

Charles Melman



RETURNING TO SCHREBER

Séminar 1994-1995
Hôpital Henri-Rousselle



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Note to the reader

The French text of Returning to Schreber was taken from recordings made during Charles Melman's seminars at Hospital Henri-Rousselle in 1994/1995. The transcript remained as close as possible to the spoken word. The text was not re-read by the author.

Th text presented here is the translation of the transcript by Cormac Gallagher, psychoanalyst and Senior Psychologist at Saint Vincent's Hospital. Dublin Ireland

The footnotes in French concern works of which we do not have the titles and references in English

Editors notes

Note a-object

The word autre is translated other in English but the term autre (petit autre) and the letter a are the subject of a polymorphic use in Lacan's teaching. This use cuts across a number of traditional writings, for example mathematics. It is the case of harmonic division.

For this reason, we consider it preferable to maintain the use of the letter a even where autre is written with an o in the language concerned. The advantage being to avoid numerous explanatory notes and to not erase the ambiguities on which Lacan so willingly plays.

For the same reason, the grand Autre, in English big Other, is designated by A.

Editors notes

Lecture I

13 October 1994

I will put this year's seminar under the aegis of a philosophical school whose inspiration, indeed whose texts, may be able to guide us along a path where we run the serious risk of going astray. I find great consolation at finding in this school an approach which, at the dawn of thinking, reveals itself to be so brilliant, so luminous and so rich in insights that 2500 years later, we are led to rediscover it, from the curious angle of psychoanalysis.

We must believe that these inaugural insights were so violent for all of those who busied themselves with the transmission of the thinking, to take care to ensure that it should only come down to us in very brief fragments. The larger part of the text was destroyed and we can only refer to it, in its essentials, through quotations made by authors, contemporary or later, who transmitted some formulae belonging to this school. It does not seem to me to be an exaggeration to recall that we have only access to its work through mutilated fragments. As if — and there, I am adding this on my own account — the approach of the aforesaid school was perceived as being too dangerous or in any case untransmissible.

Along the same line, let us note that those who belong to it are in no way designated by a name designed to specify them, to categorise their work, their thinking except in function of Socrates. They are called Pre-Socratics, as if the history of thinking could only be dated from Socrates. In their regard or with regard to the one that I am evoking, Heraclitus, before beginning here this study on Schreber, it is reported that Socrates who had been given a book of Heraclitus, spoke very highly of it. He is supposed to have said that undoubtedly there were in this book some remarkable features but that in order to perceive them, one would have to be "like a diver from Delos", which apparently is to be referred to those who dived in

order to bring up pearls. It can be underlined that Socrates' commentary — if it really took place but in any case it is attributed to him — lacks neither sympathy nor relevance.

I want then to make you more sensitive to what is going to orient our approach this year by reading a fragment of Heraclitus, reported by Sextus Empiricus that some of you surely know very well:

*This Logos, which is
forever men are still incapable of understanding it, whether it is
before they have heard it or after having heard it
for the first time,
For even though all things are born and die in accordance
with this Logos,
men are in a way inexperienced when they test themselves against
words or acts, as I expained them
In accordance with its nature separating each one
and exposing how he is,*

You see what this Logos does, separating each one according to his nature and exposing him as he is.

*While other men
Forget everything that they do when awake
just as they forget when they sleep everything that they ...*

We do not know the rest, the verb which follows is an interpolation, an interpretation.

In his Rhetoric, Aristotle takes up this beginning and quotes it: "The Logos which is forever men are incapable of understanding". And Aristotle specifies that this unpunctuated writing is quite exemplary of the difficulty of understanding these texts since "The Logos/which is/fore-

1 - Hippolyte « Réfutation de toutes les hérésies », Sextus Empiricus, « Contre les mathématiciens », in *Heraclite ou U séparation* Jean Bollack & Heinz Wismann. Les Editions de minuit Col. Le sens commun p. 59.

του δέ λόγου τοῦδ'έόντος αἰεὶ ἀξύνετοι γίνονται ἄνθρωποι καὶ πρόσθεν ἢ ἀκούσαι καὶ ἀκούσαντες τό πρῶτον γιγνομένων γάρ πάντων κατὰ τόν λόγον τόνδε, ἀπείροισιν εοῖκας πειρώμενοι καὶ ἐπέων καὶ ἔργων τοιούτων ὁκοίων ἐγὼ διηγέσθαι κατὰ φύσιν διαίρεων ἑκαστον καὶ φράζων δκως ἔχει τοὺς δέ ἄλλους ἀνθρώπους λανθάνει ὁκόσα ἐγερθέντες ποιῶσιν δκωσπερ ὁκόσα εὔδοντες ἐπιλανθάνονται

ver/men are incapable of understanding". To what is the "forever" going to be referred?²

I am astonished, because of the secular character of my reading, that it needed all this time to understand that Heraclitus, perhaps, in this connection also wanted it to be understood that if a caesura is necessary for the meaning of this formula to be specified, — I am forcing things, of course, I am pulling them towards the side that interests us but which is all the same possible starting from this sentence — it, nevertheless, is what gives its meaning. If this is true, far from this sentence bringing a difficulty of interpretation, it is on the contrary very rich in what effectively it allows to be comprehended, it allows to be understood, that in connection with the Logos, amongst other things, the meaning is perhaps not what ought to trouble us in the first place.

I would like to give you another formula from Heraclitus, reported by an unknown, Pseudo-Aristotle:

Embraces
All and not all
In accord or in discord
Consonant and dissonant
And from all things the One
*And from the One all things*³

A formula that you know has been remembered in an outstanding way, including moreover by *Le Discours Psychanalytique* which had inscribed next to its title the ἐν πάντα, and we thought we were very clever and very intelligent to have added underneath οὐκ ἐν πάντα. An μή would have been preferable and we had a discussion about one or other form of negation in Greek. In any case there is in Heraclitus this not-All, which functions as a couple with the All. We have here, of course, the usual couple of contraries whose conflict organises for him the way the world operates.

Let us re-read these few words. We might stupidly, easily, rejoice in saying, that what Lacan developed in the seminar *Encore*, is a sort of very condensed formulation which seems to mark a rather astonishing and precocious glimpse about the arrangements, the effects of the Logos! We

2 - Aristote *Rhétorique*, III, V, 1407 bl 1, in *Les Présocratiques*, La Pléiade 1988 p. 135.

3 - Pseudo-Aristote « *Traité du monde* », in *Héraclite ou U séparation*, συλλάψεις ὅλα καὶ οὐχ ὅλα συμφερόμενον διαφερόμενον συνάδον διαδον ἐκ πάντων ἐν καὶ ἐξ ενός πάντα

would be wrong to rejoice. This coincidence is not really one since in his own approach Lacan necessarily drew support, based himself, was himself sustained in his digression, on these first teachings which have only come to us, only remain to us in the form of these fragments whose reading I recommend to you. One can note a stupefying fact; a great number of fragments of authors are catalogued. There is not a single one that is foolish! You can take any one at all, the one for example quoted by Diogenes Laertius:

*A universal knowledge does not instruct the intellect.
Otherwise, it would have instructed Hesiod and Pythagoras
as well as Zenophon and Hecataeus.**

In other words, at the same time, he gives all of these people a good kick. Yes of course! If there had been a universal knowledge, they would have learned something. Because he cannot stand Hesiod, Hesiod who said "day follows night", you know the *Works and Days* by Hesiod. While Heraclitus knows well, as he will say, that night and day are the same thing. And then I could take absolutely any other one. I will spare you everything that has been written about the One and which is surely familiar to you. So then, in an etymological dictionary, at the word *pioc*;, Heraclitus is quoted:

*To the bow is given the name of erector
But its work is death}*

We do not know very well what that means — except that the bow in Greek is called {5i6c,. When you put the accent on the i, it is "life". When you put it on the o, it is "the bow", and then it is also "the dart" or "the penis". So then when Heraclitus wrote this, we find this familiar wisdom to which Lacan has introduced us in this use of the signifier whose richness these few fragments of Heraclitus shows us and that in his case thinking is perfectly well supported by equivocation and the play of signifiers.

Why start with this? Because we separated last year on what I was trying

4 - Diogene Laërce, *Vies des philosophes Illustres*, IX, i, in op. cit. note 1, p. 151.

πολυμαθίη νόον οὐ διδάσκει
Ἡσίοδον γὰρ ἂν ἐδίδασκε καὶ Πυθαγόρην
αὐτίς τε Ξενοφάνεά τε καὶ Ἑκαταῖον

5 - *Etymologicum genuinum*, au mot βίος, *vie*, op. cit. note 1, p. 169,

τό τόξω ὄνομα βίος ἔργον δέ θάνατος.

to introduce by highlighting that our psychic organisation is centred in an outstanding way by a fixed point, which, it seems, none of us is able to renounce except with extreme difficulty. The virulent character of the thinking of Heraclitus precisely highlights the organisation of the Logos and of the world as detached from any fixed point. For Heraclitus not even the sun is a fixed point! The sun, he says, is different every day, it is not the same.⁶ There you are! And then do you know how wide it is? It is a foot wide.⁷ Yes! In other words, the sun, is something you know nothing about, you do not know what it is, you see it with your eye, namely, your vision which may be clear, but this also means that if it is clear, it goes astray. Hence the virulent character of this philosophical thinking is obviously to deprive anything that might be a fixed point of every support. Even the fire presented in his cosmogony as the organiser of the world, is only one of the elements of a permanent transformation⁸ — one could see there a Klein tetrahedron, the fire which is transformed into earth, the earth which is transformed into water, etc. — fire itself is only one element among others, and all turn around. Perhaps then we can better understand, whether what I am putting forward is true — and I would be delighted if those among you who have a much better knowledge than I have of these texts would give me their opinion or even their corrections — that it is perhaps indeed because of its virulent aspect that this first philosophy was cheerfully cut to pieces! There is something in Heraclitus which constitutes a fixed point, you will tell me, it is the One and the All. You cannot deny that since he says that the One is the All, this is what organises the totality of our affair. Here then is the fixed point.

On this point also I would be happy if some one of you would help me and would tell me if, precisely, this putting in place by him of the One and the All — which Lacan makes re-emerge with the unary stroke — whether this resurgence is not what is going to be subsequently the mother of Platonic thinking for the putting in place of the concept, of the idea, as well as Aristotelian thinking as regards the putting in place of his logic. It is a way like any other, and we will proceed in the same way, to go and seek in an author the signifiers carrying the greatest virulence in order to capture them, to arrest them and to construct from them something that is

6 - Aristote, *Météorologiques*, II, II, 355 a 13, op. cit. note 1, p. 74,
ἥλιος νέος ἐφ' ἡμέρῃ.

7 - Aétius, *opinions*, II, XXI, op.cité note 1, p. 68.
(ἥλιος) εὖρος ποδός ἀνθρωπείου.

8 - Simplicius, *Commentaires sur le traité du ciel*, 94, 4, op. cit. n.2, p. 138.

going to completely deny the thinking and the approach of the one who introduced them.

We are still then at the problem of the fixed point and we are going to see along the way with Daniel-Paul Schreber the work that he will accomplish to bring out of this permanent flux by which he has been caught up in order to manage to establish, for his body, which I would not describe as defending but captive, to establish through his very body, or through its image, as you wish, this fixed point which would allow him finally to get a little rest. Am I going to speak about the necessity of the fixed point? I cannot because we can clearly see how Heraclitus, who was certainly not mad, managed perfectly well to limit himself and to have this radical and luminous thinking as well as the dissolution of every fixed point, contenting himself however to affirm that inordinate pride the famous $\upsilon\pi\omicron\tau\iota\varsigma$ was the worst of things.⁹

I am drawing your attention to this right away. Why? Because if the rules of the Logos are respected and if there is respected this law of the signifier which commits it to this mobility, to this flux, to these permanent transformations, nevertheless this Logos does not lack a support. But not at all where it is expected, not at all in a signifier. A signifier, ordinarily, only brings about a re-entry into the flux, into this river that is never the same and where it seems we ourselves are never the same.¹⁰ The signifier encounters a support when these rules, as the Logos calls them, are respected and it finds it — and here I pass over to what Lacan's teaching allows us to highlight - in the real. Here is the type of fixed point, the type of resistance that constitutes the mooring place permitting this flux to operate without my being for all that, irremediably and like Schreber, carried away by it. That is why $\upsilon\pi\omicron\tau\iota\varsigma$, inordinate pride, what would come in a way to destroy or to deny this real in a manic fashion, - this in any case is how I interpret it — Heraclitus can say is the worst of things.

Right away, in a fashion that is going to be of use to us in connection with Schreber, but also inform us once again, in return, about obsessional neurosis, I am going to highlight these opposing couples which for Heraclitus organised the world. This quotation by Heraclitus is found in an author called Hippolytus:

9 - Diogene Laërce, V/ei, IX, 2, op. cit. η. 1, p. 159 :

$\upsilon\beta\beta\rho\iota\nu$ $\chi\rho\eta$ $\sigma\beta\epsilon\nu\nu\omicron\nu\alpha\iota$ $\mu\acute{\alpha}\lambda\lambda\omicron\nu$ η $\pi\upsilon\rho\kappa\alpha\iota\tau\eta\nu$

« Démonstration, il faut l'éteindre plus encore que l'incendie. »

10 - Heraclite le Grammairien, *Allégories d'Homère*, 24, op. cit. n. 1, p. 173 :

$\pi\omicron\tau\alpha\mu\omicron\iota\varsigma$ $\tau\omicron\iota\varsigma$ $\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\iota\varsigma$ $\acute{\epsilon}\mu\beta\alpha\iota\nu\omicron\mu\epsilon\nu$ $\tau\epsilon$ $\kappa\alpha\iota$ $\omicron\upsilon\kappa$ $\acute{\epsilon}\mu\beta\alpha\iota\nu\omicron\mu\epsilon\nu$, $\epsilon\iota\mu\epsilon\nu$ $\tau\epsilon$ $\kappa\alpha\iota$ $\omicron\upsilon\kappa$ $\epsilon\iota\mu\epsilon\nu$.

*God is,
day-night, winter-summer,
war-peace, riches-famine
(all contranes: that is what the intellect is)
He takes various forms, just like "fire"
which when it is mixed with smoke,
receives a name according to the taste of each one."*

Beyond this resistance constituted by the real which constitutes itself as a fixed point once no ὕβρις comes to disturb the rules of the signifier, let us remark that these couples of opposites that Heraclitus highlights, are in no way symmetrical. "Day" and "night" are not articulated with one another, are not said from the same place; "night", for example, can come to say no to this affirmation of the signifier "day"; "summer" can come to say no to the signifier "winter"; "peace" to the signifier "war" and so on. I am skipping over, moreover, the signifier "riches-famine" which in Heraclitus is based also on a phonetic assonance, Πόρος and κόρος, with the additional fact that in one Greek dialect κ and Π could be substituted for one another. You see how Heraclitus was in his element, in showing that in the tongue itself, Πόρος and κόρος was the same thing! But I am putting forward that this opposition is not there to be taken literally as the struggle between symmetrical terms or equal forces, since the second is the response, in the form of a contradiction, in the form of a negation, given by the real to the first.

You will see in Schreber — if you remember it this evening, so much the better — this whole work of mental knitting-together through which he strove to create opposing couples, we will see that in due course. Let us leave in suspense what I am nevertheless trying to hint at, in order to bring into play this fixed point which he is lacking.

I told you that this also concerns the obsessional neurotic, because there, the opposing couples which are the rule and which tear the obsessional apart, are false couples. In his case, the opposition cannot be said to come from the real, because his whole mental operation has been, as I already attempted to highlight, to reduce this real by the progress of the symbolic. In his case then we find ourselves confronted with opposing couples that

11 - Hippolyte, *Refutation de toutes les heresies* op. cit. n.1, p. 220 :

ὁ θεός· ἡμερὴ εὐφρόνη χειμὼν θέρος, πόλεμος εἰρήνη, κόρος λιμός·
ἀλλοιοῦται δὲ ὅκωσπερ, ὁπότεν συμμιγὴ θυώμασιν, ὀνομάζεται καθ' ἡδονὴν
ἐκάστου.

literally do not hold up. They are names [nouns?] which if they do not come from the force of the real, if they are not names which are simply inverted in the mirror, the image of the first term, and which themselves come to function in the field of the symbolic, find themselves at the same time deprived of this power of genuine opposition whose lack provokes in the obsessional this anxiety which is first of all not being able to know what is yes and no, and which also gives him this feeling that there is no longer anything that is an obstacle to what he might undertake. Hence of course all the systems, all the defensive walls that he has to construct to protect himself from such a risk.

So then in these times that I am calling crude, when it seems that there is a sort of general aspiration to find or to rediscover fixed points which could solidly moor everyone within liveable, tolerable limits, you can see from this rapid introduction that the problem does not date from today. Undoubtedly, it has been thought out and all we are doing is rediscovering it, except that we are approaching it in a way that is no doubt new — which, if it is true, is to our advantage.

So then I took this name, *fixed point*, a term which comes from mathematical language, and I did not fail to seek out in books the way in which this term was introduced. On this question I also asked a certain number of you who have facilities or privileged formations in this respect, and I owe it to one of you to have properly recalled to me, on the note that he gave me, the theorem of the fixed point in mathematics, which is called Brouwer's theorem: "*The continuous mapping of a space onto itself necessarily leaves at least one unchanged point*". In other words, in the continuous mapping of a space onto itself, one can come to establish the relation between the points of this space with the function that one wishes. If the mapping is continuous, there will be at least one point that will have no other image than itself.

One question immediately arises. Is this mathematical reference valid when we are dealing with what concerns us, with a space, that of the signifier, which is strikingly discontinuous? That is even where the whole problem lies. If this fixed point is only valid for continuous spaces, is it in the slightest way valid to be flogging this Brouwer theorem, to be tossing it in a pseudo-scientific fashion into our story? In this connection, a little remark which will not go very far. When Lacan evoked the "new signifier" that he wished for and which none of us ever knew very much about, might this not have had something to do with the idea that there could a signifier functioning in a space that is no longer discontinuous but continuous? What constitutes the cut between two signifiers would not find itself in any

way mended, but in any case might find itself treated in the same way as the hypothesis about the continuous operates in mathematics. Is there a sense to what I am putting forward here?

Let us leave this to remark that to bring about the mapping of the signifier onto itself, our highly discontinuous signifier, with all its gaps, this is ordinary linguistic mapping, in order to speak that is all I am doing. Let us take an ordinary bijective mapping, it is quite normal that to one signifier there should come to correspond a strictly identical signifier in the mapping of the set of signifiers onto themselves. Moreover Lacan, on this, remarks somewhere that the famous tautology, for example, is never such. Precisely to anticipate in a way this event. If I say for example "grandpa, is grandpa" Lacan remarks, they are not the same in the two cases. Nevertheless, it is obvious that the bijective mapping of the set of signifiers onto itself necessarily ends up with the signifier being put in relation with itself, having an unchanged image of itself, namely, that we are creating fixed points, we encounter them by a fact which does not seem to be in any way cultural but is supposed to be linked to the physiology of the signifier.

This having been said, in a set, there can be other fixed points. One thinks immediately, for example, of the empty set, which by its curious properties, were it only by the fact that it belongs to all sets, to any set that exists, constitutes the fixed point of our dreams! Why this status? Does the fact of only having oneself as image constitute a fixed point? Obviously, because in this arrangement all meaning is supposed to be abolished, since the signifier only allows us to understand pure difference. If it is equal to itself, the meaning is extinguished with the signifier. This effectively is the property that Lacan accords to this signifier constituted by the great mast, the most common and the most widespread one, the famous mast to which Ulysses tied himself. The property of the phallus as signifier is not alone not to have any meaning but to manage to abolish meaning. That is why Lacan underlines the degree to which the use we make of it, we analysts, in our crude language, involves a violence, precisely a $\nu(3\kappa)$, in other words we are making what should not be appear there.

I am trying then from the beginning to get us to reflect on this first question. This fixed point to which we are so attached, is it a fact of culture or an operation that is spontaneously brought out from the proper physiology of the signifier, as I usually call it? Why does this concern us in such an outstanding way in our practice? Because it has proved that this type of attachment constitutes the ordinary stumbling block of a psychoanalysis,

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of a treatment. It is altogether, I was almost going to say legitimate for a subject to refuse the putting in question of what appears to him, precisely, not to be able in any case to be discussed since this is what for him grounds the discussion, this is what organises him, what organises his complaint, for example. From then on, can he accept the questioning of what for him organises all the speculations about the cause?

It is at the same time the point of greatest stupidity since each one of us functions with the key of what is for him the world, a key that he does not know about, of course, but which nevertheless cheerfully turns in the lock that encloses him. In other words, it is not simply an opaque point, but a radically obscurantist point since it is the point of his certitude, his stopping point, his limiting point, the organising point of his habits; it is also the point which supports his boredom — that does not mean that he will renounce it for all that; it is also the point which destines him, despite this apparent fixity, to a perpetual wandering. He is destined to be always beside the point. You may object, what is meant by, "not to be beside the point"? It remains in any case that the fixed point with which each of us organises his psychic functioning is in a way not alone the limit which destines him to a symptom, but also which destines him to never understand anything about what he has lived and about what he might live eventually. If in fact he has any interest in living something else, which could of course be debated.

So then, I am introducing very rapidly this evening before, the next time, we take up Schreber and I am inviting you already to take up the reading of the first three chapters of his *Memoirs*. You will see how this narrative, this marvellous clinical account that Schreber gives us of his psychosis will introduce us directly to the question that we debate among ourselves without great success, the question of teaching. On the subject of what a teaching is and in particular for psychoanalysts, I will show you the way in which Schreber, in connection with what he calls *soul murder*, highlights in a marvellous way the kind of impasse within which, precisely because of our fixations, we enclose ourselves.

Even though I gave earlier the very common example of the fixed point, a very general example, the one which constitutes, as Lacan again would say taking up the Greeks, the one which constitutes the *xoivfj* or, as he says the one that makes us whimper, it is the phallus. You will find in Heraclitus remarks on this, for example: "Above all you must think like everyone else — otherwise you will think nothing at all". It is a rather strong remark. It is when you are asleep that you do not think like everyone else. On which point moreover he is right and wrong at the same time, because if someone

fead not thought like everyone, there would never have been the
Tiumdeutung."

Finally, a last remark. You already see the different fixed points that are
r;mg to serve as mooring points for us. Earlier I evoked the real, namely,
ause of discordance, the cause of opposition, what says no, what is
rary. We make of the real a fixed point, that obviously of the repetition
neurosis, our attachment to the fact that we do indeed rediscover this real
oove all.

In retrospect, I measure how naive I was when at the beginning of the
.Association Freudienne we had organised an evening — I must already have
recalled this, with some men or women working in the theatre. We asked
"-em why they always told the same stories, and why they were not able to
renew their repertoire a little? You see the reply that immediately offers
itself; first of all stories are not invented, they are always the same, in a
pven cultural arena obviously. It seems that there have been collected, that
i census has been made of thirty-two situations, I did not say positions, and
parting from those you do whatever you want, you make your novel or
.our film.

/ . Pasmantier-Sebban - There are novels that are written like that, on a
computer, there are all the situations, all the beginnings, all the ends, all the
middles, and there are people who earn their living by writing four novels
in the year, that are pre-digested, pre-written. They fill in the gaps.

Ch. Melman - Indeed, this can be related to automatic writing because
each one is carried in this case by a narrative which precedes him, even if he
is living it out, if he has the feeling of having originally lived it out. What
ne lived out, is a narrative that was already there, of course!

If we continue to tolerate the repetition of the same situations, of the
same stories, it is because we are quite happy, like children to whom one
-counts always the same stories, who enjoy themselves in the same way,
who marvel at the same place, who are frightened at the same place, who
ire delighted when the saviour comes, as if it were for the first time! We do
exactly the same. Because it is quite clear that this stock of situations allows
us to rediscover our real at the same place. It is there.

