## Seminar 1: Wednesday 16 November 1976

There is a kind of notice which sets out...were you able to read it? What did you make of it? *L'insu que sait*, all the same that's a bit of blah-de-blah, it equivocates; *L'insu que sait*, and then I gave a translation of the *Unbewusst*, I said that there was, in the sense of the use in French of the partitive, that there was *de l'une-bévue<sup>1</sup>*. It is just as good a way of translating the *Unbewusst* as any other, as the unconscious, in particular which, in French – and in German also moreover - equivocates with unconsciousness.

The unconscious has nothing to do with unconsciousness. So then why not quite calmly translate it by l'une-bévue. All the more so because this has immediately the advantage of highlighting certain things; why do we feel obliged in the analysis of dreams, which constitutes a bévue like anything else, like a parapraxis, except for the fact that there is something in which one recognises oneself. You recognise yourself in the witticism, because the witticism depends on what I called *lalangue*, you recognise yourself in the witticism, you slip into it and on this Freud made some remarks that are not unimportant. I mean that the advantage of the witticism for the unconscious is all the same linked to something specific which involves the acquisition of *lalangue*. Moreover, should we be saying that to analyse a dream we should stick to what happened the previous day? This is not selfevident. Freud made a rule of it, but it would be as well all the same to see that there are many things which, not alone can go further back, but which depend on what could be called the very fabric of the unconscious. Also, is the parapraxis something which ought to be analysed strictly according to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Lacan's play on *Unbewusst* and *une-bévue* cannot be reproduced in English. 'Something of a-bungle' or similar expressions miss the point. A practical solution would be for readers to add *une-bévue* or simply *bévue* to their Lacanian vocabulary.

what happened, not the previous day, but this time during the day, this is something that really should be questioned.

This year, let us say that with this L'insu que sait de l'une-bévue, I am trying to introduce something which goes further than the unconscious. What relationship is there between this something which must be admitted, that we have an inside that is called as best one can, psyche for example, we even see Freud writing endo, endo-psychical; it is not self-evident that the psyche should be endo; it is not self-evident that this endo should be endorsed. What relationship is there between this endo, this inside and what we usually call identification? It is this in short that, under this title which is as it were made for this particular occasion, this is what I would like to put under this title. Because it is clear that identification is what is crystallised in an identity. Moreover this *fication* in French is in German enunciated differently, Identifizierung, says Freud, in a place where I went to rediscover it, because I did not remember that I had done a seminar on *Identifizierung*. I did not remember, I remembered all the same what was in this chapter, I did not know that I had consecrated a year to it. But I remembered that for Freud there are at least three modes of identification, namely, the identification to which he reserves - I don't really know why - the qualification of love. Love is the qualification that he gives to the identification to the father. What is it on the other hand that he advances in terms of an identification brought about by participation? He calls that, he pinpoints that as hysterical identification. And then there is a third identification which is the one that he constructs from a trait, a trait that formerly – I had all the same held onto the memory of it without knowing that I had done a whole seminar on identification - from a trait that I called 'unary', this unary trait interests us because, as Freud underlines, it is not something particularly connected to a beloved person. A person can be indifferent and a unary trait chosen as constituting the basis of an identification. It is not indifferent, since this is how Freud believes that he is able to account for the identification to the Führer's little moustache which everyone knows played an important role.

It is a very interesting question because it would result in certain remarks that have been advanced that the end of analysis should be to identify oneself to the analyst. For my part, I do not think so. But anyway this is what Balint maintains, and it is very surprising. To what then does one identify oneself at the end of analysis? Is one supposed to identify oneself to one's unconscious? This is what I do not believe. I do not believe it, because the unconscious remains – I say 'remains', I am not saying 'remains eternally', because there is no eternity – remains the Other. It is the Other with a capital O that is at stake in the unconscious. I do not see how one could give a sense to the unconscious, except by situating it in this Other, the bearer of signifiers, which pulls the strings of what is imprudently called, imprudently because it is here that there arises the question of what the subject is from the moment that it so entirely depends on the Other.

So then in what does this mapping out called analysis consist? Might it be or might it not be, to identify oneself, to identify oneself while taking some insurance, a kind of distance, to identify oneself to one's symptom? I put forward that the symptom could be - this can be cashed in, it is pretty common – it can be the sexual partner. This is along the line of what I put forward,- put forward without it making you scream like an osprey - it is a fact, I put forward that the symptom taken in this sense is, to employ the term knowing (connaître), is what you know, it is even what you know best, without that going very far. Knowing has strictly only this sense. It is the only form of knowing taken in the sense in which it has been put forward that it is enough for a man to sleep with a woman for us to be able to say that he knows her, and indeed inversely. Since despite the fact that I strive for it, it is a fact that I am not a woman, I do not know what is involved in terms of what a woman knows about a man. It is very possible that it may go, that it may go very far. But it can all the same not go so far as the woman creating man, even when it is a matter of her children, it is a matter of something that presents itself as a parasitism. In the uterus of the woman, the child is a parasite, and everything indicates that, up to and including the fact that things can go very badly between this parasite and this belly.

So then what does knowing mean? Knowing means being able to deal with the symptom, knowing how to sort it out, knowing how to manipulate it, to know (*savoir*), this is something that corresponds to what man does with his image, it is to imagine the way in which you can manage this symptom. What is in question here, of course, is secondary narcissism, radical narcissism the narcissism that is called primary being ruled out on this particular occasion. Knowing how to deal with your symptom, that is the end of analysis. We have to recognise that this is pretty limited. It does not really go very far. How it is practised, this is of course what I am striving to convey in this crowd, with what result I do not know. I embarked on this navigation like that, because at bottom I was provoked into doing so. It is what resulted from what was published in some special series or other of *Ornicar* on the split of 1953. I would surely have been much more discreet if the split of '53 had not happened.

The metaphor in use for what is called access to the real is what is called the model. There is someone called Kelvin who was very interested in that, he was even called Lord, Lord Kelvin. He considered that science was something in which a model was functioning and which allowed, with the help of this model, to foresee what would be the results, the results of the functioning of the Real. One has recourse therefore to the Imaginary to give oneself an idea of the Real. You should write then se faire, 'to give oneself an idea', I said, write it as 'sphere' (sphère) to clearly understand what the imaginary means. What I put forward in my Borromean knot of the Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real, led me to distinguish these three spheres and then, afterwards, re-knot them. I had therefore to go from these three balls - there are dates, I enunciated the Symbolic, the Imaginary and the Real in '54, I entitled an inaugural lecture with these three names which have become in short through me what Frege calls proper nouns (noms propres). To found a proper noun, is something that elevates your own name (nom propre) a little bit. The only proper name in all of that, is mine.

Lacan's extension to the Symbolic, to the Imaginary and to the Real is what allows these three terms to consist. I am not particularly proud of it. But I after all noticed that to consist meant something, namely, that one had to speak about body; there is a body of the Imaginary, a body of the Symbolic – this is *lalangue* – and a body of the Real about which we do not know how it comes out. It is not simple, not that the complication comes from me, it is in what we are dealing with. It is because I was, as someone or other has said, confronted with the idea that Freud's unconscious supports, that I tried, not to answer for it, but to respond to it in a sensible way, namely, by not imagining that this *avision* – what Freud glimpsed, that's what that means – that this *avision* concerns something which is supposed to be inside each one, of each of those who make up a crowd and who believe that they are by this fact a unity.

This notion of crowd, which *Massen-psychologie* clearly means, has been translated as *Psychologie collective et analyse du moi*. There is nothing to be done with that. Freud may well have explicitly started from what Gustave Lebon specifically call *psychologie des foules*, it is translated by *psychologie collective*, a collection, a collection of pearls no doubt, each person being one of them, even though what is at stake, is to account for the existence, for the existence in this crowd of something which qualifies itself as *ego*.

What can this ego be? It is in trying to explain this for you, that I tried to imagine this year the usage of what is called a topology. A topology, such as you can grasp simply by opening anything at all called *General Topology*, a topology is always founded on a torus, even if this torus is at times a Klein bottle, for a Klein bottle is a torus, a torus that crosses itself – I spoke about that a long time ago.

There you are. Here, you see that in this torus, there is something which represents an absolute inside when one is in the void, in the hollow that a torus may constitute. This torus can be a cord, no doubt, but a cord itself can twist, and there is something which can be drawn as being the inside of the cord. In this respect you have only to unpack what is enunciated as a knot in a special literature.



Fig. I-2



So then there are obviously two things, there are two kinds of holes; the hole which opens out onto what is called the outside, puts in question what is involved in space. Space seems to be extension when we are dealing with Descartes. But the body founds for us the idea of another kind of space. This torus in question does not immediately seem to be what is called a body, but you are going to see that it is enough to turn it inside out, not in the way that one turns a sphere inside out, because a torus is turned inside out in a quite different way. If here, for example, I set about imagining that it is a sphere which is inside another sphere, I do not get anything which resembles what I am going to try to get you sense now. If I make a hole in the other sphere, that sphere is going to come out like a small globular bell.

But it is a torus, it is a torus, namely, that is going to behave differently. **[hole]** 



It would be enough for you to take a simple tube, the tube of a small tyre, and apply yourself to testing it, you will see then that the tyre lends itself to this way of swelling, as I might say, into the egress offered by the cut, the cut that we have made here, and which, if I were to continue, supposing that the cut comes here, comes to fold back here, to be inverted, as one might say, what you are going to get here is something which is different, different in appearance to the torus; for it is well and truly a torus all the same, even though, seen this time in section, it is well and truly a torus exactly as if we were to cut here the torus that is in question. I think that it will not escape you that by folding this back until we have completed the hole that we have made in the torus, it is well and truly the figure which follows that we will get. **[cut]** 



This does not seem to command, as I might say, your consent. It is nevertheless quite tangible. It is enough to make an attempt at it.



You have here 2 tori one of which represents what has happened, while the other is the original. If you, on one of these tori coupled in the same way –

this is going to lead us to something else – on one of these coupled tori, you engage in the manipulation that I have explained for you here, namely, that you make a cut, you will obtain this something which is expressed as follows, namely, that these tori being coupled, you have inside one of these tori, another torus, a torus of the same kind as the one that I have drawn here. What this designates, is that here, you can clearly see that what regards the first torus has something that I called its inside, something in the torus has been turned inside out, which is exactly in continuity with what remains of the inside in this first torus. This torus is turned inside out in the sense that henceforth its inside is what goes to the outside, while in order to designate the latter as being the one around which there is turned inside out



the one here, we see that the one that I designated here, has for its part remained unchanged, namely, that it has its first outside, its outside as it is posed in the loop, it has its outside always in the same place.



Fig. I-5b

There had therefore been a turning inside out of one of them. I think that, even though these things are very inconvenient, even very inhibiting to imagine, I think all the same that I have conveyed to you, conveyed what is at stake on this particular occasion. I mean that I have made myself understood, I hope, as regards what is at stake.

It is altogether remarkable that, what is here [Fig. I-4] does not – even though it is literally a torus – does not have the same shape, namely, that it presents itself as a rod [trique]. It is a rod which nonetheless remains for all that a torus. I mean that as you have already seen here, what has been formed, is something that has nothing to do with the first presentation, the one that knots the two tori [Fig. I-5a]. It is not the same sort of chain by reason of the turning inside out of what I call on this occasion the first torus. **[cut]** 







But as compared to this first torus, as compared to the same, what you have is something that I draw like that, with respect to the same, the torus-rod – if we remember this thing, the torus-rod comes here, namely, that in order to support things, the hole which is to be made in the torus, the one that I designated here, can be made in any locus whatsoever of the torus, up to and including cutting the torus here, because then it is quite manifest that this cut torus can be turned inside out in the same way and that it will be by joining two cuts that we will obtain this aspect. In other words by cutting the torus here, you get what I called the presentation as a rod in the same way, namely, that something that will manifest itself in the torus by two cuts will allow a folding over exactly in the way as by joining the two cuts – and not by forming the single cut, the one that I made here – it is in joining two cuts that we obtain this rod which I am calling by this term, even though it is a torus.

Here you have what today, and I agree it is not easy to digest, but what I would like the next time, namely, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of December what I would like to hear the next time from one of you, is the way in which these two modes of folding of the torus being joined to a third which for its part is the following:



Fig. I-7b

Supposing that we have a torus in another torus, the same operation is conceivable for the 2 tori, namely, that from a cut made in this one and from a different distinct cut, since it is not the same torus, made in that one. It is in this case quite clear - I will leave you to conceive it - at the folding back of these two tori will give us the same rod, except for the fact that in the rod there will be an analogous content, except for the fact that for the two cases, this time, the inside will be outside and the same for this one; I mean for the torus which is inside.

How, I will ask you the question, how identify – because it is distinct – how identify hysterical identification, the so-called loving identification to the father and the identification that I would call neutral, the one which is neither one nor the other, which is the identification to a particular trait, to a trait that I called – that is how I translated the *einziger Zug* – that I called any trait whatsoever?

How divide up these three inversions of homogenous tori therefore in their practice, and what is more which maintain the symmetry, as I might say, between one torus and another, how divide them up, how designate in a homologous fashion paternal identification, hysterical identification, identification to a trait which is simply the same? There is the question on which I would like, that you would be good enough to engage with the next time.

## Seminar 2: Wednesday 14 December 1976

No need for commentaries. Since the last time I spoke to you about something, like that, which is not one sphere in another one, which is what is called a torus, the result is – this is what I wanted to indicate to you by that, but it was allusive – that no result of science is a progress. Contrary to what is imagined, science goes round in circles, and we have no reason to think that the people who used flint-stone had any less science than us. Psychoanalysis notably is not a progress, since what I want to indicate to you, since after all I remain close to this subject, psychoanalysis notably is not a progress, it is a practical approach to feeling better. *This feeling better*, it must be said, does not rule out being brutalised...

Everything indicates, with the index of suspicion that I bring to bear on the all (*tout*), that in fact there is no whole (*tout*) that is not riddled and in bits and pieces. The only thing that counts, is whether a *pièce* (piece, coin) has or not an exchange value. It is the only definition of the whole. A *pièce* is valid in every circumstance, that means, that only means the qualified circumstance like every valuing, homogeneity of value. The whole is only a notion of value, the whole, is what is valid in its genus, what another of the same type of unit in its genus is worth.

We are advancing here very gently towards the contradiction of what I call the *une bévue*. The *une bévue* is what is exchanged despite the fact that it is not worth the unit in question. The *une bévue* is a false whole. Its type, as I might say, is the signifier, the typical signifier, namely, for example, there is nothing more typical than the same and the other. I mean that there is no more typical signifier than these two enunciations. Another unit is similar to the other. All that sustains the difference between the same and the other is that the same is the same materially. The notion of matter is fundamental by the fact that it founds the same. Anything that is not founded on matter is *matériel-ne-ment*  $^2$  a fraud.



Fig. II-1

Material presents itself to us as *corps-sistance*<sup>3</sup>, I mean under the subsistence of the body, namely, of what is *cons*istent, what holds together in the manner of what one can call a cunt (*con*), otherwise called a unit. There is nothing more unique than a signifier, but in this limited sense that it is only similar to another emission of signifier. It returns to value, to exchange. It signifies the whole, which means, it is the sign of the whole. The sign of the whole is the signified, which opens up the possibility of exchange. I underline on this occasion what I said about the possible, there will always be a time – that is what this means – when it will cease to write itself, where the signified will no longer hold up as founding the same value, material exchange. For the same value is the introduction of the lie, there is exchange, but not materiality itself.

What is the other as such? It is this materiality that I spoke about just now, namely, that I pinpointed as the sign mimicking the other. There is only a series of others, all the same qua unit, between which a *bévue* is always possible, namely, that it will not be perpetuated, that it will cease as a *bévue*. There you are. All of these are first truths, but I think I had to remind you of them.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Condensing 'material' and 'does not lie'.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Condensing 'body' and 'consistency'.

Man thinks. That does not mean that he is made only for that. But what is manifest, is that this is the only valid thing he does, because valid means – and nothing else, it is not a scale of values, a scale of values, as I remind you, turns round in circles – valid means nothing other than the fact that it involves the submission of use value to exchange value. What is patent, is that the notion of value is inherent to this system of the torus and the notion of something of an *une-bévue* in my title of this year only means that – one could just as well say the contrary – man knows more than he believes he knows. But the substance of this knowledge, the materiality which is beneath, is nothing other than the signifier in so far as it has meaning-effects. Man *parle-être*<sup>4</sup> as I said which means nothing other than that he speaks signifier, with which the notion of being is confused.

This is real. Real or true? Everything is posed, at this tentative level, as if the two words were synonyms. The appalling thing is that they are not everywhere so. The true is what one believes to be such; faith and even religious faith, is the true that has nothing to do with the real. Psychoanalysis, it must be clearly said turns round in the same circle. It is the modern form of faith, of religious faith. Adrift, that is where the true is when the real is what is at stake. All that because manifestly – since the time, we would have known it, if it were not manifest – manifestly there is no knowing (*connaissance*). There is only some kind of knowledge (*savoir*) in the sense that I said at the outset, namely, that we make mistakes...a *bévue*, that is what is at stake, philosophy going round in circles. It is a matter of substituting a different sense for the term *world system* that we must indeed preserve, even though as regards this world we can say nothing about man, except that he has fallen from it. We are going to see how, and that has a great deal of relationship with the central hole of the torus.

There is no progress, because there cannot be any. Man goes round in circles if what I say about his structure is true, because the structure, the structure of man is toric. Not at all that I affirm that it is so. I am saying that one can try to see the state of affairs, this all the more since general

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Condensing 'speaks' and 'being'.

topology encourages us to do so. The world system up to now has always been spheroidal. Perhaps we might change! The world has always been painted, up to the present, like that, as regards what men have enunciated, has been painted inside a bubble. The living being considers himself as a ball, but with time he all the same realised that he was not a ball, a bubble. Why not recognise that he is organised, I mean what one sees of the living body, that he is organised at what I called the other day a rod.





There you are, I am trying to draw it like that. It is obvious that this is how there ends up what we know about the body as consistent. This is called ecto, that endo and then around, there is meso. That is how it is made; here there is the mouth and here the contrary, the posterior mouth. Only this rod is nothing other than a torus. The fact that we are toric goes rather well in short with what I called the other day, rod (*trique*). It is an elision of the o: t()rique.

So then this leads us to consider that the hysteric whom everyone knows is just as well male as female, the *hystorique*<sup>5</sup> if I may allow myself this slippage, we must consider in short that she is – I am feminising it on this occasion, but as you are going to see I am going to put my weight on the other side, that will largely suffice to demonstrate to you that I do not think that there are only feminine hysterics – the *hystorique* in short has only an

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Condensing '*hysterique*' and 'torique'

unconscious to make her consist, it is the *radically other*. She even is not except *qua* other. Well then, that's the case for me. I also, I only have an unconscious. That is even why I think about it all the time. It has got to the point that – I can bear witness to you of it – it has got to the point that I think the universe toric and that it means nothing else, the fact is that I only consist in an unconscious of which, of course, I think night and day, which means that the *une-bévue* becomes inexact. I make so few blunders that it is the same thing – naturally I make some from time to time, that is of little importance; I may happen to say in a restaurant 'Mademoiselle is reduced to eating only shrimps à *la nage*' [*Mademoiselle en est réduit<sup>6</sup> a ne manger que des écrevisses à la nage*'], as long as that is where we are at, making an error of this kind, does not matter. When all is said and done, I am a perfect hysteric, namely, symptomless except from time to time this error of gender of the kind in question.

Fig. II-3



There is all the same, I would say, something that distinguishes the hysteric from me on this particular occasion. But I am going to try to present it to you. You can see how clumsy I am. There you are. That is two – I am colouring this one here to give the direction – that means a torus that links up with another one. Everyone knows, because I already indicated it the last time, that if you make a cut here and if you fold the torus you will obtain the following: something which is presented like that, namely, which reproduces what I called earlier the rod, except for the fact that what I drew earlier like that is there inside the rod. The difference between the hysteric

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Instead of the feminine '*réduite*'

and me, and I who, in short, by dint of having an unconscious unity with my unconscious, the difference is this, it is that, in short, a hysteric is sustained in her form as rod, is sustained by a framework. This framework is in short distinct from her consciousness. This framework is her love for her father. All that we know about the cases enunciated by Freud concerning the hysteric, whether it is Anna O., Emmy von N., or any other of them, the other von R., for example, the setting, is something that I designated earlier as a chain, a chain of generations.



It is quite clear that from the moment that one is engaged along this path, there is no reason why it should stop, namely, that here there can be something else that constitutes a chain and that it is a question of seeing – this cannot go very far – of seeing how this on occasion will constitute a rod with respect to love, the love of the father in question.



Fig. II-4b

That does not mean that it is settled and that one can here schematise the turning inside out of this torus around torus 2, let us call it that, that one can schematise it by a rod. There is perhaps something which creates an obstacle, and very specifically that's what it's all about; the fact that the

unconscious chain stops at kinship relationships is yes or no founded, relationship of the child to his kin.

If I pose the question: 'What is a hole?', you have to trust me, this has a certain relationship to the question. A hole like that, of feeling, that is what this means when I crack the surface. By this I mean that by intuition, our hole is a hole in the surface. But a surface has a front and a back, as is well known, and that signifies therefore that a hole, is the hole in the front, plus the hole in the back. But since there exists a Moebius strip, which has the property of conjoining the front which is here with the back which is there, is the Moebius strip a hole?

It is obvious that it really seems to be so. Here there is a hole, but is it a true hole?



It is not at all clear, for a single reason, as I already pointed out, that a Moebius strip is nothing other than a cut, and that it is easy to see that, if this is defined as a front, it is a cut between a front and a back. Because it is



enough for you to consider this figure, it is quite easy to see that if here is the front, a back is there, since it is the back of this front and that, here, the cut is between a front and a back, thanks to which, in the Moebius strip, if we cut it in two, the front and the back as I might say become normal again namely, that when a Moebius strip cut in two, we are going to go over it, it is easy to imagine what is found, namely, that from the moment that there are two turns, there will be a front distinct from the back.



Fig. II-7

This indeed is why a Moebius strip is essentially capable of redoubling itself; and what must be remarked, is the fact that it redoubles itself in the following way which allows the passage. It is a real pity that I did not take precautions. Here is the Moebius strip as it redoubles itself, as it redoubles itself and shows itself to be compatible with a torus. This indeed is why I am attached to considering the torus as being capable of being cut out in terms of a Moebius strip. And it is enough, it is enough for this – here is the torus – it is enough for there to be cut out in it not a Moebius strip, but a double Moebius strip. It is very precisely what is going to give us an image of what is involved in the link between the conscious and the unconscious. The conscious and the unconscious communicate and are both supported by a toric world this is the reason, this is the discovery, a discovery which was



made by chance, not that Freud did not work desperately hard at it, but he did not say the last word on it. He specifically never enunciated the following, which is that the world is toric. He believed, as every notion of the psyche implies, that there was something that I earlier dismissed by saying a loop, and another loop around the first, this one being in the middle, he believed that there was a vigilance, a vigilance that he called the psyche, a vigilance which reflected the cosmos point by point. In this he was aware of what is considered as a common truth, which is that the psyche is the reflection of a certain world.

That I am enunciating this in terms, I repeat, of something tentative, because I do not see why I would be any more sure about what I am putting forward, even though there are many elements which give the feeling of it, and specifically from the outset what I put forward about the structure of the body, of the body considered as what I called a rod.

