover. Since, as I said, he suggests that to anyone at all. That there must be an easy to handle Joyce. He suggests that because of the fact that there is psychoanalysis. And it is indeed onto this track that a whole lot of people precipitate themselves. But it is not because I am a psychoanalyst and, at the same time, too involved, that I must refuse to envisage him from this angle. There is here, all the same, something objective.

Joyce is an a-Freud, I will say; playing on the word *affreux*. He is an a-Joyce.

Every object as such, every object except the object described by me (137) as small **o**, which is an absolute, every object stems from a relation. The annoying thing is that there is language, and that relations are expressed, in language, by means of epithets. Epithets, push towards a yes or a no. A certain Charles Sanders Peirce constructed on this his own brand of language which, because of the accent that he put on relations, leads him to make a trinitary logic. This is absolutely the same path that I follow. Except that I call the things that are at stake by their name: Symbolic, Imaginary and Real, in the right order. For to push towards a yes or no, is to push to the couple. Because there is a relationship between language and sex. A relationship that certainly has not yet been quite specified, but which I, as one might say, have broached (*entamé*). You see that, huh! In using the word *entamé*, I realise that I am making a metaphor. And what does this metaphor mean? The metaphor I can speak about in a general sense. But what this one means, well, I will leave the trouble of discovering it to you.

The metaphor indicates nothing but that: the sexual relationship. Except for the fact that it proves in fact, from the fact that it exists, that the sexual relationship is to take a bladder for a lantern. Namely, the best one can do to express a confusion: a bladder

may make a lantern, provided some fire is put inside it, but as long as there is no fire, it is not a lantern.

Where does the fire come from? The fire is the Real. The Real sets fire to everything. But it is a cold fire. The fire that burns is a mask, as I might say, of the Real. The Real is to be sought on the other side of it, on the side of absolute zero. All the same this has been reached. No limit to what can be imagined in terms of high temperatures. No imaginable limit for the moment. The only Real thing there is, is the lower limit. This is what I call something that can be orientated. That is why the Real is it.

There is an orientation but this orientation is not a meaning (*sens*). What does that mean? That means that I am taking up what I said the last time, in suggesting that sense (*sens*) is perhaps the orientation. But the orientation is not a meaning since it excludes the simple fact of the copulation of the Symbolic and the Imaginary in which meaning consists. The orientation of the Real, in my territory, forecloses meaning.

I am saying that because last evening I was asked the question of whether there were other foreclosures than the one that results from the foreclosure of the Name-of-the-Father. It is quite certain that (138) there is something more radical about foreclosure. Since the Name-of-the-Father, when all is said and done, is something lightweight. But it is certain that it is here that it can be of use; instead of the foreclosure of meaning by the orientation of the Real, well, we are not there yet.

We must be broken, as I might say, into a new Imaginary establishing meaning. This is what I am trying to establish with my language.

This language has the advantage of wagering on psychoanalysis inasmuch as I am trying to set it up as a discourse; namely, as the most likely semblance. As for example, in short, psychoanalysis, nothing more, a short circuit passing by way of meaning; the meaning as such that I defined earlier of the copulation, in short, of language since it is from that that I support the Unconscious: from the copulation of language with our own body.

I must tell you that, in the interval, anyway, I went to listen to Jacques Aubert somewhere that you were not invited and that there I made a few reflections on the ego. What the English call the ego. And the Germans the *Ich*.

The ego is, it's a device. It's a device about which I have cogitated. I have cogitated in terms of a knot, of a knot that has been cogitated by a mathematician who has no other name than Milnor. He invented something, namely, the idea of chain – he called that, in English, *link* (IX-2).

I must draw this differently because this is what is at stake. This is a knot (IX-3).

(139) I am making it again, because, of course, like every time that I draw a knot, I get into a mess, it is not the first time that this has happened to me in front of you. There you are, correct at the bottom. You ought to see that that, that is knotted. But suppose, says Milnor, that you give yourself this permission that, that in some chain or other, this being a chain with two elements, that in some chain or other the same element can cross over itself. So then, you get this of which, which shows you immediately that from the fact that an element may cross over itself, there results that what was above here, and here, is underneath there, there is no longer a knot. There are, of course, a lot of other examples of it; there is no longer a *link*.

What I am proposing to your astuteness is the following. To note that if in the first knot, you double each of the elements of the aforesaid chain, namely, that instead of having one here, you have two travelling in the same direction and that, in the same

way, you do the same for here, it will no longer be true, however unlikely this may seem to you – and you will check it, I hope, I did not bring my drawings so that since I only had a piece of white paper put up here, I will not risk showing you how it is twisted – it is enough that there should be two of them, which nevertheless does not seem to create an objection, since one, a loop in the form of eight, if it crosses itself, is easily freed – from the circular or from the oval, as I drew it – is easily freed when this eight in question crosses over itself; why would it not be just as true when there are two of them? I am saying two eights and two ovals (IX-4).