In presenting it in this way, this type of fixed point is not without conse-

: 2 - Plutarque, *De U superstition*, op. cit., n.l, p. 262. :

τοις ἐγρηγορόσιν ενα και κοινόν κόσμον είναι των δέ κοιμωμένων εκαστον εις
ίδιον ἀναστρέφεσθαι

quences. And repetition is all the same one of the great forces of inertia and of movement. Heraclitus will tell us that movement and inertia are the same thing. Look at repetition; it is strictly similar, because it is a movement to bring you back to the same dead point, to bring you back to inertia, it is perfect. Here then with the real, we have one of the great modalities of the fixed point.

There is another one that I will tell you about right away and which is obviously marvellous, magical, and it is narcissistic investment. Marvellous, because organised in this case thanks to an unchanged image of oneself. The mirror image is an ideal operation to embody this support, which is otherwise abstract, of the fixed point. "*That's me*". And narcissistic attachment can be essential in the maintenance of a psychic integrity.

I evoked the real, I evoked the imaginary, but there is of course on the side of the symbolic a fixed point that I would signal as being the symptom; an attachment to the fact that there should be no exaggeration, that measure itself loses all its sense and all its spice. Hence the vigilance given to ensuring that the symptom should be preserved. Take *Dora*, and we will see the simplifications that I am proposing to you in the apprehension and in the reading of the case. Dora has a fixed point, obviously, that of her complaint of the homage (*d'ommage*), with an apostrophe, of which she is the object and this homage/damage, her hysterical symptom, is very likely what takes the place of the fixed point for her. One can imagine how the way in which Freud tried to upset it was intolerable; it could not enter into a dialectic for her because one can never ask anyone, in the slightest way, by a natural movement, to detach himself from a fixed point. To take it in another register which connects up with that narcissism, it is the point from which he does not see himself, since it is situated in the big Other.

Schreber will then be for us the occasion, this year, not simply to admire his deploying of the effects of the signifier, for *Schreber's Memoirs* concern nothing other than the narrative of this cruel but at the same time marvellous experience, of a creature given over to the unloosing of the signifier, and the so correct, so scrupulous way in which Schreber, a marvellous clinician, gives an account of it. No other clinician, I believe, because of his prejudices, could have reported such a faithful, such a precious observation. And then on the occasion of what happens for a subject when his mooring points break down in this way, we will be led to approach this problem in order to see whether this is once more the limit of our actions; whether, as Lacan appeared to put forward, there was something else, because you will notice that, in the knot, there are clouds but nothing which could claim to be valid as a fixed point. As if, with the knot, one had

passed into a space, a register where the fixed point no longer proved to be indispensable. But I may allow myself to suppose, in my naivety and my incompetence, that the verification of this fact is already in Heraclitus, and that his whole development went in this direction.

Have you any remarks, questions?

J. Perin - Yes, I have a little difficulty with Brouwer's theorem, concerning continuous space, and then subsequently, the space of the signifier which is supposed to be discontinuous. What if space only belonged to the signifier? That is a little bit my question, is there a space that might be outside the signifier? Because I thought I understood all the same in one of Lacan's seminars, that he reduced space to the signifier.

C. Melman - You're right. There is a place where Lacan says that Euclidian space is the cut. This is a violent affirmation but that you can understand as the fact that it is the cut in so far as Euclidian space is not deployed in what is otherwise a toric space, for example, only takes its place here by acting as a screen to the locus of the cut. The problem is not that of knowing whether there is a space outside the signifier. Lacan will also describe for psychosis this particular space, a hyperbolic one, etc. We are quite right to think that effectively we have no other perceptible spaces than those organised by the signifier. But this does not prevent us from being able to think about continuous spaces.

H. Cesbron-Lavau - Precisely, a concept that is interesting to look at and which would permit the work that you are proposing to be prolonged is the concept of "discrete", to be distinguished from "discontinuous". In a discrete space it is altogether possible to put in place the whole topology with its properties, a topology of good neighbourhoods, which in analysis has no other name than that of free association.

C. Melman - Precisely, that is the whole problem. And to go very quickly, given the late hour, I would refer you to something that images it very well, namely, the navel of the dream. After a certain time and whatever may reveal the subtlety of the associative network that you put in place or which proves to have been put in place, there remains this navel and it is not a negligible trace or organ, is that not so? So then the property of signifier up

today, the one that we are dealing with, is of course to ensure that the hypothesis of the continuous, that continuity can only be imagined in the scopical field and uniquely in the imaginary register. But as regards what concerns the structure, whatever may be the associative work you give yourself over to, there will always be this snag, and it will go on growing

Returning to Schreber

in the measure that you progress. Since all you are doing is circumscribing an impossible, the one that is proper to the signifier, the hole that Freud has then situated as navel. This is what tempts the manic person. In his outburst something gives the illusion of triumph. His feeling of triumph is to have broken through this obstacle of the real, to bring it about that precisely there is no longer the impossible. And you know the rapidity and the intelligence with which signifying chains can be put in place and circulate in a manic person.

Is there anything else? If not, I would be very grateful to you on the next occasions for all your criticisms. All your objections to what I am proposing to you will be welcome.

So then until next week!

Lecture II

20 October 1994

I received a little word from one of you reproaching me for having said that the effects of the signifier in the psychotic were marvellous, that I would have done better to say that they were stupefying and atrocious. To tell the truth, I used this term "marvellous", taking up the adjective that Schreber uses to designate the phenomena, the famous miracles with which he is confronted and which we can see, with the greatest ease, are provoked by the signifier. Which means that the adjectives "stupefying" and "atrocious", to designate the effects of the signifier, I would have a tendency to reserve for the neurotic. Because it is really in his case that the effects of the signifier are stupefying because they stupefy him radically, and for a good period of time, and that they have consequences that one can freely and without any constraint describe as atrocious.

So that this will not appear to you to be simple juggling, I will give you an example of it right away. I evoked, the last time, the styles of relation to the fixed point — what I am calling the fixed point — and it is quite obvious that the fixed points that we have to deal with are in a way reproductions of the major fixed point that we know, the phallus; for the moment it does not matter; but I showed you how these styles of linking to the fixed point came to take their place in the fields of the symbolic as well as those of the real and the imaginary. But I evoked every time, in a way, a type of relation that was aimed at the preservation by the subject of a relation which was essential for his own glory. To attach oneself to a trauma, for example, as is ordinarily the case, is also a way of valorising it for one's own glory, because one is the survivor, the death-deceiver the one on whose head a miracle has been bestowed.

But there exists a major style of relation to the fixed point, which is constructed in what is apparently the greatest abnegation and renunciation,

and which is called devotion to duty (*le dévouement*). Devotion to duty, which is nevertheless a dimension that we should all here celebrate and decorate, devotion to duty in general turns around the concern of ensuring that, that there is somewhere a fixed point. Because if the subject himself does not represent it, it is important for him nevertheless in the first place that in the world there should be, that there should be at-least-one (*au-moins-un*) Hence his engagement, which is far from being rare, in this sacrificial activity which consists in ensuring that at least the man or woman to whom one is devoted represents this fixed point.

I suppose that in presenting things to you in this way you already see the whole clinical palette which is organised from this approach, from the mother, of course, who devotes herself to her product, the male one naturally, because for the other really, it is not worth the trouble to make the effort! It is true! Anyway I am readily evoking this kind of barbarism in which we live; I believe that mother-daughter relations in our culture is a serious example of it, a serious model. But there is of course the wife who devotes herself to making a man of her husband, I am sorry that that makes you laugh because it is an extremely touching dimension and one which, besides, in general takes up a lot of time.

I was going to go on to that of the pupil for his master, of the pupil who, of course, looks after the glory of the master. But there is, and this is a dimension which is still more gripping and more cruel, there is the relation to the big Other, and you know the degree to which people can devote themselves in order to ensure that in the big Other there is at-least-one, whether we are dealing with an ancestor, the ancestor of the tribe or of the nation, or whether we are dealing with a god....

So then in order to try to justify my opening remarks, that I would locate these stupefying and atrocious effects of the signifier rather in the neurotic, I am offering here a range of examples which are those of our daily life and which our morality very normally tends to privilege and to honour, to celebrate. I mean that this is what is put forward as an example, where we can read the effects of the necessity of this fixed point. But this goes still further because there are a certain number of speaking beings (*parlêtres*) who, in a way, renounce forever the function of representation, namely, renounce the concern of being worth anything as a representation; they delegate this power to some ideal precisely charged with supporting for them this fixed point and, there again, they busy themselves by working for its glory. One of the great symptoms of neurosis all the same, is to forbid oneself from acceding to the right of figuring in the world of representations, because this would be to introduce into this supposedly perfect

world, a defective image which would at the same time put in peril, as Schreber would say, the order of the world. So then, here again, it is often with a concern for sacrifice that a speaking being renounces being anywhere than in an interim field, leaving the place to those men and women who deserve it. And one could well evoke here, without mentioning all the students who never manage to finish their thesis, one could evoke in a more immediate way all of those who set themselves apart if not from sexual life at least from conjugal life, starting from this judgement that to take up a place there would constitute an offence to the order of the world.

I believe I am evoking clinical banalities, which are certainly tangible, but they are all the same gross banalities which illustrate these stupefying effects, the way in which we are stupefied, in which we are stupid, and the way in which we are atrocious, because of the little grace that we accord to the signifier.

To advance and continue this series of testimonies, I will take one from a different register, that of our relation to teaching, and you are going to see the way in which it leads us directly to Schreber. Why teaching? Well then because the ideal that we have of it, the ideal by which we have been captured, which we have been taught, precisely, consists in the fact that teaching culminates in the capacity that has been finally acquired of being able to repeat, to take up again the knowledge that has been served up to you. In effect, what one asks of a good teacher (*professeur*), is to be able to repeat the knowledge that had been served up to him, that he can eventually of course articulate to his taste, but which essentially is that of the authorities. The intervention of the subject to whom this teaching is proposed, is judged as a general rule to be parasitic, defective, faulty with respect to this teaching; as long as the aforesaid subject is not a genius or someone who has become recognised — you do not necessarily need to be a genius for that — but who becomes recognised by introducing into the aforesaid teaching a type of modification or of displacement or of recombination or of new introduction which are going to be attached to his name and that the teachers will subsequently have to transmit anew. Everything happens then as if teaching included the fact that the subject should shut up, should keep quiet! There is nothing else to say except to take up again, in the circumstances proposed to him, the teaching that has been so kindly and so well distilled for him.

I had the opportunity the other evening of a conversation with a teacher who functions within these walls with quite official teaching responsibilities, and besides the lassitude he showed, he seemed to think that this was not particularly stimulating work for the intelligence of those who had to

do it, to carry it out. At which I allowed myself to object to him that this was what was expected of a teacher and that it was, after all, the function of teachers, to transmit as best they could and as faithfully as they could the knowledge which belonged to their discipline. In other words, to take up the distinction so beloved of Chomsky, what they are asked for is competence, and as regards performance, either they have it or they do not have it, but it is secondary, they are asked as teachers, as teachers, to be competent and this is very precious. It is necessary. The only drawback, as I pointed out to you just now, is that this implies that the subject should shut up. I will not get involved in examining of whether or not it is since the setting up of the discourse of science that we find ourselves with this arrangement, even though it appears likely, because the theologians for their part were of course caught in this dilemma, and as we know more or less, familiar, very experienced, very well instructed about this, we know that there were regularly, periodically returns to this point that it was not enough to know, but that it was also necessary to be engaged *vis-a-vis* this knowledge with something which was part of one's soul, part of one's body. For those that this might interest or amuse, it is a movement that was particularly clear in the Hebrew tradition with, I no longer know whether that goes back to the seventeenth or the eighteenth century, the Hassidic movement; what was at stake there precisely was to take care that the relation to the aforesaid knowledge should be not simply joyous, but that it implicated what was most intimate to the subjectivity of the believer, of the pupil. You know that this type of Hebraic studies, which is then carried out collectively, is accompanied in general by a rocking of the body, which is rather strange when one sees it for the first time, a type of rocking which appears to belong to a rather strange eroticism, even auto-eroticism, but in which one can read the sign of this concern that the body should be involved, should be caught up in the aforesaid learning.

I am recalling this to you, first of all to draw your attention to what in the field of the analysis of this type of problem, is firstly clinically superabundant, and secondly has still manifestly not been resolved, it is this too that is extraordinary. Clinically superabundant, that means that since Freud there was the concern, which was subsequently that of Lacan, to say: "Listen, what I ask of my pupils, is to repeat what I have said. Now, in what I have said, I might eventually insert, or criticise, the additions that they wanted or tried to make, but what I want, is for them to trust what I have said. In that way at least, one will know that one is in the field of psychoanalysis." Hence, obviously, a certain number of disputes and of protests and all the divergences that you know, in the name of subjective authenti-

city, in the name of the subject who does not accept to find himself *fading*, to find himself foreclosed, and has resurfaced here in the real in the form of the big open mouth protesting: "No, that's enough! What about me, what about me, what about me!"

The *Ecole Freudienne de Paris*, for those among who participated in it, was absolutely exemplary for this type of situation. Lacan's teaching was answered by a series of objections which most often took on a hysterical style and managed eventually to find their foundation, their theoretical justification, in general by relying on the analysis of children — child analysts were certainly more likely than the others to protest, to contest the official teaching brutalising these poor kids who have so many things to say, to create, to invent, while they are constrained in rather stiff, in rather rigid teachings. I will skip over the accusations obviously of dogmatism, of inhumanity and many others, which haunted, dwelt in the *Ecole Freudienne de Paris*. It is strange for us to see that Lacan, faced with this phenomenon, with this problem, had a bizarre attitude which was not unique: he changed his attitude in mid-stream.

There is then a Lacan number one, who clearly testifies that the subject, this subject that we are so fond of, our soul, our singularity, namely, also for all of those who privilege their spirituality (even if they are not religious, that does not matter), this subject which is one of the great fixed points obviously to be proposed — you can for example renounce everything but not the subject! Someone said it, someone very illustrious who was obviously called Descartes: you can doubt everything, all that you want, but you have a fixed point. That is it, you doubt, and then your being is protected and at the same time you can carry out a systematic doubt; you are assured of not losing your bearings, of not losing yourself, quite the contrary since you rediscover yourself all the more in your being in the measure that you doubt the rest.

AurelieX. - That is what he calls the subject, he calls it this "fixed point".

Cb. Melman - He calls it that.....Aurelie, you are very kind because you know I did not have that, I did not have that at all in mind and I am delighted! Anyway, that proves all the same that I must have read it and that I forgot it, as one should, because it came back to me without knowing it. You would have to take up again, starting from there, the theory of vortices and a whole series of things.

So then Lacan for his part said: "Your subject, namely, what makes you take yourself to be someone, what makes you believe yourself, what swells

your narcissism..." Ah! Yes, I wanted to add something immediately after; I am a little surprised to learn that, in the book that he has just published, the Pope strongly questions Descartes and that greatly surprises me, but it would be necessary perhaps, if we were not so one-sided, I find that it would be a very good thing for us to study works like that, that of the Pope, for example, they are works that merit attention and which merit our specifying our point of view in this regard. But in any case, what I think I understood, Descartes has not got a good press in his approach, because precisely he is supposed to be the one who introduced this doubt, this famous doubt whose evil today permanently gnaws at us; this simply means that John-Paul II is badly advised, his advisers completely misunderstood the affair, they are not aware that Descartes, is well able on the contrary to give to religion a remarkable energy and support; he really makes it unsinkable, because this is to make it at once, as I might say, untackable by any knowledge whatsoever, because I can challenge all knowledge.

What is more, the better constituted the knowledge is, the more the subject will be foreclosed, will be *fading*, the more I will find myself with this subject who asks for nothing — now on this point I will push things forward a little bit later — who asks for nothing other than to find beatitude in the Other. Namely, someone who will tell him that effectively they both speak the same language, they both say what has to be said. That is beatitude, elation; I am going to speak to you about it in connection with Schreber. Elation, if you have ever had the opportunity to experience this feeling, you must always pay a little bit of attention..., but if nevertheless you have had this opportunity, it is the moment when you have this strange illusion of being in perfect harmony with the Other, of having a direct hold on the discourse of the Other, namely, what is supposed to be happening in the Other. It is really curious, strange when that happens, and that happens in some situations that I will evoke for you, which are ordinary, which have nothing extraordinary about them, this provokes an effect that is, apparently, neurochemical! For you to be able to experience this feeling of elation, there must be transmitters which secrete something at the level of the right synapses and which ensure that they really coincide properly there, stick together properly and that you are what is called *inspired*. Which is marvellous.

Lacan begins then by saying that this famous subject, is a nitwit, he is a nitwit because he takes himself to be one, an exceptional one, a one that is excepted, which is the fate of each of us. Here again that forms part of the stupefying and atrocious effects of the signifier, which ensure that each of

us lives as if he were exceptional and looks after his little difference. I already had occasion to tell you (but it can never be told too often); when Lacan left the door of his office open and the numerous patients, glued together in the library, were impatiently waiting to be able to formulate the extreme singularity of their existence, there was obviously only one possibility for them, that of blocking their ears, because otherwise they would have perceived that the singularity of one is exactly that of the other, it is just as singular; there is nothing exceptional about it despite the way in which we live it out.

Lacan considered then that as regards his teaching there was only a single attitude to have, which was to repeat strictly what he said. I remember very well some study days in the course of which one of our colleagues, brilliant and now dead, Claude Conte, had produced, I think in connection with the phantasy, a text, he produced an extremely precise and extremely brilliant text - it must moreover have been published in *Scilicet*, through my efforts - and in which, in 25 pages, he gave an account of the Lacanian theory of the phantasy (I think it was the phantasy), with an exactitude, a precision, a fidelity testifying that he himself was completely excluded from the field of what he was reporting on; I mean that his own opinion on this not alone was of no importance, but it was important that it should be excluded. The audience listened to that with a certain gravity, first of all because it was very brilliant, it testified to the fact that he had well understood and that he was quite capable of giving it out perfectly, and Lacan had this commentary on it: "That's it exactly". This "that's it exactly" went in the direction of what at that moment began to happen with *Scilicet*. The object of *Scilicet* was to publish texts, articles; the ambition was obviously the Bourbaki style, namely, that whoever the author was he was perfectly excluded just like when he was dealing with mathematics, it was a matter of a combinatorial, it was a matter of signifiers and the person who puts it in place is excluded from it. That catches what was done at that time. I recall Jacobson and Levy-Strauss, their analysis of a poem by Baudelaire, I think it is the poem on cats: to show how writing was structural; at the limit did it come from Baudelaire? Lacan would freely remark in private how the works of Diderot most often had appeared in an anonymous fashion or indeed directly in German; it was only well after and sometimes by chance that the French text was found, for example. Diderot did not give a damn whether there was the name of the author on what he was producing.

So then, the progress introduced by psychoanalysis was to recognise that the subject in the affair, first of all was not the author, and subsequently that he was only a parasitic effect of the signifier, and therefore that our relation

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to the signifier ought to be of this type, namely, a repetition, a simple revival. It is obvious that this kind of assertion at the *Ecole Freudienne* meant that certain pupils left slamming the door behind them and shouting about soul murder, "soul murder!", "Lacan wants the death of his pupils!" It was not for nothing that they left, they left on problems of this kind.

And then, there is a second Lacan on this point, who is extremely discrete, I mean you will find nowhere a theoretical reconsideration of this point in his work, nowhere. But nevertheless, I know from private conversations, from table talk, the degree to which Lacan later considered his position at that time to be erroneous, and it is quite obvious here again, to take up again what is now one of my favourites, the seminar on *The Sinthome* seems to take up again the question of the subject and of the proper name, it is no longer the same thing, in a completely new way. But, and I already drew your attention to this, it is no longer the same subject since it is no longer supported by a cut and therefore, we may understand the murder accomplished previously by Lacan as a manifestation of the fact that the subject is the symptom *par excellence*. Since it is he who loves the *sinthome*, since it is the *sinthome* which permits him to ex-sist, which allows him to hold himself together; in other words he is in essence masochistic, and in so far as this subject is here vindicating his right to ex-sistence and his singularity, there is no hope of ever putting a term to the *sinthome*. This is one of the fixed points which culturally is the most fawned upon, the most sure.

So then, Lacan number two was very discrete and no doubt it would be good for us some day, in the *Association*, or elsewhere, for us to put on the agenda the evolution of Lacan's position on the question of the subject. It would be all the more opportune in that we are very clearly, still today and including in our *Association*, just as embarrassed about teaching. We are still embarrassed caught between the concern to reproduce, as faithfully as possible, the constituted knowledge, which has its value, and then the eventual malaise experienced not simply as regards the mortification that the subject experiences from it, but also with respect to this enormous consequence that this type of split between knowledge and the subject allows it to happen that you recite your knowledge absolutely as if it were a prayer, since afterwards you can, from your position of subject, go and do strictly whatever you please. You have sacrificed to the gods by having recited your knowledge and then this now gives you, all the same, the right to construct whatever pleases you, including in your practice. Believe me, it is in no way exceptional to see there coexisting in this way in an individual who apparently appears to be unique, one, this kind of dichotomy. I recite my know-

ledge in order to please, because this is what is expected, so then I give it to you. You like that, do you not? And then once I have done that, I can go about my own little business... Anyway "my own little business", namely, that at that moment I practise without in any way referring myself to knowledge.

It seems to me that it would be interesting, at the point that we have got to, that in our *Association*, where questions of teaching have been put on the agenda with the suggestion that has been made to create schools, regional schools of psychoanalysis — we too are practising decentralisation! It would be desirable that we for our part should have the boldness to put things in place here a little bit in a correct way, and believe me, we have, you have, all the elements to do it. I think that in the months to come, and by helping ourselves moreover with Schreber we will employ ourselves in trying to show, for the analyst, what a teaching is and what position he has *vis-a-vis* what he is taught and what he himself teaches and practises. For my part, my admiration, I have said it so often, came from the fact that Lacan practised strictly what he taught and I must say that I have never seen that, ever, even in medicine; I never saw anyone who practised nothing other than what he taught.

When you have taken up the first three chapters of Schreber, if you have not already done so, I would warmly advise you to do it, you will see that he has an art of composition that is magnificent. He does not know what he is talking about but he acts as if he knew because, really, these chapters are put in place, there is a logical progression which is very rich precisely in teaching.

This is how Schreber begins: "There is something which is of the order of Blessedness". I pass over the fact that the world is organised by a network of nerves in which you immediately will recognise the network of signifiers. He cannot call it anything else since the only property that these nerves have, is to be signifying chains, there is nothing else. He does as Freud does when he writes the *Project*: he speaks about nerves, he also evokes railway networks, that is not important, but you see right away that these nerves are nothing other than signifying chains, organised in networks and decide the fate of the world. This spider's web (it has to be said) is centred, there is a fixed point which is God (I will pass over the details, you will pick them up yourself). And what gives the feeling of Blessedness, is to be dead — the physical death of the body — and thus to live this situation in which the subject's own nerves, the ex-subject's, are directly linked to the divine network, to the point that they come, after purifying trials, to almost lose their own identity. He asks himself the question, I raised it ear-

liar: does the person who is dead conserve his identity in this work of purification that he undergoes and in which he is penetrated by the divine nerves? Or indeed is this identity not completely abolished, and is it not a higher degree of Blessedness to be entirely blended in with God? Which means nothing other than to be entirely animated by the very word of God, not to open one's mouth except to make his word heard, to be in a way confused with Him.

But in this superb harmony there is a risk, or rather there are two, the first is that God may withdraw, He may get fed up with it and then if He stops feeding the network, an extremely anxiety-provoking and dramatic effect is produced, which is that wind and storm arise and a sharp feeling of anxiety manifestly traverses Schreber at that moment, before what at that moment is revealed as being the pure void of the real; an effect of aspiration, at once of aspiration and of blowing is produced from it, in this network which weaves, which organises the world which, at a moment, thus finds itself suddenly uninhabited; because the knack, is to be connected, and the term given here is to be "in contact", which is not bad either, you must be well informed (*branche*) in life! Here, if you are in contact with the network, connected to the network, all is well, but if suddenly the one who is permanently emitting the network can no longer be heard, then what? This marvellous hallucinatory effect, is it hallucination or is it physics? The wind rises and everything begins to stir... Hence a great desire that God should not abandon His creatures.