That the living being, every living being, is denominated as rod, is something that a certain number of studies, moreover crudely anatomical, have always seen themselves confirm. That the torus should be something which is presented as having two holes around which something consists, is something that is simply obvious. I repeat, it was not necessary to construct a lot of specifically microscopic apparatuses, it is something that has always been known, since simply people began to dissect, began to do the most macroscopic anatomy.

That one can cut the torus in such a way that it becomes a double turn Moebius strip is certainly to be noted. In a certain way, the torus in question is itself a hole and in a certain way represents the body. But that this should be confirmed by the fact that this Moebius strip which I already chose to express the fact that the conjunction of a front and a back is something which symbolises rather well the union of the unconscious and the conscious, is something which is worthwhile remembering.

Can we consider a sphere as a hole in space? This is obviously very suspect. It is very suspect because this pre-supposes, it pre-supposes something that is not self-evident, the plunging into space. It is equally true for the torus, and that is why it is by dividing the torus into two sheets, if I can express myself in that way, into two sheets capable of making a double turn, that we rediscover the surface, namely, something that to our eyes is more assured, is more assured in any case to found what is involved in a hole.



It is clear that it is not today or yesterday that I made use of these concatenations. Already to symbolise the circuit, the cutting of desire and demand, I made use of this, namely, of the torus. I had distinguished two modes of it, namely, what went around the torus, and on the other hand what went around the central hole. In this respect the identification of the demand to what is presented like this, and of desire to what is presented like that, was altogether significant.

There is something that I pointed out the last time, namely, this, which consists in a torus, within a torus. If you mark these two tori, the two of

them, by a cut, by folding them back, by folding back the two cuts, if I can express myself in that way, concentrically, you will make what is inside come to the outside, and inversely, what is outside will come inside. It is very precisely why I am struck by the fact that the highlighting, as envelopment, of what is inside is something that is not without relevance to psychoanalysis.



That psychoanalysis is attached to putting outside what is inside, namely, the unconscious, is something which obviously has its price, has its price, but is not without posing some questions. Because if we suppose that there are three tori, to call things by their name, that there are three tori that are specifically the Real, the Imaginary and the Symbolic, what are we going to see by turning inside out, as I might say, the Symbolic?



Fig. II-12

Everyone knows that this is how things will present themselves and that the Symbolic seen from the outside as torus, will find itself, with respect to the Imaginary and the Real, will find itself having to pass above this one which is above and below this one which is below. But what do we see by proceeding as we usually do by a cut, by a split to turn the Symbolic inside This Symbolic turned inside out in this way,...here is what the out? Symbolic turned inside out in this way will give: it will give a completely different arrangement of what I called the Borromean knot, namely, that the Symbolic will totally envelop, by turning the symbolic torus inside out, will totally envelop the Imaginary and the Real. This indeed is why the use of the cut with respect to what is involved in the Symbolic presents something which risks in short, at the end of a psychoanalysis, of provoking something which might be specified as a preference given above all to the unconscious. I mean that, if things are such that things are going a bit better like that as regards the life of each one, namely, to put the accent on this function, this function of the knowledge of the une-bévue by which I translated the unconscious, things can effectively be better organised. But it is all the same a structure of an essentially different nature to the one that I qualified as Borromean knot. The fact that the Imaginary and the Real should be entirely included, in short, in something which has come from the practice of psychoanalysis itself, is something which gives rise to a question. There is here, all the same, a problem. I repeat, this is linked to the fact that it is not when all is said and done the same thing, the structure of the Borromean knot and what you will see there. Someone who has experienced a psychoanalysis is something which marks a passage, which marks a passage, – of course this presupposes that my analysis of the unconscious qua founding the function of the Symbolic is completely acceptable. It is nevertheless a fact, the fact is apparently, and I can confirm it, apparently the fact of having gone through an analysis is something which cannot be in any case restored to the previous state, except of course by carrying out



Fig. II-13

another cut, one that would be equivalent to a counter-psychoanalysis. This indeed is why Freud insisted that psychoanalysts at least should undertake what is usually called two tranches, namely, to carry out a second time the cut that I designate here as being what restores the Borromean knot in its original form.

## Seminar 3: Wednesday 21 December 1976

I am delighted that because of the holidays you are less numerous, at least I was delighted, I was delighted ahead of time. But I should tell you that today....

If in a systematic cutting up of a torus, a cutting up which has the result of producing a double Moebius strip, this cutting up is present here. The torus is there and to signify it, to distinguish it from the double loop, I am going with the same colour as the torus in question, draw for you a little ring (1) which has the effect of designating what is inside the torus and what is outside. **[interchange 1&2]** 



If we cut out something of such a kind that here, if we were to cut the torus according to something (2) which, as I told you, has the result of furnishing a double Moebius strip, we can only do so by thinking of what is inside the torus – what is inside the torus by reason of the cut that we make on it - as conjoining the two cuts in such a way that the ideal plane which joins these two cuts should be a Moebius strip.

Fig. III-1b



You see that here I cut doubly through the green line, I cut the torus. If we join these two cuts with the help of a stretched plane, we get a Moebius strip. That indeed is why that is here (1) and on the other hand what is here (2) constitutes a double Moebius strip. I say double, what does that mean? That means a Moebius strip which is redoubled; and a Moebius strip which is redoubled has as property – as I already showed you the last time – has as property, not of being two Moebius strips, but being a single Moebius strip which looks like this, - let us try to do better – which looks in this way like the result of the double cut of the torus. [double Moebius strip and Moebius strip]



The question is the following: is this double Moebius strip in this shape or that one. In other words, does it go - I am speaking about one of the loops – does it pass in front of the following loop, or does it pass behind? It is something which is obviously not unimportant from the moment that we

proceed to this double cut, a double cut which has the result of determining this double Moebius strip.

I drew this figure very badly for you. Thanks to Gloria, I am going to try to draw it better: here is how it ought to be drawn. I do not know if you see it altogether clearly, but it is certain that the Moebius strip is redoubled in the way you see here. This is the point at which I am not really very satisfied about what I am in the process of showing you. I mean, since I spent the night cogitating on this business of the torus, I cannot say that what I am giving you here is very satisfying.

What appears as a result of what I called this double Moebius strip which I am asking you to put to the test, a test which you can experiment with in a simple way, with the simple condition of taking two sheets of paper and drawing on them a capital S, something like the following.

Be careful because this capital S demands to be drawn first with a small curve and then with a big curve. Just here the small curve and afterwards the big curve. If you cut out two of them on a sheet of double paper, you will see that by folding the two things that you will have cut onto a single sheet of



paper, you will naturally obtain a junction of the number 1 sheet of paper with the number 2 sheet of paper, and of the number 2 sheet of paper with the number 1 sheet of paper, namely, that you will have what I designated just now as a double Moebius strip. You can easily note that this double Moebius strip is cut – if I can express myself in this way – indifferently. I mean that what here is above, then passes beneath, then subsequently having passed beneath repasses above. It is a matter of indifference to make pass what first of all passed above, one can make it pass below. You will note easily that this double Moebius strip functions in either case.

Does that mean that here it is the same thing, I mean that from the same point of view one can put what is below above and inversely? This indeed is in effect what the double Moebius strip realises. I apologise for adventuring into something which was not without some trouble for me, but it is certain that that is the way it is. If you work at producing in the same way as I presented this double Moebius strip to you, namely, by folding two pages, two pages thus cut out in such a way that the one is going to be conjoined to the second page and that inversely the second page is going to be conjoined to page 1, you will have exactly this result, this result about which you can note that one can make pass indifferently the one as I might say in front of the other, page 1 in front of page 2, and inversely page 2 in front of page 1.

What is the suspension which results from this highlighting, this highlighting of the fact that in the double Moebius strip what is in front from the same point of view can pass behind from the point of view which remains the same. This leads us to something which, I am encouraging you to it, is of the order of know-how, a know-how which is demonstrative in this sense that it does not happen without the possibility of an *une-bévue*. For this possibility to be extinguished, it has to cease to be written, namely, that we should find a way, and in this case a dominant way, a way of distinguishing the two cases.

What is the way of distinguishing these two cases?

This interests us because the *une-bévue* is something which substitutes for what is founded as knowledge that one knows, the principle of knowledge that one knows without knowing it (*sans le savoir*). The '*le*' here is brought to bear on something, the '*le*' is a pronoun on this particular occasion which refers to knowledge itself *qua*, not as knowledge, but what to do about knowing. This indeed is why the unconscious lends itself to what I thought I should suspend under the title of the *une-bévue*.

The inside and the outside in this particular case, namely, as regards the torus, are they notions of structure or of form? Everything depends on the conception that one has of space and I would say up to a certain point of what we highlight as the truth of space. There is certainly a truth of space which is that of the body. In this case, the body is something which can only be founded on the truth of space, which indeed is where the sort of asymmetry that I highlight has its foundations. This asymmetry depends on the fact that I designated as the same point of view. And this indeed is why what I wanted to introduce this year is something which is important for me. There is the same asymmetry not simply concerning the body, but concerning what I designated in terms of the Symbolic. There is an asymmetry of the signifier and of the signified which remains enigmatic. The question that I would like to advance this year is exactly the following: is the asymmetry of the signifier and of the signified of the same nature as that of the container and the contained which is all the same something which has its function for the body?





The distinction between the shape and the structure is important here. It is not for nothing that I marked here something which is a torus, is a torus even though its shape does not allow this to appear. Is the shape something which lends itself to suggestion? Here is the question that I am posing, and that I pose while advancing the primacy of the structure.

Here it is difficult for me not to put forward the fact that the Klein bottle, this old Klein bottle that I made so much of, if I remember correctly, in the *Four fundamental concepts of psychoanalysis*, this old Klein bottle has in reality that shape there. It is strictly nothing other than this, except for the fact that for it to become a bottle we correct it in this way (in red), namely that we have made it come back in the following shape, that we have made it come back in such a way that we no longer comprehend anything about its essential nature. Is there not effectively, in the fact of calling it a bottle, is there not here a falsification, a falsification with respect to the fact that only its presentation here in green is the something that precisely allows it to be immediately grasped the way in which the junction of the front is made with the back, namely everything that is cut out in this surface, on condition of making it complete, and that is again a question: what is meant by making a cut which involves the whole of the surface?

These are the questions that I ask myself and that I hope to be able to resolve this year, I mean that this brings us to something fundamental as regards the structure of the body, or more exactly of the body considered as structure. That the body is able to present all sorts of aspects which are of pure shape, that just now I made dependent on suggestion, this is what is important for me. The difference of the shape, of the shape insofar as it is always more or less suggested with the structure, that is what I would like this year to highlight for you.

You must excuse me. This, I must say, is assuredly not the best thing that I could have brought to you this morning. I had, as you see, I had the great worry, I am floundering, - there is a case for saying, it is not the first time - I am floundering in what I have to put forward to you and that is why I am leaving to give you the opportunity to have someone who will be this morning a better orator than I, I mean Alain Didier who is here present, and whom I invite to come to tell you what he has drawn from certain data of mine, which are the drawings of writing and which he would really like to share with you.

- Alain Didier: Good. I must say first of all that Dr Lacan is taking me completely by surprise, that I was not warned that he proposed to give me the floor to try to take up again a point about which I spoke to him these days, of which I should tell you right away that personally I am not making any articulation whatsoever with what we are being told at present. I sense it confusedly perhaps, but it is not....do not expect therefore me to articulate what I am going to say with the problems in topology about which Dr Lacan is talking at the moment. The problem that I was trying to articulate, is to try to articulate in a rather consequential way with what Dr Lacan contributed about the montage of the drive, to try starting from the problem of the circuit of the drive, different torsions which appear to me can be located between the subject and the Other, different moments in which two or three torsions are articulated.

For me this remains a little hypothetical, but anyway I am going to try to retrace for you how things can like that be put in place. So then the drive, the instinctual circuit from which I will start, in order to try to advance, will be something rather enigmatic, will be something of the order of the invocatory drive and its reversal into a listening drive. I mean that the word listening drive, does not, I believe, exist does not exist anywhere as such, it remains altogether problematic. And more precisely when I spoke about these ideas to Dr Lacan, I should say that it is more specifically on the subject of the problem of music and of trying to locate, to locate for a listener who listens to some music that touches him, let us say that has an effect on him, to locate the different moments because I am going to try therefore to convey to you now rather succinctly because I did not prepare a text, nor notes? So then excuse me if it's a little improvised.

I imagine, if you wish, that, if you listen to some music, I am talking about a music that speaks to you or that 'musics' you, I start from the idea that, if you listen, the way in which you take this music, I will start from the idea that from the outset it is as an auditor that you function; that appears obvious, but in fact it is not so simple. Namely, that I would say that if the music, at the very first moment – the moments that I am going to try to decorticate for the convenience of the presentation are not of course to be taken as chronological moments, but as moment which might be logical, and that I necessarily disarticulate them for the convenience of the presentation - if therefore music has an effect on you as a listener. I think one can say that it is because somewhere, as a listener, it is just as if it gave you an answer. Now the problem begins with the fact that this answer therefore gives rise in you the antecedents of a questions which dwelt in you as Other, qua Other, qua listener who dwells in you without you knowing it; you discover therefore that there is here a subject somewhere which appears to have heard a question that is in you and which, would not only have heard it, but has been inspired by it, since music, the production of the 'musicing' subject, if you wish, would be the answer to this question that is supposed to dwell in you. Therefore you already see that if one wished to articulate that to the desire of the Other: if there is in me, qua other, a desire, an unconscious lack, I have the testimony that the subject which receives this lack is not paralysed by it, it is not fading because of it, underneath, like the subject which is under the injunction of the *che vuoi*, but on the contrary is

inspired by it and its inspiration, the music bears witness to it. Good, this is the starting point of what is to be noted.

The other point is to consider that qua Other, I do not know what this lack which dwells in me is, but that the subject itself tells me nothing about this lack since this lack does not mean anything directly. The subject itself of this lack knows nothing and says nothing about it because he is said by this lack, but qua Other I would say that I am in a topological perspective where there appears to me the point where the subject is divided since he is said by this lack, namely, that this lack which dwells in me, I discover that it is its very own, it itself knows nothing about what it is saying, but I know that it knows without knowing it. I am going therefore...You see that what I have said to you there could be written a little bit like what Lacan articulates about the process of separation. I am therefore going to articulate the different moments of the drive with the different articulations of separation. Good.

On the bottom left, I put the process of separation with an arrow which goes from the  $\emptyset$  (O with this lack put together between the capital O and the subject, the little **o**-object, and this arrow is meant to signify that, I know nothing about this lack qua Other, but something of it comes back to me from the subject who for its part says something about it. That is why I articulate it with a drive, because it is just as if I wanted to manage to articulate this lack, this nothing, hang something on it, know something about it, let us say I trust the subject: I allow myself to be pushed by it – it is moreover the drive. I allow myself to be pushed by it and I expect that it will give me this little **o**-object. But according as I advance, as I wait for this subject, as I might say, what I discover is that in following the subject, the little **o**, all the two of us are doing is going around it. It is effectively inside the loop and I assure myself that effectively this little **o** is unattainable.

I could say here that this is a first circuit and that, I have assured myself qua Other that he has effectively this character of lost objects, the idea that I propose, is that one can comprehend at that moment the instinctual reversal of which Freud speaks and Lacan takes up again, the instinctual reversal that



I am going to put on the top of the graph, as the passage to a second mode of separation and this instinctual reversal, as one might say, as a second attempt at approaching the lost object but this time from a different perspective: from the perspective of the subject. Let me explain: if you wish, in the first moment that I postulate, I would say that while I recognise myself as listener, the switching point that comes, which means that now I am going to pass to the other side, can be articulated as follows, namely, to advance that when I recognise myself as listener, one could say that this time it is me, I am recognised as listener by the music which comes to me, namely, that the music, what was an answer and which gave rise to a question in me, things are inverted, namely, that the music becomes a question which assigns me, as subject, to respond myself to this question, namely, that you see that the music is constituted as listening to me, as subject finally – let us call it by its name – as subject supposed to hear and the music, the production, that which was the inaugural answer becomes the question, the production therefore of the musician subject being constituted as subject supposed to hear, assigns me in this position of subject and I am going to answer it by a transference love. In this way one cannot fail to articulate the fact that music produces all the time effectively love-effects, as one might say.

I come back again to this notion of lost object from the following angle: the fact is that you have not failed to remark that what is proper to the effect of

music on you, is that it has this power, as one might say, of metamorphosis, of transmutation, that one could summarise rapidly as follows, by saying for example that it transmutes the sadness that is in you into nostalgia. I mean by that that if you are sad, the fact is that you can designate, whether you are sad or depressed, you can designate the object that you lack, whose lack you are missing, makes you suffer, and it is sad to be sad, I mean, it is not the source of any enjoyment. The paradox of nostalgia – as Victor Hugo said, nostalgia is the happiness of being sad - the paradox of nostalgia is that precisely in nostalgia what happens, is that what you are lacking is of a nature that you cannot designate and that you love this lack. You see that in this transmutation, everything happens as if the object which was lacking really evaporated, has evaporated, and that what I propose to you, is to comprehend effectively the enjoyment, one of the articulations of musical enjoyment, as having the power to evaporate the object. I see that the word 'evaporate', we can almost take it in the physical sense of the term, in which physics has located sublimation: sublimation, is effectively a matter of making a solid pass into the state of vapour, of gas; and sublimation, is this paradoxical path by which Freud teaches us – and Lacan has articulated in a much more sustained way – it is precisely the path along which we can have access, precisely along the path of desexualisation, to enjoyment.

Therefore, you see, in this second moment – what I am marking, at the top of the circuit: the reversal of the drive – a first torsion – it is perhaps starting from this notion of torsion that Dr Lacan thought of inserting this little topo at the point that he is in his progress – a second moment therefore, a first torsion appears where there is the apparition of a new subject and of a new object. The new subject precisely, is me who from auditor becomes, I would say, I cannot say speaker, speaking, musicing, one would have to say that it is the point in music where, the notes that go through you, everything happens as if paradoxically, it is not so much that you hear them, it is as if everything happens as if – I insist on the 'if' – everything happens as if you were producing them yourself: you are the author of this music. I put here an arrow which goes there from the subject to the separating little **o**, wanting to indicate by that that in this second perspective of separation, this time, it is from the point of view of the subject that I have a perspective of a lack in the Other.

So then what is this lack?

How map it out with respect to transference love? Well then, when we listen to music that moves us, the first impression is hearing all the time that this music has always something to do with love; one might say that music sings with love. But if one takes this little schema seriously and if even one tries to comprehend how love functions, from this movement of torsion in music, you will sense it is not so much the subject, the subject who speaks of his love for the Other, but much more rather that he answers the Other, that his message is this answer where he is assigned by this subject supposed to hear and that his music of impossible love is in fact an answer that he makes to the Other and that it is to the Other that he supposes the fact of loving him and of loving him with an impossible love. The problem, if you wish, one could in a summary way draw a parallel with certain mystical positions, where the mystic is the one who does not tell you that he loves the Other, but that he only answers the Other who loves him, that he is put into this position, that he has no choice, that he only answers it.

In this second moment of the music, one can draw this parallel in the measure that the subject effectively solicits the love of the Other for him, but the love of the Other qua radically impossible. That is why I put this arrow, the fact is that the subject has, through this second point of view, has a perspective on the lack that inhabits the Other, namely, that as you see, after these two moments, one could say that there is confirmed by this second moment that the evaporated object, in the second position, remains just as evaporated as in the first position. We are getting closer, as you see, we are getting closer to the end of the loop. Transference, one may remark, corresponds very precisely to the way in which Lacan introduced transference love in the seminar on *Transference*, namely, that there is there: the subject postulates that it is the Other who loves him; he poses therefore a beloved and a lover. There is therefore a passage, in this transference love,
from the beloved to the lover. What I have told you there, in any case is not correct, because the second moment cannot be articulated as such, it is synchronically articulated with a third moment which exists, I would say, synchronically with it in the following way: the subject, this time, if you wish, being himself a musician, being therefore a producer of the music, addresses himself to a new other, which I called the subject supposed to hear who is no longer altogether the Other at the starting point, it is a new other. This new other, precisely, is no longer the '*vel*' it is no longer 'either one or the other'. To this new other, he is also going to identify himself, namely, that there is starting from the top of the loop, a double arrangement where the subject is both the one who is speaking and the one who is hearing.

Something may perhaps illustrate this division for you: this is what is highlighted, in my opinion, by the myth of Ulysses and the Sirens. You know that Ulysses, in order to hear the song of the Sirens, had stuffed with wax the ears of his sailors. How ought we understand that? Ulysses exposes himself to hearing, to hearing the invocatory drive, in fact to hearing the song of the Sirens; but what he is exposed to, since, when he hears the song of the Sirens, you know that history tells us that he shouts to the sailors, that he says to them: 'Stop, let us stay here'. But he has taken his precautions: he knows that he will not be heard. Namely, that this myth in my opinion illustrates, this is my second moment, namely, that Ulysses is put in the position of being able to hear in the measure that he had assured himself that he could not speak, namely when he had assured himself that there would not be this reversal of the drive, namely, the second and the third moments, namely, when he had assured himself that there would not be a subject supposed to hear, because of these wax stoppers. You see that the first moment, 'to hear' is one thing, but that even poses for us the problem of the ethics of the analyst. Is the analyst precisely not someone from whom one can hear that he hears certain things, is he not, at a given moment, necessarily, by the very structure of the instinctual circuit, in a position of having to make himself a speaker? Not to behave like Ulysses, let us say, who had already taken a first risk of hearing certain things.

I imagine that after this second and third moment where the subject and the Other continue their paths side by side always separated by the separating small **o**, what is the position with respect to our starting point, where have we got to? Well then, the point, one could say, on to which the subject emerges, is that after this second and third moment, he has found the assurance that this little separating  $\mathbf{0}$ , he has found the assurance that it was effectively impossible to encounter it, since he only managed to go around it, but he had needed to make several dialectical movements in order to have, I would say, like – I don't know if this is the right word – to have as it were a kind of certainty that is going perhaps to allow him to make a new leap, which will be my fourth moment, a new leap that is going to allow him at that moment to pass to a new kind of enjoyment, to risk himself in it. I said 's 'y risquer' because it is not obvious that one will arrive at what I am calling this fourth moment that I will all the same mark. I am telling you that one can imagine a last moment which would be the terminal point, the point not of return, since the drive does not come back to the starting point, but the ultimate, possible point of the drive, I marked the enjoyment of the Other, and the little schema, the new schema of separation, the third that I am inscribing, represents the schema of separation, no longer with the little **o**-object in the lunula, but with the signifier  $S(\emptyset)$ , and the signifier  $S_2$ , a signifier that Lacan teaches us to situate as being that of the Urverdrängung.