(140) It nevertheless remains that - you will check this, I hope, I will come back to it the next time – not simply is there an obstacle, but it is radically impossible to separate the four elements.

On this point, I must say that I cannot trace out all the algorithms that I have stated of the type: $S(\emptyset)$. What is meant by the fact that I protest, in my seminar *Encore*, it appears – because of course I never read it – it appears according to some, I had totally forgotten $S(\emptyset)$ together with the function. I am saying, not small but capital which is a function, as is implicated by what I have indicated, namely: there exists an x for which this function is negative, .

Naturally, the ideal of the matheme is that everything corresponds. This indeed is why the matheme adds to the Real. Because, contrary to what is imagined, we do not know why, it is not the end of the Real. As I said just now, we can only reach bits of Real. The Real, the one that is at stake, in what is called my thinking, the Real is always a bit, a stump. A stump certainly around which thinking embroiders, but the stigmata of this Real as such, is to be bound to nothing.

This at least is how I conceive of the Real. And these little historical emergences – one day there was someone called Newton who found a bit of Real, that gave the

heebie-jeebies to all of those who, to all of those who thought, specifically a certain Kant, of whom one can say that Newton made him ill. And moreover everyone, all the thinking beings of the epoch all succumbed, each in their own way. It rained down not only on men but also on women. Madame du Châtelet wrote a whole book on the *Newtonian System*, which pours out stupidities a go-go. It is all the same extraordinary that when one reaches a bit of Real, it has this effect. But this is where one must start. It is the very sign that one has, that one has reached the stump. I am trying to give you a bit of Real, in connection with, in the skin of which we are, namely, the skin of this unbelievable business, in short, of the human spirit, of the human species. And I tell you that there is no sexual relationship, but that is embroidery. It is embroidery because that is a matter of yes or no. From the moment that I say *there is no*, it is already very suspect. It is suspect by not truly being a bit of Real. The stigmata of the Real, is to be bound to nothing, as I already said earlier.

(141) One only recognises oneself in what one has. One never recognises oneself – this is implied by what I am putting forward, it is implied by the fact recognised by Freud that there is the Unconscious – one never recognises oneself in what one is. This is the first step of psychoanalysis. Because what one is, is of the order, when one is man, is of the order of copulation. Namely, of what diverts the aforesaid copulation into the no less said and, significantly, into the no less said copula constituted by the verb to be.

Language finds, in its inflection towards the copula, the proof that it is a roundabout path, altogether bladder (*vessie*), namely dark. And dark is only a metaphor here; because if we had a bit of Real, we would know that light is no darker than the shadows (*ténèbres*) and inversely.

The metaphor *copula* is not a proof in itself. It is the way the Unconscious has of proceeding. It only gives traces. And traces which not only are effaced all by themselves, but that every use of discourse tends to efface; analytic discourse like the others. You yourselves think of nothing but erasing the traces of this discourse of mine, since it is I who began by giving this discourse its status, its status starting from the pretence (*faire semblant*) of the little *o*-object. Or, when all is said and done, of that which, of what I name, of what man puts in the place of the filth that he is. At

least in the eyes of a psychoanalyst who has good reason to know it, as he takes up that place himself. One must pass through this determined filth in order perhaps to rediscover something which is of the order of the Real. But as you see I use the word rediscover. Rediscover is already a slippage as if everything of this order had already been found. This is the trap of History. History is the greatest of phantasies, if I can express myself thus. Behind History, the History of events that historians are interested in, there is myth. And myth is always captivating.

The proof is that Joyce, after having carefully borne witness to the sinthome, the sinthome of Dublin which only takes on a soul from his own, does not fail, a fabulous thing, to fall into the myth of Vico which sustains *Finnegans Wake*. The only thing that, that preserves him from it, is that all the same *Finnegans Wake* is presented as a dream. Not simply a dream but it designates that Vico is a dream, just as much when all is said and done as the babblings of Madame (142) Blavatsky, the Mahanvantara and all the rest of it. The idea of a rhythm into which I myself fell, as I might say, in my *rediscovered* above. One does not refind. Or indeed this is to designate that one never does anything but turn round in circles. One finds. The only advantage of this refound, is to highlight what I am indicating, that there cannot be progress. That one turns around in circles. But there is perhaps all the same another way of explaining that there is no progress. It is that there is no progress except that marked by death.