But the other risk comes from the fact that if the creature speaks in this network, if it allows itself to become a centre, God finds Himself in danger from this other centre. He fears being Himself absorbed by this centre which, in the network, begins to function, and therefore God is absolutely not in agreement. He fears above all, He fears being himself destroyed by this other centre which begins to function and which is that of the subject's own word. So then, in this harmonious system there is all the same a very unstable equilibrium that is going to become more serious with the fact that Professor Flechsig — those who have the knowledge and that I evoked earlier, the teachers — the professor of neurology, the celebrated neurologist, Professor Flechsig, functions in the network. He functions because he has annexed a part of divine power and moreover God is not at all happy that Professor Flechsig has permitted himself to become a centre in the network to the point of risking God being absorbed, but also above all of absorbing Schreber: "Soul murder" — Schreber and his whole lineage since the operation concerns the whole lineage of the Flechsigs and the whole lineage of Schreber, being reduced to nothing.

So then, Schreber begins his work, and his psychotic experience, by the rawest and the most faithful expression, the most subtle clinical description of this problem of the relation of the subject with the big Other, of the conflict at work between the manifestation of the subject and the existence of the big Other, the antagonism, as if when I opened my mouth — to let there be heard a word of the subject, not to give an account of a knowledge — it was equivalent to killing, to the murder, not of the soul this time, but the murder of God; namely, as if when I am speaking as a subject, I could only do so at the price of the death of God. Here is something completely unexpected and of which you will say: "Yes, but this is psychotic!" Even though I pointed out to you earlier the way in which we continue to function in this unchanged problematic, since the pupils who wanted to speak in their own name considered they could only do it on condition of executing, of cancelling out the knowledge that is their reference, as if there again they could only live the affirmation of their own word, their word as subject, at the cost of the physical or moral or intellectual murder of the author of the knowledge to which they refer themselves.

You see that the split, that I evoked earlier, is obviously a way of defending oneself against this type of dilemma which is: either Him (with a capital H), or me (with a small m) and I cannot get out of it, without becoming inspired; it is the same thing as the inspiration that shakes, that disorganises Schreber's world, inspiration-expiration, you have inspiration and expiration in it, namely, I am transformed into a prophet. It is obvious that if I am a prophet, well in that case it is all joy, it is over the moon! What I am saying there is nothing other than what comes directly from there, therefore a prophet, is someone who has had a lot of success; in general a prophet is not depressed, there is a certain energy about him. Or again I can also become a patriot, a militant patriot! There, obviously, my remarks will be in a way strictly in accord with the locus of the fixed point, in the big Other. I mean that my fixed point and that of the big Other come together. In other words, when I am a patriot I am caught up in the delusion of grandeur, of grandeur! Namely, at the same time, of expansion and then, at the same time, I think everything is allowed as you know, I have no longer any limits, there are no limits to my action. That is why, as a patriot, all I can do is make exactions, they go together.

The question on which I am going very rapidly to conclude is the following: does that mean that we are all psychotic? One could pose oneself the question, one could ask oneself, since we are absolutely not any further advanced than Schreber! Obviously, what differentiates us is that we do not support in general the same phenomena, but we reason like him! So then,

if there is all the same a major difference between being neurotic and the psychotic, where is it in all of this? It is so that you can exercise your sagacity as subjects, of properly taught subjects, that I am leaving you on this question for the next time. And if the idea comes to one of you of contributing to these elements, ideas, propositions, they will be altogether welcome if you want to send them to me, communicate them to me, because I believe that the debate that is opening up on this occasion deserves to be wide-ranging.

On this, do you have questions or remarks?

E. Tellerman - Yes, what you were saying in fact about teaching, is also the problems that can arise, which must certainly have arisen in treatment, this certainly is not without an effect in the direction of the treatment.

Ch. Melman - No, but of course, because Freud expected his patients to accept his — correct — interpretations, that they should genuflect. One has to ask oneself: how did Freud do his analysis? For him psychoanalysis was scientific. What does that mean? That means that before his rationality, his type of rationality, the subject had only to abdicate. There you are. In other words, to put himself in a *fading* position, as he himself had done. For his own part, before the type of certainties that he had established, anything that might be the singularity of the subject, his ethnic particularities, his past, his this, his that, this was worth absolutely nothing; this subject had only to yield to the rigour of what he himself had established. This is how he did his analysis.

And Lacan, as long as he thought that analysis was scientific, considered in the same way that the subject could only behave in the same manner, namely, that the subject had only to lay down his pretensions and that's all! Subsequently, Lacan considered that psychoanalysis was perhaps something other than scientific — but there again we would have to take up for ourselves these kind of points, of problems — and the Lacanian demonstration, from the time when Lacan stops thinking that it is scientific is no less rigorous, perhaps it is even more so! The fact is that Lacan thought, and not alone did he think, but one could say that Lacan like Freud, himself as a subject, had accepted to give up all fixed points, with his own *fading* before, as I might say, the sequences that he had established. So then he thought that there was no better choice for the speaking being.

Freud's scandal, was to note that he served up to his analysands, interpretations which were scientific in his eyes and that his patients did not want to listen to, so then Freud... It is starting from then that he got into

the analysis of resistances, resistances to Freud's interpretations, and that, as you were able to note during the study days consecrated by a group to the question of resistances, today in psychoanalysis, the same embarrassment still continues to function.

When I am before a mathematical proof, what I think or what I do not think about it as subject has strictly nothing to do with it, has no place! So then, either I do not want anything to do with this proof, it is my right, but that will not prevent it from existing, and ensuring that it organises the world in a certain way. So then I may not like it, I can think this or that, this has no importance. And this is why mathematicians can produce collective works like those done by Bourbaki.

M. David - It is the pleasure that differentiates things, the mathematician for his part takes pleasure in his proof.

Ch. Melman - I hope so for his sake!

M. David - While in our case no. That is what differentiates us!

Ch. Melman - I don't know, perhaps some of you may take pleasure in it, I am certain that Conté, who had a solid mathematical formation, took great pleasure in this, in this type of cleaning up, you run the feather duster over it.

J. Pasmantier-Sebban - Is it not the case, precisely, that style is this way or this style of cleaning up? I think for example of a painter like Van de Velde, whose art was extremely Spartan, almost ordinary, banal, while he was someone who knew what singularity meant, he had a very strong artistic personality, and his whole work consisted in stripping himself of this singularity in order to get to this expression of great banality.

Ch. Melman - You're right, it is surely a problem of theology of which art is an expression, of which art is a testimony, it is quite normal that art should have given an account of what were the theological preoccupations of an epoch, surely.

V. Hasenbalg - Is the murder-effect to be related to the cut of Lacan number one that you speak about?

Ch. Melman - No so much with the cut as rather in this fact that the aforesaid chain leaves no place for any representative whatsoever of the subject. You no longer have in the aforesaid chain either place or representation of the subject, which means that you are dead.

D. Bruneval - When, in connection with psychosis, Lacan speaks about "the unplumbable decision of the individual/being" (*L'insondable décision de l'être*)

Ch. Melman - "The unplumbable decision of being?" And how do you understand that, Danièle?

Returning to Schreber

D. Bruneval-1 ask myself the question of whether in Lacan, in a certain way, there was not also the taking into account of a certain liberty of the subject, and specifically in atopia.

Ch. Melman - Listen, it would be a very good thing if you were to take up this sentence in the context in which it is situated and if we were to try to understand it together, because at once the term unplumbable has surely its price, decision has surely its price and being also, so then that gives us a lot of things for a small little phrase and this would merit, if you wish, your taking it up again in its context. Where is it? Is it in the *Ecrits* or in a seminar?

D. Bruneval - I have an impression that it is in "Remarks on psychic causality."

Ch. Melman - It's quite possible, it would be a good thing, if you wish, for you to try to see how it is brought in, so that we can try to understand it together. For my part I have ideas about it, but I would prefer the context to be made present.

There you are,

Until November 10th.

Lecture III

10 November 1994

Like you I have questioned myself for a long time about this very enigmatic distinction that Lacan makes at the start of a seminar between imbeciles and sods (*les imbeciles et les cons*). And I hope that you are going to help me to grasp the difference, because he appears to be telling us that it is self-evident, that everyone understands it. So then I would ask you to guide me, to help me so that I will not go astray. What is the difference for you? "Everyone understands", says Lacan. Do you have an opinion?

R. Majster - Sods are not stupid.

Ch. Melman - Ah! I do not know why they should not be stupid, I would not say that. This is precisely not the impression that this type of person gives.

/. *Perin* - Sods are not happy.

Ch. Melman - Now that, that has really not been proved, I have to say!

/. *Perin* - But the imbeciles are!

Ch. Melman - Ah! Good...

A Guy - One could say that one of them knows how to count and the other does not. Because the imbecile is supposed to be the one who can count sticks — etymologically — and the sod, if one follows a little bit what you have been saying from the beginning of the year, would rather have a tendency to come back ceaselessly to a fixed point, to be unable to separate himself from it.

Ch. Melman - In effect! I think you are helping us.

For my part, I would like to say to you that the imbecile does not know and that the sod, is the one who knows. When you meet someone who knows, who functions with this kind of mechanics organised around a certainty which portions out the network of his behaviour and his judgement,

you always have the feeling that, even if he knows a lot, even if he is otherwise very learned, you have the impression that he is a sod. So then if we were hoping to escape from these categories, we would have to navigate between on the one hand those who lack knowledge — to be avoided by preference; it would be better to have some little bit — and those who are organised around a fixed point which guarantees for them the comfort that we know all about.

This distinction concerns, of course, the teaching that we may wish for in a group of psychoanalysts. On the one hand the necessity to allow, to facilitate the acquisition of knowledge, not to be too much of an imbecile, to know the minimum, to have read Freud, to have read Lacan, and not just that, but to have studied a certain number of texts which intersect, which are in a network with their work, with ours, and then on the other hand not to tip over into being one of those who know.

/. *Pasmantier-Sebban* - Who know.... Or who know in their own opinion?

Ch. Melman - Not at all! They may know, they may be genuinely learned. And I do not believe I am committing an abuse or making things easy or tipping over into provocation, in pointing out that to be a learned person never prevented anyone from being a sod.

So then, as an exergue for a meeting that we should have in the *Association* on the problem of teaching, I would be quite happy to put this remark.

It connects up with another point which appeared very clearly to me on the occasion of a presentation that I happened to give at the *Maison de l'Amérique Latine* on the conjugal bond, the conjugal lasso in Spanish, which is right away much more expressive. In preparing these remarks, it clearly appeared to me that from the moment we open our mouths, we are led to claim or to want to affirm the character of universal import for what we say. Starting from the moment that we open our mouths, the passage through the concept, eminently desirable in order not to be imbeciles, and the fact of articulating it inevitably leads us to think that the argument that we are advancing is applicable to everyone and is valid for all.

The theme of that evening gave an outstanding opportunity for making tangible that what was at stake in an exemplary fashion was a domain in which there was every reason in the world for at-least-one person to object to this universal pretension, that there is at-least-one in the room, for example, to say: "Your remarks are really macho, it is your point of view".

As it happened there was not in the room an at-least-one but if he had shown himself, he would have represented there a pure logical law. Normally there should have been at least one to recall that what was advanced there could not be valid for all — but I was so convincing that there were none of them there! If the question had been posed in this way, there would already have been a brilliant illustration of what conjugal life is, of what is at stake in the disputes, the outbursts proper to conjugal life, where the pretension of the one to take support on an argument which is supposed to be valid for all and in every case cannot fail to encounter very logically that there is also a not-all!

But what is the status of what I am telling you here? Because, if one does not think of it immediately, one is going with Lacan to recall that there is only a single universal which is really valid for all! He says it very well in connection with the example "all men are mortal"; the only universal that is valid, is death. Whether you are man, or woman, or goat. Effectively, death is valid for all, here is the universal. But once you introduce between the partners a referent which is no longer of this kind and which is obligatorily the other aspect of the phallus, therefore what comes here to organise enjoyment (*puissance*) and at the same time the difference between the sexes, once you leave this referent represented by death, you no longer function in a field in which you can any longer claim in any way to have an argument which is valid for all.

Is it starting from here that Lacan abandons the idea that psychoanalysis could be scientific? Because what defines science is indeed being universal. If it is not so, if the experiments are not verifiable every time, if an experiment, a proposition is refuted in a certain number of cases, what are we to think? You will quite rightly oppose to me Godel's theorem. But is it sufficient? Godel's theorem, so often mentioned after Lacan in our approach, is it enough at the same time to guarantee the scientific status of psychoanalysis? And to say that after all logic too is not valid for all cases because there is at least one proposition that cannot be proved within a normalisation or a consistent body, at least one proposition that this corpus cannot prove. Therefore the objection is a limitation (*terme*) to science itself.

But if one leaves this questioning to one side to come to this other remark that I was outlining earlier, what is the status of what I am in the process of presenting? In what way is it validated? Is it valid for all? Here is a statement which does not take death as a referent and which however one cannot see why should not be accepted on one side and the other; acceptance on one condition, precisely the delicate condition, that there is on the side of women a castration which is equal to that which functions on

the side of the male. If this is not so the not-all can always say: "Your famous division only holds up because castration grounds it. But for my part, precisely in the measure in which I am not all in it, can I give the same credit as you to this statement?" You see how we go round in circles, the way in which we come back to this idea that fundamentally, what prevents sexual relations, is on the side of the woman, there is no castration, no castration which has the same value as that on the male side. But then, you will tell me, it is really very strange, if the two are equally castrated, what would allow a relation to be established? From the logical point of view, obviously, that does not pose a problem, it is even the very condition for it to be possible, that there is a specific at-least-one on the side of the woman herself. In that case, there would effectively be The woman, and one could say "Every woman... etc."

While we are waiting for what is not going to happen, we will return to the arrangement of the bond, of the conjugal lasso, when a man finds himself bound to the representative of the agency that organises his desire, the agency towards which he constantly casts longing looks; because a woman, however beloved she is, will never be any more than a representative of it, not even the masquerade of the agency that animates his desire; while a woman will have this kind of fixation on the real organs of her spouse, of her husband, designating them as not being in any way a representative, but the object-itself that organises her desire. You can see the way in which the chiasmus between one and the other grows here! Provided that this chiasmus is supportable, or supported, in the best case this couple will succeed in their marriage, a man making of his wife the true choice of the bond that he has been able to tie and the reciprocal functioning for the woman; we will have this perfect couple since each one lives in the conviction of being with the true partner, that they are really a blessed couple. They will inevitably become engaged in a relation of a paranoid style. Since paranoia, is nothing other than this sort of conviction, of assurance of being face to face with the true object, not another, not a sham, the true one!

You seem to be tolerating very well what I am telling you and I must say that I was very surprised that that evening, things went very well! They were a less well informed audience than you, less used to these fancies which moreover are only timidly taking up what Lacan teaches. I do not know whether they were dumbfounded, terrorised, depressed, I know nothing about it but in any case, there was not what I was hoping for, a well founded objection to this demonstration.

Between two seminars, I sometimes have a certain number of activities that distract me a little bit, but I believe that I manage nevertheless to bring

them together around what is not, I hope, a fixed point. Among them, another meeting occurred, a meeting around the question of trauma, of which you have a sample in the journal, which I saw in some of your hands, that we have just published with a certain number of colleagues and friends.

It is a question that ought to haunt us. The least that can be said is that here in an exemplary fashion is a type of pathology that is outstanding in its frequency, the richness of its clinical expression, by the fact that Freud encountered it from the start of his journey. It is amusing, he encountered from the start the question of cocaine, — drug addiction — and the question of trauma; these were the two fairies that came to surround the cradle of psychoanalysis. And he encountered it right through his development, which terminates with that of the death drive. And we for our part remain still just as embarrassed and encumbered by this difficult question, which is frequent in our clinical practice. Extremely frequent because it is not an exaggeration to note that everyone, however molly-coddled, however protected, however cuddled he may have been, experiences himself as marked by a trauma. I am saying "everyone", here again the universal arises, in the measure that you will find no biography — nor novel of course — which is not organised around trauma. This shows the faculty that the subject has of making his ex-sistence go back, since it is there that he takes up his place as subject, to what is supposed to have been not the hopefully joyous frolics of a couple in a bed, but the shock he received which henceforth made of him the outstandingly lonely person that we know. Is that not so? This is obviously the secret wound with which everyone organises his fixed point. There is nothing like a badly healed or even completely unhealed wound to constitute a mooring point! It is an absolute dream, ideal, to constitute for a subject the locus that he can never separate himself from, even by psychoanalytic treatment, because here, what is at stake is indeed the real.

I am passing over — those of you who are interested in it, can read the *Journal* — the valorising in our culture of those who are marked by a wound, by the wound of a trauma. Until 1989, we were dealing with the subject of history, whose outstanding representative was the proletariat and now that this history has collapsed — I am not saying that it is not credible, I am saying that it is no longer of any interest, that it does not function any longer as history — we are no longer dealing with the subject of history but with that of the accident. This is the new subject that people want to promote, the new universal subject just like formerly that of history. We will recognise ourselves, all of us, by the fact that we have all been marked by an accident. For the first time, this theme is tackled in this *Journal* with a

little bit of seriousness. Even though, I also said, without humour, or very little humour. Because it is a subject that is absolutely resistant to humour. Try being humorous about a trauma; people will really say that it is in very bad taste. A subject that forbids humour is a subject that should immediately make you prick up your ears. Immediately! And it should make you say that there is in the approach to the subject something which specifies it in a very particular fashion and which deserves a particular attention. Not at all in order to be humorous at all costs about what cannot tolerate it. The style of *Hara-Kiri* or *Charlie-hebdo* is not necessarily the cleverest way to tackle these questions. But from the moment that a domain excludes humour, the object treated there puts you in a position that you have first of all to analyse.

On this, I would like, because this is an informal gathering — I did not want to write it in the journal — to make a remark, still on the question of trauma, which appears to me to be still more interesting than the others. What I am going to propose to you really gives a definition of it. The trauma is what comes to mark the loss of an object but without it being ever possible to mourn it. Which brings about a repetition-neurosis. Why are we not able to mourn this object? There was, in the room where I was making this remark, a question, obviously from a psychiatrist, a question that appeared to me to be really relevant: "How do you relate trauma to the spectacle of the maternal body?" Why is this a good question? Because it introduces what we can in a very precise fashion define by trauma. Trauma is the shock (*coup*) experienced by a speaking being — you must not say a subject — because of his relation to the big Other, in the measure that this shock did not give him access to virility, namely, was not the shock that could organise the definitive loss of an object, a loss in that case that is extremely fortunate because it gives access to sexual enjoyment.

Now you see the way one comes back to what I was evoking at the start. If from the fact of being a speaking being, you experience this shock, obviously, but that you find yourself in the position of this not-all, namely, in a position in which you may think that this object has not been perfectly settled — that is why you get into activities of cleaning, of washing, even hypochondriacal preoccupations — and it was all the less so that the chap's look seems to be situating it in you, well then, you can in that case interpret this event no longer as a sign of a choice — I am saying that provisionally because it is going to be corrected very quickly — but as the sign of an injustice, namely, of the infirmity which comes in a way to mark the activity and the body and therefore engages at the same time, it has to be said, in this mourning which cannot happen because the sacrifice did not

open the way, directly, to sexual enjoyment. In every circumstance, including the collective one where you have this phenomenon, either collective mourning or the murder of a collectivity where this type of murder was of no use for the sexual enjoyment of the descendants, you are dealing in the first place with a mourning that cannot happen, which cannot come to an end, and a trauma which is incurable. And this is all the more annoying in my eyes because the trauma as such only delivers access to death as enjoyment. As a horizon of enjoyment trauma has nothing other than the quest for a repetition that, for its part, will be definitive, namely, will be effectively fatal for good and all, even if it is only finally to mourn oneself.

These remarks are all deduced because I am making no effort, I am letting myself be guided, I am letting myself be carried by the Lacanian current, the current of Lacan's teaching, and what I am telling you about this is only a manifestation of this flux. There is no fixed point — I evoked Heraclitus at the beginning. What I am bringing you is nothing other than the type of reasoning that is imposed by our practice and the reference points which are ours, namely, the teaching of Lacan. On every occasion I am moved to see the degree to which this teaching allows us, without for all that our becoming sods, our tipping over into some certainty, some absolute knowledge, some fixed point to respond to these questions which are extremely topical.

I am sure I told you — I like to tell it — that *Médecins du monde* produce an excellent review, *Ingérences*, and the people who animate what is called an NGO and who are no idiots question themselves about what they are doing. Obviously, they act before knowing, but it is true that there are emergencies and that it is perhaps better in these cases to act without knowing too much. If you cast an eye on their review *Ingérences* [meddling], the name of which tells you what it means, you will note that the people responsible for this movement — one of them has even developed this idea of the "duty to meddle", which goes very far — ask themselves what they are doing and what their position finally is; if their position there is a valid one. The natural propensity we are given by our religion goes in this direction since there is, specifically thanks to the Christian religion, a promotion of the excluded, all the humble, the little ones, children, women, the sick, slaves. These are the ones who, by a curious reversal, become the people preferred by God, while the rich man is there with his needle, he is trying to get through its eye! It would be also worth our while to question ourselves about this promotion, and I am coming back here to what marked the beginning of this evening, it is not a matter for us of saying that one side is better than the other, or supports true divine love and that it is in so far

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as one is supposed to be marked by a trauma, in so far as one is supposed to be excluded, that at the same time, one is assured of the love of God. Even if it is one of the frequent mechanisms of our subjective spontaneity.

You must not believe that I have in any way whatsoever left President Schreber. Because you are going to see how all of this, everything that I am introducing here for you is in fact only a lesson that can be learned from President Schreber. And I would again invite you to read with the closest attention Chapter I, not the introduction, Chapter I, to read it very attentively. We will see in it a remarkable situating of what is very precisely our problem, what Schreber calls Blessedness, *Seligkeit*, Blessedness, the soul's happiness. What is Blessedness? It is to be able to keep oneself close to God, close to Him, at a variable distance, but the closer one is to him, the happier one is. If you are at a distance, it is because you are a devil. There exist devils of different categories, of different sizes, of different blackness. But "don't believe the gossips!" says Schreber, these devils are also at God's service.

The ideal then is to stay as close as possible to God, it is to dwell in his *forecourts*, because obviously God is always further away and all that you can gain access to are the forecourts. It is already not bad, to be sheltered in the forecourt. To be there, dead next to Him. It is the condition, moreover, of staying close to him, a condition then for experiencing blessedness, *Seligkeit*, which consists in being caught up in the fundamental tongue, the *Grundsprache*, namely, in His very tongue. God speaks here, you yourself are dead, you have nothing to say, and there finally you can hear. He speaks and His word at the same time makes the world; at the same time as He speaks, before our marvelling eyes — that is his description, I am not the one who said that psychosis was marvellous — in accordance with His words the world is made, it is woven with all the images that His radiating power has projected into space.

I asked you the last time the difference between the neurotic and the psychotic and I can no longer remember my exact formulation, because since then time has passed and I did not have the patience to re-read what I said.

/ . *Pasmantier-Sebban* - The reasoning was the same but the phenomena were different.

Ch. Melman - ... as the psychotic? Good!

If one is neurotic, what happens? We experience the Other as being the fundamental Mute, the great Mute. He manifests himself, eventually, and the signs he makes are inscribed on the body of the hysteric. But the hysteric, when she has these signs is mute. It is not for nothing that women are

so easily caught up by this symptom. Because the muteness of the speaking being is the only way of authorising the big Other, not to speak, he is mute, but to send signs. So then obviously, Freud's big trick is to notice that these signs are signifying. This is the revolution of which we are still sick. But in any case, the big Other, for the neurotic, is mute. He is mute, this is the big emphasis, because the subject speaks, and once he speaks and speaks *qua* neurotic, not *qua* psychotic, I will develop this point which appears important to me, the big Other is sent back to his muteness. As if the One who could have spoken in the Other, spoken to us, was dead. The very fact that I speak, is equivalent to the murder in the big Other of the One that, perhaps if I had kept quiet or perhaps if, like Schreber, I had died, I could have finally heard and lived in what he calls blessedness, a feeling which in psychiatry is called elation. Elation is nothing other than the feeling a subject may have of speaking exactly instead of and in the place where there could have spoken the One who in the big Other remains mute, as if he had the message directly communicated, not the inverted message but the direct message.