Why am I marking that? I would say that, the whole journey having been made, that it is from the point of view of the subject, of the Other and of second other, it is confirmed that the object is really volatilised; one may imagine that at this moment the subject is going to make a leap, is no longer going to be content to be separated from the Other by the little **o**-object but is going to veritably proceed to an attempt to go through the phantasy; there is a passage in *seminar II*, well before Lacan speaks about the problem of the enjoyment of the Other, where Lacan on the subject of the drive and of sublimation, asks the question, he asks himself how the drive is experienced after the phantasy has been gone through. And Lacan adds: 'It is no longer of the domain of analysis, but is the beyond of analysis'. Now if we recall

that the little o-object is not uniquely, as one so often hears it said, essentially characterised by the fact that it is the missing object, it is certainly the missing object, but its function of being the missing object is specified very particularly, let us say, in the phenomenon of anxiety but besides this function, one could say that its fundamental function is much more rather to fill in this radical gap which renders so imperious the necessity of demand. If there is really something lacking in this speaking being, it is not the little o-object, it is this gap in the Other which is articulated with the S of  $\emptyset$ . That is why at the end of this instinctual circuit, to account for the experience of the listener, I am putting forward the idea the nature of the enjoyment to which one can accede at the end of the journey is not at all on the side of a 'surplus enjoying', but precisely on the side of this experience of this enjoyment, that perhaps one might call 'ecstatic', enjoyment of existence itself - moreover as regards the term 'ecstatic enjoyment' I was struck at finding Levi-Strauss writing on the one hand, in a number of *Musique en jeu* where Levi-Strauss puts very precisely in perspective the nature, not of the enjoyment, in fact the experience of music and that which appears to him to be that of mystical experience. Freud himself, in a letter to Romain Rolland, finds himself answering, spontaneously articulating that he refused himself musical enjoyment and that this musical enjoyment appeared to him as strange as what Romain Rolland was saying to him about enjoyments of a mystical order; anyway it is he himself who articulated the two, who had the idea of introducing music into it.

Final moment then, where the subject will make the leap, I don't know whether one can say 'beyond' or 'behind' the little **o**-object, but will manage to break through and arrive at this locus, one might say of the commemoration of the unconscious being as such, namely, the joining up of the most radical lacks which are those which constitute the gap of the subject of the unconscious and that of the unconscious, namely, to put the experience of this..., one might say that in the final moment, if you wish, one might say that the real as impossible is a white heat, is raised to incandescence; at that very moment, I mean, I would indicate, for my part,

that the drive stops in the sense that musicians, listeners to music know that in certain moments of being overwhelmed by music, as one says, time stops. Effectively there is a suspension of time at that level. And in this suspension of time, one can make the hypothesis that what is happening, is a sort of commemoration of the founding act of the unconscious in the most primordial separation, the most primordial gap that has been torn from the real and which has been introduced into the subject, which is that of the S of Ø of the signifier. I believe that the last point that one can put forward, is to remark that this point of enjoyment which appears to me to be what Lacan articulates as being the enjoyment of the Other, is precisely the point of maximum desexualisation, I would say total, superior, sublime, sublime in the sense of sublimation; and it is indeed at this point that sublimation is connected with desexualisation and enjoyment.

So then, two torsions or three torsions therefore, of which I spoke to you at the start, it is therefore these which can be mapped out between the passage from the first to the second moment, from the second to the third, and I do not know whether one can really speak about torsion for the topology of what I would call the fourth moment. This remains to be thought through.

- J Lacan: Thank you very much.

## Seminar 4: Wednesday 11 January 1977

What determines the contagious nature of certain formulae? I do not think that it is the conviction with which they are pronounced, because one cannot say that that is the basis on which I propagated my teaching. Anyway in that regard, it is rather J.A. Miller who can contribute a testimony on this: does he consider that what I have been chatting about throughout my 25 years of seminar carries that brand?

Good. This all the more so in that what I strove for was to say what is true, but I did not say it with all that much conviction, it seems to me. I was all the same sufficiently sidelined to be well-behaved. To say what is true about what? About knowledge. It was from this that I believed I could found psychoanalysis, because when all is said and done everything that I said holds together. To say what is true about knowledge, is not necessarily to ascribe knowledge to the psychoanalyst. As you know, I defined the transference in these terms, but that does not mean that it is not an illusion. It remains that, as I said somewhere in this yoke that I reread myself with some astonishment – what I recounted in the good old days always strikes me, I never imagine that it is I who could have said it - that Knowledge and Truth do not have with one another, as I say in this *Radiophonie* in No 2-3 of *Scilicet*, that Knowledge and Truth have no relation with one another. I now must produce a preface for the Italian translation of these four first numbers of *Scilicet*.

That naturally is not all that easy for me, given the age of these texts. I am certainly weakish in my way of taking on the responsibility of what I myself wrote. That is not because it always appears to me to be the most uninspired stuff, but it is always a little backhanded and that is what astonishes me.

The Knowledge in question therefore, is the unconscious. Some time ago, invited to something that was nothing less than what we are trying to do at Vincennes under the name of *Psychoanalytic clinic*, I remarked that the Knowledge in

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question was neither more nor less than the unconscious and that in short it was very difficult to know clearly the idea Freud had of it. Everything he says, it seems to me, it seemed to me, prescribed that it should be a Knowledge.

Let us try to define what this can mean to us, a Knowledge. What is at stake, in Knowledge, is what we can call signifier-effects (*effets de signifiant*).

I have here a yoke that I must say terrorised me. It is a collection which has come out under the title of *La philosophie en effet*. Philosophy in effect, in signifiereffects, it is precisely what I am trying to get out of unscathed, I mean that I do not believe that I am doing philosophy, but one always does more of it than one believes, there is nothing more slippery than this domain; you also do it, you too have your moments, and it is certainly not what you have most to rejoice about.

Freud therefore had only a few ideas about what the unconscious was. But it seems to me, in reading him, that one can deduce that he thought it was signifiereffects. Man – we have to call a certain generality by that name, a generality in which one cannot say that some stand out; Freud had nothing transcendent about him: he was a little doctor who did, good God, what he could in terms of what we call curing, which does not take us very far – man therefore, since I spoke about man, man can scarcely escape this business of Knowledge. This is dictated to him by what I called the signifier-effects, and he is not at ease: he does not know how to 'deal with' ('faire avec') Knowledge. This is what is called his mental debility from which, I must say, I do not except myself. I do not except myself simply because I have to deal with the same material, with the same material as everyone else and that this material, is what dwells in us. With this material, he does not know how 'to deal' ('y faire'). It is the same thing as this 'dealing with' that I spoke about just now, but these nuances of the tongue are very important. This y faire cannot be said in every language. Knowing how to deal with is something different to know-how. It means to get on with it. But this 'y faire' indicates that one does not really capture the thing, in short, in a concept.

This leads us to pushing the door of certain philosophies. You must not push this door too quickly, because you must remain at the level where I placed what in

short I called the discourses; the saids, it is the 'saying which succours' ('dire qui secourt'). We must all the same take advantage of what the tongue in which we speak offers us in terms of equivocation. What succours, is it the saying or is it the said? In the analytic hypothesis, it is the saying; it is the saying, namely the enunciating, the enunciating of what I called earlier the Truth. And in these 'diresecours', I had, the year when I spoke about *L'envers de la psychoanalyse* – you certainly do not remember it – I had, like that, distinguished in general 4 of them, because I was amusing myself precisely at making a sequence of 4 revolve, and in this sequence of 4, the Truth, the Truth of the saying, the Truth was only in short implied, since as perhaps you remember...yes, as you perhaps remember, it was presented like that, I mean that it was the discourse of the master that was the least true discourse. [impossibility]



Fig. IV-1

The least true, that means the most impossible. I noted in effect the impossibility of this discourse, at least this was the way in which I reproduced it in what was published of *Radiophonie*.

This discourse is lying and it is precisely by that that it reaches the Real. *Verdrängung*, was what Freud called that; and nevertheless, it is indeed a said which succours him. Everything that is said is a swindle. It is not simply about what is said starting from the unconscious. What is said starting from the unconscious, participates in equivocation, in equivocation which is the principle of the witticism: the equivalence of sound and sense, it was in the name of that that I believed I could advance that the unconscious was structured like a language.

I noticed, like that a little bit too late and in connection with something which appeared in *Lexique et Grammaire* or else *Langue Française*, a trimestrial journal; it is a little article that I would advise you to look at very closely because it is by someone for whom I have great esteem, he is J.-C. Milner. It is No 30, which appeared in May 1976. It is called Réflexions sur la réference. Something that, after reading this article, is an object of interrogation for me is the following; it is the role that he gives to the anaphore. He notices that grammar plays a certain role and that specifically the sentence that is not so simple: 'I saw 10 lions and you, he says, you saw 15 of them (tu en a vu 15)', the anaphore involves the use of this 'en'. It very precisely highlights things by saying that the 'en' does not concern the lions, it concerns the 10. I would prefer that he should not say 'tu en a vu 15'; I would prefer him to say 'tu en a vu plus'. Because, in truth, the tu in question has not counted these 15. But it is certain that in the distinct sentence: 'I captured 10 lions and you, tu en a capturé 15', the reference is no longer to the 10 but to the lions. It is, I believe, quite gripping that in what I call the structure of the unconscious, grammar must be eliminated. Logic must not be eliminated, but grammar must be eliminated. In French there is too much grammar. In German there is still more. In English, there is a different one that is in a way implicit. Grammar must be implicit to have its proper weight.

I would like to indicate to you something which is from a time when French did not have such a burden of grammar. I would like to point you towards something called *Les bigarrures du seigneur des Accords* ('The variegations of the lord of concords'). He lived right at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. It is gripping because he seems to be all the time playing on the unconscious, which is all the same curious, given that he had no kind of idea of it, even less than Freud, but it is all the same on it that he plays. How manage to grasp, to say, this sort of flux that usage is? And how state precisely the way in which, in this flux, the unconscious, which is always individual, can be specified?

There is something striking, which is that there are not three dimensions in language. Language is always flattened out. And that indeed is why my twisted business of the Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real, with the fact that the Symbolic is what goes above what is above and which passes beneath what is beneath, this indeed is what gives it its value. The value is that it is flattened out.



Fig. IV-2

It is flattened out, and in a way that you know, because I repeated, resifted it, you know the value of the function, namely, that the effect this has is that if one of the 3 dissolves, the 2 others are freed. This is what I described, at one time, by the term knot for something that is not a knot, but effectively a chain. This chain all the same, it is striking that it can be flattened out.

And I would say that – it is a reflection, like that, which was inspired in me by the fact that as regards the Real, people want to identify it to matter (*la matière*) – I would rather propose to write it like this '*l'âme à tiers*'<sup>7</sup> (third party soul?). It would be, like that, a more serious way of referring oneself to this something that we have to deal with, and it is not for nothing that it is homogenous to the two others; that someone named Charles - Sanders as he was called, as you know, I already wrote this name often, many, many times, - that this Peirce was really struck by the fact that language does not properly speaking express relation, that indeed is something which is striking; that language does not permit a notation like x having a certain type of relation with y, and no other; this indeed is what authorises me, since Peirce himself articulates that for this there would need to be a ternary logic, and not the one we use, a binary logic, this indeed is what authorises me to speak about *l'âme à tiers*' as something which necessitates a certain type of logical relationships.

Yes. Well then, all the same, I am going in effect to come to this *Philosophie en effet*, a collection published by Aubier-Flammarion, to say what scared me a little

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Pun on *la matière*.

in what makes its way in short from something that I inaugurated by my discourse. There is a book which has appeared by someone called Nicolas Abraham and someone called Maria Torok. It is called Cryptonymie, which sufficiently indicates the equivocation, namely that the name is hidden there, and it is called Le verbier de l'homme aux loups. I don't know, there are perhaps some people here who attended my elucubrations on the Wolfman. It was in this connection that I spoke about the foreclosure of the name of the father. Le verbier de l'homme aux loups is something where, if words have a sense, I believe I recognise the thrust of what I have always articulated, namely, that the signifier is what is involved in the unconscious, and that, the fact that the unconscious, is that in short one speaks – if indeed there is something of the *parlêtre* – that one speaks all alone, that one speaks all alone, because one never says anything but one and the same thing which in short is upsetting, hence its defence and everything that is elucubrated about so-called resistances. It is altogether striking that resistance – I have said it – is something which takes its starting point in the analyst himself and that the goodwill of the analyser never encounters anything worse than the resistance of the analyst.

Psychoanalysis, - I have said it, I repeated it quite recently, - is not a science. It does not have its status as science and it can only wait for it, hope for it. But it is a delusion from which one is awaiting a science to be brought forth. It is a delusion that one is waiting to bring forth a science. One can wait for a long time. One can wait for a long time, I said why, simply because there is no progress and that what one is expecting is not necessarily what one is going to get. It is a scientific delusion therefore, and one is expecting that it will bring forth a science but that does not mean that analytic practice will ever bring forth this science.

It is a science that has all the less chance of maturing in that it is antinomical; and all the same, by the use that we make of it, we know that it has its relationships between science and logic. There is a thing which, I should say, astonishes me astonishes me still more than the broadcasting, the broadcasting which I know well is happening, the broadcasting of what is called my teaching, my ideas – because that means that I have ideas – the broadcasting of my teaching to this which makes its way under the name of *Institut de Psychanalyse*, the thing that astonishes me still more, is not that *Le verbier de l'homme aux loups*, not simply that it sails ahead, but that it produces offspring, the fact is that someone whom I did not know - to tell the truth, I think he is in analysis - whom I did not know was in analysis – but this is a simple hypothesis – someone called Jacques Derrida who writes a preface for this verbier. He writes an absolutely fervent enthusiastic preface in which I believe I can see a trembling which is linked - I do not know which of these two analysts he has dealings with - what is certain, is that he couples them; I do not find, I must say, despite the fact that I launched things along this path, I do not find this book, nor this preface to have the right tone. As a kind of delusion, I am speaking to you like that, I cannot say that it is in the hope that you will go and look at it; I would even prefer you to forgo it, but anyway I know well that when all is said and done you are going to rush to Aubier-Flammarion, even if only to see what I call an extreme limit. It is certain that this is combined with the more and more mediocre desire I have of talking to you. What is combined, is that I am scared of that which in short I feel myself more or less responsible for, namely, to have opened the floodgates of something about which I could just as well have shut up. I could just as well have reserved for myself alone the satisfaction of playing on the unconscious without explaining the farce of it, without saying that it is by this yoke of the signifier-effects that it operates. I could just as well have kept it to myself, since in short if I had not really been forced, I would never have done any teaching. It cannot be said that what Jacques Alain Miller published about the split of '53, that it was with any enthusiasm that I took up the baton on the subject of this unconscious.

I would even say more, I do not like the second topography all that much, I mean the one into which Freud let himself be drawn by Groddeck. Of course one cannot do otherwise, these flattening-outs, the Id with the big eye which is the Ego. The Id is..., everything is flattened out. But anyway, this Ego – which moreover in German is not called Ego, is called *Ich - Wo Es war* – where it was, where it was: we have no idea about what was in Groddeck's head to support this Id, this *Es*. He thought that the Id in question was what lived you. This is what he says when he writes his *Buch*, his '*Book of the Id*', his book on the *Es*, he says that it is what lives you. This idea of a global unit which lives you, even though it is quite obvious that the Id dialogues, and this is even what I designated by the name of capital O, the fact is that there is something else, what I called earlier *l'âme à tiers*, *l'âme à tiers* which is not simply the Real, which is something with which explicitly, I am saying, we do not have relations. With language we clamour after this thing, and what is meant by  $S(\emptyset)$ , that is what that means, which is that it does not answer. It is for that reason that we talk all alone, that we talk all alone until there emerges what is called an Ego, namely, something as regards which nothing guarantees that it might not properly speaking be speaking deliriously. This indeed is the reason I highlight, like Freud moreover, that you do not have to look too closely at what is called psychoanalysis and that, between madness and mental debility, we can only choose. That's enough of that for today.

Seminar 5: Wednesday 18 January 1977

Fig. V-1



This is rather laboured, so there you are, in truth, here, it is more or less the testimony, the testimony of a failure, namely, that I have exhausted myself for 48 hours, in making what I would call, contrary to what is involved in a plait (*tresse*), I exhausted myself for 48 hours, in making what I would call a 'four-stranded plait' ('*quatresse*'). There you are [Fig. V-2]

The plait is at the principle of the Borromean knot. That is to say that after six times, one finds, provided one crosses these three threads in an appropriate fashion – good, so then, this means that at the end of six manoeuvres of the plait, you find in order, at the sixth manoeuvre, the 1, the 2 and the 3. This is what constitutes



the Borromean knot [fig. V-3]. If you have, if you try it twelve times, vou have likewise another Borromean knot, which Borromean knot is curiously not visualised immediately [Fig. V-4]. It has nevertheless this character that contrary to the first Borromean knot which, as you have seen just now, passes above the one that is underneath, since as you see, the red is above the green, underneath the one that is underneath: that is the principle from which the Borromean knot derives. It is in function of this operation that the Borromean knot holds up. Likewise, in a fourfold operation,



Fig. V-3

you will put one above, the other underneath, and in the same way you will operate with underneath the one that is underneath, you will therefore have a new Borromean knot which represents the one with

1

12 crossovers.

What is to be thought of this plait?

This plait can be in space. There is no reason, in any case at the level of the 'fourfold' ('quatres-



Fig. V-4

se') that we cannot suppose it to be entirely suspended. The plait nevertheless can be visualised insofar as it is flattened out. I spent another period, one that was supposedly reserved for holidays, exhausting myself in the same way, in trying to make function another type of Borromean knot, namely, one that would be obligatorily made in space, since what I started from was not the circle as you see it here, namely, something that one usually flattens out, but from what is called a tetrahedron.



A tetrahedron is drawn like that. Thanks to that, there are 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 edges (*arêtes*). I should say that the prejudices that I had – because it is a matter of nothing less – pushed me to operate with the four faces, and not with the six edges, and with the four faces it is quite difficult, it is impossible to make a plait. There must be six edges there to make a correct plaiting and I would like to see these balls carrying the outline of the schema, coming back [**balls thrown into the audience**]. The fact is that you will note there that the plaiting, not six-fold but twelve-fold, is altogether fundamental. I mean that, what happens is that one cannot bring into play this knotting of tetrahedrons without starting, since there are only three tetrahedrons, without starting from the plait. It was a fact that was unveiled to me rather late, and which you will see here provided I pass you these balls which, I repeat, I would like to see coming back, because I have not, far from it, fully elucidated them,. I am going therefore, as I usually do, to throw them to you so that you can examine them.

I would like all four of them to be sent back. In effect, they are not similar. There are four of them, and there is a reason for that. It is a reason that I still have not mastered. It is preferable, even though of course that would take too much time, it would be preferable, that these balls should be compared one to the other, for they are effectively different. I would like that, from this threefold plait which is basic in the operation of these tetrahedric Borromean knots to which, I repeat, I applied myself without really completely managing them, I would like you to draw a conclusion. The fact is that, even for the tetrahedrons in question, one proceeds also to what I would call a flattening out for this to be clear. The flattening out which on this occasion is spherical is necessary for one to put one's finger on the fact, as I might say, that the crossovers in question, the tetrahedric crossovers, are indeed of the same order, namely, that the tetrahedron which is underneath, the third tetrahedron, passes underneath, and that the tetrahedron which is above, the third tetrahedron passes above. It is indeed because of that that we are still here dealing with the Borromean knot.

What is annoying nevertheless, is that even in space, even starting from a presupposed spatial, we should also be constrained in this case here to support – since when all is said and done, it is we who support it – to support the flattening out. Even starting from a spatial presupposition, we are forced to support this flattening out, very precisely in the form of something which presents itself as a sphere (Fig. V-5b). But what does that mean, if not, that even when we manipulate space, we have never seen anything but surfaces, surfaces no doubt which are not banal surfaces because we articulate them as flattened out. From that moment on, it is manifest on the balls that the fundamental plait, the one that crisscrosses itself 12 times, it is manifest that this fundamental plait forms part of a torus. Exactly this torus that we can materialise by the following, namely, the twelve-fold plait, and that we can also moreover materialise in terms of the following namely, the six-fold plait [Fig. V-3 and Fig. V-4].

In truth this function of torus is clearly manifest in the balls that I have just given you, because it is no less true that between the two little triangles, if we make – I would ask you to consider these balls – if we make a polar thread pass through, we will have exactly in the same way a torus; for it is enough to make one hole at the level of these two little triangles to constitute at the same time a torus. This indeed is why the situation is homogenous, in the case of the Borromean knot, as I have drawn it here, is homogenous between the Borromean knot and the tetrahedron.

There is therefore something which ensures that it is no less true for a tetrahedron that the function of the torus governs here whatever is nodal in the Borromean knot. It is a fact, and it is a fact that has strictly never been glimpsed,

namely, that everything that concerns the Borromean knot is only articulated by being toric.

A torus is characterised quite specifically as being one hole. What is annoying, is that this hole is difficult to define. The fact is that the knot of the hole with its flattening out is essential, it is the only principle of their counting – and that there is only one way, up to the present, in mathematics, of counting the holes: it is by going through, namely, by taking a path such that the holes are counted. This is what is called the fundamental group. This indeed is why mathematics does not fully master what is at stake.

How many holes are there in a Borromean knot? This indeed is what is problematic since, as you see, flattened out, there are four of them [Fig. V-6]. There are four of them, namely, that there are not fewer than in the tetrahedron which has four faces in each of the faces of which one can make a hole. Except for the fact that one can make two holes, even three, even four, by making a hole in each of these faces and that, in this case, each face being combined with all the others and even repassing through itself, it is hard to see how to count these paths which would be constitutive of what is called the fundamental group. We are therefore reduced to the constancy of each of these holes which, by this very fact, vanishes in a quite tangible way, since a hole is no great thing.



Fig. V-6

How then distinguish what makes a hole and what does not make a hole? Perhaps the *quatresse* can help us to grasp it.

What is involved in this *quatresse* is something which solidarises what is found, that by which it happens that I qualified three circles, namely, that, as you see

here in this first drawing [Fig. V-1], these three circles form a Borromean knot. They form a Borromean knot, not that the first three form a Borromean knot since, as is implicated in the fact that the freed fourth, as I might say, the fourth element freed should leave each of the three free. The guatresse binds nevertheless, starting from the one which is the highest (black), on condition of passing above the one that is highest, it will find itself by passing over the one which in the flattening out is intermediary (green), by passing beneath, it will find itself binding the three. This indeed in effect is what we see happening [Fig. V-7], namely, that, on condition that you see that as equivalent to the following, I think that you see here that it is a matter of a representation of the Real insofar as it is here that we have the apprehension of the Imaginary, of the Symptom and of the Symbolic, the Symbolic on this particular occasion being very precisely what we must think about as being the signifier. What does that mean? The fact is that the signifier on this particular occasion is a symptom, a body, namely, the Imaginary being distinct from the signified. This way of making the chain questions us about the following: the fact is that the Real, namely, what on this particular occasion is marked here, the fact is that the Real would be very specially suspended on the body.



Let's see. Let us try to see here what would result from that, namely, that this X which is at this place, would open out and that the Imaginary would continue into the Real. This indeed in effect is what happens, because bodies are only produced, in the most futile fashion, as appendices of life, in other words of that about which Freud was speculating when he speaks about a germen.

We find there around the speaking function, something which, as one might say, isolates man, of whom at this time it must be marked that it is only in function of the fact that there is no sexual relationship, that what we can call on this particular occasion language, as I might say, may supply for it. It is a fact that blah-de-blah furnishes, furnishes what is distinguished by the fact that there is no relationship.



Yes, it would be necessary in this case that the Real, without us being able to know where it stops, that we should place the Real in continuity with the Imaginary. In other words, it begins there somewhere right in the middle of the Symbolic. That would explain why the Imaginary, traced out here in red, effectively falls back into the Symbolic, but that it is on the other hand foreign to it, as is testified by the fact that it is only man who speaks. You see here that the Real is drawn in green.