What Freud underlines about this death, if I may express myself thus, is to *trieb* it, to make a *Trieb* of it. This has been translated into French by, I do not know why, the *pulsion* or the *pulsion de mort*. A better translation was not found even though there was the word *dérive*, the death drive is the Real inasmuch as it can only be thought of as impossible. Namely, that every time it shows the tip of its nose, it is unthinkable. To tackle this impossible does not constitute a hope. Since this unthinkable is death, and the foundation of the Real is that it cannot be thought.

The unbelievable thing is that Joyce, who had the greatest contempt for history, futile in effect, that he qualifies as a nightmare, a nightmare whose characteristic is to unleash on us big words which cause us so much harm, could finally only find this solution: to write *Finnegans Wake*. In other words a dream which, like every dream, is a nightmare, even if it is a tempered nightmare. Except for the fact, he says, and

this is how this *Finnegans Wake* is constructed, that the dreamer in it is not any particular character, it is the dream itself. It is here, it is in this way that Joyce slides, slides, slides towards Jung. Slides towards the collective unconscious of which there is no better proof, there is no better proof than Joyce, that the collective unconscious is a sinthome. For one cannot say that *Finnegans Wake*, in his imagination, is not part of this sinthome.

So then it is indeed Joyce who is the sign of my impediment. It is indeed Joyce precisely in so far as what he advances, and advances in a quite especially artistic way – he knows how to do it – is the sinthome. And a sinthome such that there is nothing that can be done to analyse it.

I said that recently. A Catholic from good stock as was, as was Joyce – who could never get over that he had been soundly brought up by the Jesuits – a Catholic, one who is true as true. But of course, there (143) is not a single true one here, of course; not a single one of you has been brought up by the Jesuits! Well, a Catholic is unanalysable.

On this point, there is someone who pointed out to me that I had said the same thing about the Japanese. It was Jacques-Alain Miller, of course, who did not miss his chance. Anyway, I stick by it. I stick by it, and it is not for the same reason. But since, since that evening with Jacques Aubert, to which you were not invited, since that evening with Jacques Aubert, I saw a film, which was also a Japanese film [*The Empire of the Senses?*]. It was in a small cinema and you could not have been invited to it, any more than to Jacques Aubert. And then, I would not have liked to have given you bad thoughts. All the same I picked out some people from my School who were attending this film and who were, like me, I suppose, anyway, this is what I use as a term to describe the effect it had on me: I was, properly speaking, stupefied. I was stupefied because, because it is, it is eroticism – I was not expecting that going to see a Japanese film – it was feminine eroticism. There, I began to, to understand the power of Japanese women. It seems, in looking at this film, one day or another you should go and see it, this was a private showing, but I hope all the same that it will get a permit. And by doing a bit of crawling, you will manage to see it in a limited

number of cinemas, anyway. You will be asked to show your credentials, but you can say that you have come from my Seminar for example. Yes!

In it feminine eroticism seems to be carried – I am not going to simply make a dividing line in a film – seems to be carried to its extremes. At this extreme there is the phantasy, neither more nor less, of killing the man. But even that is not enough. One must after having killed him, go much further. After – why after, here is the doubt – after this phantasy that the Japanese in question, who is a masterful woman, make no mistake, for her partner, cuts off his cock (*queue*). That is how it is called. One may ask why she did not cut it off before. We know well that it is a phantasy, all the more in that I do not know what happens after death, but there is a lot of blood in the film. I am willing to accept that the erectile tissue may be blocked, but after all, I do not know anything about it.

There is here a point, of what I earlier called doubt. And it is here that one clearly sees that castration, is not the phantasy. It is not so (144) easy to situate, I mean the function it has in analysis. It is not easy to situate, since it can be phantasmaticised.

This indeed is why I come back to my \emptyset , my capital \emptyset here which may also well be the first letter of the word phantasy. This letter situates the relationships of what I will call a phunction of phonation. This is the essence of the \emptyset contrary to what is believed. A phunction of phonation which is found to be substitutive for the male, described as man, as such. With, here is what I was objecting to, it is that the substitution of this for the signifier that I was only able to support by a complicated letter from mathematical notation, namely, what I wrote underneath, here, $S(\emptyset)$; S of \emptyset barred is something quite different. It is not what man makes love with, namely, when all is said and done, with his unconscious, and nothing more. As regards what the woman phantasises, if indeed here it is what is presented to us in the film, it is indeed something which, in any case, prevents the encounter.