In other words, I am supposing that prophesy ought, should procure such a state in the one who engages in it, and perhaps the success encountered by the prophets, those that are called gurus, the leaders of sects, is to give in a way this promise to those who hear them that they too could realise this feat of strength, this impossible, undoable, unplayable conciliation this Mute present in the Other speaking through the intermediary of their mouth. And then neither one nor the other would have any need to die, because this always seems to be done at the cost of one or the other. If I want to speak it is He who dies; if He speaks, it is my death that is required. Hence the happy solution proposed by the prophet. One can understand that effectively a feeling of blessedness can come to penetrate the one who lives out this crazy experience of the impossible reconciliation of the subject and of the Mute who is there present in the Other and whose murder is the price paid by my ex-sistence.

Well then, imagine that with respect to the problems of teaching, we are always in a position as stupid as that. In other words, I must acquire a certain amount of facts (*connaissances*), which are then automatically put in the place where knowledge (*savoir*) is supposed to function, at the locus of the Other. I must bring these facts to life by making them understood and radically eclipsing myself as subject. In this way one arrives at the paradox that this teaching that I have articulated would have no other practical consequence for me as subject than the fact of having articulated it. This was from very early on one of the problems of the Fathers of the Church.

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One could perfectly well pay homage to God by a certain number of articulations which otherwise left the subject in absolute peace at his own little affairs. Hence this sort of divorce between the sum of facts built up into knowledge, and then the subject.

So then how is the subject going to get on in life? He makes use obviously like everyone else of his unconscious, namely, of a knowledge that has no relation with facts, since it is precisely the knowledge that he does not know. On the one hand he is very able, he has a lot of facts, he is a learned person and otherwise, as regards life, for ordinary things, he makes do with his unconscious, and there you are! This is why when people get together to exchange facts, to give an account of them and to highlight them in the concert expected by the aforesaid facts, everyone will agree that each one should have his own piece of fact, more or less perfected, it does not matter! In any case the will, the intention is there. And as regards practical activity, that is another affair!

In other words, the subject plays dead in order to reproduce perfectly the totality of his facts and then when he takes up his existence again, he acts as if he knew nothing in practice. I assure you that this type of dilemma, either He speaks and He knows, or indeed it is me, me *qua* subject, you will encounter it as organising crises in all the psychoanalytic societies between, on the one hand, the dogmatism of facts and, on the other hand, the necessity of originality, of inventiveness, of creativity, a properly Schreberian type of conflict, and it is one of the reasons why I am so happy... Because I have to tell you that reading Schreber puts me into a state of elation, it is my own elation. Moreover from time to time, I put a brake on myself, I ask myself where this business is going to lead me to. And this has been going on for a long time. Because I began in 1963, more than 30 years ago, in the psychoanalytic *milieu* with Schreber.

Well then, our problematic, the problematic of psychoanalytic societies around the question of teaching and of the relation of the subject with what one can call dogmatism or authority is exactly the same as the Schreberian problematic. While it is perhaps possible to bring to this question the little necessary clarifications to give us a little more peace with respect to this divorce and to allow us to better articulate facts and knowledge. It is then on this that, for my part, I will continue next week.

Have you any remarks? Alain?

A *Dufour*- Yes it's about the evening that you alluded to, I was asking myself a question; I needed a while to formalise it because I have a little

bit the *esprit de l'escalier*, and you alluded to it again this evening. Xavier Emmanuelli brought up the condition of the excluded and the way in which these excluded people accommodated themselves to their trauma; in fact, Xavier Emmanuelli, alluded to it in a rather crude manner, I am saying it for those who were not there, their bodily wounds, their state of physical decay. I asked myself whether this way of relating to wounds, to traumas, did not testify in them to an impossibility of putting their trauma into a story. Namely, that they had no other way out than to locate in the present something inscribed on their bodies, something which at the same time, if I follow you, would not be capable of taking the allure, in any case "the allures", no, the signifying character of stigmata in the hysteric.

Ch. Melman - So then, since above all one must not find any humour in this question, I am going to find some. You are dealing with a misfortune. What is the only thing that he has?

Y - His misfortune.

Ch. Melman - And you want to deprive him of it! Listen, really

A Dufour - It is cruel!

Ch. Melman - I am not the one who made you say that. The worst thing is that it is true. Take away his misfortune from him and ask yourself then.... On the other hand these famous excluded are only such because people organise specialised places to receive them, because the usual places, the hospitals, have become completely crazy. The hospitals are no longer doing their work. So then they have become effectively excluded. That's all. It is the way in which we manage and in which we think about the hospital, which was never in its tradition. The tradition of the hospital, which at the start was religious, was to ensure that the excluded, the person who did not have a place, who was hungry, who had no bed, should have a place where he was taken in with nothing being demanded of him in exchange and where he was given what was necessary to survive. Good! Our hospitals have become *Centres*, I no longer know how, and they have left that behind them. So then it is now necessary to create NGO's; we no longer create hospitals but NGO's to look after them.

But putting that into a historical context? I had the opportunity of meeting a certain number of them, precisely when they came to the hospital and I was able to speak with them and have a conversation with them, because I was interested to know who were these (homeless) S.D.E, how it happened, how they saw their future. I assure you that they were quite capable of situating their adventure in a history. There was no amnesia, no refusal, they all had their history. But they did not make of it, there you are right,

they did not make of it the object of a delightful investment. They were not particularly demanding, they had a history, that's all! This history did not make them hysterical.

A Guy - But your remarks did not centre on that; your proposition was to oppose memory and history, namely, to say, that seemed to me to be both more enigmatic, and at the same time on the part of a psychoanalyst more provocative and therefore more interesting, because in some places it was a little bit like the murder of psychoanalysis. What you were doing, was opposing the subject of trauma to the subject of history, by saying that in turning around trauma, one had strictly speaking no chance of getting out of it except by making it perpetual and reinforcing it, while in solutions that we can say are more collective, in the more conceptual working over of history that you proposed there was perhaps another possible exit to envisage not just a different ideology to the one supported today in the discourse of exclusion, but to also envisage in a way, perhaps, to rethink this question of exclusion differently. And for me what appeared all the same to be important was this opposition that you drew between the subject of trauma, referred therefore to childhood in your text in the *Journal de Psychiatrie*, and then this subject of history. What I am asking myself, is what a psychoanalyst like you calls a subject of history?

Ch. Melman - Yes. Your remark gives me the opportunity of bringing to this a clarification that is obviously necessary. The subject of history, is this promotion brought about by Hegel which made of the subject of history not simply the force, the support of a blind force led to make the aforesaid history progress, and this towards a happy ending, but this subject of history, taken up by Marx from Hegel, was found by him to be more precisely supported by a social figure — it is not very nice, "social figure" — by the members of social stratum, the proletarians, in so far as they became emblematic of the human condition. In other words, the suffering of the proletarians, the exploitation to which they were subjected and at the same time their organised revolt — their organised revolt being the way of treating this suffering and this injustice that they were the object of — came to put in place, in our way of thinking, a subject of history. Not the subject of a family, not the member of a family or of a nation, not a supporter of a religion, not someone who is distinguished by his sex. It was not the battle of the sexes...

A Guy - It is a symbolic representation.

Ch. Melman - Emblematic. I would not say that it was symbolic but emblematic of the human condition. The proletarian became the representative of the universal condition. That is how there was a subject of histo-

ry, who disappeared with the collapse of the countries organised upon the consequences — there are consequences to advancing such propositions — that they were led to draw from these postulates. So then when I for my part, oppose memory and history, it is not to revive the subject of history. I am simply saying that memory remains blind in the measure that it is a singular memory. *Qua* memory, it is incapable of rising to the general conditions of the trauma as long as it is attached to the singularity of the trauma in question, to its exclusive, unique, exceptional character. It celebrates therefore a very singular cult. Trauma is at the origin of an individual religion and an existence will pass in general in celebration of this cult and in the always unresolved attempt to conquer it, to overcome it, while history is able to undo all these singularities and tackle the question of the general conditions of the trauma.

In this history, psychoanalysis, far from being abolished, has on the contrary a place, an outstanding role to play. Since in a historic approach, it has its word to say about the general conditions of trauma. What I was saying earlier concerned only that; beyond the always private character of trauma, there are to be seen these general, I did not say universal, laws. Which is the only way to put a term to what? To repetition, to the taste for trauma and then obviously to a transmission which takes place, which is always of the order of revenge since the following generation always has to avenge the traumas of the preceding one.

C. Veken - But in that case, the history that you are talking about here with respect to trauma, is not at all the same history as when one speaks about history and structure. It is not historicisation, it is the rational dimension of...

Ch. Melman - No, it is not the same, it was not in the sense, effectively, of the opposition — I do not know whether it is still used — between history and structure. But in any case history has so much material at its disposal that a historian, I believe, in the style proper to him might be in a position to draw up a table of its general conditions, of what is necessary for a people to be sustained by and maybe die of this trauma which is transmitted in its womb.

C. Veken - But it is all the same a history that has rational and scientific pretensions.

Ch. Melman - Of course! Naturally! It is not an interpretation of history. But it would be enough for a historian to have the courage to ask what are the general conditions for a conflict to take place between nationalisms. He studies a certain number of cases, he puts them through the computer obviously, he turns the handle, and then when he gets to the end, if what he

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has put into the machine is honest, he already has results that would be worthy of interest.

/. *Pasmantier-Sebban* — I would like to come back to Schreber. It seems to me that in the first chapter, Schreber makes a remark by appealing to the poet, but without developing it too much. And I was asking myself what he expected from the teaching, or the saying from the words of the poet.

Ch. Melman - You are posing a question there at the limit of what can be posed. But nevertheless....

/. *Pasmantier-Sebban* - It is Schreber's.

Ch. Melman - No, he does not pose that question.

/. *Pasmantier-Sebban* - Ah yes, yes! He appeals to the poets. He did not pose it but he appeals to the poet.

Ch. Melman - He makes an appeal, but why would he not make an appeal? I am sending the question back to you. One is *always* right to make an appeal to the poet. But even though your question appears to me to be *at the limit*, I promise you it will be dealt with. And for that, I will propose an exercise for you: that each one of you try to construct a little poem. This would be excellent in every respect. Even if the poem is bad, that is not important. But make the attempt.

C. Hopen - On what theme?

Ch. Melman - On... *that She loves you*. Whatever you like.

Good, until next week!

Lecture IV

17 November 1994

I pointed out to you the last time that trauma was linked to the relation to the big Other, a testing that has to do with castration, while its outcome nevertheless left the one who had submitted to it without having at his disposition the organ allowing, in a way, the accomplishment, the realisation of phallic enjoyment. In other words, a test, a shock received from the relation to the big Other, without for all that there coming to testify the participation in a virility demonstrating in a way the validity, the timeliness and the quality of the aforesaid shock. So then, pure trauma. The problem nevertheless remains of knowing why, in this case, the relation to the trauma and the taste for remembering it, the place that it takes in our subjective organisation, the type of filiation that it inaugurates, are so widespread, including among those who find themselves on the male side — and for whom one might think, that at the same time, the trauma had lost this attraction for them. The following response confirms these hypotheses that I am proposing to you; what every speaking being receives from this shock that is linked to the encounter with the signifier Other is in the best of cases an index of virility, but it is a borrowed virility that is never satisfying. There is therefore always this remainder, this residue linked to the desertion of enjoyment, this remainder that means that for everyone, male and female, there is offered this interpretation of a subjective genesis linked to a trauma. This no doubt is what is able to account, as I was saying above, for the place that this may take in our psychic lives.

Before continuing directly, I would like to draw your attention to other points that are so many sideways approaches to this year's subject. One of them is the following: in the field of psychoanalysis, on the side of the psychoanalyst, a *big noise* (*la grosse voix*, v.o.Lx.) can make himself heard? It is interesting to note that a *big noise* is in general seen as a bad thing; in this case

one scarcely hears what he is saying, but one hears essentially the fact that he was a *big noise*. In any case it is clear that in our current domain there is a repugnance with respect to anything that is a *big noise*, it is a feature that is very spontaneously and very commonly denounced as being of the order of exaggeration, of excess, of what is not done. You must not pretend to be a *big noise*. And this, obviously, much more in the field of psychoanalysis. I remind those of you who were there that Lacan certainly inaugurated something in this domain, because on occasion he acted the *big noise* — this did not necessarily mean that he shouted, but there were times also that he did shout — and it was very badly received, it was even taken as a feature that, at the same time, made him go beyond the bounds of his role as psychoanalyst. Psychoanalytic intervention, it seems, cannot be supported by a *big noise*.

Freud was also reproached with this, even though we have scarcely any recordings, but in any case we may suppose that the authoritarianism attributed to him, and that people talk about in his regard, had a relation also with the effects of a *big noise*. So then what do you for your part think? Are you for it or are you against it? Do you think that this has a place in the field of psychoanalysis? Yes? You can shout? A psychoanalyst can shout?

The audience - Yes it is even salutary!

Ch. Melman - It is even salutary

The audience - Salutary for whom?

Ch. Melman - Salutary for whom? In other words you think that it is good for the psychoanalyst. That, after all, is not nothing.

It is a problem that you find in a different way in religious language, is the priest a *big noise*? [*There is a hubbub in the audience*] Of course! Your own priests! [*Laughter*]. Because there is precisely in this respect a big difference between a God of anger, whose role as a *big noise* is undoubtedly an attribute at the same time, and then a God of love that in this case one supposes... anyway, it is hard to imagine that love is expressed by shouting!

The audience - The sermon on the mount!

Ch. Melman - The sermon on the mount, yes. Anyway in any case...

Ch. Lacote - Bossuet, all the same...

Ch. Melman - So then Bossuet, he was a *big noise*? No, not all that much.

Ch. Lacote - All the sermons about hell!

Ch. Melman - All the sermons, yes, but he was not a *big noise*.

The audience - Daddy bear in *Goldilocks*!

Ch. Melman - Daddy bear in *Goldilocks*.

The audience - In Zen!

Ch. Melman - In Zen, yes.

A few weeks ago I found myself at a meeting of *orthodox* psychoanalysts, another branch of religion, and on the platform I played a little, not a lot, but a little the *big noise*. I preached a little like a *big noise*, and there was an immediate explosion, this is not a suitable tone for a psychoanalyst. Perhaps a psychoanalyst would be better situated as a sigh [*Uughter*]. I am happy to see that we are having fun with this, because it is strange to note that this forms a kind of symptom in our milieu, and that we are no clearer about it. After all, I was speaking to you about trauma a little while ago, but the *big noise* is obviously one of the representations, one of the modalities of expression of what can be traumatising in the big Other; and so this type of question will enlighten us about other points concerning the technique of the psychoanalyst, will gain ground on other points that are to be clarified.

In the series of these questions, there is one that concerns what we are doing here together and, in particular, what is a teaching of psychoanalysis, a question that we ought to debate in our *Association*. How is a teaching psychoanalytic? There is first of all something that one can easily put aside. Obviously there is a certain number of facts (*connaissances*) that are necessary for psychoanalysts; the confidence that they have in their unconscious is sometimes mistaken by the lack of facts that they may have to give a more adequate expression to this relation to the unconscious. So then it is clear that there are a certain number of facts that are indispensable for them and in particular, of course, something that we neglect in our own group, namely, to imagine it is normal that everyone has at least read attentively the works we refer to and that each one of us may have a very intimate, a very familiar access to the works of Freud and the works of Lacan. It is the least that one should hope for! The minimum, because there are all the interconnected fields.

In the course of this study day, we will see the problem of access, in order to make easier the relation to the works of Freud and of Lacan. Freud in particular who, in our groups, is too easily set aside, to the point that there is a Lacanian group that wants to cut him off radically, to put him aside as an author who has been overtaken, or from another era, an author who has been overtaken as regards his capacity to introduce us into the analytic field. But that is not all because the university may perfectly well be charged with this task, and this is even what is expected of it. The most reasonable thing, the most sensible thing, is to expect the university to transmit facts, and to transmit as faithfully, scrupulously, exactly as possible. That is its task. It is a university task in this case to transmit facts just as much from the field of psychoanalysis as from the field of history, or physics. It is a matter of transmitting facts.

But this is not what defines a teaching of psychoanalysis. So then we, what can we say about it, what is a teaching of psychoanalysis? Well then, I will provisionally propose to you that it is first of all to teach people to listen, and then to teach them to read, that is not at all the same thing. Teach them to listen to what? Let us not launch ourselves into generalities, to listen to the unconscious, the desire, etc. In my eyes at the moment, I would say that a teaching of psychoanalysis, is something that ought to teach us to listen to *who* is speaking; *who* is in the process of speaking. You know that in a speaking being, at different moments, different subjects take the floor. Lacan called that "the inmixing of subjects", it is in the analysis of *the dream of Irma's injection*. It is up to us then to teach this type of listening that would allow us to locate at one or other moment *who* is speaking and *who* is being addressed.

Can that be taught? Well then, this is taught to such an extent that when you come to follow lectures, presentations, etc, it is in general the position into which you put yourself, namely, you understand very well *who* is speaking and to *whom* what is said is addressed. The last time I amused myself by drawing with you this distinction between the imbecile and the sod (*le con*). One of you very correctly recalled the fact that, to find the difference, one could rely on etymology and in particular that of *imbecile*. He is quite right and I myself could have had greater confidence in etymology, undoubtedly, since imbecile, as it was said, is the one who does not have a stick. And one sees immediately the type of person that this represents, namely, the one who, effectively, has not yet understood that it is phallic enjoyment that directs things, and that was eventually to be heard in what is said. And the sod? Here again etymology is not lacking, it does not fail to inform us since the sod, since the time of Latin the word had really traversed the years without budging, it is still just as active; the sod is on the contrary the one who believes that phallic enjoyment is Everything.

So then, between on the one hand the one who does not have a stick, and on the other hand the one who believes that phallic enjoyment is Everything, you see effectively how that holds together. And you hear it when you lend your ears to presentations. That means that to learn to listen, is not at all the same thing as learning to read. It is really a pity to note that we do not know how to read. And I am always hoping that our summer seminars will finally help us to learn how to read, to read a text, how a text is to be read.

Why is it not the same thing? Well then, in reading it is no longer a matter of hearing who is speaking, it is a matter quite the contrary of mapping out the type of signifying chain through which the subject is eclipsed. It is

therefore no longer the stating subject that is in question in writing, but much rather what creates the division in a given subject. What cannot be said — it is Lacan who precisely teaches us this — can nevertheless be written. I will give you a simple illustration of it. I cannot say the phantasy, since if I were to say it, I would have disappeared as a stating subject, so I would pass out. And that is no doubt why the avowal of a phantasy is always so delicate. But the formula of the phantasy, and again it is Lacan who shows it to us, can be perfectly well written, I can write it. Big O I cannot state it, but on the other hand, I can very easily write it.

Writing is the putting in place, the organisation of the chain through which precisely the subject finds himself divided, eclipsed; and that is why moreover speech and writing in general do not benefit from the same investment depending on the neurosis, because it is clear that hysteria will be situated on the side of speech, of the voice, on the side of what makes the stating subject vibrate, and what propels him to the front of the stage; while the obsessional will align himself with delight on the side of writing. I recalled for you why an obsessional does not speak but always writes, even when he is speaking, it is writing.

So then, what is meant by learning to read? Well then, that means, undoubtedly, to try to map out in a text the caesuras that are the index, at first of the eclipsing of the subject. And there again, since the subject is not univocal these caesuras can perfectly well be mobile within the same written text, they are never definitive. This is the understanding of this first learned mode of reading that is represented by the cabbala. People took up this unpunctuated text, and then they went about putting in the caesuras, eventually letter after letter, and in that way obviously changing the whole sense of what was supposedly being put forward, by a *big noise*; and then, by playing with displacements of the letter inside the phoneme or the word to recall all the vertical chains that were suspended on, associated with the horizontal arrangement. In other words, by striving to re-establish the stuff of what otherwise only appears to be linear, all the adjoining chains. It is obvious that, as they say, it is the work of a Benedictine. But precisely the Benedictines also devoted themselves to it. Reading led also, of course, to a resurrection of what was formerly philology, namely, the history of words, their origin, and also this perfectly hazardous, perfectly arbitrary poetic interpretation that considers that the assonances of a signifier, of a word, or of a phoneme, are also included in the choice that presided at the determination of the aforesaid phoneme. So there is also therefore to be risked a poetic reading, that appears to be highly subjective, that appears completely arbitrary, even mad, while it would be enough no doubt to prolong the

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reading a little — as in the analysis of a dream — to notice that the repetition of a theme or the emergence of a new related word shows that the initial arbitrary association was the correct one. I will give you an example of it right away. There was the *Ecole Freudienne de Paris*, *scoU*. So then you look up *scoU*, in a Latin dictionary, up to now it is not too difficult; what is the word just above *scola*? Go on! Go on! A little bit of inventiveness! A little bit of daring!

The audience - Detention (La colle)}

Ch. Melman - Detention? No, it is not detention! The word just above it in a Latin dictionary, huh? It is no longer s.c.o...., it is no longer the O., (*the audience makes different inaudible suggestions*).

Ch. Melman - Scala! Listen you're having me on! Sci! So then? Sci!

Mr. X-Scilicet

Ch. Melman - There you are! *Scilicet*, that is the word that you find just above. And you see in any case how our little master Lacan, how he worked and how he offered to his pupils determinations that effectively..., *Scilicet*, there you are!

Learning to read a text has therefore at first nothing to do with learning to listen, and it implies a discipline — that is not just one, moreover, you will see that there are several stages — a discipline that is at once rigorous and at the same time hazardous, namely, poetic. Why poetic? Why, because poetry has already presided over the writing of the text.

When you analyse, or when you try, as those who have given themselves to this have done, a poem by Mallarmé, the associations that they may make about it, in the best of cases, were effectively included, they were enfolded in the Mallarmean writing itself, that is certain. It happens that Lacan said, for example, about someone: "That one knows how to read me". But since you, you for your part have an ear, you have very well understood that, at the same time, that meant that he did not know how to hear him! Because it is not at all the same thing to know how to read and to know how to hear. If you cast an eye on this little volume that is called *Television*, in which you will notice the way in which it was treated, namely, by an attempt at a rigorous mathematisation, put in the margin — there are kinds of fly dirt there in the margin that represent an attempt to give the logical writing of Lacan's different formulations — this text is very funny. Why is it funny? Because it is surprising that Lacan in the last resort had spoken! If it was enough to have a blank page with, in the margin, little logical writings, it is hard to see why a word that is always the source of

confusion as we know, was necessary. He only had to shut up! But the best thing, is that this operation of logic, in this attempt to give a logical writing to all the inflections of Lacanian thinking, is obviously a way to make him shut up, to eclipse him, to chase him out of his own speech, to eliminate him from his own word as a stating subject. And I always find it funny that we remain so shy before the analysis of these phenomena.

So then, let us come back, or let us use these remarks in order to take up again what concerns us in an outstanding way in these first three chapters of Schreber that I still have not had the resolve to leave, to abandon, since they are so important for us. I am going to sketch out very rapidly the picture that strikes me, and then tell you how they concern us, and why we are mad like Schreber, that we do not do any better than him, and I am going to show it to you. Schreber tells us that there is a very, very fine network, of extraordinary delicacy, of what he calls "the nerves of the body", in which you will have no trouble seeing, and without arbitrariness, the network of signifiers. No trouble. I do not need to prove this here, but if it were necessary, it would be quite easy. And then the beginning recalls that of all works of psychology, Freud's *Project*, for example. Well then, you read the beginning of Schreber, it begins in the same way, it is just as learned as the other. *"Every single nerve of intellect represents the total mental individuality of a human being"* (45). Now that is remarkable. This fundamentally recalls what I was saying earlier, that you have to hear who is speaking; every signifying chain taken separately represents *"the total mental individuality of a human being"*. You take a signifying chain in someone and it represents the totality of his "mental individuality", it represents his whole subjectivity. It is Schreber who said it: the style, is the subject. So then, it is enough when you have to deal with someone to listen to a fragment and then you know. In the way a fragment of a leaf is enough to tell you what the plant is; well then here it is the same thing, you know what individuality you are dealing with.