Yes, I would like someone to challenge me about what today, for you, I laboriously tried to formulate in this very unsymbolic fashion; it is something that is not easy to express. I think that as regards what is involved in this four-fold plait [Fig. V-2], it seems to me to reproduce, to reproduce very exactly what is here [Fig. V-1],

namely, that it is a way of representing it as plait that is in question. If I did not succeed effectively from the start, it is because it must not be believed that it is easy to make a four-fold plait; one must start from a point which sections the intercrossings, as I might say, in an appropriate fashion and it may be that things are such that starting from one of these points, one does not find a means of making the plait.

It is at this that I delayed so long, delayed so long that there has resulted more than a little damage to what I had to say to you today. If therefore someone wants to answer me, namely, question me about what i wanted to say today I would be very grateful.

- X: I would like to ask you a question...I wanted to ask you, because you said 'the presupposed space', and I never too clearly understood - and I humbly admit it before this noble assembly – whether you were saying '*ek-siste*' or '*existe*'. I have a right to my little weaknesses. But why could you not say: the '*père espace*'?

- Lacan: Yes

- X: I am asking myself, and then you said the 'presupposed tetrahedron which is threefold in space forms a plait'. I am not at a circus, but I remember since we are talking about a sphere, with these balls that you threw out which are so different, one could plait it.

- Lacan: One could?

- X: One could plait on the Borromean isle. One could make the plait in space like a jungler.

- Lacan: Yeah...

- X: It is because you said that it is difficult when it's flattened out, you admitted it yourself. Nobody told you that?

- Lacan: Yes, yes that's true. Well then has anyone else a question to ask?

- Y: Does the opening of the Real and of the Imaginary with the Symbolic folded back on itself presuppose that you are passing from the domain of man to the domain of life and of living beings?

- Lacan: He is certainly not the only one alive.

- X: You can't hear me because precisely I don't have a microphone. Things are designed technically so that there should be microphones. Why don't you use one? Is it to give a greater value to what you're saying?

- Lacan: Certainly not. I apologise for having had to go to the board more than once.

- X: So then, if the speaking function isolates man, what about a preverbal manifestation, namely, of the possible opening up of the Real – I am re-reading: the Real in continuity with the Imaginary – how do you see for example preverbal manifestations like all those of art for example:

- Lacan: Those of ...

- X: Art, music, indeed all the arts which are, which do not go by way of the talking cure that do not pass through speaking? So then if you put the Real in continuity with the Imaginary by an opening here, I believe, from the experience which I have of painting that the continuity here drawn by you on the board by an opening is in act – I am saying indeed in act – this time by the body, which is as you have defined it and as Freud defined it by the germen, like the body being here an appendix, I think that at the level of painting something happens which is a preverbal appendix operation, namely, and there, I would ask you to link up precisely not that I do not know what follows but I am waiting for your riposte.

- Lacan: Yes

- X: I see in this graph, which is the representation of a cut, but where there is a possibility of an opening, in the act which is the act of painting, which is precisely there the fact of an opening, but by a continuity which would be, excuse me, like when you take a piece of toffee, it makes threads; so then this time there is no cut between the subject and the locus of the Other, there is not this alienation that was described for us in music, the last time, where the small **o** vanishes, let us say between the subject and the locus of the Other that makes threads. It is like when one is making toffee. Starting from the compulsionality of the Subject to the locus of the Other, me, for my part i see a curious possibility from the language of painting, which is mine, and which is a language where at the level of what is denoted, namely, at the level of what is in the dictionary and of what is plunged into an abyss and which is in function of time in your study on language starting from the treatment. Here in the pictorial fact there is a sort of insistence and since Lacan says that sense does not consist in what it signifies at that very

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moment, effectively there is always this slippage and this interplay of signifiers as in the *Seminar on the Purloined Letter*, here there would seem to be a process of continuity, of curious insistence, a first level which would be a level of denotation, which might exist in poetry, which exists in what concerns me, in a pictorial experience where at that moment there is a first putting into a scenario or a production; signs are scenoengraphed and are going to insist at a level where the primary passes into the secondary and if you wish, constitutes a first formation of signs which themselves will be afterwards put into the condition of an abyss by the operation of a sort of scenic engagement.

- Lacan: For my part I believe that your preverbal on this particular occasion is completely modelled by the verbal. I would even say that it is hyper-verbal. What you call on this particular occasion filaments, is something which is profoundly motivated by the symbol and by the signifier.

- X: Yes, moreover I believe that too. But let us say that the path is different and does not happen by the whole process of the Symbolic and this is not at all to put in doubt or to fault your teaching even though I am not for it here.

- Lacan: There is no reason why one cannot find fault with my teaching.

- X: No but let us say at the level of what no longer is.

- Lacan: I am trying to say that art on this particular occasion goes beyond symbolism. Art is a know-how and the Symbolic is a principle of doing. I think that there is, that there is more truth in the saying of art than in any amount of blah-de-blah. That does not mean that it can pass along any path whatsoever.

- X: Yes I just wanted to say that things...

- Lacan: It is not a preverbal. It is verbal to the power of two. There you are.

## Seminar 6: Wednesday 8 February 1977

Ah! I am banging my head against what I would call, on this occasion, a wall, a wall of course of my own invention. That is precisely what annoys me. One does not invent just anything at all. And what I invented is designed in short to explain – I say to explain, but I am not very clear about what that means – to explain Freud. What is striking, is that, in Freud, there is no trace of that worry or more exactly of these worries, of these worries that I have and that I communicate to you in any case in the form of: 'I am banging my head against the walls'. That does not mean that Freud did not worry a lot, but what he gave to the public was apparently of the order, I say of the order of a philosophy namely, that there was not..., I was going to say that there were no snags (d'os); but precisely, there were bones and what is necessary for walking on one's own, namely, a skeleton. There you are. I think that here you recognise the figure, in any case if I drew it properly, the figure, the figure in which by a single stroke depicted the generation



of the Real, and that this Real is extended in short by the imaginary since that indeed is what is at stake, without us knowing very clearly where the Real and the Imaginary stop. There you are, it is this figure [Fig. VI-1] which is transformed into this figure there [Fig. VI-2]. I am only offering it to you because in short it is the first drawing where I haven't got into a muddle, which is remarkable, because I always of course get into a muddle. Good, I would like all the same to give the floor to someone whom I asked to come here to express a certain number of things which seem to me to be worthy, altogether worthy of being enunciated. In other words I think that Alain Didier Weil is someone who is not badly engaged in his business. What I can tell you, is that, for me, I was very attached to flattening out something. Flattening out always participates in a system, it simply participates in it, which is not saying a lot. A flattening out, for example that I made for you with the Borromean knot, is a system. I am trying of course to crush this Borromean knot, and this indeed is what you see in these two images.

The ideal, the Ego Ideal, in short would mean finishing with the Symbolic, in other words saying nothing. What is this demoniacal force which pushes forward to say something, in other words to teach, is what I have come to tell is that, the Superego. That is what Freud designated by the Superego which, of course, has nothing to do with any condition that could be designated as natural. On the subject of this natural, I ought all the same signal something to you, it is that I found myself strongly drawn to read something which appeared in the Royal Society of London and which is an 'Essay on dew'. This had the greatest esteem of someone called Herschel who wrote something entitled 'Discours préliminaire sur l'étude de la philosophie naturelle'. What most strikes me in this 'Essay on dew', is that it is of no interest. I obtained it, of course, at the Bibliothèque Nationale where I have like that from time to time a particular person who makes an effort for me, a person who is a musicologist there and who is in short not too badly placed to obtain for me on occasion, since I had no other means of getting this original text which at a pinch I might have managed to read. What I asked her for was a translation. It had been translated in effect, this'Essay on dew', this 'Essay on dew' had been translated from its author William Charles Wells, it was translated by someone called Tordeux, a master in pharmacy and you really have to force yourself enormously to find it of the slightest interest. That proves that not all natural phenomena interest us as much, and dew guite particularly, we slip over the surface of that. It is all the same curious that dew, for example, has not the same interest that Descartes succeeded in giving to the rainbow. Dew is as natural a phenomenon as the rainbow. Why does it not have any particular importance for us? It is very strange and it is quite certain that it is by reason of

its relationship to the body that we do not have the same lively interest in dew as in the rainbow, because the rainbow, we have the feeling that this opens out to the theory of light, at least we have this feeling since Descartes demonstrated it. Yes. Anyway, I am perplexed about the little interest that we have in dew. It is certain that there is something centred on the functions of the body, which ensures that we give a sense to certain things. Dew lacks a little sense. That at least is what I can bear witness to after reading as attentively as I could this 'Essay on dew'. And now I am going to give the floor to Alain Didier Weill, while apologising for having delayed him a little; he will have no more than an hourand-a quarter to speak to you, instead I think of what I guaranteed for him, which was an hour-and-half.

Alain Didier Weill is going to speak to you about something which has a relationship to Knowledge, namely, 'I know' or 'he knows'. It is on this relationship between 'I know' and 'he knows' that he is going to play.

- Alain Didier Weill: Can we say that I am going to talk about the Passe?

- Lacan: You can also talk about the Passe.

[ADW's lengthy intervention has been included for completeness but has not been as carefully translated and revised as Lacan's own words. CG]

- Alain Didier Weill: The point from which I came to propose to Dr Lacan these elucubrations that I am going to submit to you, comes from what is represented for me by what is called in the Ecole Freudienne, the Passe. Effectively a rumour circulates for some time in the School, which is that the results of the Passe which is supposed to have functioned for a certain number of years, did not respond to the hopes that had been put in it. Given that this idea, like that, that there is the idea of a failure of the past, this is something that personally I find hard to put up with, in the Passe where for me it seems to guarantee what can preserve the essential and what is most living for the future of psychoanalysis; I cogitated on the question a little, and I think I have eventually found what could account for the fact that the *jury d'agrement* perhaps does not manage to use, and to use what is

transmitted to it to advance the crucial problems of psychoanalysis. The circuit that I am going to put in place before you claims to metaphorise by a long circuit in which there would be representable the fundamental movements – you see that I am designating precisely three of them – at the issue of which a subject and his Other can arrive at a precise point, very locatable, that I will call B4-R4 – you will see why – and starting from which I will articulate what seems to me to be, both the problem of the passe, and that of, perhaps, the nature of the short circuit, of what could topologically short circuit what is supposed to happen at the level of the *jury d'agrement*. Good, I commence therefore.

The subjects that I chose to presentify for you our two analytic partners, can be made familiar to you in that they are supposed to correspond in a certain way to two protagonists most absent in the story of *The purloined letter* which you know, the very ones, about whom from the beginning to the end there is question, namely, the emissary, the one who is the emissary with the letter who is so far excluded that Poe even, I believe, does not even name him and namely, the receiver of the letter, who – as we know – Lacan showed it to us – is the King. If you allow me, I baptise for the convenience of my presentation, the subject by the name of Bozef and I will keep the name of the one it is destined for, that of the King. My whole montage is going to consist in substituting for the short circuit by which Poe's story keeps his two subjects outside the journeying of the letter, a long zigzag circuit by which the letter starting from position B1 will end by arriving at position B4. The numbering of 1 and 4 that I indicate to you indicate already that I will be led to distinguish 4 places which will differentiate 4 successive positions of the subject and of the Other. I begin therefore with B1.

You see that B, the series of Bs, responds to the subject Bozef, this series of R1, R2, R3 correspond to the progression of the knowledge of the king, R1, R2, R3. By B1, if you wish, I am qualifying the state, of innocence of the subject indeed the infantilism of the subject, when he is uniquely supported by this subjective position which is the following: the Other does not know, the king does not know, does not know what? Well then, quite simply, the content of the letter does not matter, quite simply does not know that the subject knows something about him. R1 represents therefore the radical ignorance of the king; therefore one could say

that in the position B1, would be the foolish position of the cogito which could be written: 'He does not know, therefore I am'. The story, if you wish, this position is familiar to you in the measure that we know that it is a position that we know from the analyser; the analyser quite often as we know chooses his analyst while saying unconsciously to himself, while saying to himself, 'I am choosing him, this particular one, because I know I am going to be able to best him' and we know that what he fears the most at the same time is that he will succeed. So then starting from this elementary montage, I continue.

Before putting up Lacan's graph here is how things are going to happen. But now, the story begins; I am going to now make intervene someone that I call, you see that I called him M, M I will call that the messenger, namely, that B1 one day, Bozef who is at B1 is going to give to the messenger in the position of M the message that I called m1 and in m1 he says: The Other does not know, the king does not know. The messenger is designed for that, he is of course a traitor, he transmits to the king the message m1 which is transformed on m of 1, namely, that the king passes from the position of the ignorance R1, to the position of R2 an elementary knowledge: the Other knows, namely, that the subject knows something about me. Starting from there, the message is going to go back to Bozef, our subject, in an inverted form. It is going to come back in two ways as I say, it is going to say to him, is going to find him if you like and going to say to him: I said to the king what you told me. I call this message m1 it is a return on



the plane on the axis on the graph, on the axis of i of o; if you wish, it is a specular relation. Another message arrives to Bozef that will be placed for its part on the trajectory of subjectification, that I put in green, that will arrive directly therefore on the plane through the symbolic plane. You see therefore that the important thing here is the fact that Bozef who was in a position of foolishness, of the foolishness of B1, because of the inversion of the message that comes back to him, namely, this time the Other knows, is displaced. He can no longer remain at B1, he finds himself at B2. And at B2, I would say that he is here in the position of semblance, he can still support himself in the position that I would describe as that of duplicity since at B2 he can still say to himself: 'Yes, he knows, but he does not know that I know he knows'. So then I am now going to write, before going any further, the first episode on Lacan's graph.

There, the position of the Other, the message leaves from the Other; there is the ego position of Bozef that I am writing as B1. The message starts from Bozef who gives it to the messenger who would be i of o the message that I called m1, namely, that this circuit says: he does not know. The messenger does his business, transmits this message along this path which makes the king go from R1 to R2. The effect starting from there, starting from the new position of the Other is going to carry Bozef who was at B1, here an elementary subject effect what Lacan would call the signified of the Other, at the level of B2, namely, that one can also draw this arrow.

Bozef also receives a message, one might say, at the level in the axis of o - o' of the messenger. You see therefore that our subject Bozef is at B2, I am now going to make, to introduce another graph of Lacan's. I continue therefore, I left, as you

see, Bozef at B2, being sustained by the position of duplicity that I have described for you, since he



is in the position of maintaining the idea of the ignorance of the Other. Now things, it is here that things begin to become really interesting for us and much more complicated. Starting from this position B2 of Bozef, here's what is going to happen: Bozef continues the operation of the transmission of his knowledge, namely, that to the messenger that I draw in the position of M2, he is going to transmit a second message that I call m2 and in this message he says to him: 'Yes, he knows, but he does not know that I know'. The messenger at M2 does the same work, retransmits this message to the king, the king passes therefore to a new knowledge, goes from R2 to R3; the knowledge of the king at that point is: 'He knows that I know that he knows that I know'; but that is something that Bozef does not yet know, he will only know it when the messenger makes his last trip, comes back to Bozef and confides to him: 'I told the king that you know that he knows that you know that he knows', namely, that, at this point Bozef whom we have left at B2 is propelled into a new position that I am calling B3, starting from which we are going to question the second graph of Lacan, in a very particular way and starting from which we are going to begin to be able to introduce what is involved in the passe.

I am therefore going to continue, to end the schema before continuing.

Here is M2, m1, m1.

Bozef whom I left at B2 here (2), I replace here at B2 (1), namely, that he transmits to M2, he transmits m2, he says to him: 'He knows, but he does not know that I know that he knows'. Just like earlier this message arrives at the Other also like the following (2) and the return of this message to Bozef puts him in this very particular position of being confronted to an Other from whom he can no longer hide anything. The king...

Good, I hope that you can follow me, even though it's a bit of a zigzag. What happens therefore when the king is at R3, namely, when he is in the position of knowing what I have indicated to you and that this knowledge is known by the return of the messenger to Bozef, namely, that Bozef may think: 'The king knows that I know that he knows that I know'. What is going to happen at that very moment and what is going to introduce us to what follows, is that, even though, at B2, Bozef in the semblance, could still lay claim to a little bit of being by saying: 'He knows, but he does not know and I can all the same still be', at B3, because of what one could call 'the absolute knowledge of the Other', Bozef, the position of the cogito of Bozef will be completely dispossessed of his thought. At that level, if the other knows everything, it is not because the Other knows everything, it is because he can no longer hide anything from the Other, but the problem is to hide what? Because what is revealed to the Other at that moment, is not so much the lie in which Bozef held him, it is that there emerges for Bozef at that moment the fact that his lie reveals to him that in fact, behind this lie, there was hidden a lie of a completely different nature and another dimension. If the king is in this position, in this position of R3 in which he would know everything, this all, namely, the most radical incognito of Bozef, which disappears, Bozef is in the position, in the position in which he find himself and what I am going to show you, corresponds to what Lacan names the position of the eclipsing of the subject, of fading before the signifier of demand, which is written on the graph – this also designates the drive, I am not going to talk about that now - \$0D.

I must continue now, I would like you to sense that since at R3 nothing more can be hidden, while there is opening up for the subject B3 the last hiding place, namely, the one that he did not know was hidden. And what he uncovers, is that by involuntarily hiding, by having a lie that he can designate, he avoided in fact a lie of which he knew nothing, which dwelt in him and which constituted him as subject. Therefore, this knowledge of which he knew nothing is going to emerge at R3 with respect to the Other who henceforth knows everything. When I say 'emerge with regard to the Other', it is really in the proper sense that this expression must be understood, for he does not emerge with respect to this Other, it is precisely what was withdrawn during the originating creation of the Subject, what was withdrawn from the Subject, the signifier S<sub>2</sub>, and which constituted him as such, as subject supporting speech, as subject acceding to speech in the demand of the fact of the withdrawal of this signifier S<sub>2</sub>. Now, what happens? Here we have the signifier S<sub>2</sub> reappearing in the Real, for that is what must be said. Effectively the problem of primary repression, one cannot say that the return of the primary repression is produced in the Symbolic as secondary repression would, since it is itself the author of it. If it comes back, it can only be because in the Real and it is insofar that it is as such it manifests, I would say by a look, a look of the Real, before which the Subject is absolutely without recourse.

I am not going to go on about that, but if you reflect on it, you will see that the position of knowledge implied by R3, by the Other at R3, could correspond to what happens, if you wish, in that which is supposed to be the Last Judgement, at this point where the subject will not be accused finally of lying in the present, since precisely at the point B3 – R3 he is no longer lying, since he is revealed in his non being, but what is subsequently revealed to him, is that he did not cease to lie in the imperfect, even though he said a word. This position can also indicate to you, Knowledge at R3 can also open up perspectives, if you want to reflect, on what might be involved in racist or segregationist knowledge, but this would be a position of knowledge in which I would see the subject incarnate this S<sub>2</sub> in the Real.

As you see these are paths that I am launching here, since it is not our subject and I'm not going to come back to it. It would also be necessary to articulate the return of this S<sub>2</sub> into the Real with what is involved in terms of delusion, to seriously articulate the aphanisis and the delusional position in the measure that in the two cases the signifier returns to the Real, but nevertheless one could say that in the case of the non-psychotic who loses speech like the psychotic, nevertheless one could compare his position to that of these peoples invaded by foreigners who carry out a politics of scorched earth, who burn everything, who burn everything in order to keep something, namely, that the invasion is not total. And what is effectively maintained, what remains once the subject disappears, since, if you reflect on it, what is happening at R3, is that the signifier of the Urverdrängung returning into the Real, it is nothing less than primal repression, the subject of the unconscious which disappears: if you like, the bar of the unconscious, this bar which separates the  $\mathbf{o}$  and  $S_2$  being barred, makes them appear in  $S_2$  in the Real and in the **o** in the Real, and that is what remains, and that this is a position of total desubjectification.

I am coming now to the most enigmatic point of the business, which is that this position in which the subject finds itself thunderstruck under the look of the S<sub>2</sub> in the real, a thunderstruck position, without speech before this monstrous look, the word monstrous is not here by chance, because it is a matter of the reality which shows itself (*se montre*), that this 'monster', which is precisely the most radical incognito and that, if this S<sub>2</sub> shows itself, what supports speech itself, namely, its effacing, can no longer arrive, and if a monster is monstrous, it is nothing other than the cutting of speech.

The high point of the riddle that we are getting to, is to try to interpret how Bozef being in B3, if we posit that he is not going to remain there all his life, in eternity like a petrified subject, fixed in stone, under the look of Medusa, what is going to enable the subject at B3 get out of it? And how is he going to get out of it?

So then the first step that I am posing, is that you see that at that moment there there is no longer the support of the messenger; the messenger was at the end of his course and at the end of his recourse to Bozef and for the first time Bozef is confronted to the Other and with this Other, namely, with the one to whom the letter was really addressed and meeting whom he avoided as much as possible, at that moment he is face to face with this Other and he cannot do anything other than say a word recognising this Other, one word and one alone. The important thing is to see the link that there is between the fact that he can only say a single word, with the fact, at the moment when he gives up on the messenger, namely, the moment at when there are no longer two of them to transmit the message to the Other. It is also then the moment when the Other is going to receive a message that will not come from the two, it will no longer be duplicity, one could say that the position of duplicity at that moment, interiorised by Bozef, metamorphises him by dividing him, that is the division and the price of 'one word'.

You see there moreover that duplicity is without doubt the best defence against division. The fact that there is a link between a single possible word, Bozef is going to be confronted with the king at R3, there is only one possible word to which I will return later, what is the only thing that he can say to him? He will say to him: 'It is you'. An 'it is you' that is extended moreover – I will come back on this later, into 'it is us'. And the single word that he can say to him, he says to him at the same time: there is only one person to whom I can say it and it is already from topology that we can see that one word can only be given at one locus and that the tongue itself shows you that it knows this topology since it tells you that someone that has speech has only one and cannot have another; someone who has no speech, precisely has only one and at the same time there is the notion in the tongue of the destination, since, to give his word, is only conceivable if one can keep it namely, in fact a word that can be kept, the point therefore at which I arrive, is that the message delivered is this 'it is you' and I am going to write it for you in a way at a certain level, I am going to write a letter which is going to go from B3 to R3, B3 and R3 are going to meet at the level of this message which I will further explicitate now as being this S of Ø. I am going to give you a first way of writing it.

What I have drawn on the schema on the left is that when Bozef with his back to the wall this time can only say one word to the king by the very fact that he addresses this word to the king, the king one last time is displaced, migrates, migrates from the place where he was, namely, of the Real, migrates anew into the locus, into the symbolic locus where there is found in the position of R4, Bozef saying 'It is you' who is in the position of B4, the S(O), I am writing of the meeting, of the communion between B4 and R4, both putting in common at that moment their bar and that is why I wrote in the lunlua S<sub>2</sub> and S(O); I hope to be able to explicitate more rigorously in what is going to follow.