But $S(\emptyset)$, what does that mean? That means that if the device, in other words the instrument with which one operates – one operates with this instrument, for copulation – if this instrument is indeed, as is evident, is to be cast aside [*rancard?*], it is not of the same order as what is involved in my $S(\emptyset)$. It is because there is no

Other. Not there where there is a supplying, namely, the Other as locus of the unconscious, of which I have said that it is with it that man makes love, in another sense of the word *with*, that is the partner. But what is meant by this S of O as barred, and I apologise for not having anything other than the bar to make use of. There is a bar that, that any woman whatsoever knows how to jump, it is the bar between the signifier and the signified, as I hope has been proved to you by this film, to which I have just now alluded.

But there is another bar which consists in barring, namely, it is like this bar here, . I regret moreover not having made it in the same way. That way it would have been more exemplary. It says that there is no Other, Other which, which would respond as a partner. The absolute necessity for the human species being that there should be Another of the Other. This is the one generally called God, but which analysis unveils as being quite simply The woman. The only thing that allows her to be designated as The, since I told you that the woman does not exist – and I have more and more reasons to believe it, especially after seeing this film – and the only thing which allows (145) the woman to be supposed, is that, like God, she is a layer (*pondeuse*).

Only this is the progress that analysis has made us make, it is to make us aware that even though the myth makes everything come out of a single mother, namely Eve, well there are only particular layers. And that is why I recalled in the seminar *Encore*, it appears, what was meant by this complicated letter, namely, the signifier. The signifier of the fact that there is no Other of the Other.

There you are, everything that I am telling you there is only good sense. And in this respect it is full of risks of making mistaken as the whole of History proves. We have never done anything but that. If I take the same risks, it is much more rather to prepare you for the other things I may have to say to you. By trying, by trying to make a *foliesophie*, as I might say, that is less sinister. Less sinister than the *Book* described as that of *Wisdom*, in the Bible. Even though after all, it is the best thing one can do, to found – I recommend you to read it, it is sober and of an excellent tone; Catholics read it less often, it must said; one can even say that Catholicism consisted throughout the centuries in preventing its adherents from reading the Bible – but to

found *Wisdom* on lack, which is the only foundation that it can have, it is really not too bad at all, it is top drawer.

Will I manage to tell you – this must not be simply a dream – will I manage to tell you what is called a bit of Real? In the proper sense of the word bit (*bout*) that I specified earlier.

For the moment, one can say that Freud himself only spoke sense and that this deprives me of all hope. For all that it is not a reason. Not for me to hope for it, but for me to really do it one day.

There you are. That's enough for today. We have to laugh a little from time to time!

VIII.

IX.

X.

XI.

XII.

A.

B. Seminar 10: Wednesday 13 April 1976

Good, as usual, as usual I have something to tell you. Can you hear? Good, so then that's it, this thing isn't working! Is it working now? What? What's happening? It's working.

As usual I have something to tell you. But I would like, like that, today, I would like because, like that, I have an opportunity - its

my birthday [*applause*] - I would like to be able to verify whether, whether I know, whether I know what I am saying.

After all, saying aims at being understood.

I would like to verify in short whether, whether I am not being satisfied with talking for myself. As everyone else, as everyone else does, of course. If the unconscious has a meaning, it is indeed that. I say: if the unconscious has a meaning. I would prefer then that today someone - I am not asking for many, I am not at all asking that, that the spark should shoot forth - I would have liked, no doubt, that, that someone would write, would write something which, which in short would justify, would justify this trouble that I have been taking for, about twenty two years, a little more. The only way of justifying it would be, would be if someone were to invent something that could be of use to me. I have got it into my head that this is possible.

I invented what, what is written, is written as the real.

Naturally, it is not enough to write it Real. Because quite a few people have done it before me. But I have written this Real in the form of what is called the Borromean knot, which is not a knot, (148) which is a chain, a chain having certain properties. And in the minimal form in which I have traced out this chain, there must be at least three of them, the Real, the Real is that. This is what consists in calling one of these three: Real. That means here that there are three elements. And that these three elements, in short, said to be knotted, in reality enchained, constitute a metaphor.

It is nothing more, of course, than metaphor of the chain.

How can there be a metaphor of something that, that is only number? Because of that this metaphor is called the figure (*chiffre*).

There are a certain number of ways of, of tracing out figures. Anyway, the simplest way is, is the one that I called the unary trait. To make a certain number of strokes (*traits*), or of points, moreover, and that is enough to indicate a number.

There is something important, which is that what is called energetics. It is nothing other than the manipulation of a certain number of numbers, a certain number of numbers from which a constant number is extracted. This was what Freud, in referring himself to science, to science as it was conceived of in his time, to what Freud referred himself; namely, that he only made a metaphor of it. He never truly, truly founded the idea of a psychic energetics. He would not even, he would not even have been able to make the metaphor hold up, make the metaphor hold up with some degree of verisimilitude. The idea of a constant, for example, between, linking the stimulus to what he called the response, is something completely unsustainable.