So then, who is God in that? Well, God is the network. God is only nerves, He only has nerves, He has no body and *"He is akin therefore to the human soul."* (46). He is akin to the human soul since if God is the signifying network he is the Other. Now it is obvious that God is akin to the human soul since the subject does nothing but take up his remarks, he is caught in the network, that is all we will say for the moment, that the subject is caught up in the network and that each subject obviously feels himself to be divine, feels himself to be consecrated; this is moreover at the foundation of our humanism and of democracy. Democracy has a manifestly religious foundation, which means that one individual is worth ano-

ther, is equal to another because he has a soul, and therefore all the souls are of equal worth.

The first putting in place, is then the signifying network, God, the human soul. In this network, God manifests himself in a quite remarkable fashion and here his place is going to be specified now, because he has just withdrawn to a greater distance from the Earth, what is happening? Well then "*winds or storms arise*" (47), in other words, and we have a right to understand it in this way, this signifying network, in which we can legitimately see the expression of the symbolic — I am sparing you, obviously, the details that justify it — he takes care to tell us that God is always above, that it is only exceptionally that God, that is "the lower divine kingdoms" are manifested in all their splendour in this network. This is described as an absolutely luminous, absolutely overwhelming and extraordinary manifestation, but in normal times God is always beyond this network, of which the planetary system constitutes a number of relays. And the sun constitutes the instrument, the central heating! God is always beyond. But if he withdraws from this beyond, this whole system does not simply begin to tremble and shake, but begins to fold back. This is the place where we can read the fact that if first of all God is the network of the signifier, he localises it more precisely in this locus that is that of the real, namely, always in a beyond inaccessible to the signifying chain, to the signifying network, and that if this real comes in a way to separate itself, to distance itself, the totality of the network finds itself not only vibrating, but also finds itself sucked in by this real that is escaping.

Now, this is the great disturbance that has been established at the present time, and has upset the order of the universe, the fact is that now this anxiety provoking phenomenon of the withdrawal of the signifying network and the unleashing of the wind and a storm, is produced every time he himself makes a pause in his thinking. As soon as he himself stops guaranteeing the deployment of the aforesaid network, and therefore the putting in place of this real at a distance, the phenomenon happens, hence the exhausting and harassing necessity of having to constantly think in order that the world should hold together, in order that the world should not collapse. You have here, right away, the mapping out of the Symbolic network, of the inaccessible Real that is found beyond, and for the dimension of the Imaginary you have the fact that everything that is produced in this way by God is accompanied by the simultaneous creation of "*fleeting-improvised-men*" (49), namely, these creations of the Imaginary, that come to people the environment. You see, in a few pages, a putting into place of our three favourite dimensions, and then also of what, very easily, obviously, without any effort

we say: "There you are! These three dimensions have dissociated, therefore Schreber is mad". This in any case is what we say; we still do not know what we are saying, we are interpreting from the Borromean knot, this is of no importance, but in any case this indeed is how this is presented.

It is immediately more interesting that he tells us again that God must not approach living humanity too closely. Why? Because if he approached — a moment ago it was the problem of his moving further away, now it is that of his closeness, why should he not approach too closely? Well then, if he approached too closely, there might be on the part of the individual such a power of attraction that God would risk finding himself completely absorbed by the individual. Happiness, blessedness, as I told you the last time, is therefore to have died in order to be able to be close to God; in this case, there is no longer a risk of threatening him and one benefits from listening to the famous fundamental tongue, the *Grundsprache*, in that without any effort we see then the Other's tongue, that the subject comes in this way to articulate directly. He speaks the same tongue as God. You see that the dynamism of the operation, this very dangerous dynamism is this power of attraction, because the goal of the operation is that the individuality of each one should be attracted, should be attached to God, should come back to God. But there obviously still persists this risk that the reciprocal is not true, and that therefore we might be led to kill God, to make him disappear by something that might be a word that, in a way, becomes foreign to Him, would do without Him, would become indifferent to Him. In other words, there is here constantly a relation with God that is one of either Him or me. And a responsible creature can do nothing other, obviously, than yield and accept to die so that God may live.

I am skipping over absolutely delightful elements that concern the problem of the preservation or not of the individuality of the soul, once it is reduced to the state of blessedness, namely, that it has come to God. Is it necessary here that the proper name should be preserved, that the soul should preserve its proper name? So there are pages — I hope that you have tasted them, or that you will taste them at your leisure — there are absolutely delightful pages concerning our own questioning of the proper name, and about what we should understand by proper name, whether if effectively a proper name constitutes a singularity, or indeed whether a proper name could be the representative of this famous *little difference*, or indeed whether a proper name is never anything but an accidental name and that one soul, after all, is worth another, is equal to another whatever may be the name that is given it. In other words that the unary trait, is the unary trait, whatever may be the name that is destined to singularise it.

Why am I telling you, I am coming now to this point, that we are — if one gives some attention to this type of dynamic — Schreber's equals? Well then, it is because you hear all around you a sort of claim for the expression by each one of his singularity. In other words, you must not impose on him what he might have to say. His right is to be able to express everything that is unique and exceptional in this singularity. If one treats this singularity by the *big noise*, or by an argumentation that invites him to renounce this singularity in order to consider that he is only one among others, it is denounced as intellectual terrorism. Namely, that we behave in entertaining, like Schreber, this type of relation with the big Other that would have it that it is either Him, namely, this knowledge that is supposed to be inscribed in the Other and that would claim to direct me, or me who is protesting, who rebels, rebellious son, and who eventually comes to suppress, to deny, to marginalise myself, to speak a different tongue than this famous *Grundsprache*, an ungodly language, there you are. I think it's extraordinary that this is the most common problematic that we hear, not alone in the speculations of so called intellectual milieux, namely, the stress put on the fact that it is important that each one above all should be able to give expression to this treasure that inhabits him, that we also encounter it in the field of psychoanalysis itself.

It is here that I come back to the question of teaching. The style of relation, of good or bad relation to be established between the teaching that is uttered, that is given, and then what the subject is going to take up of it, remains extremely unfortunate. In effect, either he takes it up in a direct way and people say, I am passing over the fact that taking things up in a direct mode is psychotic, that he is repeating. He is a parrot, he takes up the masters lesson. Or again he takes it up in an inverse mode and in that case you no longer understand very well, you feel yourself to be a little lost and you think that it is not very faithful, that he did not say it quite like the boss, so it is shady, there is some deviation in it, divergences, etc. Or again he takes it up starting from the split that he takes on *qua* subject because of the fact of his relation to this writing, and in that case he is going to become an opponent of this teaching, he is going to say no. He is going to constitute his life on this no to the aforesaid teaching.

A few days ago I received a letter from an old member of the *Ecole Freudienne*, who had left it around 1964. He never writes to me, but I received a letter from him because in the *Bulletin de Psychologie* there appeared, it appears, I've been told, accounts of the different groups issuing from the *Ecole Freudienne de Paris* or from the teaching of Lacan, and that in the account referring to the *Association Freudienne*, there is supposed to have

been an unfavourable remark about the group to that this old member belongs. So I received a letter of protest against this unjustified accusation. It is true that it is unjustified because there is no reason, when one is presenting oneself, to kick your pal, it is not necessary, it is not good, that's true. That having been said, I am not the one who wrote the account, but that has no importance; when I read this very long letter from this old member, who is an intelligent and cultivated man, I notice that not only has he constituted himself entirely in this opposition to a teaching that has been given, that he therefore preserves this teaching in himself, in the form of the negation that he brings to it, but what is more that it is a teaching that has completely stopped for him at the date when he separated himself from it. It is an absolutely interminable and uncureable style of transferential attachment. I am speaking about this ex-member, but for others it was exactly the same thing.

This in order to tell you that this dialectic of the relation to the big Other, that today has become persecutory and of the either Him or me type, and that is a specifically psychotic dialectic, that it seems we espouse, that we take up without any difficulty, finding it to be absolutely normal, that this is self-evident, this type of dialectic, we don't even ask ourselves how it has happened that it should be in place. Because after all, and I take up again the problem of the *big noise*, that someone in the Other should want to direct me, so much the better! Since what I may suffer from is rather to have been abandoned; and if there is someone to tell me a little bit the paths to follow, it's an opportunity, it's a luxury. How then does it happen that this simple presentifying should be perceived in a paranoid style and in this dual relation of rivalry and antagonism?

I will put forward right away that this possibility, namely, this hostility, this separation that is sought between the articulation in the big Other and the word emitted by the subject, and enunciating, this type of alternative, of exclusive or — either Him or me — I imagine it as being linked to a topological arrangement that implies, that puts in question a ribbon with two faces and no longer a Moebius strip. So then, either something is spoken on one face and the other is then reduced to silence, to annihilation, or something is spoken on the other face and it is the other one that is reduced to silence. Namely, that what is lacking in this topological disposition, is this little hole that, in the *cross-cap*, recalls the style of interpenetration that precisely organises this bishop's hat and ensures that a cut carried out on this cross-cap will be Moebian, in other words will allow something to be spoken on one face, without for all that in any excluding the other, since it is the same. How does it happen then that we should have a relation in

our cultural climate, with a topological representation that is much more rather of the order of the sphere, because only the sphere can suppose that the cut leaves in place a strip with two faces, and we neglect to this degree the figure of the *cross-cap*, that did not wait for Lacan to be invented since we may suppose that it is found to be at work from the very fact of the structure itself.

Here again I imagine, I am submitting it to your reflection, that it is the promotion of the discourse of science, the promotion of the discourse of science at the locus of the Other, that comes perhaps to cancel out what might be there in terms of a phallic reference and that, at the same time, the subject would find himself effectively confronted with a big Other who is hostile to his singular expression, precisely *qua* singular expression, namely, *qua* the One, that the unary trait comes to be sustained by the phallic agency. I imagine, I am supposing that that is it. In other words, that we are indeed living in what Lacan called social psychosis, it's the term that he uses. And if a final testimony were needed, I would see it in the fact that the objective of science is to supply for the lack proper to desire, to the weakness proper to desire, the dissatisfaction that feeds it, that organises it, the lack that organises it, and substitutes for it a demand that for its part can be perfectly satisfied. I read in this great feature, namely, this putting into circulation of this demand as coming to take precedence in a way over desire, that is precisely sexual, an effect of the success of science. It is obviously striking today — today, it is not very old, it dates from 20 years ago at most — that sexual enjoyment is an enjoyment that no longer serves as a reference for other enjoyments, that it no longer serves as a standard, to express myself in an appropriate way. The standard no longer serves as a standard! And not alone are enjoyments now willingly presented as equal, the scopic drive for example, or indeed the auditory one, but also, the prevalence of enjoyments that are called auto-erotic, that implies precisely a detachment from sexual enjoyment that for its part appeals to the partner.

This is strange, but we are currently organised in a flagrant, public way around the promotion of auto-erotic enjoyments. When the family gathers around the television set in the evening this is no longer the conviviality proper to the family, everyone takes his place alone before the television, even if nuts are passed around. Everyone takes his own ration, his own dose. We won't even talk about the walkman, let us skip over that; jogging, dancing. Everyone looks at himself dancing in the other. One can also read one of the effects of this advance, of this putting forward of the demand, insofar as effectively it does not need a partner, it can do without then the relation to the other; another that then becomes more and more persecuto-

ry. Anyway, it is obviously hostility that today dominates social relations, and no longer attitudes of sympathy or conviviality. Well then I imagine — I am presenting it under the sign, under the seal of what is my imagination — I imagine that this state in that we are, social psychosis as Lacan says, is linked to this promotion of the discourse of science and that this implies that in what concerns us, at least for the analysts, we should try to avoid this type of misunderstanding, this type of error. There were no longer any more than two agencies to encourage phallic jouissance, one still exists moreover, it is the Church, that is what makes it appear reactionary, not up to date, but the Church is nothing other than the desperate defence of phallic enjoyment. It tells you that it is the good one, that it is the only one you should respect, it is sacred and you have no right to play with that. **That** obviously has scarcely any, well that has still some audience, but it is wearisome. And the other agency that for its part no longer exists and that said the same thing, is Lacan. He said exactly the same thing.....

So there we are for this evening, have you any remarks, questions?

/. *Legaut* - In connection with what you were saying about teaching, teaching that would be to study who is speaking and to whom he is addressing himself and then it is supposed to be able to read this point of scansion, this caesura between the two, I was asking myself how do you consider Lacan seminar, is it a spoken text or is it a written text? And I would add also the difficulty of the work of transcription, that are still greater, I would say, for people who were not there to listen to Lacan. What is going to be transcribed? Is it going to be a matter of transcribing what is heard into a formulation in the form of caesuras? In what does the work of transcription consist?

Ch. Melman - Jacqueline, you are very charitable because it is exactly the question that I was hoping for. Why? Because, we have already had perhaps, I don't know, we will have an opportunity to speak about it again, every lecture of Lacan's seminars involved a part that is spoken and a written part that was read. Namely, that there is always, and within each lecture of the seminar these two parts. And he even took the trouble to draw our attention to the fact because at the end of each year he took up again in an article, in a writing, not all the written parts of each seminar but what could be written, of what there was to write from each one of his seminars. That is why it would be a very interesting work to that, as you are going to see, we are going to devote ourselves on the occasion of the spring seminar, this will be, precisely, to carry out a sort of reciprocal reading of the seminar

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and the written version, namely, of the article that Lacan subsequently extracted from it. Everyone can see that it is both the same thing, and that it is not the same thing. Everyone will be sensitive to the difference between speech and writing. But in certain cases, you can very easily pick out within each lecture of the seminar, what was improvised from notes and then what was explicitly read, from a page that was written out.

CPariente - And even when he forgot them, he points out that here today he is improvising.

Ch. Melman - For example. Let us hope that we will end up by being sensitive to what are not just details. For my part I always marvel at the way in that in the field of psychoanalysis things collapse; you lift them up and then pfut... In our thinking there is a force of inertia that is considerable.

Everything that I am in the process of recalling for you and also for me, are things that date from a good number of years and that nevertheless, when we tackle problems like those of teaching for example, continue to remain as if this had never been put forward or formulated. It's extraordinary, namely, how psychoanalysis upsets, but only for a time, except for some chaps or women who are by their nature upset, these continue, but otherwise after a little while things are stitched up, one makes repairs and then everything becomes normal! In other words, one participates in the social psychosis.

Off you go, that is enough for this evening.

Lecture V

8 December 1994

I have some good news.

One of our friends, who lives and works in one of the big cities in the provinces, went into one of the two psychology bookshops in the town to offer them three copies of the *Journal Français de Psychiatrie*. In the provinces... huh! We were warned! The provinces! As if, moreover, Paris was peopled by anything other than provincials. Well then, the person in charge of the section, effectively, took the three journals and told her that he was going to look at them, and after this examination she got a telephone call asking her to send another ten! You see that the provinces...

D. Sainte Fare Garnot - Are less traumatised!

Ch. Melman - Are less traumatised. Anyway, I believe that with these photos¹, in a way that is moreover a little surprising for us, I believe that we have really accomplished a feat. It is rare that one can publish in a journal, elements that verify, in the reader himself, what precisely one is in the process of writing about, it is rare! And moreover, according to others, because obviously I have a certain number of echoes about this, as you can imagine, the *Journal* is meeting with great success because everyone is grabbing it to see the photos. In other words, I have not heard the slightest commentary about the texts because no one gives a damn about them. It is, I believe, really interesting - and surprising. In return, this enlightens us

1 - It concerns the first issue of the *Journal Français de Psychiatrie* on the subject of traumatism and illustrated on each page by photos of women. The intolerable nature of the photos was obviously linked to their neutral aspect, nether erotic or pornographic, in other words, showing the pure difference.

finally, on the function of the psychoanalyst, which is obviously not to furnish, to produce images of this sort, surely not. Except to note that nowadays, no one gives a damn in the last resort about texts, but that an image, once it had been seen — it is strange — cannot be repressed like that. That is what is curious. Fundamentally, one can throw out the texts; the image...

This is an unexpected dimension, an unexpected effect of the image, but in any case, the function of the psychoanalyst is clarified all the same with this feat that we have accomplished and that is, as I must no doubt have told you, but I do not remember too clearly whether it is to you that I was talking about it, that the function of the psychoanalyst is to make ceaselessly vacillate the boundary between the Symbolic and the Real. This does not imply outrageousness, nor obscenity. Moreover, obviously, what these photos are reproached for is that they are not obscene. If they were, they would not pose any problem. But what is intolerable, is that obviously they are not so, I mean that they are not proposed for enjoyment, and it is obviously because of this that they have this traumatic aspect. There are not many analysts who make the boundary between the Symbolic and the Real vacillate, obviously, and to want to touch this boundary means exposing oneself to some drawbacks. It means exposing oneself to return effects that are very spontaneous, very intuitive, in no way dialecticised, but return effects provoked by the sacrilegious character, in the proper sense of the term of the operation. To touch, to mobilise the frontier between Symbolic and Real is at the same time, obviously, to recall us to life. I would like all the same to pose you a question, and I wish in a very sincere fashion that you would help me to resolve it. What we call death, for example we speak about the *dead father*, but what do we understand by that? Is it enough to be alive as an organism in order to be at the same time persuaded that one is not dead? What can give the feeling of life? All the more so because there are a whole series of neurotic formations, or neurotic ruses that consist all the same in making sure, in assuring oneself while one is alive, during the time at least when the organism is living, that in reality it is as if one were dead. The superb neurosis that obsessional neurosis consists all the same, in great part, in trying to pass oneself off as dead, in playing dead, in other words in making sure, not alone that of course, no boundary is crossed - because this is one of the dramas of the obsessional, this fear that this may occur - but that above all nothing should move.

So then I am allowing myself to send the question back to you hoping for a suggestion from you; what gives us the idea that we are alive? Even the fact of reproducing oneself does not give an assurance that one is not simply a machine, having the particularity of reproducing oneself. With the business of clones today, there are perhaps going to be machines that are

going to have the faculty of fabricating clones, or clowns. But for our part, what can give us the idea that we are not, in reality, well and truly dead? In other words, what does life consist of? Would you be kind enough to take me out of my embarrassment and propose an answer to me?

A Dufour - It seems to me, following Freud, that the feeling of being alive, is the perception of pain.

Ch. Melman - That's not bad! As usual I do not know where he wrote it, but it is already undoubtedly something, and effectively one may entertain one's pain in order to have the feeling that one is living, in order to verify that one is living.

Mme X - The fact of being divided.

Ch. Melman - The fact of being divided..., does the fact of being divided suffice nevertheless or does that not expose itself eventually to what one could call a double mortification: mortification on both sides?

Ch. Lacote - To be off balance.

Ch. Melman - To be off balance... You would have to specify what you mean by balance and off balance.

Ch. Lacote - Yes, it means the opposite of a certain wellbeing, the opposite of a homeostasis, there you are! One cannot walk without being off balance.

Ch. Melman - Yes. That is surely a feature of it, but again, is it sufficient
/. *Pasmentier* - Desire.

Ch. Melman - Desire. Desire, that can be, as is generally the case, a desire for death. So then, you will tell me that this does not prevent it testifying to the activity of the living being, yes...

/. *Legaut* - The aptitude for astonishment.

Ch. Melman - The aptitude for astonishment. Yes, in that case there are not that many living beings! That is what we have to conclude..., because there is rather in that case an aptitude for scandal. Where there is a place for astonishment, it is rather a response through scandal, the feeling that it is due to scandal, that what gives rise to astonishment is scandalous because what gives rise to astonishment can only be the Real.

/. *Delorenzi* - For me I have the impression that it is the moment of speech.

Ch. Melman - It is certainly the moment of speech, of course, but that depends also on which one?

/. *Delorenzi* - Absolutely, absolutely.

Ch. Melman - That depends on which one, because speech is all the same also a way of making oneself rigid, into a statue, in general.

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J. Delorenzi - Yes, but the moment of speech at which, precisely, it is not a statue, that is what I meant.

Ch. Melman - Yes.

Mme Y - Perhaps it is the moment when we are surprised in language by our failures, what we are lacking, we would want, we would desire to say something that will not come, or that comes on the contrary in a slip, at that moment, there is a fracture.

Ch. Melman - Yes, these traces are the manifestations of an unconscious desire in any case, and of desire in so far as it escapes us, it is then surely the sign that we are not reduced to being an Ego, one could say that.

But nevertheless, what the processes of the unconscious bear witness to, namely, the bringing into play through the automatism of repetition - the automatism of repetition, namely, the attempt to rediscover the Real always at the same place, because that is what it is in the final resort - is this not finally a dead game? A dead game because even this desire that you recalled earlier as coming to break the carapace of the Ego, is caught up for its part in this mechanism of repetition, namely, an opening up that is always effected along the same paths, as if from then on, there was nothing else to expect than, precisely, the automatism of this operation. Namely, that at the very moment that the subject considers he is most alive, he is only bringing into operation the mortal process of the quest and the rediscovery of the identical.

What Freud isolated as death drive — and that Lacan was determined on attaching, not on separating from Eros, but on the contrary, to make it one of the faces of Eros — is this not again a step that leaves in place this famous off balance, and that means that one may well have taken a step forward, in fact, as in the theatre, one does not budge. This in order to question you again about what is meant by *dead father*, how must the *dead father* be understood? We speak about it easily after Lacan, we make important references to it, what is the *dead father*? So then, to try to answer, we must once again give credence to our President Schreber, when he tells us that "*God is endangered in his own existence by anyone who speaks*", I am shortening the sentence but he says that God feels, God who for Schreber is obviously a living God, and it is perhaps in Schreber that we can learn or verify what we mean by *dead father* or by *living father*. Why does the living God feel himself endangered once the subject speaks? And why does he say: "*Regular contact between God and human souls - therefore those who speak - occurred in the Order of the World only after death*", of these human souls? In other words, is Schreber not

telling us there that the only way to ensure that God survives is that the subject should die?

Perhaps we should take up again, I will do it with you perhaps the next time, an enigmatic chapter of *The subversion of the subject and the dialectic of desire*, in connection with this dream that Lacan takes up often, that of the "dead father who did not know it", and the pain of the son, "he did not know". There is here a very nice passage whose import I believe we can now clarify with the help of this text. So then, why if I speak, should this word — that you were evoking earlier as a manifestation of existence or of life — imply the death of the father? Is it because the introduction into the big Other of a cut, because of the exercise of this word, would succeed in isolating in the big Other, this locus that at that moment would take on the category, the value of the Real, and whose rediscovery I shall be henceforth as subject be led to search for? Except, obviously, by mortifying myself, namely, by articulating nothing other than what allows itself to be supposed from this locus, in other words to renounce enunciating in order to be, as in the graph, where there is this lower circle, only the emitter of a statement. In other words, the respect for the limit between the Real and the Symbolic — and that is why I came to this earlier — and that is why questioning this boundary gives the feeling of sacrilege. Is not the respect for this boundary linked both to the concern not to profane the tomb of the *dead father*, as if in touching this boundary, I had shaken the stones that protect this place? To put in place this locus, is it not, at the same time to destine myself to mortification, in order to celebrate and not upset this place? If what I am telling you is correct, it has to be noted in this connection that those who, well before the psychoanalyst, had for function, I would say are tickled by the idea of fiddling with this boundary between the Symbolic and the Real, are the artists, when they are true artists, namely, not people who are satisfied with showing their talent in reproduction.

You know this discussion in Plato about the one who had the talent to reproduce in such an exact fashion that even the birds were deceived and came to peck at the grapes, I think, that he painted. After all, the question deserves to be posed, in doing this did he not also touch this boundary? We would have to see. To be capable, I would say, precisely much better than Plato with the myth of the cave, to make us understand that we function in a world of representations and that the grapes that we think we are grasping are never more than representations, after all, perhaps this was the intelligence of this painter? In any case, it is surely the function of the artist to touch this boundary, and this moreover is what these photos did.