The point of the enigma on which I would like to keep you, is that, in the message delivered at  $S(\emptyset)$ , in the 'it is you', is that the subject who keeps his word – as we have seen – is here in a position much more of keeping it, but of supporting it, which is something quite different. What does it mean to sustain a word? It is much easier first of all to say what it is not, for example someone who says to you: 'I think that, when Lacan says the unconscious is structured like a language, I think that he is right, I agree with him', even if the subject may assure himself of his thinking in all good faith by thinking that he thinks that the unconscious is

structured like a language, I ask you: what does that prove? Nothing at all. In other words: is it because a subject thinks that he is thinking something that he really thinks it, namely, is it because he thinks he is thinking it that the enunciating, the subject of the unconscious which is in him, corresponds to what he says, in other words is he responsible for what he says? That is what is meant by sustaining one's word among others. It's a first approach. This having been said, that our enunciating corresponds, sustains our enunciation, I was going to say, praise be to God, there is no proof for it. There is no proof for it, but what there is eventually is a proof and that is how I believe one can understand the passe, the passe as a topological montage that would allow us to take into account if effectively when a subject enunciates something, he is capable of bearing witness, namely, of transmitting the articulation of his enunciating to his enunciated. In other words, it is not a matter of saying, but to show how it is possible not to go back on one's word.

The question therefore at which I will go further on, is that if this S(O) which Bozef reaches at R4, if he reaches there according to what I am showing you, the fact is that it is from a certain place - the word he uses doesn't matter, it is banal, it is you, it's chit chat, it's nothing at all - the weight of truth of this message, is that it is a locus. The question that I am now going to pose and develop is: is this locus from which the subject speaks transmissible? Can it reach, for example in the case of the passe, can it reach the jury d'agrement? Good. The enigma from the moment when the subject is capable, more than keeping his word, of sustaining it, namely, to be at a point where he reaches something that must be recognised as being of the order of a certainty and of a certain desire let us try to give an account of it, it is not easy. It is not easy because precisely in S(O) the object of desire or the object of certainty is something of which one can say nothing. But notice already, in order to circumscribe more closely what I am trying to say, it is in a general fashion that the people who, in life, inspire confidence in you, as it is put, are people that precisely you feel are desiring, but with a desire that remains I would say enigmatic to themselves, and quite the contrary, those who inspire in you what I would call an ethical judgement that is eventually of distrust, who will make you say: he's a hypocrite, he's a bad penny or he's ambitious, anyway terms of this kind, this doesn't matter, these are precisely people of whom you feel that

the object of desire is not unknown to themselves, that they can very precisely designate it, I would even say that what makes you uneasy perhaps in them, is that the voice of phantasy is so strong in them that there will be no hope for the voice of the  $S(\emptyset)$ ; since I am talking about trust you can clearly see that that poses the problems of the conditions by which an analyst can be worthy of trust? How is he so? Briefly I would say for the moment precisely that his desire should not be placed like the one that I have tried to describe, but this his desire should not have as a voice of clogging up the bar by making the object emerge but that his desire is to maintain this bar, and to bring it to incandescence just as what happens at the point B4 – R4 where the bar is carried to this point of extreme incandescence, I would say briefly. All of this does not yet give us an account of why at S(O), while the subject has no guarantees, what ensures that he reaches the point of being able to sustain what he says? And how he must account for the fact that if he gets there it is along the path of B3-R3, - as you remember - when the Other is in the position of absolute Knowledge, the subject can arrive at  $S(\emptyset)$ after having undergone the experience of the dispossession of his thinking, a total dispossession of his thinking.

Let us suppose, if you wish, to go a little further, an analyst who has not Passed through this dispossession of his thinking and who maintains with psychoanalytic theory a relationship of a possessor, of relationships of possession comparable to those, if you wish of the miser and his moneybox. Such an analyst, in his relationship to the theory, naturally can only see the gain of the operations; the gain of the operation is obvious; the thing is within hands reach and by definition what he does not see, is what he loses in the operation. What does he lose? Precisely what he loses, is the dimension of topology that there is in him, namely, the dimension of the locus of enunciating, namely, the dimension of presence which in him can answer 'Present', answer to what he enunciates. What I would then say, is that, in this position, is not the subject, the analyst in question, in a position that corresponds psychoanalytically to flat denial, namely,, is it possible on the one hand to say yes to knowledge and on the other hand to say no to the locus from which this knowledge is emitted. If this split takes place, one may think that the truth which is in the subject having brought about this split, by having remained outside the circuit of speech, is going to short circuit the circuit

of speech as, if you wish, reminding him of an absolutely painful nostalgia that must never be reawakened. That is why I would say, if a parl'être pulls himself together at that moment and makes a completely different sound be heard, Lacan for example in his heroic days, the analyst in question – let us think of the IPA or even, without going that far, to what happened among ourselves – can literally not support the echo that this sends back to him. This split of which I am speaking, which it is tempting to bring about, because it avoids division, implies in effect for the analyst, if he is split, that implies that his Other also is split and his Other is split, I would say, between an Other that would never lie and an Other which always lies, if you wish the Devil, the one who deceives, and to defy whom it is enough, in order not to make a mistake, it is enough not to be a dupe. You know well that the non-dupes err, and you see that it is the renunciation of this duplicity of the Other that the subject is necessarily in a position of passing on, namely, of being a heretic. And I would point out to you that Lacan, more than once, designated himself specifically as a heretic, and especially as passing it on. My transitory hypothesis, is to say that in the red arrow which goes from B4 to R4 (1), which make  $S_2$  and  $S(\emptyset)$  communicate, an arrow that I drew above in violet (3), which makes one go from the fading of  $\diamond D$  to  $S(\emptyset)$ , is the Passe, the movement by which something about the Passe can be said.

Now let us explore still more, if you wish, the scandalous character, that's how it should be described, of the message transmitted in  $S(\emptyset)$ , the message of the heretic. I told you at the outset there are no longer these two divinities, there is therefore no longer a guarantee for the moneybox. The subject speaks having in himself a responder to what he says. What is interesting, when we read, - I am making a rapid parenthesis – *The Manual of Inquisitors*, and they are interesting because they correspond literally to what happened in a recent Passe for us – the fact is that the inquisitor picks out perfectly what is in question in this  $S(\emptyset)$ ; he picks it out in his way of defining a heretic: a heretic is not somebody who errs, who is in error, *'errare humanum est'*, it is the one who poses an 'I' to which another diabolical 'I' – *'errare diabolicum'* – a diabolical one responds, and effectively this I of enunciating, is diabolical because like the devil, it is diabolically ungraspable: the devil does not always lie. If he always lied that would come down to saying
that he tells the truth. You see that the inquisitor, clearly spots what is at stake, namely, that it is in terms of an articulation between the two 'l's', at the level of this  $S(\emptyset)$ . And that is why, whatever he says, he does not demand an avowal of the heretic, but a disavowal. You sense the nuance between the two, since I spoke to you earlier about the disavowal at the very heart of the inquisitor in this split of the two Others. This disavowal moreover, notice that I am not throwing stones at anyone, this disavowal lies in wait for us at every moment. It is not all that rare to see for example an analyst in supervision who, at a given moment in his journey, prefers to lie on the couch rather than to continue the supervision, and what one often sees is that, if he wants to lie on the couch, it is as if lying on the couch the rule being to be able to say anything at all, as if, at that very moment, he had disengaged himself from the fact that he had to answer for what he says, that he can talk without responsibility. This analyser can believe that for a certain time until the day he discovers, on the couch, that these signifiers that he thought he did not have to answer in the sense of responsibility, he has to answer for, and that day perhaps the analyser, for him, the Passe is profiled because at that moment, one could say that he is no longer simply the disciple of Lacan or of Freud, but he becomes the disciple of his symptom, namely, that he allows himself to be taught by it and that if for example the analyser in question was Bozef, however complicated may be Bozef's path, he can only discover that in writing this outline, that this outline in a certain way has already been sketched out, perhaps even before he learned how to read, on the graphs of a certain Dr Lacan. One could say at that moment that the analyser no longer is the delegate of the master, because he no longer has to be, he no longer has to be I would say carried by the knowledge of the master, because he makes himself the carrier, and this is what he delivers to  $S(\emptyset)$ . I am going round in circles to approach little by little, closer and closer, the core of this  $S(\emptyset)$  namely, at the point that we are at, I could say that Bozef, it would be at the end of this journey that he is responsible for the graphs that he writes and only at that very moment.

Now the problem is to effectively account for the nature of this certitude and of this enjoyment of the Other that Lacan talks to us about. I am obliged to go quickly because time is effectively passing. At S(O) a contradictory phenomenon takes place, which is that of a communion – the word is Lacan's in *The formations of the unconscious*, you will find it – is that of a communion coinciding with a separation between the subject and the Other. The paradox is to comprehend why it is at the moment of the dissolution of the transference, that a certainty may be borne in the subject, and perhaps uniquely at that very moment. For that I am obliged to make a rapid return back to what is the point that we were at at B3-R3, the point of *désêtre*.

At that point I would say - I am obliged because to comprehend what is the nature of the emergence of the subject in a pure state - at B3-R3, rapidly, the subject was in a position where the primary repression had disappeared, fixed by the look of the Real. What is going to allow the subject to unfix himself remember moreover, that on the subject of fixation, Freud articulates it to primary repression - what is going to allow the subject to unfix himself, what is going to allow the Other which is in the Real to reintegrate his symbolic site? It is there moreover that the art of the analyst must make itself heard. An example: an analyser in this position, where for him the knowledge of the Other wanders around like that in the Real, puts pressure on his analyst to see the way in which the analyst is going to manifest himself, from where he speaks, one day telephones him to press for a rendezvous to see the reaction, the analyst responds: 'If it were necessary, we would see one another'. The message, the signified, has nothing very original about it, nevertheless this message has the effect of a radical interpretation for the analyser, the effect being of managing to reconvey to the Other in his symbolic locus, guite simply because of the syntactic articulation, which ensured that his analyst by finding the formula 'If it were necessary', by the introduction of the 'it', subjecting himself as analyser to the dominance, to the predominance of the signifier.

In the point B3-R3 where the subject has no recourse, he has no recourse 'to comprehend this notion of being without recourse', evokes the night terrors of the child. Why effectively in the dark is the child in this position? I would say precisely that in the dark what happens for the child is that he does not have a corner to go to where he is not under the look of the Other; because in the dark there is no little corner. And it is precisely in answer to the fact that under the

look of the Real, there is not, for the subject, at B3-R3 any recourse to any corner whatsoever, that the recourse summoned by the signifier of the Name of the Father is going to be to create a little nook, namely, a nook that is going to withdraw him from the Other, but which is also going to withdraw him from himself by constituting him as not knowing, since it is precisely this corner itself, the corner in which he has the most of himself, the most symbolic of himself that is going to be evaporated. I would say that at that moment – scripture says to us 'let there be light' – what is at stake at that moment is 'let there be a hole', this is an expression of Lacan's. And this is perhaps what happened in the syntactical formula that I evoked earlier. Having said this, how is it that the subject - I am turning all the time around that as you can see – who has lost speech, is going to rediscover it and is going to be able to say 'It's you'? Well then I would say due to the intervention of the signifier of the Name of the Father, which recreated the primal repression, which made  $S_2$  disappear and restored the **o**-object in its place, because of the operation of this signifier of the Name of the Father, the subject reaches a different point of view, a point of view where he does not know the equivalence between the knowledge of the Other and the key which is lacking in him. He discovers that it is not because the Other recognises that he is lacking, that there is not in him the key, that he lacks the essential key of his being, it is not because the Other recognises that that he knows it. I would even say that when he discovers that the Other can recognise the existence of this key while not knowing it, namely, not being able to restore it to him, if, in a first moment he may fall into despair, in truth this is going to reintroduce him to hope, because if the Other is in the position of recognising what he does not know, that introduces the dimension of the fact that the Other himself has lost this same key, that he knows well what lack is involved, and the hope that is opened up then, is to make present the absence of this lost uninscribable thing, and the hope, is precisely that the uninscribable can cease not to be written. And that is what is delivered at S(Ø).

The unlikely paradox on which one ends up, as one might say, is how a signifier, this signifier of  $S(\emptyset)$ , can assume this unthinkable contradiction of being at once what maintains open the gap of what does not cease to be written – when you read, when you hear music that overwhelms you or a poem that overwhelms you,

the word that scores a bulls eye with you, one can say that opens to the maximum this dimension of primal repression – how then can this signifier maintain this contradiction of maintaining this gap and at the same time be what ceases not to be written, for example a very banal note in the diachronic scale a completely stupid lah?

You see that this wager nevertheless, is what is realised in our third moment of the  $S(\emptyset)$ , of which one could say that the production, of this  $S(\emptyset)$ , is the result of an ultimate dialectic between the subject and the Other through which the one and the other, by becoming two as I might say, resurrect literally in a movement of encounter - through which, I repeat, Lacan has not hesitated to employ the word of communion, in the production of the witticism – this very bar, this very bar whose paradox is to associate and to disassociate at the same time. From this, if you wish, from this encounter of the subject and the Other, some specifications, three specifications: first of all it is a matter of a communion, it is not a matter of collaboration. We know what the subject is capable of when he becomes a collaborator. Another point: this mode of communion which is produced in  $S(\emptyset)$  is a mode in which, at that moment, the subject does not receive his message in an inverted form since it would be the only unlikely moment, outside time, really outside time, in which the Other would communicate in the same knowledge at the same time. When I say knowledge, it is precisely the knowledge of this bar of this non-being. You see that the experience of this lack of being at  $S(\emptyset)$  – and precisely you have to distinguish between aphanisis which for its part is one could say an excommunication of the subject - here it is not a matter of being, here one could say that effectively it is a matter of a communion in non-being and that it is in this putting in common of the signifier of S<sub>2</sub> and of the signifier lacking to the Other that there is delivered this signifier that I articulated and that I am now going to articulate more closely to the Passe.

One might say if you wish, that the bar of the subject and of the Other, by communicating together, carried the subject into the incandescence of this shared lack to the very sources of existence, well beyond the object way beyond the phantasy. The very fact that along this path the subject renounces the phantasy, short-circuits it, demonstrates, at that moment, that what is

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accentuated by him is the search for this experience of lack in a pure state. Finally you see that what is proper to this response, the 'It's you', as I define it at that moment, that the proper of this response is that it is a metaphor in a pure state. If you wish, if the subject had responded: 'It's you' to the Other who would have asked him: 'So then yes or no is it me?' and that then he would have answered, his word, his enunciation would have been the same but would not have had this effect of a message of  $S(\emptyset)$  by situating itself, I would say, clearly metonymically, like this aphasic described by Jakobson who by metaphorical aphasia, could not enunciate the adverb 'no' except if one said to him: 'Say no' then he can respond: 'No, since you say that I can't say it.....' demonstrating, if you wish, by that, that the word itself, if it has fallen from its locus of enunciating, falls itself as a simple metonymical remainder and loses its value of metaphorical message, as long as you see that – I am coming back to it, this  $S(\emptyset)$  only has sense when articulated at its locus of emission.

Good, since it's late, I am going to end with the problem of the Passe skipping over a certain number of things.

Let us take up again our story of Bozef. Can we say that Bozef, as things have happened here, has Passed the Passe, namely, we see that Bozef has arrived by delivering his message 'It's you', corresponds to what I have located, namely, has managed to do without an intermediary, one is no longer 2, one is only 1, to address a locus. Bozef, therefore has got to the point, the topological enunciating point articulated to his enunciated message. But Bozef being this point, is he for all that, if he is, as one might say 'passant', is he for all that capable of testifying, of realising that he is in the Passe from which he speaks? Is he capable of it? The king himself who is supposed to be R4, in the position of the analyst, is for his part capable of recognising the locus from where Bozef speaks. He hears him. But the king – it is not by chance that the king who is the analyst – the king is not the jury d'agrément. I come back to my question: if the whole value of the message of  $S(\emptyset)$  is that it should be emitted at a certain locus, how can this locus be transmitted get to the jury? Because, in  $S(\emptyset)$ , Bozef can sustain what he's saying, but in the name of a truth that he finds himself experiencing but of which he knows nothing: he knows nothing about this locus. In other words: if Bozef is in

a certain way, in the Passe, I would not say that for all that he occupies the position of a passant, insofar as being placed at the locus of truth at that moment, he is not in the right place to say something about it. Can we at the same time speak about this locus, B4-R4, and say this locus?

We have already said, if what is proper to this  $S(\emptyset)$  is not to be able to be hidden in any moneybox, to return to our metaphor of the possessive analyst, we take another step and now we are saying, that as a locus, this locus does not say itself as such and cannot arrive as such to the jury.

Good, I'm going to illustrate that in the following way: when you hear a Lacanian analyst, a Lacanian disciple speaking about Lacan passant, since Lacan has defined himself as not ceasing to pass the Passe, when you hear this passant, can you say that in hearing this passant you understand where Lacan is speaking from? You cannot say so. From where does Lacan speak, the  $S(\emptyset)$  of Lacan, you can pick out eventually when you hear him or when you read him; when you hear him, I point out to you here that I am taking another step, that he always supports himself with something written. Another example: do you think that what happened to psychoanalysis, before Lacan got involved, is to be imputed uniquely to the fact that analysts of that time were bad Passers or indeed that the jury d'agrément that they represented, aggregated in a way that was not that.

The two hypotheses are perhaps true, but not sufficient. If Lacan at a given time, reminded analysts that it would be better to read Freud than to read Fenichel, what was he doing by reminding them of that, if not that if they really wanted to agree with Freud, they needed a Passer, is, I was going to say, worthy of this definition, namely, the topological arrangement, the writing of Freud which testifies that Freud does not separate what he says from the locus from which he says it, and if one wants to bring about, that in certain psychoanalytic societies, a dumbing down of Freud's work – you can hear that in this dumbing the word vel is barred, namely, that one no longer hears any more the dimension of 'Freud *parl'être*': what one ends up with is effectively a taking possession of the theory that one can put in a moneybox.

What is happening, is it not, the danger, if the analyst therefore does not make himself a Passer, namely, if, I may say that the very reading of Freud, of the Passer Freud, qua manifesting his decision, does no longer bring about in them an effect of division, namely, this exigency of the  $S(\emptyset)$  which makes one sense that Freud, in himself, bears witness to this indivisible locus of what he says and which in fact makes him the responding heretic of his word. Because what is proper to a writing is it not – I am giving you this last example before concluding – the proper of a writing whatever it may be is that in a writing the subject of the enunciated and the subject of enunciating may well be present, but it is not for all that that the writing will be a Passer: the writing will only be a Passer if the two 'I's' are articulated in a transmissible way. Take the rather characteristic example of the actor, of the interpreter; a heart-rent interpreter, when he interprets a text, a writing, it will be heart-rending for this jury who is the spectator, his tears are going to draw tears from you and though he says he's acting, one could say that if he cries, if he is overwhelmed somewhere, it is because his enunciating has been shaken by the signifiers of the author; in such a way that what I am saying to you is that it is not the interpreter who is the Passer of the text, it is the text which is the Passer of the enunciating of the actor. I even heard it said in the Ecole Freudienne, these are the sorts of things that are said, that some Passers that have been accepted by the jury, if the Passer is accepted, it is because he will have been able to give rise in his Passer to an enunciating of the Passer which, for its part, Passes with the jury and that, since it gets Passed, it makes the rest pass, namely, the Passer.

I come back to my starting point to tell you that it is even more complicated than that. If the author himself, of whom I am speaking, plays his proper role in the fiction that I told you about, that doesn't prove, if he played his own personage, that he would play the role to perfection, crying out the truth as one might say – this has happened to great authors like Moliere – that does not prove that, if chance accepted this fiction, if the chance of life made him encounter the same situation as the one that he described to his personage, that does not prove that at that moment he would not be gauche, borrowed; and nevertheless the signifiers in question, it is not a question, as for an actor, of borrowed signifiers, in principle they are his own. I come therefore to the idea that the author is not at all be superimposed on the one who produces on the stage and I return to Bozef. And on that I end.

Bozef therefore, at  $S(\emptyset)$  is in the position of being a Passer, but he is not in the position of bearing witness from where he is passing. What can account for his position, I ask you, from where he speaks, if not this concatenation of graphs that I have drawn for you – I unfortunately was not able to finish them – that I drew for you on the board. If this hypothesis is true, namely, if the Passer, this writing, these graphs function as Passers in that they testified from the locus of enunciating strictly articulated to enunciation which is the Passer, since it is not Bozef? I would simply answer and I would say that fundamentally the Passer is the writer of the one who has put in place, who has written this writing, these graphs. I would even say that the example, if Lacan says he never ceases passing the pass it is perhaps for this reason; he does not cease and we can imagine that he will never cease; he does not cease because seminar after seminar he creates, he resurrects the Passer, which is his writing, namely, that he creates the conditions of his division. He creates like Bozef at a given moment on his journey with his back to the wall, puts himself in the place of the transmitter in order to make himself at the same time an emitter and a transmitter in the violet arrow when he renounces the intermediary, Lacan, seminar after seminar, creating and recreating his Passer, can effectively not cease to pass the pass, all the more so that the Other to whom he addresses himself is certainly not a jury from which he expects some sort of Amen. Yes. I imagine the negative reactions that will be thrown back at me, of saying that a writing could play the function of a Passer for a jury; I incidentally learned from Jean Clavreul, that this is a proposition that he had made, some years ago, to think of this notion of a writing as a Passer; the objection that will be made immediately to me is to say; to make a Passer out of a writing, effectively, is a matter then of making a report, a report why not an academic masters? Naturally, the response that I would give immediately to this contradictor, would be to say that if the one who writes, if the Other to whom he addresses himself is identifiable to a jury, effectively what he will produce will eventually effectively be perhaps an excellent report but effectively academic. If in this writing he bears witness, as I think I have tried to do, of the locus of the way in which an enunciation and an enunciating are articulated topologically in a grounded and articulatable way, and that besides what is articulated between these the lines, Passes the presence that corresponds to the writing, the heretical responding presence, which for its part is the guarantee that it is not an academic writing, but effectively a writing that creates the topological arrangements where at the same time a *parl'être* assumes, indeed lives at the same time his division of Passer-passing.

Good in conclusion what I would tell you, is that it is for nothing other than the very consequences of this hypothesis of work that did not authorise me to make the Passe as it functions topologically in this moment in the Freudian school, that made me produce what appears to me to be something like this Passer which is this writing, which, by its topological arrangement puts in place, has allowed me to account for a possible transmissible articulation between the two 'I's'. To whom this writing was destined before I did it, I knew strictly nothing before Dr Lacan asked me to speak to you about it.

## Seminar 7: Wednesday 15 February 1977

To give you an idea of why, the last time, I had Alain Didier Weill speak – I had asked him to speak, it is obviously because I worry myself about this business of the Borromean chain. This is a Borromean chain. As you see, this element here, could be folded back, in such a way that these two circles are buckled like the ones that you see here, which is what a Borromean knot realises. It is absolutely not completely simple and the fact that on several occasions I disturbed Pierre Soury who is someone of whom I dare to believe...but of whom I dare to believe that I contributed something to the fact that he has given an awful lot to the Borromean knot. I most recently posed him the question of how four tetrahedrons could be knotted in a Borromean way among themselves. He right away gave me the solution, a solution that I verified as being valid. It is something which implies what you see here,



Fig. VII-1

namely, not a relation between these terms which is spherical, but a relation that I could call toric. Suppose that...