In the metaphor of the chain, of the Borromean chain, I am saying that I invented something. What does it mean to invent? Is it an idea? That this does not prevent you, all the same, trying in a moment to ask me a question that, that recompenses me. That recompenses me not for the effort that I am making for the moment because, precisely, what I think, what I am thinking for the moment, is that what I am telling you, for the moment, does not have much chance of getting a response.

Is this idea of the Real an idea? I mean, as it is, as it is inscribed in what is called the Borromean knot. Which, I underline, is a chain. It is not an idea. It is not an idea that can be sustained

(149) because it is here in short that one can touch that the idea, the idea that comes like that, the idea that comes when, when one is lying down, because when all is said and done, it is that, the idea at least reduced to its analytic value, is an idea that comes to you when you are lying down. Whether one is lying down or standing up, the chain effect that one gets by writing is not easy to think about.

I mean that, in my experience at least, it is not at all easy to say how a chain, a chain composed of a certain number of elements, even by reducing them to three, is not all that easy to imagine, is not all that easy to write. And it would be better to be broken in to it beforehand in order to be sure of succeeding of giving it a written form. This is very exactly what you have had a thousand times a testimony of by me, in the errors, indeed the slips of the pen that I have made a hundred times before you in trying to do what? To make a writing. A writing that symbolises this chain.

I consider that to have stated the Real in question in the form of a writing has the value of what is generally called a trauma. Not that my aim was to traumatise anyone whatsoever, especially, especially my listeners that I have no reason, in short, to have any bad will towards; to have any bad will to the point of causing them what is generally called a trauma. Let us say that it is a forcing. A forcing, the forcing of a new writing. A writing which, through metaphor, has a bearing. A bearing that must be called symbolic. It is the forcing of a new type, as I might say, of idea which is not an idea that flourishes, in a way, spontaneously by the simple fact, by the simple fact of what in short makes meaning sense; namely, by the Imaginary.

Nor is it the case either that it is something altogether foreign. I would even say more, it is what, what allows, what renders tangible, what allows us to put a finger on, but in a quite illusory

way, what may be, what may be what is called reminiscence (*réminiscence*). Reminiscence consists in, in imagining in connection with, with something which plays the function of idea, but which is not one, one imagines that one reminisces it, if I can express myself thus. This is how the two functions are distinguished in Freud, because he had a feeling for distinctions; it is in this that reminiscence is distinguished from remembering (*remémoration*).

Remembering, is obviously something which, that Freud (150) completely forced. That he forced thanks to the term *impression*. He supposed that in the nervous system, there were things that were imprinted. And these things that were imprinted in the nervous system, he provided with letters, which is already saying too much, because there is no reason why an impression should be figured as this something already so distant from the impression as a letter is. Because a letter, there is already a world between a letter and a phonological symbol.

The idea the Freud bears witness to in the *Project*, by depicting in networks, networks, of course these networks, are what, are perhaps what encouraged me to give them a new more rigorous form. Namely, to make of these networks something which is enchainé, which is enchainé instead of being simply woven.

Remembering, properly speaking, is to bring in, and it is certain that it is not easy, that it is not easy, I think that I have given you the testimony of this, it is not easy to bring in the chain or the knot described, placed under the patronage of the Borromeans, it is not easy to make it enter into what is already there. The frequent lapses that I made, in trying to trace them on something like this piece of paper, are the proof of it. Something which is already there and which is named knowledge.

I try to be rigorous by pointing out that what Freud supports as the Unconscious always supposes a knowledge, and a spoken knowledge, as such. That this is the minimum that is supposed by the fact that the Unconscious can be interpreted. It is entirely reducible to a knowledge.

After which, it is clear that this knowledge requires at the minimum two supports, is that not so, that are called terms, by symbolising them as letters. Hence my writing of knowledge as being supported by S, not to the power of 2, of S with this index, this index that supports it, this index of a small 2, of a small 2 at the bottom. It is not S squared, it is S supposed to be 2, S₂. The definition that I give of this signifier, as such, that I support from S index 1, S₁, is to represent a subject, as such, and to *truly* represent it. On this occasion truly means *in conformity with reality*.

The True is saying in conformity with reality. Reality which is on this occasion what functions; what truly functions. But what truly functions has nothing to do with what I am designating as the Real. It is an altogether precarious supposition that *my* Real - I must indeed accept my part in it - that my Real conditions reality; the reality of your hearing, for example.

There is here an abyss which is far from, which one is far from being able to guarantee will be crossed over. In other terms, the agency of knowledge that Freud renews, I mean renovates in the form of the Unconscious, is a thing which does not at all obligatorily suppose the Real that I use.