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So then, is it not also the function of the psychoanalyst, by upsetting precisely our presumptions, upsetting our justifications, upsetting all our justifications, and without for all that proposing other ones, but simply playing at this boundary? This in any case, apparently — that allows him to be distinguished and recognised — is what Lacan did, that earned him, of course, the legitimate reprobation that we know. It is interesting, obviously, to note that after him it did not change very much, it did not budge very much, in other words that the aforesaid operation was not registered. Nevertheless you can go to an exposition that is being held at present at Beaubourg, and that I would recommend to you. It is very correctly called *Hors limites*. It is a very interesting exhibition, even if on the whole it is much more repugnant than our photographs, much more repulsive, but in any case it bears witness in an open way that what I am recalling for you here, is not a private preoccupation, it is not a solitary and therefore at the same time hazardous cogitation, but that it forms part of a much more general reflection on the function of the artist and on the difficulty today of putting this boundary in question. So then, once again, why do we see in such a regular fashion, it is a question that I have often asked you, this relapse, among the analysts themselves, from what they are supposed nevertheless to have experienced during their own treatment. Lacan was astonished at it and asked himself why the end of the treatment was so quickly — because he thought all the same that he had treatments that had concluded — why the end of the treatment was so quickly forgotten and healed, repaired, and why it was thus necessary to put in place a procedure to recall it, to recall its weight, its incidence as truth?

What is it that allows us to say that in the analytic milieu this truth is forgotten? It is very simple; it is not a judgement, simply a vague judgement or appreciation, but once the psychoanalytic milieu is organised by values that are the required values of traditional functioning and this without any distance taken from them, well then! One can say that what is happening there, in this milieu, is that it has quite simply forgotten the teaching of psychoanalysis, that after all one can still teach psychoanalysis, when one has forgotten, or when manifestly, as is clear from its type of functioning, one bears witness to the fact that what is taught, in reality does not matter a damn. What I am saying is extremely clear, it is not allusive, but it is obvious that when, in the milieu of analysts, there reigns what Lacan spoke about, narcissistic competition, ruses, concerns for prestige, wars of competitiveness, concern with appropriation, even if it is only the appropriation of ideas, that in such a milieu obviously never belonged to anyone — Lacan, himself, always said that he was not the proprietor of his own ideas

— well then, it is clear that this type of functioning, in the final resort obviously leads the partners to having one day or other to go to court to obtain what they consider their rights, which is an extraordinary word. This testifies, illustrates that the milieu of psychoanalysts represses or fore-closes the teaching that procures, that gives it, its own practice, it is clear.

So then, the prevalence, the cult of phallic enjoyment — because these big features that I am bringing are nothing other than manifestations of this enjoyment — the cult of phallic enjoyment, exacerbated no doubt by the fact that the bringing to light of another enjoyment was able for a time to disturb psychoanalysts in their formation, I mean the revelation that phallic enjoyment was not everything, and therefore, at the same time, made vacillate this supposedly universal boundary between the Symbolic and the Real, well then! The prevalence of this phallic enjoyment shows in them a concern to respect this automatism of repetition that guides all of us, and therefore the concern to be indeed dead, namely, to never say anything other than what has already been written, by the very fact of the prevalence of this enjoyment. Once this enjoyment is functioning, there is nothing else to say except what is, obviously, already pre-inscribed.

When you attend debates, what are called debates, you are obviously struck by the fact that what is debated there is done so between partners who never do anything but put forward arguments that, in a way, are there for all..., I was going to say for all eternity, in any case arguments that evoke, that give the idea of eternity in any case; hence the importance of conformity, namely, of the respect for this border between the Symbolic and the Real and therefore of this requirement to play dead. In a way, it would be immodest there to show that you were living. If one gives to life this possibility that I recalled earlier, namely, of making this border move, in making this locus move by proposing a different communal grave, namely, a different fashion to go towards one's burial, it is not taken too badly; if you propose another, a better way of dying, that has some success. But if someone proposes simply to you not to be completely dead and to move a little bit, you in return have a right to two things: — on the one hand a scream, and you will see in Schreber when there is produced this miracle of bellowing, namely, the moment when he has the feeling that, from the very fact of this vacillation, of this oscillation, the world withdraws; the deployment of the signifier finds itself all of a sudden, brusquely, a vast network that in an instant finds itself brought back to a unique point and where there no longer remains, with this point, anything but bellowing, screaming, namely, the voice in a way deprived of any possible articulation. There are in Lacan these slightly obscure reflections on

the scream, well then we have here a good evocation of what the scream, namely, truly when there is no longer any possible signifier no longer any possible signifying articulation, in that case all that remains at that moment is the scream; — and then, obviously, a second reaction provoked when you solicit this border, is a blow with a stick, namely, at that moment one must strike, it is an invitation for you to be struck. And I have no doubt, or I know well that these blows will not be lacking for the *Journal* that I evoked for you earlier.

I am underlining in this way the manner effectively that artists today are willing to produce what they call performances. If you have gone to see someone called Beuys, he is a chap who among other things gave performances, but they were solitary performances. There was at one time, it was around 1968 and even a little bit before, there were *happenings*; these were per-

formances in the sense that the collectivity was invited to react, to participate.

I think that we, for our part have done better because we have absolutely not, at the limit we have said nothing, we have contented ourselves with showing images, that I assure you are banal, that they form part of artistic currents, if you show them to photographers or to people engaged in art, these are things that at the limit appear to them almost to enter into a series that they know very well and that, precisely, try to highlight the body thanks to its representation, to assure a representation of what cannot be, namely, the Real; because what is proper to the Real is that, precisely, how are you able to represent it? You are told: "The little Λ -object is not specular" and then the representation... Therefore, precisely, this attempt at using the body to introduce the Real into representation, even to give of it, which is still more refined, an aesthetic figuration, as these photos try. In other words, to try to grasp through the medium of the Imaginary, what escapes the Symbolic, and therefore to bring into play there effectively a different aesthetic. It is extremely easy, it is within the grasp of any amateur, and a very famous American photographer Maple Thorpe, tackles it in an extremely simple way when he photographs a penis close up, well illuminated. Remember the way in which Lacan testifies to you the way in which the operation of the - (p comes to cut out on the image of the body what is involved in the penile zone. From the moment that what is there, in our system of representations, a blank that is cut out, I mean what can no longer make an irruption except from the angle, except *qua* representative, that is a curious word, of the Real, well then it is within reach not simply of perverts, like the photographer that I have just named, but within anyone's reach. And you see how, effectively, the human body lends itself to it in an outstanding way. There is today, for those among you who follow the mat-

ter, *Body Art*, I mean the way in that people try to use the human body to play with this boundary that I am evoking for you.

How does this directly rejoin our study of Schreber? This introduces us without our wishing it, or without our knowing it, to the question of hallucination and this leads us to question ourselves in a way that I hope will be fruitful this year, because I have to say, that for my part, I have for a long time found it a tough nut to crack. I wrote a first article on hallucinations, that appeared in *Scilicet*, I announced a follow-up and I needed a certain time to begin to sketch out this follow-up. Hallucination, in the field of psychiatry, always appeared to me to be a remarkable phenomenon and at the same time, one with a completely mysterious mechanism. Lacan has well said, in his text on Schreber, that in psychosis the signifier is imposed as such in its dimension of voice; in the graph, that we will study again this summer in connection with *Desire and its interpretation*, that we have then put forward for study again, you see mentioned the voice as specifying one of the extremities of these two chains that the word traverses from an X, from a A. Marc Darmon makes very relevant remarks on the fact of why Lacan here wrote A, because as we know Lacan rarely does things for nothing, he leaves them to our sagacity if we have any. So then, why does this introduce us without wishing it, to the question of auditory and visual hallucinations, even though... it is much rarer, or you need particularly intense delusions to observe properly speaking visual hallucinations, it is easier to have false recognition more than properly visual hallucinations. Schreber for his part really went at it, he had visual hallucinations.

So then how are we going to proceed in order to try to advance in this study? There again, I would solicit your remarks and your contributions. Let us start, I would say, from what is easiest, and no less enigmatic, and that I already drew to your attention, the sort of imperative ejaculations that spring up in the psyche of the obsessional, even though at no moment does he speak about hallucinations, I already insisted on this, but he talks about a quasi-hallucinatory form, indeed a frankly hallucinatory one. It is an imperative; for example in the *Ratman* the "now take your razor and cut your throat!", well then it is almost as if he had heard it. And I remind you also of the degree to that in the psychotic himself there is this distinction that the French psychiatrists the Ecole Française de Psychiatrie have highlighted, there are *aperceptives* hallucinations, this was described as such by someone called Petit, if I remember correctly; in other words when the patient tells you that he does not hear with his ears, it is in his head but he does not hear it with his ears, there we have every reason to think that there

is a difference of structure between these hallucinations, these aperceptive auto-hallucinations and then the others, those in that messages are sent to him. Yesterday, I examined here a patient, and when I say examined, it is a big word because he disoriented me so much that, in truth I was not able to examine him, I mean that I did not manage to put him in a frame, because to examine someone you have to begin by getting him into a field of vision, and I did not manage that. I did not manage it for a simple reason, because I did not know whether I should be speaking to him or to her. Officially it was a him, as regards his subjective status it was a her, and the presentation was obviously modified by this; he had a breast, that he was sure was spontaneous and that was, I must say, quite feminine and since he had nevertheless a rather masculine face and a mimic on this masculine face, a mimic that for its part, was feminine and in particular when he cried — I must say that it was particularly feminine when he cried — well then, I did not really manage. I could only conclude finally that he must be — he said "*hermanocycle*" — and effectively I ended up by believing that he was a hermaphrodite and that he had then a congenital sexual anomaly and that his mental state must be the consequence of this hermaphroditism. This proved to be false, I mean that he had male organs, and I allowed myself to be persuaded, I finally believed it, he gave details, some of which were delusional, but you end up by no longer even knowing. After all when he told me that he wanted to show his scars, because he had given birth by Caesarean, I did not want to see the scar, I do not know why, I did not want to see it. Finally, he wanted to exhibit his anatomy before the audience and I did not encourage him to do so, I even prevented him, I do not know why, I liked him better like that perhaps! I do not know. But in any case, he had me! Well, this man presented the fact that he received messages and that he emitted them, I come back then to my hallucinations, and it appears that in the army, because he was in the army, his function was to decode messages in Morse. That too, why had he hallucinations?

Therefore we start all the same from what I recalled about the obsessional. What happens in the obsessional for there to come these imperative quasi-hallucinatory ejaculations, even frankly hallucinatory ones? They testify obviously — I am saying obviously — to that which, and that brings me back to what I am evoking throughout this seminar, this evening, the boundary between the Real and the Symbolic, in the obsessional, is not clear cut. It is not clear cut and, precisely, it does not constitute a boundary, a passage from one to the other, this is what, throughout my seminar on obsessional neurosis, I was trying to establish. Perhaps this precisely is what we owe to religion, namely, to what is supposed to be a symbolisation

of God. Is religion a way of imagining God or of symbolising him? For my part, I would like you to help me to answer that question. And do not forget that to imagine, can also very well be to name, because I am bringing you back here to this distinction that may have astonished us, surprised us a lot when we saw it in Lacan, that there is a symbolic nomination, but that there is also an imaginary nomination. When I say God, and more specifically God the Father, am I symbolising him or am I imagining him? In any case in obsessional neurosis, to stay with that, we can take it as given that the imperative character of what comes from the Other, from the locus of the Other, is linked to the fact that the cut between the Symbolic and the Real is not respected. This no doubt is what Lacan means when he speaks about the foreclosure of castration in the obsessional.

That is why, I already insisted a lot on this, the obsessional has no other means than to keep his distance, in other words to be someone who is very respectful, and that he therefore has this extremely rich symptomatology, for him it always is a matter of staying at a distance, indeed to verify that he has not touched it, because it is evident that here contact is in a way permanently established, because there is no cut, therefore he may have the feeling that he never manages to free himself from contact. Should we see at the same time, in this structural fact, the explanation of why the messages that come from the Other are apt to be precisely invitations, either to a radical cutting, for example the one that I recalled earlier: "Go and take your razor and cut your throat.... Ah no! Not your own throat but that of the old woman!", or indeed a complete breaking through of the limit, that in the present case obviously comes back to the same thing. Hence of course, this character, this equality between prohibition and commandment, of a commandment that is both that of a radical cut and that of a breakthrough of the boundary, and that obviously throws the obsessional into this perplexity that we know.

That, I would say, may surprise us less when we verify in Schreber something that is also going to stimulate us to develop things, when he says that the *Grundsprache*, the basic tongue, namely, this "*somewhat antiquated but nevertheless powerful German*" (50) that comes to him from the Other, the big Other, "*and that is characterised particularly by a wealth of euphemisms; for instance (this is strange) with a reverse sense*". Namely, that in this tongue "*there is reward for punishment, poison for food*", and in German the words are very similar, *Gift* and *Sift*², namely, that they are dis-

2 - It concerns rather the word *Saft* which means "juice", and is the other term used later by Schreber in opposition to *Gift*, "poison".

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tinguished just by the first letter, "*poison for food, juice for poison*, this is the *Gift* and the *Sift* (sic), *unholy for holy*" namely, that in this tongue, *Grundsprache*, a signifier can signify exactly its contrary.

You remember the degree to which, in connection with obsessional neurosis, I questioned myself before you about the antonyms that on this occasion remind us of what? They remind us of what, I believe, we should keep in the hollow of our memory, but that there too we forget all the time, that yes and no do not form an opposing couple, but that yes and no — it is strange to say that — yes and no, it can be the same signifier that says yes and that says no. Why? Well then! It is proper to every signifier to want to affirm the sense, to display the sense while at the same time giving it to be understood that it is not that, namely, at the same time, evoking the Real that, to this sense, says no. And perhaps I will take up some day with you, if I can manage, it would require a lot of work, the question that I already tackled, why there is no no (*pourquoi de non iln'y en a pas*) *N.o.n.* Because even if it is foreclosure that is at stake, that is really the most radical no, what is denied in this way returns in the Real, as happens in the obsessional, through these imperatives, through these imperative ejaculations that I evoked earlier.

So then, I am not going to delay too much this evening, this would mean that there is in the signifier a kind of wisdom that would want to make me understand a sort of morality proper to the signifier, and that would ceaselessly remind me of what I have missed, namely, on this occasion, castration, for example. It is obvious that what is called the voice of conscience, which exists, even though it seems that it is more and more rare, makes itself heard when effectively I have committed some act that puts me off the track with respect to the law of the signifier, a murder, for example, a theft, a crime, an attack, an infraction against the laws of kinship. It is indeed at the moment when I have committed this act that abolishes the prohibition proper to the laws of the word, that the voice of conscience makes itself heard, it is true. From that, obviously, to supposing that there is in each one a guardian of the moral order, is obviously easy to suppose. In any case, this indeed is how it operates.

Therefore, what happens in the obsessional gives us a way in, it must be said, to the problem of hallucinations and in particular those of Schreber. I will put forward to end this evening, by way of proposition, of thesis that I will take up next week and that I will try to highlight, that the signifier is liable to make itself heard for a subject, to take on this dimension of voice, once there is not in place in him, in the subject, this category of the Real which means that this signifier, henceforth, no longer makes itself listened

to, but heard, and that the difference would be situated between a signifier that makes itself heard and, when this possibility that the signifier has of making itself understood is lacking, to whoever wants to hear it, when it is lacking, the fact that then all that is produced is the din of what means it can be listened to. It is obvious that this proposition that I am giving you is not conclusive, and is not sufficient, because why would there occur at that moment the phenomenon of vocalisation? This is what I will take up with you the next time, and this, obviously, in connection with Schreber and I invite you again to take up and to pursue this marvellous read.

Have you got, here this evening, some remarks to make?

T. Engelen - Yes, I have a question about what you said about this exposition at Beaubourg, *Hors limites*. I have not gone to see it yet, but my daughter went and so I have had some echoes of it, and really I asked myself if it was still art, if it was still a matter really of titillating this limit in the sense that you give it, is it not something else?

Ch. Melman - What answer am I going to give you to that? From the moment that I offer you a representation, under the name, in the name of artistic representation, namely, telling you that it is art, you can tell me that this does not have this effect on you, but the fact that you say it does not in any way invalidate my assertion. Obviously, you can say that for you, it is not art, and this is what has been constantly said throughout the whole history of art, because it is obviously marked by this kind of disruption. What characterises the history of art, is that the canons of representation have been regularly displaced, modified. And from the moment that one who presents something, even if it is not in the frame, since precisely in *Hors limites* there is no general framework and this is also interesting, it is obvious that it is interesting; but from the moment when someone says to you: "There you are, this is art", your objection is not enough, anymore than his assertion. You can say that you don't like it, you can say: "For me it is not art", this is what you can say, and he will say "yes, it is a pity! It is a pity that you don't like it".

Mile 2-1 saw in it effectively this horror of the Real that was in question, I was really petrified by this Real that showed itself there and I cannot see how, why you say that this boundary between the Symbolic and the Real is played out in it.

Ch. Melman - Yes, well, we will look into this question again, we will look into it.

In any case, the history of Schreber is going to lead us, it is bizarre, but

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it is going to lead us perhaps to better understand the Borromean knot. And in connection with the Borromean knot — we are going to stop here this evening — I have an anecdote to tell you, the fact is that the Borromean knot, I no longer remember the analyst who wanted to take this knot as a work of art, namely, to link it to the work of a woman who painted rings (ronds) in order to say that, finally, the Borromean knot was art. Now first of all, this woman did in effect paint rings that are very good, but she did not paint Borromean knots — Sonia Delaunay is the person in question. But that she should have wanted, that she should have seen the Borromean knot as being inscribed in the field of art, namely, as something that could shift the limit I evoked earlier, this is interesting. So then she brought me a long article on this, that I was supposed to publish and I considered that the bo knot was not beau, that is what I thought.

Good then, so good-bye!

Lecture VI

15 December 1994

Giving a commentary on this formula of Lacan according to which "the unconscious is the social", implies accepting at first a curious decentering, since to postulate that the Oedipus complex is the organiser of subjectivity, and therefore of desire, is equivalent to privileging the family stage as being where the destiny of the subject is played out, is determined. It is no doubt one of the reasons why the psychoanalysts, in a more or less intuitive way, consider that the field of their responsibility comes to a halt at the boundary of family organisation and that they do not have to make any pronouncement, to become engaged, when they are challenged by the social field. This is also what one sees on the part of neurotics who make of the family scene this permanent and ineradicable locus of passions, of complaints, of grievances, of unpardonable sins, which obviously give to our family lives a very curious tint. You have to choose, either family life is really very good and, in that case, the results are not very good, precisely as regards the determination for a subject of his desire since the aforesaid desire is only supported by shocks, by accidents, even traumas, or indeed, and it is much more frequent, family life is bad and it gives rise to this type of historicising and consequences which is scarcely any more satisfying.

No doubt Freud should be singularly thanked for having put the accent on this prevalence of family organisation in subjective determination even though he, for his part, because of his history, because of his heritage, had every reason to question the social field, which did not prevent him from making these excursions that are called *Civilisation and its discontents*, *The future of an illusion*, *Why war*, etc., very remarkable excursions on the part of the secular man that Freud was in political matters, despite what one could call his uneducated character in this material, excursions which are still valid and which make us astonished all over again at seeing how the

relation to the social field is badly handled, badly treated by psychoanalysts. This sends us back then to this singular formulation of Lacan, "the unconscious is the social", of which I already spoke on several occasions but that I would like, this evening, to take up again to develop a point about which I would like to have your reactions, I would like to subject myself to the test of presenting it to you.

The point is the following. Lacan already denatures the traditional idea people have of the ego by testifying that this attachment that I may have to what appears as most private to my own person is only an attachment to an otherness (*alterite*) whose absorption in a way, I do not dare to say introjection, but..., identification to which guarantees that this otherness, the image of the small other, of my fellow is henceforth going to be internal to me; it is going at the same time to guarantee my link to my fellow, because I am already conceived in the image of this fellow. This shows the interest that I have in him, the phenomena of transitivity that Lacan speaks about, it also shows the suffering I may endure from noting his inadequacies, the fact that I can be led in my choice of friends, in my judgements etc., to turn away from someone who appears too inadequate in the measure that I always experience that the mirror relation with my fellow engages me, whether I want it or not, that his inadequacy compromises me directly. Hence curious reactions of intolerance, rejection, etc. But if this is in a way the imaginary aspect of what links me to my fellow, and therefore guarantees my interest in the social group to which I belong, even if my interest is of the order of a refusal, of isolation, of rupture, this does not have the slightest importance, there is no doubt another dimension that we can explore and which for its part is rather on the symbolic side, if one recalls this strange thing that "a signifier is what represents a subject for another signifier". In effect if one draws the consequences of this formula one can see clearly how the subject $\$$ is what is supported between two signifiers, one and the other of which find themselves legitimately incarnated by different figures. It would be necessary, if what I am putting forward holds up, to consider that the subject, far from being localised within the corporeal meningeal envelopes or whatever you wish, is properly speaking something that is, something that lies between S_1 and the one who incarnates the S_2 . The subject therefore can only be validly completed at first in the measure that a couple like this is found to be effectively realised.

What testimony can we find of this very curious arrangement? Testimonies of the phenomenological order but perfectly experienced by everyone, a theme that I amused myself in sketching out in conversations with one or other of you; you do not experience the same perceptions when

you are alone or when your subjectivity is sustained by the partner here in the position of S_2 . It is completely verifiable at elementary, extremely common levels. If you go to the theatre on your own, you will not see the same play as when you find yourself in the other position that I have just recalled. It is obviously the same for other satisfactions, a meal for example. It is still more troubling to be able to note that here the choice of the partner, the one that comes into the position of S_2 — I am putting S_2 to facilitate things but I will explain this right away because it could also be in S_j , everything depends on the signifier from which you primordially sustain your subjectivity — can for the same play, the same meal, the same situation, modify your perceptual field in what nevertheless seems to be what is most essential to your organisation. Without for all that your being able to be accused of mimicry or of malleability or things of this kind.

One could, I am not going to develop it here and now, recall all the difficulties that are experienced by someone who, for different reasons, finds himself led to sustain his subjectivity systematically from a single one of the signifiers, the master signifier, for example, and misses out on the *reprise*, for which it would be necessary to find more exact metaphors to qualify what occurs then, which comes from the S_2 , which at the same time cannot be perfectly in accord, and which cannot either be a complete divorce and which is situated then in a sort of extremely delicate and variable margin but which in any case is appropriate to incarnate, to support the expected response on the side of S_2 . That is the first remark.

The second remark is that this arrangement would account for the fact that a subject, this moreover is beyond question, does not have a determinate sex. Everything depends on the signifier put into the master position to sustain your word as subject. We see clearly in this arrangement how it is justified and how this famous bisexuality proper to the speaking being is effectively inherent in the one who speaks. He has no choice, except obviously to search despairingly in imaginary representations some comfort for his sexual identity. So then, you will say to me, are there only imaginary representations to bring comfort to the sexual identity of this subject who *qua* subject may moreover express himself in a virile style or in a style that is supposed to be feminine? No, since there are obviously symbolic determinations, ideal imperatives, which themselves are symbolic and which command the subject to keep his word, to organise his subjectivity in one or other fashion and therefore to sustain his phantasy and his desire.

To engage oneself along this path has obviously disturbing consequences. The first advantage is to break radically with the whole tradition

of the ego, ego psychology, a tradition that Lacan remarks not alone goes back to Aristotle but is outstandingly sustained by the religious tradition and constitutes progress in a valid sense of the term in a completely different direction which appears to me to be the following. I told you that the task of the psychoanalyst, like that of the artist, bizarrely, is to make vacillate this boundary ordinarily fixed between the Symbolic and the Real. Note that this challenges the paternal reference, which would have it that this frontier should be traced out once and for all. To amuse oneself by making it vacillate, is to upset his tomb, to do out something that is most sacrilegious, no longer to respect it, to profane it. Now it is quite clear that the whole work of what is called reason was only there, in the very measure that it is proposed as universal, the most ordinary case, to serve the ruse of the master, the one who settles once and for all what is involved in the limit between the Symbolic and the Real, saying: "don't touch, that's how it is!" That is why the last time I was questioning you, if we hold that an argumentation can never be universal, what is to be said about psychoanalytic argumentation? To sustain that the subject is what takes its place not within the limits of the meninges but between two signifiers, eventually incarnated by different creatures and ordinarily of a different sex, is at the same time to upset this facility, this immediacy of the relation of the subject to the dead father.