Fig. VII-2

It seemed to me that the mode in which – but I only got it last night – the mode in which Pierre Soury sent me the knot, the Borromean knot of the four tetrahedrons is just as toric. This simply to explain to you that it worried me to know whether, the application of the Borromean knot to a space spherically representable also generated a toric space and this in order to explain to you that in short, since I was completely entangled in the midst of all of that, it was to Alain Didier Weill that I made a call, a call to substitute himself for me in this enunciation, because I had expected great promise on why he had put forward the name of Bozef. This name of Bozef that he brings in like an intruder into *The purloined letter*, this name of Bozef, I challenged him about this name Bozef and this famous 'I know that he knows' – that he, the King knows – 'because I had informed him of it'. Informed of what, this is what is not said.

In principle Alain Didier Weill, by introducing the Bozef into the story of *The purloined letter*, does not formally know what he is putting forward. Witness the question that I posed him and which he answered. He answered: if Bozef could be substituted for a character in Poe's story, it could only be the Queen, eventually the minister when he is – as I underlined – in a feminised position. It is a fact that the fact of introducing himself in the way that you know, by filching the letter which for that

reason is said to be purloined, while what I enunciate, in re-establishing Poe's text, *The purloined letter*, namely, the letter that does not arrive, the letter whose circuit is extended. On this I made a certain number of remarks that you will find in my text, a text which is at the start of what is called my *Ecrits*. I show how striking it is to see that the fact of being in short in a state of dependency on this letter feminizes a personage who – one could put this otherwise – is not precisely lacking in pluck, were it only from the fact of filching the letter which the Queen knows that he possesses and he is feminised for all that, and not because of the trials he endures in hiding it from the Other, who is the King, this scandalous letter. He says to himself: the Other does not know. But this is simply equivalent to the fact that he holds the letter. He for his part knows, hence the extrapolation that Alain Didier Weill makes, an extrapolation which depends on the fact of holding the letter. That he hides it from the Other, does not ensure that the King knows anything at all about it.

Alain Didier Weill pursues: the way in which the story of the Queen of the story is different to Bozef depends on the fact that, if the Queen does indeed carry out the trials opened with the Minister of these 4 moments of knowledge that he himself has described and that he finds the trace of in Poe by the ascendency that the Minister has gained at the expense of the knowledge that the abductor has, of the knowledge that the victim has of its abductor and of which the four moments are according to him: the Minister knows that the Queen knows that the Minister knows that she knows. It is true that this can be picked out, and that following on this, Alain Didier Weill, in his letter, points out to me that the Queen does not for all that experience this objective dispossession by the Minister as the subjective dispossession at which Bozef arrives at the level that he enunciated for you, the last time, as B3-R3. It is true that here there is a deficiency in the enunciation that gave us at the last session. But, in this regard. I disagree. Bozef, even though he has had a name bestowed on him – and this indeed is the flaw in which I surprise– Bozef even though he has been given a name, is not something which deserves to be named, I mean that it is not something which is like something which, let us say, is seen. It is not nameable. Bozef is, I would say, the incarnation of Absolute Knowledge, and what Alain Didier Weill extrapolates, completely in the margins of Poe's tale, is, the journeying that starts from this hypothesis, namely, that Bozef is the incarnation of what I will specify soon, of what is meant by Absolute Knowledge, shows the journeying starting from this hypothesis that he is himself, Bozef, this incarnation, shows the journeying of a truth which in fact is nowhere made obvious. At no moment, does the Minister who has kept this letter in short as a pledge of the good will of the Queen, at no moment has the Minister even the idea of communicating this letter, to the King for example, who is moreover the only one who would find himself in the position of understanding its consequences.

The truth, one might say, 'demands' to be said. It has no voice, to 'demand', to be said, since in short it can happen, as is said - and this indeed is what is extraordinary about language - it can happen - how has French which must be considered as an individual, has it put this form into use? - it can happen, I would say according to it, the concrete French that is at stake, it can happen, according to it, that no one says it, not even Bozef; and this indeed is what in fact happens, I say, namely, that this mythical Bozef, since he is not in Poe's tale, says absolutely nothing. Absolute Knowledge, I would say, does not speak at any price. It is silent if it wishes to be silent. What I called Absolute Knowledge on this particular occasion, is the following: it is simply that there is knowledge somewhere, not just anywhere at all, in the Real, and this thanks to the apparent existence of a species for which – as I said – there is no sexual relationship. It is a purely accidental existence, but on which one reasons starting from the fact, as I might say, starting from the fact that it is capable of enunciating something, about appearance of course since I underline apparent existence. The orthography that I give to the name *paraître* that I write *parêtre*, it is only about the *parêtre* that we have to know, being on this occasion only being one part of *parl'être*, namely, of what is made up uniquely of what speaks.

What is meant by Knowledge as such? It is Knowledge in so far as it is in the Real. This Real is a notion that I elaborated by having put it into the Borromean knot with that of the Imaginary and of the Symbolic. The Real, as it appears, the Real tells the Truth, but it does not speak and one must speak in order to say anything. The Symbolic, for its part, supported by the signifier, only tells lies when it speaks; and it speaks a lot. It ordinarily expresses itself by the Verneinung, but the contrary of the Verneinung, as someone who was good enough to take the floor during my first seminar, the contrary of the Verneinung, in other words of what is accompanied by negation, the contrary of the Verneinung does not give the Truth. It exists when one speaks of a contrary, one is always speaking about something that exists, and which is true about one particular among others; but there is no universal that corresponds to it in that case. And that by which the Verneinung is typically recognised, is that one must say something false, to succeed in getting across a truth. Something false is not a lie, it is only a lie if it is willed to be such, which often happens, if it is aiming in a way at a lie passing for the truth; but it must be clearly said that, apart from psychoanalysis, it is rare. It is in psychoanalysis that this promotion of the Verneinung, namely, of the lie willed as such to get a truth across, is exemplary. All this, of course, is only knotted by means of the Imaginary which is always wrong. It is always wrong, but it is on it that there depends what is called consciousness.

Consciousness is very far from being knowledge, since, what it lends itself to is very precisely falsity. 'I know' never means anything, and one can easily wager, that what one knows is false; is false but is sustained by consciousness, whose characteristic is precisely to support this false by its consistency. To the point that one could say that, one should look twice before admitting something obvious, that it must be sifted as such, that nothing is sure in matters of obviousness, and that that is why I enunciated that the obvious (*l'évidence*) must be emptied out (*évider*) that what is obvious depends on this emptying out.

It is very striking that – I can well, for my part also, go on to the order of confidences with which I am crushed in my daily analyses – an 'I know' that is conscious, namely, not simply knowledge, but the will not to change,

is something which is, I can confide in you, experienced very early on, experienced by the fact of someone, like everyone, who was close to me, namely, the one that I called at that time, I was two years older than her, two and a half years, my little sister, she is called Madeleine and she said to me one day, not 'I know', because the 'I' would have been too much, but 'Manène knows'.

The unconscious is an entity that I try to define by the Symbolic, which is only in short an extra entity. An entity with which one must know how to deal. Knowing how to deal with it, is not the same thing as a knowledge, as the Absolute Knowledge of which I spoke earlier. The unconscious is what precisely makes something change, what reduces what I called the *sinthome*, the *sinthome* which I write with the orthography that you know.

I always had to deal with consciousness, but in the form which formed part of the unconscious, since it is a person a 'she' on this particular occasion, a 'she' since the person in question put herself in the third person by naming herself Manène, in a form which formed part of the unconscious, I am saying, since it is a 'she' who, as in my title for this year, a 'she' *qui s'ailait à mourre* who pretended to be a bearer of knowledge.

He or she, is the third person, is the Other, as I define it, it is the unconscious. It knows, in the absolute, and only in the absolute, it knows that I know what was in the letter, but that I alone know. In reality, it therefore knows nothing, except that I know it, but this is not a reason that I should tell him.

In fact, this Absolute Knowledge, I did more than allude to it somewhere, I really insisted on it with my big boots, namely, that the whole appendix that I added to my writing on *The purloined letter*, namely, what goes from page 54 to page 60, and that I entitled in part 'Parenthesis of parentheses', is very precisely this something which, here, is substituted by Bozef.

Alain Didier Weill, for his part, it is not that he substitutes himself, he identifies himself to Bozef. He feels himself, he feels himself in the *Passe*, it is rather curious that he could, in a way in this writing, find, as I might say, the call that answered for me, made me answer by the *Passe*.

The Real that is at stake, is the knot in its entirety. Since we are speaking about the Symbolic, it must be situated in the Real. There is, for this knot, a cord. The cord is also *corps-de* (body-of). This *corps-de*, is parasited on by the signifier; for the signifier though it forms part of the Real, it is indeed there that I am right to situate the Symbolic, one must think of the following, which is that we might well have dealings with this *corps-de* only in the dark. How could we recognise, in the dark, that it is a Borromean knot? That is what is at stake in the Passe. 'I know that he knows', what can that mean except to objectify the unconscious, except for the fact that the objectification of the unconscious necessitates a redoubling, namely, that 'I know that he knows that I know that he knows'. It is on this condition alone that analysis holds onto its status. This is what creates an obstacle to this something which, by limiting itself to 'I know that he knows', opens the door to occultism and telepathy. It is because of not having sufficiently grasped, sufficiently well grasped the status of anti-knowledge, namely, of the anti-unconscious, in other words of this pole, of this pole which consciousness is, that Freud allowed himself from time to time to be tickled by what have since been called 'psy' phenomena, namely, that he allowed himself to slip quite gently into delusion, in connection with the fact that Jones gave him his visiting card immediately after a patient had casually mentioned Jones' name.

The *Passe* that is at stake, I only envisaged in a tentative way, as something which means nothing but a 'recognising one another', if I can express myself in that way, on condition that we insert into it an '*a*-v' after the first letter 'recognising one another between knowledge (*se reconnaître entre* s(av)oir)'. Are there tongues that are an obstacle to the recognition of the unconscious? This is something that was suggested to me as a question by the fact that this '*c*'est toi', in which would have Bozef communicating with

the King in this moment, that he imputed to me quite wrongly, thanks to the fact that he picked up the term communion somewhere in my *Ecrits*. *'C'est toi'*, are there tongues in which this could be a *'toi sait'* of the verb *savoir*, namely, something which would put the *toi*, which would have it slip into the third person.

All of this to advance, to say that it is really divinatory that Alain Didier Weill was able to link what I call the *Passe* to *The purloined letter*. There is surely something worthwhile here, something that consists in the introduction of Bozef. Bozef walks around in it, as I really indicated in the very text of *The purloined letter*; as I really indicated – I talk all the time, on every page, of something which is on the point of happening, it even goes as far as being the point at which I end – that a letter always arrives at its destination, namely, that it is in short addressed to the King, and that is why it has to get to him. That, in all of this text, I speak of nothing but that, namely, of the imminence of the fact that the King gets to know about the letter, is this not to say, namely, to put forward, that he knows it already? Not alone does he know it already, but I would say that he 'recognises' it. Is not 'this recognition' very precisely what can ensure the behaviour of the Queen and King?

That is what I wanted to say to you today.

## Seminar 8: Wednesday 8 March 1977

What one writes..., I say 'one', because – anyone at all can write – I say 'one' because it embarrasses me to say 'I'. It is not without reason that it embarrasses me. Why should the 'I' be produced on this particular occasion? Therefore it happens that I said and by that fact it can be found in writing, I said that there is no metalanguage, namely, that one cannot talk about language.

As it happens I reread something which is in *Scilicet IV* that I called, anyway that I entitled, that is how, it is something like that that carries your brand, anyway that I entitled *L'étourdit*, and in *L'étourdit*, I noticed, I recognised something, in *L'étourdit*, this metalanguage, I would say that I almost brought it to birth. Naturally that would mark an epoch. It would mark an epoch, but there is no epoch because there is no change. This *almost* that I added to my sentence, this almost underlines that it never happened. It is a semblance of metalanguage and since I make use in the text, I make use of this way of writing, *s'embler*, *s'emblant* to metalanguage. Making a reflective verb of this *s'embler*, detaches it from this coming to fruition which being is, and as I write, *il parest, parest* means a *s'emblant* of being. There you are.

And then, in this connection, I notice that it was for a preface that I opened this writing, for a preface that I had to write for an Italian edition that I had promised, it is not sure that I will do it, it is not sure that I will do it because it annoys me, but I noticed in this connection, I consulted someone who is Italian for whom this tongue, that I understand nothing about, is his maternal tongue, I consulted someone who pointed out to me that there is something that resembles this *s'embler*, which resembles this *s'embler*, but which is not, which is not easy to introduce with the deformation in the way of writing that I give it. In short, it is not easy to transcribe, that is why I proposed that my preface should not be translated, after all, this all the more

that there is no kind of inconvenience in translating anything whatsoever, in particular, not the preface.

Like every preface, I would be inclined, since this is usually what happens in prefaces, I would be inclined to approve myself, even to applaud myself; this is what is usually done. It is a comedy. It is of the order of comedy and that made me, that induced me..., that pushed me towards Dante. This comedy is divine, of course, but that only means one thing, which is that it is farcical. I speak about the farcical in L'étourdit, I don't know at what page I speak about it but I do speak about it. That means that one can be farcical about this supposedly divine work. There is not the slightest divine work, unless one wants to identify it to what I call the Real. But I want to specify this notion that I have of the Real.

I would like it to become more widespread. There is an aspect (*face*) – it is unheard of that one should dare to advance terms like that – there is an aspect by which this Real is distinguished from what is, to say the word, knotted to it. Here it is necessary to specify certain things. If one can talk about aspect, it must take on its weight, I mean that it should have a sense. It is quite clear that it is inasmuch as this notion of the Real that I am advancing, is something consistent that I can put it forward.

And there I would like to make a remark, which is that the rings of string, as I called them, in which I made consist this triad of the Real, of the Imaginary and of the Symbolic, to which I was pushed, not by just anyone, by the hysterics, so that that I started from the same material as Freud, since it is in order to say something coherent about hysterics that Freud built up the whole of his technique, which is a technique, namely, something that on this particular occasion is very fragile.

I would like all the same to point out the following, which is that the rings of string on this particular occasion do not hold up. Something more is needed – this is what was, I should say, suggested to me the other day by Soury's lecture; Soury gives lectures on Thursday evening, I don't see why I shouldn't tell you, at 7.15 at Jussieu and you can ask him where, I hope that many of the people who are here will go there – he pointed out to me very specifically that these rings of string only held up on condition of being something that must be called by its name, a torus. In other words, there are three tori; there are three tori which are necessary, because if they are not presupposed, one cannot demonstrate the fact that these tori are necessitated by the reversal of the aforesaid tori; in other words a torus, we are used to drawing it like that, naturally it is a completely inadequate drawing, since one does not see, unless one indicates it explicitly in this form, that it is a surface and not at all a bubble in a ball.



That this surface can be turned inside out, has properties from which it results – I once recalled that the torus can be turned inside out – from which it results that it is thanks to that that it appears, that turned inside out, the torus which for example is supposed to be one of three, this one for example, that when turned inside out the torus contains the two other rings of string which themselves ought to be represented by a torus, namely, that what you see here, which I drew in this way, ought, not to be drawn as I have just begun to draw it, but to be drawn like that namely, two other tori, and two other tori, are not two other rings of string. Does that mean that these three tori are Borromean knots? Absolutely not. For, if this is the way that you cut the torus which is for example the one that I have designated here (1), if that is the way you cut it, it does not free the two other tori. You

have to cut it, as I might say to express myself in a metaphorical fashion, you have to cut it lengthways (2) for it to be freed. [cut 1, 2]



Fig. VIII-2

The condition therefore that the torus should only be cut in one single way, even though it could be done in two ways, is something that deserves to be remembered in what I would call on this occasion, not a metaphor but a structure; for the difference there is between the metaphor and the structure, is that the metaphor is justified by the structure.

Now in following what is at stake in the Dante in question, I was led to reread an old book that my bookseller brought me, since he comes from time to time to bring me things, it is by someone called Delescluze, which was published in 1864, he was a pal of Baudelaire, it is called *Dante et la poésie amoureuse* (Dante and love poetry) and it is not very reassuring; it is all the less reassuring in that as I said earlier, Dante had begun on this particular occasion, on the occasion of the aforesaid love poetry, began to act the buffoon.

He created, not what I have not created, namely, a metalanguage, he created what one can call a new tongue, what could be called a metatongue, since after all, every new tongue is a metatongue, but like all new tongues, it is formed on the model of ancient ones, which is to say that it fails.

What kind of fate is it which ensures that, whatever may be the genius of someone, he always recommences along the same rail, along this rail which

means that the tongue fails, that, in short, it is a farcical tongue? The French tongue is no less farcical than the others, it is uniquely because we have a taste for it, have practiced it, that we consider it as superior. It has nothing superior about it in any way whatsoever. It is exactly like Algonquin or Coyote (*sic*), it is no better. If it were worth more, one might say of it what Dante enunciates somewhere, he enunciates this in something he wrote in Latin and he calls it *Nomina sunt consequentia rerum*.

The consequence, consequence meaning on this particular occasion what? It can only mean the real consequence, but there is no real consequence, since the Real, as I symbolised it by the Borromean knot, the Real vanishes into a dust cloud of tori because, of course, these two tori here inside the other are unknotted. They are unknotted and this means that the Real, at least in the way that we believe we can represent it, the Real is only linked by a structure, if we pose that structure, means nothing but the Borromean knot. The Real is in short defined as being incoherent insofar as it is precisely structure.



Fig. VIII-3

All of this does nothing more than specify the conception that someone, who happens on this particular occasion to be me, has of the Real. The Real does not constitute a universe, except by being knotted to two other functions. That is not reassuring, it is not reassuring because one of these functions is the living body. We do not know what a living body is. It is an affair which for our part we have to leave to God. I mean that – insofar as what I am saying has a sense - what I mean is that I read a thesis which, bizarrely, was produced in 1943. Don't go looking for it, because you will never get your hands on it, you will never get your hands on it, because you are here much more numerous than the number of the copies of the thesis that came out, it is the thesis of someone called Madeleine Cavet who was born in 1908, the thesis specifies it, namely, about 7 years after me, and what she says is not foolish. She sees perfectly well that Freud, is something absolutely confused in which, as we say, a cat would not find its kittens. And she takes a measure, she evokes on this particular occasion the work of Pasteur.

Pasteur is a funny business. I mean that up to him - for after all it is from him that this comes – up to him people believed in what can be called spontaneous generation, namely, that people believed that, to abandon here lay the apparent foundation – to abandon a living body, naturally things started to swarm all over it, I mean that it swarms with what are called micro-organisms, as a result of which people imagined that these microorganisms could grow on anything whatsoever. It is quite certain that, if you leave a glass in the open air, there are things that fall into it and that even, on occasion, make what is called a culture. But what Freud demonstrated, what Pasteur demonstrated – this slip has all its value, given the sense of the thesis of the aforesaid Madeleine Cavet - what Pasteur demonstrated, is that, on condition simply of putting a little cotton wool at the mouth of a vase, things do not start to swarm inside and this is manifestly one of the simplest demonstrations of non-spontaneous generation.

But then that presupposes strange things. Where do these micro-organisms come from? We are reduced in our own day to thinking that they come from nowhere. It is as good as saying that it is God who fabricated them. It is very, very annoying that people should have abandoned this openness to spontaneous generation which was in short a rampart against the existence of God. For us, our friend Pasteur was moreover considered by the doctors of his time as a formidable cleric and this is quite true. He had religious convictions. People completely forget this adventure, this adventure of the aforesaid Pasteur, people forget it. People forget it and the fact of being reduced to thinking that there is life, more or less pulsating life on meteorites does not resolve the question. The fact that we do not find the slightest trace of life on the moon, or on Mars, does not help matters. For why, in the name of what, if not in the name of a being that must all the same be situated somewhere, of a being who might have done that explicitly like a man, as if man who, for his part, manipulates and fiddles with things, as if man all of a sudden had seen that there was an ape, an ape-God – I mean that God is supposed to ape him – as if everything in short started from that, which in fact loops the loop. Everyone knows that the ape-God, is more or less the idea that we can construct for ourselves of the idea and of the way in which man is born and that this is not something which is completely satisfying. For why does man have what I call parl'être, namely, this way of talking in such a fashion that nomina non sunt consequentia rerum, in other words that there is somewhere something which is not working in the structure as I conceive it, namely, the so called Borromean knot.

This is indeed the case, and it is worthwhile evoking by this name Borromean a historic date, namely, the way in which there was elucubrated the very idea in short of structure. It is altogether striking to see that this meant at the time that, if one family withdrew from a group of 3, the 2 others by that very fact found themselves free, free to no longer agree with one another. Of course, this sordid aspect of this history of the Borromeans is worthwhile recording.

Not alone are names not the consequence of things, but we can explicitly affirm the contrary. I have a grandson, I have a grandson called Luc – it is a funny idea, but it was his parents who baptised him – he is called Luc and he says quite appropriate things. He says, in short, that he strives to say words that he does not understand, and he deduces that this is what makes his head swell, because he has like me, - it is not surprising since he is my

grandson – he has like me a big head. It is what is called, I am not properly speaking hydrocephalic, I have all the same a head, I have a head, and a head is characterised by the average, I have a rather big head, and my little grandson also and he makes the mistake obviously of thinking that, this way that he has of defining so well the unconscious – because that is what is at stake – this way that he has of defining so well the unconscious, this approach, namely, that the words entered into his head, he has deduced from that very fact that that is why he has a big head. It is a theory in short, that is not very intelligent, but pertinent in the sense that it is justified. There is something which all the same gives him the feeling that speaking is parasitic. So then he pushes that a little bit further to the extent of thinking that that is why he has a big head.

It is very difficult not to slip, on this particular occasion into the imaginary of the body, namely, the big head. The terrible thing is that it is logical and that logic on this particular occasion, is no small thing, namely, that it is the parasite of man. I said earlier that the universe did not exist, but is that true? Is it true that the One which is at the principle of the notion of the universe, that the One is capable of dissolving into powder, that the One of the universe is not one or is only one among others. Does the fact that there exists a One, imply just by itself the universal? This involves that one should say that, however excluded the universal may be, the foreclosure of this universal implies the maintenance of particularity. There exists a one is never put forward in logic except in a way that is coherent with what follows: there exists a one that satisfies the function. The logic of the function is in short what depends on the logic of the one. But this means at the same time, and this is what I try to draw somewhere on my graph, this graph that I risked a long time ago, on which like that so that no one would speculate about it, I wrote this something which is the signifier, the signifier of the fact that the Other does not exist, which I wrote like that: (Ø). But the Other, the Other in question, must indeed be called by its name Other, it is the sense, it is Other than the real.

It is very difficult not to waver on occasions. There is a choice to be made between actual infinity which can be circular, on condition that there is no origin that can be designated, and the enumerable knot, namely, finite.

There are many possibles in this which means that one interrupts the way of writing – that is my definition of the possible – one only continues it if one wishes; in fact one gives up, because it is always possible to give up, because it is even impossible not to really give up. What I call the *impossible, is the Real*, limits itself to non-contradiction. The Real is the impossible to simply write, or in other words, does not cease not to be written. The Real, is the possible waiting to be written.