I conveyed a lot of what is called the Freudian thing. I even entitled something that I wrote *The Freudian thing*. But in what I call the Real, I invented. I invented something, not at all because this imposed itself on me, perhaps there are some who remember how, in short. And at what moment there arose this famous knot

which is the most figurative of things. The maximum that one can depict of it is to say that to the Imaginary and to the Symbolic, namely, to things which are very foreign, the Real, for its part, contributes the element that can make them hold together. This is something of which I can say that I consider it as being nothing more than my symptom.

I mean that - if indeed it is something that one can call a Freudian lucubration - that it is my own way of raising to its degree of symbolism, to the second degree, it is in the measure that Freud articulated the Unconscious that I react to it. But already we see there that it is way of raising the *sinthome* itself to the second degree. It is in the measure that Freud truly made a discovery - and supposing that this discovery is true - that one can say that the Real is my symptomatic response. But to reduce it to being symptomatic is obviously no small thing. To reduce it to being symptomatic, is also to reduce all invention to the *sinthome*.

Let us change our seat.

From the moment that one has a memory, does one have a memory? Can one say that, that one is doing any more in saying that one has it than in imagining that one has it? Imagining that it is at one's disposal (*on en dispose*)? I should say that one *dispose's* of it, that one has it to say. And this is why the tongue, the tongue, the *lalangue* that I called *lalanglaise* has, has all kinds of resources: 'I have to say.' *J'ai à dire*. That is how it is translated. Moreover it is an Anglicism. But that one can say not simply 'have', but ought, 'I ought to say' gives the slippage, 'I have to say' becomes 'I ought to say'. And that one can, in this tongue, (152) put the accent on the verb in such a way that one can say: 'I do make', I insist in short on the fact that, by this *making*, there is only fabrication. That one can also separate negation in this form that one says 'I don't', which means that *je m'abstiens* doing

something 'I don't talk'. 'I do not choose to talk', to talk what? In the case of Joyce, it is Gaelic. This supposes, implies that one chooses to speak the tongue that one effectively speaks. In fact, one only imagines that one is choosing it. And what resolves the matter, is that when all is said and done one creates this tongue, one creates a tongue in as much, in as much as at every instant one gives it a meaning. It is not reserved to the sentences in which the tongue is created. At every instant one gives a little prod, otherwise the tongue would not be living. It is living in as much as at every instant it is created. And that is why there is no collective unconscious, that there are only particular unconsciousness', in so far as everyone, at every instant, gives a little prod to the tongue he speaks.

So then for me it is a matter of knowing whether I do not know what I am saying as true. It is to each of those who are here to tell me how you understand it. And especially about the fact that, when I speak - because after all it is not sure that what I say about the Real is anything more than speaking without rhyme or reason. To say that the Real is a *sinthome*, my own, does not prevent the energetics, that I spoke about earlier, being any the less so. What is supposed to be the privilege of energetics? If not that, if not that one has - on condition of making the proper manipulations, manipulations in conformity with a certain mathematical teaching - one always finds a constant number. But one clearly feels at every instant what it can, that it is, as one might say a preestablished requirement. Namely, that *one must* get the constant. And that this is what constitutes energetics in itself. It is that some knack must be found to find the constant. The appropriate knack, the one that succeeds is supposed to be in conformity with what is called reality. But I make a distinction between this organ, as I might say, between this organ which has absolutely nothing to do with the fleshly organ, I draw a complete distinction between this organ by which the Imaginary and the

Symbolic are, as they say, knotted, I draw a complete distinction between this supposed Real as compared to what serves to ground the science, of reality.

The Real that is at stake is illustrated by this flattened-out knot. Is (153) illustrated by the fact that in this flattened-out knot, I show a field as essentially distinct from the Real which is the field of meaning (*sens*). In this respect, one can say that the Real has and does not have a meaning with respect to the following, which is that the field is distinct from it. That the Real does not have meaning is depicted by the following, namely, that meaning is there (X-1). And that the Real is there. And that they are not,

they are specifically distinct as fields. The striking thing is this, it is that the Symbolic is distinguished by being specialised, as one might say, as hole. But that the true hole is here. It is here that there is revealed that there is no Other of the Other. And that this here would be the place, just as meaning is the other of the Real, that this here would be the place, but that there is nothing of the kind. At the place of the Other of the Other, there is no, no order of existence. This indeed is why I can think that the Real is not in suspense either as one might say. That the Real can be, can be what I reduced it to, in the form of a question, namely, of only being a response - a response to the lucubration of Freud of which one can say that all the same it feels repugnance for energetics. That it is altogether up in the air with regard to this energetics, and that the only conception that can supply for the aforesaid energetics, is the one that I stated under the term of Real. There you are.