What is this figure, Antigone, to whom Lacan attached himself so much and that we have undoubtedly to take up again? Antigone is the one who says that the laws of the city are not the ultimate laws and at the same time cannot be considered valid for all. In certain cases, to refuse the laws of the city is to respect a law of a higher order that commands the laws of the city. Pay attention to the fact that this is a formulation that directly concerns the events that some people here knew personally or that other younger people know by books, the events of the last world war. The problem was indeed that, fidelity, obedience, duty, was it to respect the laws of the city, or indeed to consider that there was a law that could be superior, and impose itself, and go against the laws of the city? Some time ago, the editors of the review *Autrement* thought they should ask me for a paper for a number devoted to courage. I therefore wrote this paper. It happens, as it always does, that in recalling it now for myself, namely, in making a second approach, reading again what I nevertheless wrote black on white myself, I noted that unwittingly, because I do not believe that I said it as clearly in the paper, that what I specified as courage was in no way to obey the laws of the city, which requires fidelity more than courage properly speaking. For even if it is a matter of dying in this case for the city, this remains ins-

cribed in the accomplishment of a duty which can appear to be of the order of the necessary. If you belong to a community, you do not have the choice. Because otherwise what would you become? Not simply a traitor, you are condemned to wander off and never again find your place.

To judge what you see being produced before your eyes in central Europe, for example, I would put forward for my part that the people there do not have a choice; depending on whether you are born on one or other side you cannot but gut your neighbour, given the disputes that exist. Except, and it is the only exception, the only reference that you can oppose to these absurd laws, because notice carefully that our brilliant intellectuals do not go any further than take one side or the other, they cannot get out of the difficulty, thinking that the fate of humanity is supported by one or other of the protagonists, depending on their personal inclinations. But everyone feels the despairing character for the spirit of such commitments because what they mean is that there is really no law, precisely, that is universal enough to introduce some vacillation into the commitment of those who are caught up by these affairs. Antigone is there, at the price of a sacrifice that is no less obvious, in order to come and say that there is a law of a superior order, and as it happens, and it is here of course that I wanted to get to, the analyst can do nothing but endorse this law. If this were better perceived by psychoanalysts it would introduce a certain pacification in their morals and would make them more apt as regards their taking sides, their commitments, their judgements.

So then I am making you take this journey in order to testify simply to you that the way in which saying that "the unconscious..." as Lacan did, with this very condensed character of a formula, and with that sort yourselves out, my friends! It is a formula that is effectively active and living in reality, even if we overlook it.

I was speaking earlier about the splits in the neurotic who remains highly attached to the familial scene but one could also distinguish the person who on the contrary makes of the social field what is responsible, no longer for his castration, but for his frustration and his privation and who therefore engages in a social struggle with the same dynamism as the other does in family conflict. One can see how the position of the psychoanalyst allows him to avoid both ways of going astray and allows him to think. Is it thinking a universal? In any case it is thinking something general because we could not postulate a universal. But *qua* subject, and here once again I fall on my feet, to expect of S_2 not that he will respond to me, in an identical way to my own formulation "yes there is a universal" but that there is separated out this type of response which, while accepting the split, while

accepting separation, does not attribute it to some frustration or privation but knows how to recognise in it the very thing that ensures sexual enjoyment. And therefore instead of making a grievance of it, make of it rather the occasion of an attempt, not at harmony, not at reconciliation, but of correct response. This assuredly does not exist, because you will find no kind of romantic form of this exercise, this attempt between a man and a woman to formulate interpellations and responses that one could consider as correct and which at the same time would make their dialogue pathetic, much more so obviously than the pathetic, which has become so worn and ridiculed, of dispute, grievance, complaint, denunciation, plaint, accusation, excess, fault, all the usual things. I am telling you all of this in order that obviously that you should start using your pens when you get home and begin to reflect on what such a dialogue might be, that of a subject who would no longer be sustained by his parental, paternal particularity but who would be a subject equal to Antigone.

So then, this is the type of cogitation to which a formulation like the one I recalled earlier, "the unconscious, is the social" may lead. I simply want to tell you that when you make remarks like the ones I am summarising for you before an audience of students in the provinces, students of the Arts Faculty and of psychology in the provinces, students who only have a rather vague glimpse of what psychoanalysis is, to your astonishment, you see that this gets through, you see that this is understood. So then you say to yourself, if the profane can understand such unbelievable remarks, perhaps there is something in them that deserves to be taken up and developed. The term unbelievable brings us back to president Schreber, as if we had ever left him, because if president Schreber wrote his book, it was for what reason? Precisely to have an S_2 . He says that he wrote it first of all for his wife. President Schreber who had this fantastic experience, now that he is feeling better, even though disguised as a woman and spending his days in front of the mirror, needs to have, at the place he is addressing, someone who at least listens to what he has to say and eventually answers without too much disfavour. So then we have not really left president Schreber.

Let us return then to what I evoked a moment ago, the question of incredulity and credulity. There is a very difficult problem that I am also submitting to you. In the real, there are signifiers which are rejected, I am not specifying the mechanism, just as much by neurosis as by psychosis. There is in the real at-least-one which ensures that this real is for me the locus where I can love a God or a father. Is he there or is he not? In other words do I believe in him or do I not believe in him? Here there arises the pro-

blem of belief. This problem of belief obviously is resolved in the psychotic. He says it to us and he is going to put us on the path of certainty. There is no doubt. In what Schreber calls the posterior divine kingdoms where you have Ormuz and Arhiman, the Indo-European gods, he knows very well that they are there, there is no possible doubt about this. This is what we would call in our language delusional certainty.

But if one is neurotic, one believes in the God of religion in a quite different way and when one of our friends starts really believing, namely, when he is certain about it, one becomes a little bit concerned about him. The mystic quest, yes, I agree, but a quest, an attempt to encounter it or to hear it can end up with hallucinations, can go very far, but in any case remains in the dimension of effort. While for the psychotic, there is no effort, he knows, oh how well he knows that it is there. As for Schreber there are a whole lot of forecourts that obviously keep the gods at a distance, ordinarily, when the order of the world is respected. There are all the stages, it is like Jacob's ladder, there are steps but in any case, at the top of the ladder, he is there. No doubt about it. As regards credulity and incredulity, what brings it about that for the psychotic, the fact that the real is inhabited in this way by signifiers and amongst others by the gods, is not to be doubted, for him it is of the order of certainty, and that for the neurotic it is of the order of belief? In the late Lacan a curious formulation says that the difference depends on the fact that the neurotic "believes in it" while the psychotic "believes it", it is a problem of the direct or indirect complement. It is interesting because this seems then to bear witness to the fact that the place where the gods are situated for one and the other is not the same.

But nevertheless the real, the dimension of the real exists for the psychotic. Obviously it is a fluctuating real, it is a real which, as long as the delusion is not systematised is a real that moves, that changes, that is displaced, and therefore obviously the subject with it, and undergoes all kinds of metamorphoses. This indeed is what Schreber tells us. There can even be several reals, foci from which things are activated at the same time; Schreber saw perfectly clearly two suns at the same time. And then what is called the work of delusion allows a systématisation through the imaginary, namely, succeeds in establishing a history that localises this real, interprets and in a way masters it. Once the delusion is systematised, the real is caught and there is no question of a delusional person querying his system in any way because this would be once again to enter into the throes of what is called an acute delusion and all the transformations, the metamorphoses, the desubjectifications, all the processes that you know. But why *qua* neurotic,

is it for me of the order of belief or disbelief? I cannot believe in it. For example, Creon believes in it, Antigone, not in the same way. Perhaps she for her part does not even believe in it.

So then there is in Lacan's development a work that is very attentive to this question. What can we say about it? What is the difference, why does the psychotic escape this dimension of belief, why, for him, does this immediately impose itself on him as being of the order of certainty? Can we not recall that in psychosis, what does not take place is the cut. Which means that the unary trait present in the real is present in a materiality which is not itself the trace of any cut. I often point out to you that the \$ means that what makes the 1, the first 1, is the cut. What means that you can take the bar on the S either as the materiality of the trait 1, or as the simple mark of the cut, of the slit. I tried to show you how the clinic of hysteria was sustained by this double incidence. Can we think that in psychosis, the indubitable presence in the real of the unary trait is valid as pure materiality but not at all in so far as the unary trait might be here the mark of a cut? The unary trait here is only sustained by its permanent positiveness. Is the phenomenon of belief not supported by this curious physical property of the unary trait, which is to present itself with this double face, either of material, physical trait, or of being slit? While for the psychotic, there is only this pure materiality, positiveness that, for its part, leaves no place either for doubt or for perspective. We should take it up again in connection with the schema R, I should perhaps ask Darmon to come and take up again for us here the schema R, namely, the effects of hyperbolic geometry. But in any case, for the psychotic, it is a world organised otherwise than in the register of perspective.

Have I got a clinical illustration to give you for this point that I am putting forward? Yes, there is one that is interesting because it takes up another problem that I so often tried to circumscribe in obsessional neurosis. Schreber tells you that the *Grundsprache*, the fundamental tongue, this archaic and racy German is rich in euphemisms. In reality these euphemisms are antonyms, namely, where the fundamental tongue uses the word white, you have to understand black; purified means on the contrary impure. Namely, that each signifier is to be understood as opposite to the habitual conventional meaning. The figure of speech known as antonym, then. I had occasion to point out to you that the power of the symbol was to establish an affirmation only on the basis of a negation and that the negation did not fail in a way to reintroduce itself into the operation of the tongue. But what dominates, is nevertheless the affirmation carried out by the symbol, the negation comes there as a response of the real. While for

the psychotic, perhaps I should take up with you either some pages of Schreber in German, or other texts collected in French literature in connection with the writings of psychotics, in order to take up the question again of what a delusional metaphor is. Lacan uses this term but what is a delusional metaphor?

In any case, in the way in which the signifier is understood by Schreber, the prevalence of antonyms — it is not at all a euphemism, they are not at all, in following Schreber himself, metaphors or metonymies, they are antonyms; you simply have to decipher that what is good means what is bad and inversely, etc., you have to ceaselessly carry out this reversal. Can we not read then in this very strange operation precisely what happens to the signifier in the psychotic, once its positiveness is no longer affirmed by the *Bejahung*, once what comes to deny this *Bejahung* no longer comes from the real, but that the only way for the signifier to make sense, is simply to carry out this reversal, this simple negation of itself, isolating in this way a referent which is nothing other than itself, the unary trait, but which taken as referent, in the locus and the place of the phallus, can only be understood in this systématisation, in this rudimentary coding.

Why then, you will say to me, does the signifier in the psychotic not always mean exactly what it says? First of all, yes! Very often, for a psychotic, the signifier means strictly what it means. But, in Schreber, there is a refinement of this operation; the totality of signifiers refer to a referent but this referent, in the measure that it is not organised by a cut and therefore opening onto a depth which is that of an enigma, that of uncertainty. To the extent that this is lacking, the putting in place of this referent can occur only through banality and the very mechanical, very limited character of the production of sense, simply by this reversal.

Schreber tells us that God is always outside, God only knows the living man from the outside, "*God was not omniscient and omnipresent in the sense that he continuously saw inside every individual living person*" (54). Well then, I understand this in the following way. There is no question in psychosis of the subject being able to inhabit the locus where his God is, but that the subject is always outside him, they are always outside one another. And this indeed will be, I will develop it for you in January, Schreber's drama, not only the exteriority of the subject with respect to God, but also this permanent struggle between them, which means that the victory of the one can only be expressed by the death of the other, and the subject can only get to the place where his God is — if it is true that this God is only sustained by a pure materiality and no longer by a cut in which the subject could assert his existence — because if he asserts himself in this locus of the

signifier, this signifier can only be outside the divine signifier or enter into mortal competition with it. It is either you or me. A singular ordeal!

To conclude this evening, a little word once again, but in a clearer fashion perhaps, on the problem of the foreign language. Because there are situations which can in an artificial and experimental way reproduce devices analogous to those of psychosis. If I speak, if I try to speak a foreign language, for example English, which I do with a lot of trouble, what is the message that I receive in return for my word, what is sent back to me in my use of this tongue, even if we suppose that I am speaking it correctly, fluently, what is sent back to me? What, if not that I am outside the tongue, that I am a stranger to it, and a stranger highlighted here not as subject — I am not a foreign subject in it, because as subject, I am not understood in it — but foreign to my being.

There you are! Let us suppose that my maternal tongue is French. Therefore I am speaking my maternal tongue. To realise myself in it in my being is not easy, it is a whole quest, it is a whole labour. Because if I function in it as subject, what am I in it as being? But as subject? All the work of philosophers to try to specify, to define what should be understood as being. I can say that I am as existing (*étant*) but as being (*être*), I do not know. On the other hand, if I speak a foreign tongue, I can be at ease, because as regards what is involved for my being, it is immediately accomplished, it is posited in this tongue as foreign, but at the same time as characterising me in my being. I realise my identity, namely, my being in a foreign tongue. But at the same time what functions as a referent in this foreign tongue takes on for me a positiveness that excludes any gap in it. It is compact, it is even so compact that it makes me veer away, namely, that it is only in the measure that I speak a foreign tongue that I can take on the entire dimension of what is called positivism. Perhaps you have to take this route in order to become a positivist. You see better now what we can call a maternal tongue, which is not at all necessarily the tongue that mammy spoke. The maternal tongue is the one that records — I believe that we are making progress, all the same — the wound, the cut that I have inscribed in it as speaking being, and that not alone accepts the aforesaid wound but what is more loves it. So then the maternal tongue is the one that accepts the cut that *qua* speaking being I have inscribed in the Other, provided I lose my being in it.

So then if I am making this final remark to you, it is in order to try to strengthen by examples which are more immediately tangible for us and which have not simply individual but also social effects, to strengthen what I am evoking for you in connection with psychosis, in connection with

Schreber and how the fact of speaking a foreign tongue can permit a neurotic or a psychotic to find the solution to a certain number of problems described as personal, since in speaking a foreign tongue I become an other. Not necessarily another subject but in any case, if I fail to find my subjectivity in it, I find my being there. And then I find a positiveness which perhaps may suit me. Positiveness also means that the aforesaid tongue is no longer to be heard in the interplay of its metaphors and its metonymies — no, this is not important — but simply that for me *qua* stranger it means nothing other for me than what it says and so there you are! It is moreover in this way that in general one teaches foreign languages.

That's it for this evening. Despite the stupefaction you are struck by, have you remarks? Nathalie?

TV. *DeUjond* - It is in relation to what you were saying about the unary trait. I had two cases of interpretative delusions unleashed by the simple repetition of a word, of a number, and when the phenomenon was laid bare in a way, it was this simple repetition. Obviously, one might say that in that case the signifier no longer operates as signifier but probably as sign, it becomes the sign of an intention in the Other which is directed at the subject. But it always seemed to me that this had something to do with the fact that the psychotic fundamentally cannot conceive of the fact that this repetition may not have a sense, namely, that the enigmatic point that you are speaking about, the enigmatic point created by the cut is completely absent. So then is...?

Ch. *Melman* - Yes, but I am afraid that in what you are evoking, in it there was not the well known hallucinatory phenomenon which is that his own thoughts may be spelled out and repeated by his voices. There are psychotics among whom this hallucinatory phenomenon is limited. Moreover it is also one of the features of Schreber, the voices repeating ceaselessly, permanently, there is a sonarisation of his own thoughts. Perhaps the fact of activating this in reality is something that comes in his case to solicit this phenomenon which is always rather painful for a psychotic.

G. *Pariente* - Yes, for my part this makes me think of those psychotics who present hallucinations without delusion and who are these rare persons who want to be absolutely rid of this certainty. In that case does one not occupy this place or this locus which could rid them of what they have a certain certainty about most of the time?

Ch. *Melman* - Listen, I know now for already, I don't dare to say the number of years, a patient who is doing very well and whose only symp-

torn is constituted by hallucinations that are perfectly identified because they are emitted by her husband from who she has been separated for a great number of years, and who besides is dead. She learned of his death two or three years ago and she came to me, a little surprised saying "It's funny! He's dead and it still continues". So now, it is the husband and his pals. She has spent her whole life with these hallucinations, she is absolutely not deluding, and thanks I would say to a therapist, she functions peacefully and calmly with them, it is scarcely an inconvenience. And I was even led on several occasions to remark to her that if they stopped, she would feel a little lonely. And the worst thing is that when the neuroleptics clean out..., effectively the psychotic has a feeling of being deserted and of being abandoned. This is an old woman now, who had a professional life, she worked up to the age of retirement, she brought up her daughter, and she has always lived with that. She walks the streets, she does not need a walkman.

B. Vandermersch - A question on the unary trait of the psychotic. What is difficult for me to represent is what its topology might be? If it is not a cut at the beginning, what does it cut, which means that one can say that it is all the same a unary trait, that there is something of the one in it, what does it mean that it dominates the remainder, in other words?

Ch. Melman - Well! There is a cut, this indeed is where the flaw, as I might say, of the tongue is. The way of constituting it makes discreet elements of the tongue, the simple operation of the tongue introduces the cut, whether you are psychotic or not. Only it seems that something more is necessary, it has to be said, for this cut — we are not going to say to be recognised as such since it is not recognised precisely — in any case is decisive for the functioning of the tongue, gives to the functioning of the tongue a reference, settled, grounded, established once and for all. But which afore-said referent at the same time is just as valid, ceaselessly commemorates the cut, is its representative.

C. Lacote - I wanted to pose you a question. I find that what you have said about the distinction between being and the subject goes very far in what is happening in the field of psychological sciences, for example, the American ones. Someone was talking to me recently about the Gordon method, and I was wondering whether what you were saying this evening did not allow there to be grasped this kind of method in which it is a matter of properly speaking fully inhabiting, in all certainty, the words one pronounces, of interpreting them in another way than by suggestion but by making our relation to language psychotic.

Ch. Melman - Yes.

Lecture VI - 15 December 1994

C. *Lacote* - Because today that is rather easily interpreted in terms of hypnosis or other suggestions. Here we can perhaps understand that, because it is a matter of completely filling each word that is emitted with something that also resembles the by heart of the tongue one is learning, the foreign tongue also, there is something there which seems to me to be very important.

Ch. *Melman* - Yes, but fundamentally, it was already what Plato wanted, a very ancient wish, a very precocious wish; his repudiation of poets, the poets must be driven out of the City they are dangerous people. On the other hand, all thought about the concept goes in the direction, precisely, of an accomplished positiveness. On these questions we never do any more than take up or give rise again to ancient data, we never invent very much.

So then goodbye, to the month of January!

Lecture VII

12 January 1995

The question of the ethics of psychoanalysis is easily posed. At the point that we are at, Schreber is going to help us with it because he speaks about what is in conformity with "the order of the universe", a term which may appear enigmatic if we do not try to clarify it a little. In any case, this conformity to the order of the universe is very important for him. One might say that after all the ethics of psychoanalysis responds to Schreber's preoccupation. It is a matter of being in conformity with the order of the universe, namely, what we know constitutes, not the universe but the lack of universe, in other words the order of discourse, of course! This is to say at the same time that the ethics of psychoanalysis — we are going to find here familiar figures — is not that of the city. It is not that of Creon, who is nevertheless usually proposed as the most elevated representation of what ethics can think of. Why? Not only because of the effects that we see occurring when the ethics of the City is appealed to and it frequently is.

If what we see happening in the centre of Europe — I often come back to it because this deserves to remain a subject for us, at least of meditation, since we are not engaged in it — it is a pity that it is not underlined more that what engages the combatants on one side and the other is nothing other than the respect that they accord to the laws of the City. The laws of the City are never anything but those of one's own and everyone after all, in this furious and bloody conflict, never does more than accomplish his great moral duty. It is one of the reasons for taking sides in favour of one or other of the camps, to the detriment of what might be this elementary observation made at a phenomenological level, it is quite obvious that people are just as courageous on one side as on the other, and that on one side and the other they have wife, mother, children, that they are only obeying, respecting the laws of the City. This implies in truth no courage

and that also is something that has not been said enough. It is not a mark of courage, in effect, to content oneself with obeying laws which are understood by everyone, and in a reinforced way once they become collective; it is not courage to follow and to die for these laws. It is simply to show one's respect for the laws and for the duty of obedience. Courage is obviously something else. And I am coming back to this point to enlighten perhaps those among you who are pleased to cast an eye on this paper that I wrote on courage in a review¹, and who are confronted with the difficulty of the text, it appears. Courage, is obviously that of Antigone. And it is not by chance that Lacan insists at this point on this figure and on the way in which she concerns psychoanalysts.

The law of the City obviously claims to be valid for all and implies at the same time frontiers which are those of otherness, but situated at the periphery and therefore in an inevitably hostile way. The laws of the City being equally imposed on all, those who fail to obey them are deserters. During the Nuremberg trials, the accused gave as authority the laws of the City, their own as it happened, since after all, they never did more than respect and obey the orders they were given. As regards the opposition to these laws from an order above them and which is supposed to be that of Humanity, these are laws that are obviously much too abstract and fabricated for the occasion, for the accused were no doubt criminals but not imbeciles, to simply smile at the evocation of higher laws than those of the City that would be valid for Humanity.

I do not need to remind you that if the laws of the City were imposed in their time by Athenian legislation with what it owes to someone called Solon, at the same time Athens found itself confronted with Sparta in a war which did not benefit either of these great cities. These laws of the City are flawed for us, because they overlook something which appears to be nothing at all and that Lacan introduces with the not-all (*pas-tout*) and therefore go radically astray.

From a more anecdotal and less emphatic angle, a question was posed to me by a group working on drug addiction abroad. What ethics should be invoked to ground the concern of the therapist, that the addict should renounce his abuse, his excess. In effect, if the therapist shows himself favourable to the laws of the city, he is in a rather weak position, because most often precisely the person involved had tipped over into addiction against these laws. Against these laws, namely, against the insipidness of

1 - «Rupture», in *Le courage*, Éditions Autrement, Série Morales, n°6, 1992.

middle class satisfactions and their timidity. Therefore, if I claim to support my intervention in the name of the aforesaid insipidness, it is obvious that it is in difficulty from the beginning. Perhaps some of you remember that I said in a humorous way that we should propose to addicts to cure themselves by reading Lacan, namely, the way to be introduced to an ethics which is not limited, which is not restricted, which is not stopped by the laws of the City, but puts in place this superior order which is that of the laws of language, and which obviously the addict betrays, perverts, denatures, fails to recognise. It is obviously in the name of these laws that Antigone is able to say that after all the sin of her father, the sin of Oedipus, perhaps more than the others, deserves, calls for this inhumation, and why not in the family vault. Since it is indeed from this tradition, the family tradition, that there came to Oedipus this taste for incest and it was therefore perfectly legitimate that it should not be overlooked in the very genesis of his incestuous adventure.

The difficulty is then to give its whole value to the fact that these laws of language are sustained no longer from a universal but from a special, limited and open, totality, opened, marked by a breach that puts in place this not-all that we always have to think about.

$\exists x . \overline{\Phi x}$	$\overline{\exists x} . \overline{\Phi x}$
$\forall x . \Phi x$	$\overline{\forall x} . \Phi x$

Example: why does Lacan not say in his formulae of sexuation that on the side of the woman, since there is no at-least-one who says no to castration, at the same time "there is no x which is Ox"? On one side "every x is Ox" and on the other side, "there is no x which is Ox" ? In other words, something which is of the order of contradiction, or of the contradictory.