And I should say that I had a confirmation of this, because I don't know why, something got into me, I went to Saclay, more exactly I asked someone to drive me there. It is someone called Goldzahl, it is amusing that he should have this name which means golden number; he brought me into a little room where there were traces - because Saclay is immense, it is absolutely enormous, you cannot imagine the number of people who are scribbling on paper inside it, there are 7,000 of them, all they do moreover is to scratch on paper, except for the few people who are there in this little room and thanks to which, there is seen, what bears witness to the functioning of most of these apparatuses – as a result of which one can see the undulating trace of what represents – of course it was necessary to set up the apparatuses in such a way that this functions, that it should be represented – of what represents the magnetism of the principle magnets. One sees on other apparatuses there being displaced, because one can qualify as displacement what goes from the left to the right and what is supported by a point; a point at the end of a line, that makes a trace and in this little room, one sees nothing but these traces whose structure it is in short conceivable to symbolise by something which goes around in the form of a circle each of these points, each of these points which represents a particle, a particle which therefore is articulated with all of the apparatuses of which it is quite certain that the totality of these apparatuses, is what is called *psi*, in other words what Freud could not prevent himself from marking as the initial of the psyche. If there were not these savants who looked after these particles, there would not be *psarticules* either and this forces our hand to think that, not alone is there the *parl'être*, but that there is also the *psarl'être*, in other words that all of this would not exist if there were not the functioning of this thing which is nevertheless so grotesque and is called thought.

Everything that I am saying to you there, has no more value I think than what my grandson recounts. It is rather annoying that the Real can only be conceived of as being improper. It is not quite the same as language. Language is only improper for saying anything whatsoever. The Real is only improper by being realised; according to the usage of the word *to realise* [in English] that means nothing other than *to imagine as sense*. There is one thing which is in any case certain, if indeed a thing can be so, it is that the very idea of the Real involves the exclusion of all sense. It is only insofar as the Real is emptied of sense, that we can grasp it a little which obviously brings me to not even give it the sense of the One, but one must hang on to something, and this logic of the One is indeed what remains, what remains as existence. There you are.

I am very annoyed at having conversed with you today in this kind of extreme. It is necessary all the same that this should take a different turn, I mean that to end up on the idea that the only thing that is Real is what excludes any kind of sense, is exactly the contrary of our practice. Where our practice is bathed in this kind of precise indication that, not simply names, but simply words have an import.

I do not know how to explain that. If the *nomina* do not depend in some way on things, how is psychoanalysis possible? Psychoanalysis would be in a certain way what one could call a sham, I mean a semblance. That is all the same how I supplied in the enunciation of my different discourses the only thinkable way of articulating what is called the psychoanalytic discourse.

I remind you that the place of semblance where I put the object...that the place of semblance is not where I articulated that of the Truth.

How can a subject, since that is how I designated the S with the bar, \$, how can a subject, a subject with all its weakness, its debility, hold the place of the Truth and even ensure that this has results? He places himself in it in this way, namely, a Knowledge. **[To be corrected, insert arrows and bars]** 

$$\mathbf{o} > S_2$$
 (hesitation)  $\mathbf{o} > S_1$   
\$ S<sub>i</sub> \$ S<sub>2</sub>

Is it not like that that I wrote it at the time?

J-A Miller: \$ at the place of S<sub>1</sub>, S<sub>1</sub> at the place of S<sub>2</sub> and S<sub>2</sub> at the place of \$

$$\mathbf{o} > \$$$
  
 $\mathbf{S}_2 \quad \mathbf{S}_1$ 

- Lacan: - You see that it is easy to get confused with this!

Yes. Undoubtedly it is better like that. It is undoubtedly better like that, but it is still more troubling like that, I mean that the gap between  $S_1$  and  $S_2$  is more striking because there is something interrupted and that in short  $S_1$ , is only the beginning of knowledge; but a knowledge which is content to always commence, as they say, ends up at nothing. This indeed is why, when I went to Brussels, I did not speak about psychoanalysis in the best of terms. There are some that I recognise who were there.

Good. To commence to know in order not to arrive, is something which goes when all is said and done, rather well with what I call my lack of hope, but finally that implies a name, a term it remains for me to allow you to guess – the Belgian people who heard me speak in Brussels being free to share it with you or not.

## Seminar 9: Wednesday 15 March 1977

There are people well intentioned towards me - and already that raises a mountain of problems: how account for the fact that people are well intentioned towards me? It is because they do not know me; for, as regards myself, I am not full of good intentions – in any case these well intentioned people have sometimes written letters tending... - in any case, it was written..., it was written that my stammerings the last time about the discourse that I call analytic, was a slip. They wrote that textually. What distinguishes a slip from gross error? I have all the more tendency, for my part, to classify as error, what is qualified as a slip, in that all the same I have spoken a little bit about this analytic discourse; when I speak, I imagine I am saying something. The annoying thing is that where I make a slip, or I am supposed to have made a slip, it was in material, as I might say, in written material that I made the slip. That takes on a particular importance when it is a matter of something written by someone -, me on this particular occasion - by someone who has been found out. Formerly I did happen to say, in imitation moreover of someone who was a celebrated painter: 'I do not seek, I find.' At the point that I am at, I do not so much find as search, in other words I go around in circles. This indeed is what happened in connection with this slip, the fact is that the letters written were not in the right direction (sens), in the direction that they turn, but were mixed up. It should all the same be clearly said that I did not make this slip altogether without reason, I mean that I certainly imagined the order in which the letters turned, but I think I know at least what I wanted to say.

I am going to try today to explain what. I am encouraged to do so by the hearing that I received last evening at the Ecole Freudienne from a Madame Kress-Rosen. I am not going to ask her to stand up, even though I can clearly see her. I even became quite concerned to know if she were among what are called the listeners (*auditrices*) and I do not see why I should put

this term in the feminine, since that has no sense, that has no sense (*sens*), that has no valid sense.

Madame Kress-Rosen had the goodness to say last evening almost what I wanted to say to someone, whom there is no longer any question of my encountering, since it is a person that I asked to telephone me and who did not do so – it is someone who belongs to German radio, I don't know too well, in truth I do not even know her name, but she asked me, apparently on the advice of Roman Jakobson, to answer something about what concerns him.

My first feeling was to say that what I call *linguisterie* – Madame Kress-Rosen has given its destiny to this appellation – that what I called *linguisterie* requires psychoanalysis to be supported. I would add that there is no other linguistics than the one that I call *linguisterie*, which does not mean that psychoanalysis is the whole of linguistics, events prove this, namely, that people have been doing linguistics for a very long time since the *Cratylus*, since Donatus, since Priscianus, that people have always done it, and this moreover does not settle anything since I tended to say the last time – I noticed it in connection with this S<sub>1</sub> and this S<sub>2</sub> which are separated in the correct notation of what I called the psychoanalysis discourse. I think that after all you got some information from the Belgians, and that the fact that I spoke about psychoanalysis as being able to be a fraud, has reached your ears, I would even say that I insist on it in speaking about this S<sub>1</sub> which appears to promise an S<sub>2</sub>.

It must all the same be remembered at that moment what I said concerning the subject, namely, the relationship of this  $S_1$  with this  $S_2$ . I said, at one time, that a signifier was what represented the subject for another signifier. So then what can be deduced from that? I will all the same give you an indication, even if only to throw some light on my route because it is not self-evident. Psychoanalysis is perhaps a fraud, but it is not just any one whatsoever. It is a fraud that is quite correct with respect to what a signifier is. And the signifier, it should all the same be clearly noted is something very special; it has what people call sense- effects, and it would be enough for me to connote  $S_2$ , as not being the second in time, but as having a double direction (*sens*) for the  $S_1$  to take its place, and its place correctly. It should all the same be said that the weight of this duplicity of sense is common to every signifier.

I think that Madame Kress-Rosen will not contradict me, if she wants to oppose it in any way whatsoever, she is quite free to make a sign to me, since, I repeat, I am delighted that she is there. Psychoanalysis, I would say, is no more of a fraud than poetry itself, and poetry is founded precisely on this ambiguity of which I speak and which I qualify as double sense. Poetry appears to me all the same to depend on the relation of the signifier to the One could say in a certain way that poetry is *imaginarily* signified. symbolic, I mean that, since Madame Kress-Rosen yesterday evoked Saussure and his distinction between the tongue and speech, not moreover without noting that as regards this distinction, Saussure had wavered; it remains all the same that his starting point, namely, that the tongue is the fruit of a maturation, of the ripening of something that is crystallised in usage, it remains that poetry depends on a violence done to this usage and that, - we have proofs of this - , if I evoked, the last time, Dante and love poetry, it is indeed to mark this violence, that philosophy does everything to efface, this indeed is why philosophy is the testing ground for swindling and why one cannot say that poetry does not play, in its own way, innocently, at what I called just now, what I connoted as *imaginarily symbolic*, that is called the Truth.

This is called the Truth notably concerning the sexual relationship, namely, that, as I put it, - perhaps the first, and I do not see why I would give myself a title for it - there is no sexual relationship, I mean properly speaking, in the sense that there might be something to ensure that a man necessarily recognises a woman.

It is certain that I, that I have this weakness of recognising her as *the* (*la*), but I am all the same sufficiently aware to have noted that there is no *the*,

which coincides with my experience, namely, that I do not recognise all women. There is no such thing, but is all the same necessary to say that this is not self-evident; There is no such thing, unless it is incestuous – this is very exactly what Freud put forward – there is none such except incestuous, I mean that, - what Freud said -, the fact is that the Oedipus myth designates the following, that the only person that one wants to sleep with, is one's mother, and as regards the father, one kills him. It is even all the more probable that one knows neither who is your father and your mother, it is exactly why the myth of Oedipus has a sense; he killed someone that he did not know and he slept with someone that he had not the slightest idea was his mother, it is nevertheless like that that things happened according to the myth, and what that means, is that the only true thing is castration. In any case with castration, one is quite sure of escaping it, as all this so-called Greek mythology designates clearly for us, namely, that the father, it is not so much his murder which is at stake as his castration, that castration passes by way of murder and that, as regards the mother, the best thing that one can do with her, is to cut it off to be quite sure of not committing incest.

What I would like, is to give you the refraction of these truths in sense. One would have to manage to give an idea of a structure, which is such that it would incarnate sense in a correct way. Contrary to what is said, there is no truth about the Real, since the Real is sketched out as excluding sense. It would be still too much to say, that there is something of the Real, because, to say that, is already to suppose a sense. The word *Real* has itself a sense, I even at one time, played a little bit on it, I mean to invoke the things, I evoked as an echo the word *reus* which, as you know, in Latin means guilty; one is more or less guilty of the Real. This indeed is why moreover psychoanalysis is a serious thing, I mean that it is not absurd to say that it can slide into fraudulence.

There is something that must be noted in passing, which is that, as I pointed out the last time to Pierre Soury – the last time, I mean in his own place, at Jussieu, the one of which I spoke to you the last time – I pointed out to him that the reversible torus from which he approaches the Borromean knot is something which, for the knot in question, presupposes that one single torus is reversed. Not at all, of course, that one cannot reverse others, but then it is no longer a Borromean knot. I gave you an idea of that by a little drawing the last time.

It is therefore not surprising to enunciate in connection with this torus, with this torus which starts from a triple Borromean knot, with this torus if you reverse it, to qualify what is in the torus, in the torus of the Symbolic, as *symbolically real*. The *symbolically real* is not the *really symbolic*, for the *really symbolic* is the Symbolic included in the Real. The Symbolic included in the Real has well and truly a name, it is called the lie, whereas the *symbolically real* – I mean that which of the Real is connoted inside the Symbolic – this is what is called anxiety. The symptom is real; it is even the only real thing, namely, which has a sense, which preserves a sense in the Real. It is indeed for that reason that the psychoanalyst can, if he is lucky, intervene symbolically to dissolve it in the Real.

So then I am going to all the same note for you in passing what is symbolically imaginary. Well then, it is geometry; the famous mos geometricus, that so much has been made of, is the geometry of angels, namely, something which despite writing does not exist. I formerly teased the Reverend Father Teilhard de Chardin, a good deal by pointing out to him that if he was so keen on writing, he should recognise that angels existed. Paradoxically Reverend Father Teilhard de Chardin did not believe in them, he believed in man, hence his business about the hominisation of the planet. I do not see why one would believe more in the hominisation of anything whatsoever than in geometry. Geometry explicitly concerns the angels and for the rest, namely, as regards structure, there reigns only one thing, which is what I call inhibition. It is an inhibition that I attack, I mean that I worry about, I concern myself about everything that I bring you here as structure, a concern which is simply linked to the fact that a genuine geometry is not what one thinks, one that depends on pure spirits, as much as one that has a body, that is what we mean when we speak about structure,

and to put that for you in black and white, I am going to show you what is at stake when one speaks about structure.

It is a matter of something like that, namely, a holed torus – this I owe to Pierre Soury – I mean that it is easy to complete this torus; you clearly see that here there is, as one might say, the edge, if one can express oneself in this way, so imprecisely, the edge of the hole which is in the torus and that all of that is the body of the torus. [Fig IX-1, IX-2].



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It is not enough to draw this torus like that. For one sees that by holing this torus at the same time one makes a hole in another torus. This is what is proper to the torus, for it is just as legitimate to draw the hole here and to make the torus which is, as I might say, linked with that one. This indeed is why one can say that by holing a torus, one holes at the same time another torus which is the one which has with it a chain-like relationship.
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So then I am going to depict for you what one can draw here in terms of a structure which you see that by drawing it in two colours, I think it is sufficiently evident that here, namely, the green in question, is inside the red torus; but that on the contrary here you can see that the second torus is outside. But that is not a second torus, since what is at stake is always the same figure, but a figure which shows itself able to slide inside what I will call the red torus, which slides while turning and which realises this torus linked to the first one.

If we make this green one turn, this green one which is found to be at the outside surface of the red torus if we make it turn, it is going to find itself here represented by its own sliding and what we can say of the one and of the other, is that the green torus is very precisely what we can call the complement of the other torus, namely, the linked torus. [Fig. IX-3].

Fig. IX-3



But suppose that it is the red torus that we make slide in that way. What we obtain, is the following, it is something which is going to find itself realised inversely, that something which is empty is knotted to something which is empty, namely, that what is there is going to appear there; in other words what I pre-suppose by this manipulation is that, far from us having two concentric things, we will have on the contrary two things which operate on one another.



Fig. IX-4

And what I want to designate by that, is something that I was questioned about when I spoke about *full speech* and *empty speech*. I clarify it now. Full speech, is the speech full of sense. Empty speech is one that has only meaning. I hope that Madame Kress-Rosen whose bright smile I can still see, does not see too great an inconvenience in that, I mean by that that speech can be at the same time full of sense, it is full of sense - because it starts from this duplicity drawn here – it is because the word with a double sense, which is  $S_2$ , that the word sense is itself full. When I spoke about Truth, it is to sense that I refer; but what is proper to poetry when it fails, is precisely to have only a meaning, to be a pure knot of one word to another word. It nevertheless remains that the willingness for sense consists in eliminating the double sense, which can only be conceived by realising, as I might say, this cut, namely, to ensure that there is only sense, the green overlapping the red on this particular occasion.

How can a poet realise this *tour de force* of ensuring that one sense is absent? It is, of course, by replacing this absent sense, by what I called meaning. Meaning is not at all what foolish people believe, as I might say. Meaning is an empty word, in other words it is that which, in connection with Dante, is expressed in the qualification given to his poetry, namely, that it is love poetry. Love is nothing but a meaning, namely, that it is empty and one can see clearly the way in which Dante incarnates this meaning. Desire has a sense, but love as I already pointed out in my seminar on *Ethics*, as courtly love supports it, is only a meaning.

There you are. I will be content to tell you what I told you today, since moreover I do not see why I should insist.
## Seminar 10: Wednesday 19 April 1977

I have a little bit of trouble today, I have a sore back, so that standing up does not help me. But when I am sitting down I am still sore. Because one does not know what is intentional is certainly not a reason for speculating about what is supposed to be so.

The Ego, because that is what it is called – it is called that in Freud's second topography – the Ego is supposed to have intentions, this from the fact that there is attributed to it what it chatters about, what is called its saying. In effect, it says; it says and it says imperatively. It is at least like that that it begins to express itself.

The imperative, is what I supported, let us say, with a signifier with the index 2, S<sub>2</sub>; this signifier index 2 by which I defined the subject, I said that a signifier is what represents the subject for another signifier. In the case of the imperative, it is the one who listens who, by this fact, becomes subject. That does not mean that the one who utters it does not become, for his part also a subject incidentally. Yes. I would like (*je voudrais*) to draw your attention to something, there is nothing in psychoanalysis except these I would like's. I am obviously a psychoanalyst who has a little too much experience, but it is true that the psychoanalyst, at the point that I have got to, depends on the reading that he makes of his analyser, of what his analyser says to him in so many words. Can you hear me, because after all I am not sure that this megaphone is functioning? Is it functioning...in the...Huh? Yes? Good. What his analyser believes he is saying to him, means that everything that the analyst listens to cannot be taken, as people say, literally (au pied de la *letter*). Here I must make a parenthesis, I said the tendency that this letter, whose foot (pied) indicates the attachment to the earth, which is a metaphor, a lame metaphor, which goes well with the foot, the tendency that this letter has of rejoining the Real, is his business; the Real in my notation being what it is impossible to rejoin. What his analyser, believes he is saying to the analyst in question, has nothing to do – and that, Freud noticed – has nothing to do with the truth. Nevertheless we must indeed think that to believe, is already something

that exists, he says what he believes to be true. What the analyst knows, is that he is only speaking approximately about what is true, because he knows nothing about the True. Freud here, is delusional, and just enough so, for he imagines that True, is what he calls, for his part, the *traumatic kernel*. This is how he formally expresses himself, namely, that in the measure that the subject enunciates something closer to his traumatic kernel, this so called kernel, and which has no existence, it is only its prostitute (*roulure*) that the analyser is just like his analyst, namely, as I pointed out in invoking my grandson, the learning that he has undergone of one tongue among others, which for him is *lalangue* that I write, as you know, in a single word, in the hope of fitting (*ferrer*), the tongue itself, which equivocates with *faire-réel* (making real).

*Lalangue* whatever it is, is an obscenity. It is what Freud designates as – pardon me here for the equivocation - *l'obrescène*, it is also what he calls *the other stage*, the one that language occupies because of what is called its structure, elementary structure which is summarised in that of kinship.

I point out to you that there are sociologists who have enunciated under the patronage of someone called Robert Needham, who is not the Needham who has busied himself with so much care with Chinese science, but another Needham – the Needham of Chinese science is not called Robert – this one, the Needham in question, imagines that he is doing better than the others by making the remark, which is moreover correct, that kinship is to be questioned, namely, that it involves in fact something else, a much greater variety, a much greater diversity than that which, – it has to be clearly said, this is what he refers to – than what the analysers say about it. But what is quite striking, is that the analysers, for their part, speak only of that, so that the incontestable remark that kinship has different values in different cultures, does not prevent the resifting by the analysers of their relationship with their relations, moreover, it must be said, their next of kin, is a fact that the analyst has to support. There is no example that an analyser notes the specificity, the particularity which differentiates from other analysers, his relationship with his more or less immediate kin.

The fact that he talks only of that, is in a way something that chokes up all the nuances of its specific relation, so that *La parenté en question* (Kinship in question) – this is a book published by Seuil – that the kinship in question highlights this primordial fact that it is *lalangue* which is at stake. It has not at all the same consequences if the analyser talks only of that because his close relations have taught him *lalangue*, he does not differentiate what specifies his own particular relation with his close relations. It would be necessary to perceive that what I will call on this occasion the function of truth, is in a way deadened by something prevalent, and it must be said that culture is here stifled, deadened, and that on this particular occasion, one would do perhaps better to evoke the metaphor, since culture is also a metaphor, the metaphor of the *agri* of the same name. It would be better to call culture a soup of language.

What does it mean to free associate? I am striving here to push things a little bit further. What does it mean to free associate? Is it a guarantee – it seems all the same to be a guarantee – that the subject who enunciates is going to say something which has a little bit more value? But in fact everyone knows that rationalisation, what is called that in psychoanalysis, that rationalisation has a greater weight than reasoning. What have what are called enunciations to do with a true proposition? One would have to try, as Freud enunciates, to see on what is founded this something, as Freud enunciates, to see on what is founded this something, which only functions by attrition, from which the Truth is supposed. One would have to see, to open oneself up to the dimension of truth as variable *varité*, namely, of what, in condensing like that these two words, I would call the *varité*, with the little silent *é*, the *varité*.

For example, I am going to pose something which has indeed its price. If an analysing subject slips into his discourse a neologism, like the one I have just made for example in connection with *varité*, what can one say about this neologism? There is all the same something that one can say, which is that the neologism appears when it is written. And it is precisely why that does not mean, like that, automatically, that it is the Real; it is not because it is written, that this gives the weight to what I evoked earlier in connection with *au pied de la lettre*.

In short, one must all the same raise the question of whether psychoanalysis,- I beg your pardon, at least I beg the pardon of psychoanalysts – is not what one could call an *autism* à *deux*? There is already a thing which allows this *autism* to be forced, this precisely that *lalangue* is a common affair and it is precisely there that I am, namely, capable of making myself understood by everybody here, this is where the guarantee is – this is why indeed I put on the agenda the transmission of psychoanalysis – this indeed is the guarantee that psychoanalysis does not limp irreducibly from what I called just now *autism* à *deux*.

People speak about the ruse of reason; it is a philosophical idea. It was Hegel who invented that. There is not the slightest ruse of reason. There is nothing constant, contrary to what Freud enunciates somewhere, that the voice of reason was low, but that it always repeated the same thing. It only repeats things by going around in circles. In order to say things, reason repeats the symptom. And the fact that today I have to present myself before you with what is called a physical *sinthome*, does not prevent you from asking quite rightly whether it is not intentional, whether for example I have not got into such stupid behaviour that my symptom, however physical it may be, may be something all the same wished for by me. There is no reason to stop in this extension of the symptom because it is something suspect, whether one likes it or not. Why should this symptom not be intentional?

It is a fact that *l'élangue*, I am writing that *élangue*, is elongated by translating one into the other, but the only knowledge remains the knowledge of tongues, that kinship is not translated in fact, but the only thing it has in common is the fact that analysers talk only about that. It has even got to the point that what I call on occasion an old analyst is tired of it.

Why did Freud not introduce something that he would call the *lui* (him)? When I wrote my little yoke there, in order to talk to you, I made a slip – another one! – instead of writing *comme moi* – this *comme moi* was not especially benevolent, it was a matter of what I would call mental debility, - I made a slip, at the place of *comme moi* I wrote *comme ça*. To write – since all of that is written, that is even

what constitutes saying – to write that the analyser gets on as best he can with me also means me with him. That analysis talks only about the Ego and the Id, never of *Lui*, is all the same very striking. *Lui* nevertheless, is a term which should be required, and if Freud disdains taking note of it, it is indeed, it must be said, because he is egocentric, and even super-egocentric! That is what he is sick of. He has all the vices of the master, he understands nothing about anything. For the only master, it has to be said, is consciousness, and what he says about the unconscious is only confusion and entanglement, namely, a return to this mixture of crude drawings and of metaphysics which are never there without one another.

Every painter is above all a metaphysician, a metaphysician that he is due to the fact that he makes crude drawings. He is a dauber, hence the titles that he gives to his paintings. Even abstract art is titled (*se titrise*) like the others – I did not want to say entitled (*titularisé*) because that would mean nothing – even abstract art has titles, titles that it strives to make as empty as it can, but all the same it gives itself titles.

Without that, Freud would have drawn the consequences of what he says himself that the analyser does not know his truth, since he cannot say it. Which I defined as not ceasing to be written, namely, the symptom, is an obstacle to it. I am coming back to it. What the analyser says while waiting to be verified, is not the truth, it is the *varité of the symptom*. One must accept the conditions of the mental in the first rank of which is debility, which means the impossibility of holding a discourse against which there is no objection, no mental one precisely.