QUESTIONS

-J. Lacan: *If psychoanalysis, this is put to me as a question, is a sinthome -*

I did not say that psychoanalysis was a sinthome - is not what you were doing with your knot and your mathemes, deciphering, with as consequence the dissipating of its signification?

(154) I do not think that psychoanalysis is a sinthome. I think that psychoanalysis is a practice whose efficaciousness, which after all is quite tangible, implies, implies that I make what is called my knot, is that not so; namely, this triple (*triple*) knot. Implies the following, for me, and this is why I am suspending this approach of this third which is distinguished from reality and that I call the Real, this is why I cannot say *I think* because it is a thinking that is still completely closed, namely, in the final term enigmatic.

The distinction of the Real as compared to reality is something which I am not sure is to be confused with, I will say, the proper value that I give to the term Real.

The Real being deprived of meaning, I am not sure that the meaning of this Real could not be illuminated by being held to be nothing less than a sinthome. This is what I respond to the question that is put to me.

It is in the measure that I believe I am able, first, from something which is a crude topology, to support what is at stake. Namely, the very function of the Real as distinguished, distinguished by me from what I believe I can hold with certainty - with certainty because I am practiced in it from the term of Unconscious, is that not so - it is in this measure, and in the measure that the Unconscious is not without a reference to the body, that I think that the function of the Real can be distinguished from it.

Question: - *If according to Genesis - I am reading the things that people have been good enough to write to me, it is not the worst way to do it given what I have said: that the Real is linked to writing - if according to Genesis as translated by André Chouraqui, God created a help for man, a help against him, what about the psychoanalyst as a help against?*

-*J. Lacan:* I think that effectively the psychoanalyst cannot conceive of himself otherwise than as a *sinthome*. It is not psychoanalysis that is a *sinthome*, it is the psychoanalyst. That is how I will reply to what was put to me as a question earlier. The fact is that it is the psychoanalyst who is, when all is said and done, a help of whom, in the terms of *Genesis*, one can say that, that he is in short a reversal (*retournement*). Since moreover the Other of the Other, is what I have just defined now as the little hole there. That the little hole might be able to provide a help all by itself, it is precisely in this that the hypothesis of the Unconscious has its support. The hypothesis of the Unconscious, (155) as Freud underlines, is something which, which cannot hold up except by supposing the Name-of-the-Father. Supposing the Name-of-the-Father, certainly, is God. It is in this that, that psychoanalysis, by succeeding, proves that one can moreover do without the Name-of-the-Father. One can moreover do without it provided one makes use of it.

Question: *Is not every word-act, the coup de force of a particular Unconscious, I am asked, is it not the collectivisation of the Unconscious?*

-**J. Lacan:** But the fact is that if each word-act is a *coup de force* of a particular Unconscious, it is altogether clear that, according to the theory of it that we have, in short, every word-act can hope to be a saying (*un dire*). And the saying culminates in what we have

the theory of, the theory is the support of every kind of revolution, in short, it is a theory of contradiction.

One can say very diverse things, each one being on occasion contradictory and that, from that, there emerges, there emerges a reality. A reality that is presumed to be revolutionary. But this is precisely what has never been proved. I mean that it is not because there is a contradictory hullabaloo that anything has ever come out of it as constituting a reality. One hopes that a reality will come out of it, but this indeed is what, what is never proved to be such.

Question: What limit do you assign to the field of metaphor?

-J. Lacan: That is a very good question. It is not because the straight line is infinite that it does not have a limit (X-2), for the question continues with: *are the fields of metaphor infinite, are they infinite like the straight line, for example?*

It is certain that the status of the straight line deserves reflection. That a straight line that is cut is assuredly finite, as having limits, does not mean for all that that an infinite straight line is unlimited. It is because the finite has limits that an infinite straight line, since it can be supposed as having what is called a point at infinity, namely, in short making a circle, it is not for all that that the straight line is enough to metaphorise the infinite.

What this question of the straight line puts as a question is precisely the following: the fact is the straight line is not straight. Apart from the ray of light which seems to give us - and everyone

knows that it does not give us - an image. It does not give us, on condition of supposing it as it seems indeed to be according to the latest news from Einstein, of supposing it flexible, this ray of light itself is bent. It bends even though it gives in the short range, anyway, which is ours, of short range, even though it gives every appearance of not being so, namely, of producing a straight line.

How conceive of a straight line which on occasion is twisted? It is obviously a problem that my question of the Real gives rise to; it implies in a way that, that one can put questions like, good God, the one Lenin put. Namely, that it is said, explicitly formulated, that a straight line could be twisted. He implicated it in a metaphor which was his very own and which was supported by the following. That even a baton can be so. And that a baton being what one crudely calls the image of a straight line, a baton can be, by the simple fact of being a baton, twisted and at the same time, in a position of being able to be straightened out (*redressé*).

What the meaning is of this *redresser* with respect to the use that we can make in the Borromean knot that I already represented here as two straight lines, as two straight lines explicitly intervening in it, is in effect the question. What can be the definition of a straight line outside the support of what is called, over a short range, the ray of light? Nothing other than what is described as the shortest path from one point to another. But how can we know what the shortest path from one point to another is?

Question: *I always expect you to play on equivocations. You have said: there is something of the One (y a d'Un). You speak to (157) us about the Real as impossible. You do not depend on One-possible (Un-possible). In connection with Joyce you speak about imposed words, you do not depend on the Name-of-the-Father, as One posed (Un-posé).*

J. Lacan: That's something that is signed. Who is it that always expects me to play on blessed equivocations? I do not set any special store on blessed equivocations. I believe that it seems to me that I demystify them. *Yadlun*. It is certain that this One is very embarrassing for me. I do not know what to do with it, since, as everyone knows, the One is not a number. And even that, on occasion, I underline this.

I speak about the Real as impossible in the measure that, that I believe, precisely, that the Real - anyway, I believe, if it is my symptom, tell me - where I believe that the Real, that the Real is, it has to be said, lawless.

The true Real implies, implies the absence of law.

The Real has no order. And that is what I mean, in saying that the only thing that, perhaps, I will manage one day to articulate before you, is something that concerns what I called *a bit of Real*.

-Question: *What do you think about the contradictory hullabaloo that has been going on form some years in China?*

-J. Lacan: I am waiting. But I hope for nothing.

-Question: *The point is defined from the intersection of three planes. Can one say that it is real? The writing of strokes, qua the aligning of points, writing, the stroke qua the alignment of points are they real, in the sense - I suppose that this should be written - in the sense that (où) you understand it?*

-J. Lacan: What is written is in the sense that (*que*) you understand it? No, there is nothing to laugh about.

It is certain that it is a question which is altogether worth while posing, that the point is defined from the intersection of three planes and with the question which is put at the end: can one say that it is real?

Since certainly, anyway, my, the implication of what I call the Borromean chain is that there is not between all that is consistent in this chain, that there is not properly speaking any common (158) point, certainly excludes the point as such from the Real. Because a depiction of the Real can only be supported from this hypothesis that there is no common point, that there is no branching, no Y in writing, implies certainly that the Real does not comprise the point as such. I am very grateful.

-Question: *Does the member, does, does the number, if I have understood, the constant number that you speak about, have a relationship with the phallus or with the phallic function?*

-J. Lacan: I absolutely do not think so, precisely, in short, I think, I think in so far as my thinking has, is more than a symptom. I absolutely do not think in effect that, that the phallus can be a sufficient support for what Freud conceived of in terms of energetics. And even, which is quite striking, the fact is that he himself never identified it.

Someone writes to me in Chinese, which is very very kind. Someone writes to me in Chinese, no, in Japanese, I mean that I recognise the little characters. I would be very grateful if the person who sent me this, this text would translate it for me.

Question: *Are you an anarchist?*

-J. Lacan: Surely not.

Question: *What can be the status of a response given to a lucubration from which it would be defined as a symptom?*

-J. Lacan: It is a matter, in what I pointed out just now, of a lucubration which is that of the Unconscious. And you can indeed, you have certainly noticed that I had to, I had to lower the symptom by a notch, to consider that it was homogenous to the lucubration of the Unconscious. I mean that it, that it is depicted as knotted to it. What I supposed earlier, is the following (X-3). The fact is that I reduced the *sinthome* which is here to something which corresponds not to the lucubration of the Unconscious, but to the *reality* of the Unconscious. It is certain that even in this form, this implies a third term. A third term which, these two rings (*ronds*) to call them by their name, the rings of string, keep (159) them separated.

So then, this third term can be, can be whatever you like. But if the *sinthome* is considered as being the equivalent of the Real, this third term on this occasion can only be the Imaginary. And after all, one can construct Freud's theory by making of this Imaginary, namely, of the body, everything that keeps, everything that keeps separated, the two, the totality of what I constituted here by the knot of the symptom and of the Symbolic.

I thank you for having sent these, except for the following:

Question: *Is your twisted cigar a symptom of your Real?*

J. Lacan: Certainly! Certainly! My twisted cigar has the closest relationship with the question that I put about the straight line of the same name which is also twisted.