The mental is discourse. One does one's best to arrange for discourse to leave traces. This is the business of the *Entwurf*, of Freud's *Project*, but memory is uncertain. What we know, is that there are lesions of the body that we cause, of the body described as living, which suspend memory or at least do not allow us there to count on the traces one attributes to it when the memory of discourse is at stake.

Objections must be raised to the practice of psychoanalysis. Freud was a mental defective, like everyone, and like me myself on this particular occasion, in

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particular besides, neurotic, a sexual obsessional as has been said. It is hard to see why an obsession with sexuality would not be as valid as any other, since for the human species sexuality is quite rightly obsessive. It is in effect abnormal in the sense that I defined; there is no sexual relationship. Freud, namely, a case, had the merit of seeing that neurosis was not structurally obsessional, that it was fundamentally hysterical, namely, linked to the fact that there was no sexual relationship, that there are people disgusted by it, which is all the same a sign, a positive sign, is that it makes them vomit.

Sexual relationship must be reconstituted by a discourse, namely, something which has a quite different finality. What discourse is useful for from the outset, it serves to order, I mean to convey the commandment that I allow myself to call the intention of the discourse, because there remains something of the imperative in every intention. Every discourse has an effect of suggestion. It is hypnotic. The contamination of discourse by sleep is worth highlighting, before being highlighted by what one can call intentional experience, in other words taken as a commandment imposed on facts. A discourse is always soporific, except when one does not understand it. Then it wakes you up.

Laboratory animals are wounded not because one harms them more or less, they are woken up, completely, because they do not understand what is wanted of them, even if people stimulate their supposed instinct. When you make rats move in a little box, you stimulate their alimentary instinct, as it is put; it is quite simply hunger that is at stake. In short, awakening is the Real in its aspect of the impossible, which is only written by force or through force what is called counternature.

Nature, like every notion that comes to our minds, is an excessively vague notion. To tell the truth, counter-nature is clearer than the natural. The pre-Socratics, as they are called, had a penchant for counter-nature. This is the whole reason why attributing culture to them is deserved. They had to be gifted to force a little the discourse, the imperative saying which we have seen puts people to sleep. Does truth waken up people or put them to sleep? That depends on the tone in which it is said. Spoken poetry is soporific. I take advantage of this to show the thing that François Cheng thought up. In reality he is called Cheng Tai-tchen. He put in François like that, as a way of being reabsorbed into our culture, which has not prevented him from maintaining very firmly what he says. And what he says, is *L'écriture poétique chinoise* (Chinese poetic writing), which is published by Seuil and I would really like you to follow the grain of it, follow the grain of it, if you are a psychoanalyst, which is not the case for everyone here.

If you are a psychoanalyst, you will see that these forcings by which a psychoanalyst can make something else ring out, something other than sense, for sense, is what resonates with the help of the signifier; but what resonates, does not go very far, it is rather flabby. Sense deadens things, but with the help of what one can call poetic writing, you can get the dimension of what one could call analytic interpretation.

It is guite certain that writing is not that by which poetry, the resonance of the body is expressed. It is all the same quite striking that the Chinese poets express themselves by writing and that for us, what is necessary, is that we should hold onto the notion, in Chinese writing, of what poetry is, not at all that all poetry - I am talking especially about ours – that all poetry is such that we can imagine it by writing, by poetic Chinese writing; but perhaps, you will sense something in it, something which is different than what ensures that Chinese poets cannot do otherwise than write. There is something that gives the feeling that they are not reduced there, the fact is that they sing, that they modulate, the fact is that there is what François Cheng enunciated before me, namely, a tonic counterpoint, a modulation which ensures that that it is sung, for from tonality to modulation there is a slippage. That you are inspired eventually by something of the order of poetry to intervene, is indeed why I would say, it is indeed something towards which you must turn, because linguistics is all the same a science that I would say is very badly orientated. If linguistics raises itself up, it is in the measure that a Roman Jakobson frankly tackles the questions of poetics. Metaphor, and metonymy, have an import for interpretation only insofar as they are capable of

functioning as something else. And this other thing that they function as, is indeed that by which sound and sense are closely united.

It is in as much as a correct interpretation extinguishes a symptom, that the truth is specified as being poetic. It is not from the angle of articulated logic – even though on occasion I slip into it – it is not from the angle of articulated logic that we must sense the import of our saying, not at all of course that there is something which deserves to have two aspects. What we enunciate always, because it is the law of discourse, what we always enunciate as a system of opposition, is the very thing that we have to surmount, and the first thing would be to extinguish the notion of the Beautiful.

We have nothing beautiful to say. A different resonance is at stake, one founded on the witticism. A witticism is not beautiful, it depends only on an equivocation, or, as Freud said, on an economy. Nothing is more ambiguous than this notion of economy. But all the same, economy founds value. A practice without value is what we must establish.

## Seminar 11: Wednesday 10 May 1977

I am racking my brains, which is already annoying, because I am seriously racking them; but the most annoying thing, is that I don't know what I am racking my brains about. There is someone named Gödel, who lives in America and who has enunciated the name *undecidable*. What is solid in this enunciation, is that he demonstrates that there are things that are undecidable. And he demonstrates it on what terrain? On what I would qualify like that, as the most mental of all the mentals, I mean in what is the most mental, the mental par excellence, the high point of the mental, namely, what can be counted: what can be counted is arithmetic. I mean that it is arithmetic that develops the countable. It is a question of knowing whether there are One's which are un-enumerable; this is at least what Cantor put forward. But this remains all the same doubtful; given that we know nothing except the finite, and that the finite is always enumerable.

Does this mean that the mental is weak? It is simply the weakness of what I call the Imaginary. The Unconscious was identified by Freud – we do not know why – the Unconscious was identified by Freud to the mental. This at least is what results from the fact that the mental is woven of words, between which, - it is explicitly, it seems to me, the definition that Freud gives of it – between which *bévues* are always possible. Hence my enunciation, that in terms of the Real there is only the impossible. This indeed is where I come to grief: is the Real impossible to think about? If it does not cease, - but here there is a nuance –, I do not enunciate that, it does not cease not to say itself, if only because the Real, I name it as such, but I say, that it does not cease not to be written.

Everything that is mental, when all is said and done, is what I write by the name of 'sinthome', s.i.n.t.h.o.m.e., namely, sign.

What does sign mean? This is what I am racking my brains about. Can one say that negation is a sign? I formerly tried to pose what is involved in the agency of the letter. Is one saying everything by saying that the sign of negation, which is written like that, [**Frege's sign for negation**] should not be written? What does it

mean to deny? What can one deny? This plunges us into the *Verneinung* of which Freud has put forward the essentials. What he enunciates, is that negation presupposes a *Bejahung*. It is starting from something that is enunciated as positive, that one writes negation. In other words, the sign is to be sought – and this indeed is what, in this agency of the letter, that I posed – is to be sought as congruence of the sign to the Real.

What is a sign that one cannot write? For one really writes this sign. I highlighted like that, at one time, the pertinence of what the French *lalangue* touches on as adverb. Can one say that the Real lies (*ment*)? In analysis, one can surely say that the True lies. Analysis is a long journey (*cheminement*) – one finds it everywhere – that the *chemine-ne-mente* (the journey does not lie) it is something which can only on occasion signal to us that, as in the wire of the telephone, that we find our footing.

And then, that such things can be put forward poses the question of what is sense. Is sense supposed to be only lying, since one can say that the notion of the Real excludes – which should be written in the subjunctive – that it excludes (*qu'elle exclue*) sense? Does that indicate that it also excludes the lie? This indeed is what we have to deal with, when we wager in short on the fact that the Real excludes – in the subjunctive, but the subjunctive is the indication of the modal – what is modulated in this modal that would exclude (*excluerait*) the lie? In truth, - we sense it clearly -, there is nothing in all of that but paradoxes.

Are paradoxes representable? *Doxa*, is opinion, the first thing on which I introduced a lecture, at the time of what one can call or that one could call my beginnings, it is in the *Meno* in which it is enunciated that *doxa*, is true opinion. There is not the slightest true opinion, since there are paradoxes. This is the question that I am raising, whether paradoxes are or are not representable, I mean depictable (*dessinables*). The principle of true saying, is negation, and my practice, since there is a practice, a practice about which I question myself, is that, that I slide, I have to slide, because that is the way it is constructed, between the transference, that is called, I do not know why, negative, but it is a fact that it is called that. It is called negative because people clearly sense that there is

something, we still do not know what positive transference is, positive transference, is what I tried to define under the name of *subject supposed to know*. Who is supposed to know? It is the analyst. It is an attribution, as is already indicated by the word *supposed*; an attribution is only a word; there is a subject, something which is underneath which is supposed to know. To know is therefore its attribute. There is only one problem, which is that it is impossible to give the attribute of knowing to anyone.

The one who knows, is, in analysis, the analyser, what he unfolds, what he develops, is what he knows, except for the fact that it is an Other, - but is there an Other? -, that it is an Other who follows what he has to say, namely, what he knows. The notion of the Other, I marked in a certain graph with a bar which breaks it,  $\emptyset$ . Does that mean that when broken it is denied? Analysis, properly speaking, enunciates, that the Other is nothing but this duplicity.

There is something of the One (Y a de l'Un), but there is nothing other. The One, as I have said, the One dialogues all alone, since it receives its own message in an inverted form. It is he who knows, and not the one supposed to know.

I put forward also this something which is enunciated about the universal, and this to deny it; I said that there is no all (*tous*). This indeed is why women, are more man than men. They are not-all (*pas-toutes*), as I said. These *all* therefore, have no common trait; they have nevertheless this one, this single common trait, the trait that I described as *unary*. They are comforted by the One. *There is something of the One*, I repeated it just now to say that there is something of the One, and nothing else. *There is something of the One*, but that means that there is all the same some kind of feeling. This feeling that I called, according to the unaries (*unarités*) that I called the support, the support of what indeed I must recognise, hatred, insofar as this hatred is akin to love; *la mourre* that I wrote in – I must all the same finish on this – that I wrote in my title for this year: *l'insu que sait*, what? *de l'une-bévue*. There is nothing more difficult to grasp than this trait of the *une bévue*. This *bévue* – is that by which I translate *Unbewusst*, namely, the Unconscious. In German, that means unconscious, but translated by *une bévue*, it means something completely different, that means a stumbling, a tripping up, a

slipping from word to word, and this indeed is what is at stake when we use the wrong key to open a door which precisely this key does not open. Freud hastens to tell us that we thought that it opened this door but that we were mistaken. *Bévue* is indeed the only sense that remains for this consciousness. Consciousness has no other support than to permit a *bévue*. It is very disturbing because this consciousness strongly resembles the Unconscious, since it is what we say is responsible, responsible for all the *bévue*'s that make us dream. Dream in the name of what? Of what I called the **o**-object, namely, that by which by the subject, who, essentially, is divided, barred, namely, still more barred than the Other.

This is what I am racking my brains about. I am racking my brains and I think that when all is said and done psychoanalysis, is, is what seems true (*fait vrai*), but how must one understand this seems true? It is an effort at sense, but it is a sensblance (*sens blant*). There is the whole distance that I designated between S<sub>2</sub> to what it produces. It is of course the analyser who produces the analyst, there is no doubt about that. And that is why I question myself about what is involved in this status of the analyst to whom I leave this place of seeming true, of seem it formerly, there is nothing easier than to slip into the *bévue*, I mean into an effect of the Unconscious, since it was indeed an effect of my unconscious, which means that you were good enough to consider a slip, and not as what I wanted to qualify myself, namely, the next time as a crude error. [**Bars and arrow**]

$$\mathbf{o} > \$$$
  
 $\mathbf{S}_2 \quad \mathbf{S}_1$ 

What effect does this subject, divided subject have if the  $S_1$ , the signifier indexed 1, S index 1, is found in our tetrahedron, since what I stressed, is that, in this tetrahedron, one of its links is always broken, namely, that the S index 1 does not represent the subject for S index 2, namely, of the Other. The S index 1 and the S index 2, is very precisely what I designated by the divided O of which I made a signifier S( $\emptyset$ ).

This indeed is the way in which the famous Unconscious presents itself. This Unconscious, is, when all is said and done, impossible to grasp. It does not represent, - I spoke earlier about paradoxes as being representable, namely, depictable – there is no possible depiction of the Unconscious. The Unconscious is limited to an attribution, to a substance, to something that is supposed to be beneath and what psychoanalysis enunciates, is very precisely the following, that it is only, I say, a deduction, a supposed deduction, nothing more. That with which I tried to give it body with the creation of the Symbolic has very precisely this destiny which is that this does not arrive at its destination.

How does it happen nevertheless that it is enunciated? That is the central introduction of psychoanalysis. I will stick with that for today. I hope to be able in a week's time, since there will be a 17 May, - God knows why! – anyway it has been announced to me that there will be a 17 May, and that here I have not too many examinees, unless it is you that I will examine and perhaps I will question in the hope that something of what I say have got across. Au revoir!

## Seminar 12: 17 May 1977

People in the middle were not able to hear me; I would like to be told this time whether I can be heard. It is not because what I have to say is of extreme importance. Can you hear me? Would someone mind telling me if, perchance, I cannot be heard?

Good. So then to say things in order of growing importance, I had the pleasure of noticing that my teaching has reached *l'Echo des Savanes*! (laughter). I will only quote two lines for you: 'Psychoanalysis is no more complicated than that; anyway, that's Lacan's theory'. There you are. L'Echo des Savanes, number 30, in which you can read this text is all the same a little bit porno (laughter). That I have succeeded - indeed I have succeeded..., I did not do it deliberately - that I should have succeeded to going as far as porno, is all the same what can be called a success! Good. There you are. I am always careful to get I' Echo des Savanes as if I was only waiting for that, but it is obviously not the case. So then in order of growing importance, I am going all the same to signal for you the publication by Seuil of a text called *Polylogue*, which is by Julia Kristeva. I really like this text, it is a collection of a certain number of articles. It is no less precious for that. I would all the same like to be informed, by Julia Kristeva, since she has made the effort, this morning, to be good enough to put herself out, how she conceives of this Polylogue. I would really like her to tell me whether this Polylogue, as perhaps anyway it appears to me insofar as I was able to read it - because I did not get it too long ago – if this Polylogue is a polylinguisterie, I mean whether linguistics is there in some sort of way – what I believe is that it is, as far as I can see - , more than scarce, is that what she meant by *Polylogue*? She is moving her head up and down in a way that appears to approve me, but if she had still has enough voice to give a little yelp, I would all the same not be displeased. It is?..

**J. Kristeva**: It is something other than linguistics. It passes by way of linguistics, but it is not that.

**J. Lacan**: Yes. Only the annoying thing is that one only ever passes by way of linguistics. I mean that one passes by way of it, and if I enunciated something valid, I regret that people cannot base themselves on it. To tell the truth, I don't know, I heard it said by someone who came like that to pull my sleeve, that Jakobson wanted me to participate in an interview. I am very embarrassed and I feel myself completely incapable of doing so. It is not that...and nevertheless I have, as Julia Kristeva has just said, I have been through it. There you are.

I have been through it, but I have not remained there. I am still at the stage of interrogating psychoanalysis about the way in which it functions. What ensures that it holds up, that it constitutes a practice that is sometimes effective? Naturally there, one must all the same go through a series of interrogations. Does psychoanalysis work, since from time to time it does work, does it work by what people call an effect of suggestion? For the effect of suggestion to hold up, presupposes that language, - here I am repeating myself -, that language depends on what is called man. It is not for nothing that at one time, I manifested a certain, like that, preference for a certain book by Bentham which talks about the usefulness of fictions. Fictions are orientated toward service, which is...that he justifies in short. But on the other hand, there is a gap; that this depends on man, presupposes that we should clearly know, that we should know sufficiently what man is. All that we know about man is that he has a structure; but it is not easy to say what this structure is. Psychoanalysis has given a few squeaks about this subject, namely, that man leans towards his pleasure, which has a guite clear sense. What psychoanalysis calls pleasure, is to suffer, is to suffer the least possible. Here all the same one should remember the fashion in which I defined the possible, this has a curious reversal-effect, since I said that the possible is what ceases to be written. That is how at least I clearly articulated it, at the time when I was speaking about the possible, about the contingent, about the necessary and the impossible. So then if one transports the word the least, like that, guite clumsily, guite brutally, well then that means what ceases to be the least written. And in effect, that does not cease in an instant. Here indeed is where I would like to pose again a question to my dear Julia Kristeva. What does she call – that is going to force her to get out a little bit more from this quiet voice like earlier - what does she call the metatongue (metalangue)?

What does the *metatongue* mean if not translation? One can only speak of a tongue in another tongue, it seems to me, if what I said formerly is a fact, namely, that there is no metalanguage. There is an embryo of metalanguage; but one always skids away from it, for a simple reason, which is that I know nothing about language except a series of incarnated tongues. People strive to reach language

by writing. And writing only produces something in mathematics, namely, there where people operate by formal logic, namely, by the extraction of a certain number of things that one defines, that one defines principally as axiom, and that one only operates quite brutally by extracting these letters, for they are letters.

Yeah, this is not at all a reason for people to believe that psychoanalysis leads one to write one's memoirs. It is precisely because there is no memoir of a psychoanalysis that I am so embarrassed. There is no memoir, that does not mean that memory is not involved in this affair. But to write one's memoirs is a different matter. Everything depends on a metaphor, namely, that people imagine that memory, is something which is imprinted; but there is nothing to say that this metaphor is valid. In his project, *Entwurf*, Freud articulates very precisely, the impression of what remains in memory. Because we know that animals remember is not a reason that it should be the same for man.

What I enunciate in any case, is that the invention of a signifier is something different to memory. It is not that the child invents; he receives this signifier, and this is even what would make it worthwhile to make more of them. Why would we not invent a new signifier? Our signifiers are always received. A signifier for example which would not have, like the Real, any kind of sense. We do not know, it would perhaps be fruitful. It would perhaps be fruitful, it would perhaps be a means, a means of shocking, in any case. It is not that people do not try. That is even what the witticism consists of, it consists in using one word for another usage than the one for which it is made. In the case of *famillionnaire*, one crumples this word; but it is not in this crumpling that its operational effect consists.

In any case there is a thing that I risked operating in the sense of a metatongue, the metatongue about which just now I was interrogating Julia Kristeva. The metatongue in question consists in translating *Unbewusst*, by *une-bévue*, this has absolutely not the same sense; but it is a fact, the fact is that once a man is asleep, he *une-bévue'* s at full tilt, and without there being any inconvenience, apart from the case of somnambulism. Somnambulism is inconvenient, when one wakens when one wakens the somnambulist, if he is walking on the rooftops, he may have an attack of vertigo, but in truth the mental illness which is the Unconscious does not wake up. What Freud enunciated and what I want to say, is the following: that in no case is there an awakening. Science, for its part, can only be indirectly evoked on this occasion, it is an awakening, but a difficult and suspect awakening. It is not sure that one is awake, unless what is presented and represented has, as I have said, no kind of sense. Now everything that is enunciated, up to the present, as science, is suspended on the idea of God. Science and religion go very well together. It's a *Dieu-lire*! But this does not presuppose any awakening. Luckily, there is a hole. Between the social delusion and the idea of God, there is no common measure. The subject takes himself to be God, but he is impotent to justify that a signifier can be produced, a signifier S index 1, and still more impotent to justify that this S<sub>1</sub>, index 1, represents him for another signifier, and that it is through this that there pass all the effects of sense, which are right away blocked up, are in an impasse. There you are.

Man's trick, is to stuff all of that, as I told you, with poetry which is a sense effect, but also a hole-effect. It is only poetry, as I told you, which permits interpretation, and that is why I no longer manage, in my technique, to get it to hold up; I am not enough of a *pouâte*, I am not *pouâteassez*!

There you are. That is to introduce the following, in connection with which we pose questions. The definition of neurosis, we must all the same be sensible and notice that neurosis depends on social relations. We shake up the neurosis a little, and it is not at all sure that in that way we cure it. Obsessional neurosis for example, is the principle of conscience. And then there are also bizarre things. There is someone called Clérambault who noticed one day, -- God knows how he found that! – that there was somewhere mental automatism. There is nothing more natural than mental automatism. That there should be voices, - voices, where do they come from? They come necessarily from the subject himself – that there are voices which say: 'She is wiping her bottom', one is stupefied that this derision – since to all appearances there is derision –, does not happen more often. For my part, I saw, at my presentation of ill people, as they say, if in fact there are ill people, I saw a Japanese, a Japanese who had something which he himself called a thought-echo. What would a thought-echo be if Clérambault had

not pinpointed it? He calls this a *serpigineu* (billhook-like?) process. It is not even sure that it is a *serpigineux* process there where it is judged to be the centre of language. I for my part, I said all the same that this Japanese who had a very lively taste for the metatongue, namely, that he took great enjoyment in having learned English, and then French afterwards. Is this not where the slippage was? He slipped into mental trauma from this fact that, in all these metatongues that he managed to handle rather easily, well then, he could not find himself in them. I for my part advised that he should be given some room and that one should not stop at the fact that Clérambault had invented, one fine day, a thing called mental automatism. Mental automatism is normal. If as it happens I do not have it, for my part, that is by chance. There are all the same, all the same somethings that can be called bad habits. If one starts saying things to oneself, as the aforesaid Japanese expressed himself textually, if one starts to say things to oneself, why would that not slide towards mental automatism because it is all the same quite certain that, according to what Edgar Morin says in a book which was recently published and in which he questioned himself about the nature of nature, it is quite clear that nature is not as natural as all that, it is even in this that there consists this rottenness which is what is generally called culture. Culture seethes, as I pointed out to you in passing. Yes.

The types modelled by social relations consist in word play. Aristotle imputes, we do not know why, being hysterical to the woman; it is a play on the word *hysteron*. I pointed out something to you about kinship. *La parenté en question,* is a book tackled by Needham, Rodney Needham who is not the good one. Why does everyone get engulfed in the most banal type of kinship? Why do people, who come to speak to us in psychoanalysis, talk to us only about that? Why would we not say that we are entirely akin to a pouâte for example, in the sense that I articulated just now, the *pas pouâteassez*? A *pouâate*, one has just as much kinship with him, why does psychoanalysis orient, orient people who open themselves to it, orient people, in the name of what, towards their childhood memories? Why does it not orientate them towards a kinship with a *pouâte*, a *pouâte* among others, any one at all? Even a *pouâte* would be an exception.

A new signifier, one that would have no kind of sense, that would perhaps be what would open us up to what, in my lumpish way, I call the Real. Why would one not attempt to formulate a signifier which would, contrary to the use that is habitually made of it, which would have an effect? Yes. It is certain that all this has an extreme character. If I am introduced to it by psychoanalysis, this is all the same not without an import (*portée*). *Portée* means sense, it has exactly no other incidence. *Portée* means sense and we always remain stuck to sense. Why is it that we have not yet forced things sufficiently, in order, in order to test what that would produce, to forge a signifier which would be other.

Good, I will stick with that for today.

If ever I summon you in connection with this signifier, you will see it advertised and this will all the same be a good sign, since I am only relatively mentally defective, I mean that I am like everyone else, since I am only relatively mentally defective, who knows, a little light may come to me.