$\exists x . \overline{\Phi x}$	$\overline{\exists x} . \Phi x$
$\forall x . \Phi x$	$\forall x . \Phi x$

If you read them like that, you will see that effectively there is a feminine experience which carries out this reading, which lives femininity as condemned to this lack, to this flaw of castration, and which from there is organised in depression as well as in complaints — and in this sort of opposition frequently tinged with hostility that organises conjugal life. This rea-

But why not read the formulae of femininity in this way?

ding, after all, can be done from the side of the woman and explains the frequent attraction that exists here for feminine homosexuality in the measure that the heroine is presented in this field as denying the previous assertion by saying, not at all, there are some who are indeed Ox , virile. Hence the value to be accorded to this invention by Lacan, it is indeed his invention, he does not carry out at all this reading of the not-all in the feminine, "not all $x Ox$ ", not all.

Which gives us among other things, I am coming back to it, the following development. I pointed out to you that the subject is sustained by these two signifiers, S_j and S_2 . At the same time we have to come to this singular conclusion that the subject *qua* speaking being, the subject of the phantasy has no sex. Here is something that is still clearer than to say that the libido is one but it comes back to the same thing. Fundamentally, structurally it is the same thing. But we can verify it on this occasion, $\$$, the subject of the phantasy, has no sex. And it is true that I cannot appeal to a subject whom I suppose to be masculine or feminine. There is something of the subject when there is one, and that is all!

What puts in place the sexed identification of the subject, since in the usual case, there is one, even if at the origin it is bisexual? Lacan at the beginning of his work speaks about this bisexuality which is fundamental in the human being. Well then, we see what organises it. It is first of all the nature of the object concerned by the phantasy, since this is not the same thing depending on whether this object is *one* or the d-object. Secondly, the question of ideals, the ideal to which the aforesaid subject refers itself. In the subject position, I can obviously pass through an identification to S_j , have myself represented by S_j , in order to find myself in the position of desiring what the \wedge -object supports, S_2 on this occasion, or indeed I can, no less, identify myself to S_2 and find myself in the position of desiring what S_j represents or the possession that this S_j is supposed to imply, namely, a phallus.

In presenting it to you in this way, we grasp better both the relative complexity of the becoming of the sexuality for each one, its arcana, its eventual risks and, of course, its deviations. The identification to S_j , the representation by S_j privileges narcissism and has as consequence the loss of enjoyment of one's body; while bizarrely, we have to accept that the representation of the subject by S_2 implies the consent, in a way, to pay the price of renouncing narcissism, the faculty of an enjoyment which can be not simply that of the phallus, but also that of the body; and provisionally, it is necessary to come back to it in a more precise fashion, one can also label it or pick it out as the enjoyment of the Other. Before pursuing this question

of the enjoyment of the body, I would like to take up a tiny little point that I avoided in passing but that I would like all the same to pinpoint for you. In taking up again the formulae of sexuation, the value of the copula — I think it is admirable that it is called that — "every x is Ox ", the is takes up here an affirmation which does not tolerate doubt in the formula. "Every x is Ox ", that is how it is and that is all, from that side of things. This shows the vigour of the copula. On the other side, "there is no x which is not Ox , not-all x is Ox ". The is has not at all the same value as on the other side. Since it does not have to ground it this at-least-one which gives the certainty, the certainty of the attribute. This no doubt is why I imagine that there is thus more easily in a woman this unease about her being, because of this copula which lacks a foundation, and at the same time about the permanence of the attributes from which she authorises herself. In other words, is it quite clear, is it quite true, is it going to last? Here again, a bourgeois exploitation of these formulae as I am attempting it for you, but which I believe does not lack clinical interest, a woman is never sure of herself, something like that, even the ones who in appearance seem to be most armoured. Except obviously by being homosexual and no doubt you have been able to note, in this case, there were effectively kinds of assurance of being, perhaps still more superior because of the path that has been taken, to that of someone who is supposed to be virile.

Let us come back to the question of the enjoyment of the body. It is inscribed that with castration, I am led to renounce the enjoyment of my body in favour of organ enjoyment. This reminder is valid not simply for what Schreber is going to teach us about it but it is valid to note that there is a sort of modern current which comes back from time to time, which would like everyone to be able to enjoy his body, have the right to the enjoyment of his body. In other words, for want of a universal on the male side, of a universal of castration, let us attempt a universal of the enjoyment by each one of his body, the access by each one to the Other enjoyment (*jouissance Autre*).

In connection with what manifestations do you see that expression? Let us take up a question that I have often posed, of what the addict enjoys, what is the object of his enjoyment? Because the drug is only a means, it is not the drug that he enjoys, it is the instrument, it is not the object. What is it the addict enjoys? Does he not give us the spectacle of someone who is desperate to enjoy his body, to consume it, to absorb it like a mouth which would not "kiss itself" to take up the image furnished by Lacan, but which would like to absorb what is in the very interior and gives this mouth its appetite? You see the type of invagination that this can represent. When we

for our part give the body this support of being the set of S_2 , the set of S_2 that has become consistent because of being organised around certain edges cut out by castration, the aforesaid castration renders this body habitually silent, we can effectively make a list of a certain number of procedures whose aim is to enjoy the body, to enjoy one's own body. To want to enjoy one's thoughts is without any doubt to want to enjoy. You believe that you think with your head — you remember what Lacan said, that it was not the ideal place for thoughts to be produced, even if the neurological system is stuck in there. What I am calling thoughts, we should perhaps be Schreberian and speak about "a procession of ideas". It is certain that the drinker does not enjoy alcohol but the effects that are produced, namely, his access to a procession of ideas. One cannot even call that thoughts, we would even have to find a better term than ideas, which has too many connotations, I do not know which. But this is what causes enjoyment, which no doubt explains in a certain manner the féminisation that he may experience, as induced by drinking, from the fact of being led to make of his body an object of enjoyment.

A tougher question because it is more violent: is writing a way of enjoying one's body? Writing has traditionally a close relationship frequently with alcoholism, with drink, it is not exceptional for them to go together. I had the advantage of knowing one of our favourite poets: it was remarkable that his talent was exercised in a continuous stream like Schreber, he had a continual operation of thinking — except in his case it was talented, it was always a delight simply to hear him talking. Well then, he was always under the influence of drink, which did not prevent him, moreover, from living to a very advanced age. Is writing not one of the ways of wanting to enjoy what is expelled from the body? Hence perhaps moreover the difficulty in, or the appetite for, the taste for writing, or also perhaps the difficulties, the inhibitions that perhaps have something to do with this disposition.

Does not analysis, the analytic session have a relation with this Other enjoyment? In any case for the addict, we are in a position to put forward without too many risks that what he consumes, what he drinks, what he burns, is indeed this body, his own body, and without any regard, quite the contrary, for the physiological limits necessary for its survival. That is why the *overdose* is not an accident but a moment implied by the physiological economy of the addict.

I do not know whether I should specify for you that these remarks are the effects of the teaching given by President Schreber. He summons us ceaselessly with a remarkable fidelity to what he calls "the order of the

world" in so far as it should be respected. He summons us ceaselessly, he makes resonate in the reader, even the uninformed one, this type of problem. That is why I will begin this evening with you an approach to what figures in Chapters IV and V of Schreber. In the measure that I am presupposing that you have read these chapters, I will obviously go straight to the essential.

The essential is that his illness begins with the necessity for him of having to occupy a social position which is one clearly designated as being one of responsibility, and therefore of commandment. This breakthrough which puts him in a position of being not only his own boss but of having under his responsibility a group of magistrates, of jurists, this breakthrough is obviously the one which draws him into illness. In other words the incapacity he proves to have to occupy this place. This does not mean that he does not valorise it that he shows himself to be lacking in it, not at all! But by occupying it he is going to fall ill and this then for the first time in 1884. This illness gives him the opportunity to get to know, to be cared for by professor Flechsig whose favourable action greatly impresses him. He has the feeling of having dealt with a man of an altogether superior quality, to the point, as he tell us, that his wife, Mrs Schreber, keeps on her desk a photo of professor Flechsig. Another element contemporary with this difficulty of assuming the new responsibility which is his, is the impossibility of having children despite the repeated pregnancies of his wife who was, if I remember correctly a diabetic and who did not manage to bring her pregnancies to term.

Allow me this incidental remark about Chapters IV and V. One can marvel at the construction of these chapters. Chapter IV is purely factual, Chapter V purely analytic. The organisation of this book by Schreber would deserve just by itself a separate study, the quite remarkable way in which he constructs his book. So then in this purely factual Chapter **iV** in which he tells us how, in 1884, he falls ill for the first time, through intellectual overwork, after his nomination to the title of Chairman of the County Court of the *Land* of Chemnitz; he notes in passing this inability to have children, since his wife's pregnancies do not come to term. And then he mentions some dreams to which, he says, it would all the same be rather intelligent to pay a little attention, and among these dreams, one of them, the idea, it was scarcely a dream, rather a type of hypnopompic thought on awakening.

"It was the idea that it really must be rather pleasant to be a woman succumbing to intercourse. This idea was so foreign to my whole natu-

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*re that I may say I would have rejected it with indignation if fully awake; from what I have experienced since I cannot exclude the possibility that some external influences were at work to impUnt this idea in me."*²

And, as he says, during this first illness, no phenomenon of a supernatural order, no delusion, no hallucination.

We can see then very clearly how the first illness is situated. Better than any observation; he tells us about his responsibility as Chairman of the County Court of Chemnitz, his overwork, in other words the difficulty of taking up the position, the disappointment at not having a child, his dreams and in particular one of them: *"It really must be rather pleasant to be a woman succumbing to intercourse"*.

Eight years later, the second illness. Again in the autumn he is nominated this time, "Senatspräsident to the Superior Court in Dresden".

*"I have already mentioned the heavy burden of work I found there. I was driven, maybe by personal ambition, but certainly also in the interests of the office, to achieve first of all the necessary respect among my colleagues and others concerned with the court (barristers, etc.) by unquestionable efficiency. The task was all the heavier and demanded all the more tact in my personal dealings with the members of the said panel of five judges over which I had to preside, as almost all of them were much senior (up to twenty years), and anyway they were all much more intimately acquainted with the procedures of the court to which I was a newcomer. It thus happened that after a few weeks I had already overtaxed myself mentally."*³

We are able to locate thanks to him in a very clear fashion both the mode, the encounter which provoked, which unleashed these two attacks of psychosis, because one can take the first one as having already been a psychotic attack, but, if we were not to refer to Lacan who studied this very carefully, we would spontaneously at best specify the structure of the apparatus. In other words, why does being called to this place — he tells it perfectly clearly, here, he could not depend on anyone older, he was the boss — why did being called to this place make him fall ill? Namely, the appea-

2 - *Memoirs of my nervous illness*, p. 63.

3 - *Ibid.* p. 64.

rancee of a stubborn insomnia and then, during the night, certain noises, crackling, which returned at more or less long intervals and could be heard in the walls of the bedroom and in particular when he was going to sleep. As if there were a force that wanted to stop him from recuperating and therefore of being able to take on his task. He came up against the manifestation of a power that did not allow him to sleep, woke him when he was going to do so and so he says the following to us:

*"In other words that right from the beginning the more or less definite intention existed to prevent my sleep and later my recovery from the illness resulting from the insomnia for a purpose which cannot at this stage be further specified".**

He is going to tell us very quickly what this purpose is. In any case, the phenomena get worse, he manifestly has not simply insomnia but is more and more anxious. He meets once again professor Flechsig who had looked after him so well the first time and who again speaks to him in a remarkable way which greatly impresses him and gives him confidence again. But this encounter is going to precipitate him into a state of anxious agitation, as well as his insomnia, because he spends the night without sleeping and gets out of his bed on several occasions,

"for a kind of suicidal attempt by means of a towel or suchlike; the next morning my nerves were badly shattered; the blood had gone from my extremities to the heart, my mood was gloomy in the extreme and professor Flechsig, who had been sent for early in the morning, therefore advised my admission into his asylum"}"

Let us note simply the ebbing of the blood "from my extremities to the heart" and, without being too interpretative, we can grasp something that was already an expression of his unease about the maintenance of his virility. His blood had ebbed from all his extremities towards his heart.

I am passing over the events that occurred after his hospitalisation in professor Flechsig's asylum except to highlight three phenomena for you. On the one hand a new rush of blood to his heart which again caused attacks of anxiety. Secondly, he looks at his attendant and sees the features

4 - *Memoirs of my nervous illness*, p. 64, this passage is in italic in the text.

5 - *Ibid.*, p. 64.

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of his face totally distorted which, he said, created a "particuUrly terrifying impression"⁶; we can no doubt read in this phenomenon the fact that he himself was in the grip of a corporal decomposition, the fact that as he remarks, "I could hardly, if at all, manage any intellectual occupation such as reading newspapers, but also quite banal mechanical occupations such as patience." He could not even manage to simply play a game of draughts. And therefore he was missing out on the simplest of activities.

Finally, one event is going to considerably aggravate the clinical picture. His wife absents herself, she had been there every day at the clinic with him, and she has to go away for a few days, four days, to see her own father. And this absence of his wife, who took lunch with him, spent the day with him etc., provoked such a collapse that when she returned after these four days, he did not even want to see her because he did not want her to see him in the low state into which he had fallen. And here is how Chapter IV ends:

"From then on appeared the first signs of communication with supernatural powers, particularly that of nerve-contact which professor Flechsig kept up with me in such a way that he spoke to my nerves without being present in person. From then on I also gained the impression that professor Flechsig had secret designs against me; this seemed confirmed when I once asked him during a personal visit whether he really honestly believed that I could be cured and he held out certain hopes, but could no longer — at least so it seemed to me — look me straight in the eye.

I must now discuss the nature of the frequently mentioned inner voices which since then have spoken to me incessantly, and also of what in my opinion is the tendency innate in the Order of the World, according to which a human being ('a seer of spirits') must under certain circumstances be 'unmanned' [Entmannung] (transformed into a woman) once he has entered into indissoluble contact with divine nerves (rays). The next chapter is devoted to an exposition of these circumstances; this is, however infinitely difficult".⁷

You see how this purely factual Chapter IV, situates with the greatest rigour this implacable logical aspect in the psychotic organisation, situates

6 - *Memoirs of my nervous illness.*

7 - *Ibid.*, p. 68-69.

with the greatest rigour the expression of the transference onto professor Flechsig and the catastrophic effects of the aforesaid transference, the emergence, the appearance of voices in so far as they are attributed to, whose emitter is supposed to be professor Flechsig, and at the same time the requirement expressed by these voices in a disposition which is supposed to be immanent to the Order of the World, that in certain circumstances — he is going to develop all of this later, explain it, complete it — there occurs the necessity for the gelding of the human being who has entered into dealings that are henceforth impossible to suspend with the divine nerves.

The next time, we will see in this Chapter V the clinic of these hallucinations in the account that Schreber gives of it, and what the aforesaid clinic teaches us.

There we are then for this evening! Have you some suggestions? Virginia?

V. Hasenbalg - It is a question concerning what you said about the certainty of being in men. Is it something that is determined by the structure and that analysis will therefore only confirm or does analysis give rise to this certainty of being?

Ch. Melman - What can I say to you? I think that analysis has more to do than simply arouse this certainty. One would like to hope so. But this remark on the copula enlightens us also in a more general way about the verb and in particular about the infinitive, which is a remarkable word. Who invented this term?

C. Veken - I could not tell you who invented it but it is very old because one opposes the finite forms of the verb to the infinitive.

Ch. Melman - Because this would lead us to recall that the verb is essentially infinitive; it is rare that one gets to the end of the task. Alain?

A. Dufour - Yes. It happens that last summer I had to work on the connection between writing and perversion. And then in doing this research, I happened on something a little astonishing, in finding the same metaphor that you have quoted on the one hand in Genet and on the other hand in Gide. In Gide, that did not surprise me too much in the measure that I believe Lacan drew some inspiration from him, anyway he must have had him somewhere in his memory when he uses this metaphor of the "the mouth that engulfs itself.

Ch. Melman - He says "the mouth that kisses itself.

A. Dufour - Yes, it is a slight transformation. Anyway, given that he speaks about Gide.

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Ch. Melman - I for my part am saying something other than "the mouth that kisses itself"

A *Dufour* - Yes, so does Genet, Genet and Gide speak about "self-engulfment".

Ch. Melman - Ah yeah, it is not the same thing.

A *Dufour* - No it is not the same thing. And therefore the question posed is that, beyond the relation between alcoholism and the structures that you have posited, one could also note a proximity between perversion and writing, which is all the same very great. And at the moment a group of us are working on the question of sublimation. It does not seem that writing, as a general rule, is the slightest little bit therapeutic or cathartic. That is why I wonder if you would agree that writing does nothing more than call forth a little more writing. It is a sort of operation that resolves nothing.

Ch. Melman - Next Monday, in the *Maison de l'Amérique Latine*, at 9 in the evening, there is a lecture by a Portuguese woman writer, who is famous in her own country and in every Portuguese speaking country, and who has written 35 novels. The problem when one reads that, there are French authors who are just as prolific but when one imagines what that represents as a production, as a secretion of letters, what that gives rise to in terms of things coming out, it makes a curious effect. The advantage with her — she is called Augustina Bessa-Luis, she is translated in part into French and known to those who are interested in foreign literature — she speaks very well about her experience. And I think that it would be interesting to question her again and to read her again to specify this possibility, that I would describe as physical of being capable of aligning hundreds of thousands of characters and besides, with an indisputable talent, which spoils nothing. She is a woman writer then, with a type of writing... You know the eternal questions, does a feminine writing exist or not etc.? It is no doubt a point that deserves to be raised particularly in connection with what she does.

Having said this, perhaps she does it to keep her husband busy because he is the one, she tells us, who types her manuscripts. I am joking, of course! I would strongly advise you to come and pose her this type of question.

Until next week!

Lecture VIII

19 January 1995

It is strange that analytic practice poses again for us the question of the truth in a way that, manifestly, resolves the antinomies encountered by philosophical as well as logical reflection. This is not self-evident and nevertheless, without this reference, the analytic approach would find itself effectively exposed to perpetual doubt and in the sequence of masks that are presented during a treatment, we would end up by no longer knowing finally what is true. Which is the right one? Is there one that is true? And what does it mean to say that one mask is the true one?

It is therefore strange that the psychoanalytic approach renews in a fruitful fashion this questioning whose practical consequences are considerable, because we know well what the practical effects are, for example, of the dilemma that was brought to our attention in our philosophy class, the dilemma between dogmatism and scepticism, between affective truth and scientific truth; while the reflection of scientists, precisely on the problem of truth, goes well beyond such simplicity. Analytic practice renews then in a decisive fashion this questioning, and this in following to the letter the old scholastic definition, *adaequatio rei et intellectus*; the only displacement carried out by our practice is to give to the thing, to the res, its inaugural and apparently definitive status, namely, to highlight in it "the thing", *das Ding*, and to bear witness that the truth is effectively the capacity to think the thing (*l'achose*), with an apostrophe now; this thing palliates then what is a lack in the Other — it has to be said like that — but also what may present itself in the Other as a multiplicity of reals, I mean of places capable of representing this category — and this indeed is what the psychotic and in particular Schreber experience — well then, the aforesaid a-object besides having the power to make a One locus, with here again outstanding practical consequences that we will take up again in connection with Schreber.

The truth is therefore this lack in the Other, this flaw in the Other which the Λ -object palliates. Here is a banal, common, trivial formula that we are in a position to give. This being so, the truth, another question, is it always good to say it? There is undoubtedly a temptation for the analyst which consists — because of weariness before the succession of masks, or the disappointment that he experiences at it — to make this truth explode, like so many petards, sometimes moreover rather violent ones and therefore to work with what is supposed to be a sort *démystification* of our world and its system of representation; enough of these representations whose mortal sin we know, I mean to be only valid by default, and let us agree at least about what is involved in the truth.

Well then in testing things, in the history of the analytic movement, you see very well around Freud how analysts were fascinated, drawn into this movement. You can for example evoke Ferenczi, and obviously the way in which this purging ends up by making existence infernal, indeed may tip someone over into psychosis. In Lacan, you remember these two apparently contradictory titles of his seminars, one coming from a certain manner of correcting the other, the first being *D'un discours qui ne serait pas du semblant* [a discourse that is not a pretence] and we should study it attentively, all the more so because we see him hesitating so much in the course of this seminar, and then the other one *Les non-dupes errent* [the unduped are mistaken] as if being duped was the final means, the final way, the final guide to not going too far astray. So then, from experience, but also from reflection, if this taste for truth, the love of truth, is what should animate analysts, it would lead them nowhere than to the places that I have just mentioned, one of the reasons, among others, being that the unveiling of the truth does not lead to action but can lead to a *passage à l'acte*, which is not the same thing. And even the unveiling of the truth has a rather inhibiting and depressing effect since it must be recognised that what is able to command an action in us, not a *passage à l'acte* going into action, is rather the moment when the talk stops and gives the feeling that here something must be done. To continue to ratiocinate would only be a defence against the effects of this ratiocination itself, and so a stop has to be put to it, you have to do something.

It seems that what determines going into action is not at all something of the order of the truth, but rather - if you have better propositions to give on this point I would be very grateful if you would formulate them - that the agent of action in us is the ideal. It is in general in the name of the ideal that we go into action, namely, for bad reasons. For bad reasons, because the action commanded by the ideal is aimed precisely at repairing this truth

which arose for a single instant, namely, that of a lack in the Other and the enterprise animated by the ideal, the requirement of the ideal, is always close to sublimation, in other words to the renunciation of desire and the call to sacrifice. In what I am telling you here, one part of cogitation is born of the fact that for long years I saw the complete inaction of psychoanalysts, namely, why psychoanalysts in general, apart obviously from a split to the left or to the right, were not particularly active.

The ideal is a huge affair, as a politician would say. It is a huge affair because the accomplishing of ideals is at the foundation of our morality, I am not saying of our ethics but indeed of our morality, and I do not know whether there has already been well underlined — someone must have done it obviously, but anyway he does not come to mind — the fact of recognising that the ideal as it animates our morality goes very far, but goes very far in the wrong direction, since the ideal, is always — I introduced it a little bit a moment ago — the call to sacrifice, namely, the call to death. Quote for me some ideals whose success is not of this type, that it involves one's own death or that of the comrade at one's side. Acting validly, I mean with good reason on one's side, against the comrade next door, can only be done in the name of an ideal, in other words it would never come to anyone's mind to invent such a thing. There have to be ideals and a consensus about these ideals and their leading action within the psychic apparatus — that is also called the Super-Ego obviously — to lead then to the place that I have just evoked. And during the very interesting *Journees* that we had about the death drive at Grenoble, I do not know whether we have properly questioned, I would have to look at the texts again, the incisive character of the ideal in this regard, namely, of knowing in what measure the death drive find its source in an outstanding way in the requirements of the ideal.

You see what the action proper to psychoanalysts might be, oscillating in this way between on the one hand a kind of wisdom which would want to confine them no longer perhaps to scepticism but at least to passivity, in other words: "Oh! It is not worth the trouble to make too much of it because in any case when you see the results of what that can lead to", so then a kind of spontaneous wisdom which would put them on the side of inhibition and which would leave them otherwise constantly divided between on the one hand the *passage a l'acte* and then on the other hand the action determined by the ideal. If you draw up this table, a re-interrogation arises about what made of Lacan a man who it must be recognised was an intellectual in action. The word is really bizarre, strange. No one could deny that Lacan was a man of action, but this action was not separable from

the production of a discourse. And no doubt for ourselves, caught up in our own laziness or in our own inhibitions, we have to re-think within our Association the modalities that our action will have to take on, if we want to be not simply friends able to satisfy ourselves with our own talk, to rejoice in it, but if we expect some effect, some consequences from it.

That the truth can have a baneful influence once it is said is verifiable everywhere. I will give you a little example that is very current and I hope it will not appear to be too distant from your own speculations. It concerns precisely the place of truth in social functioning and our own relation to these manifestations. Let us take something dramatic. A war at the edge of Europe, in the Caucasus and which occupies a good share of our media and the commentaries of our specialists, in order to be very obviously denounced as all war ought to be, because of its cruelty, the disparity of the forces, the refusal to accept the national claims of a little people, the misery of the inhabitants, their distress, their death. The truth — let us take the truth on this theme — the truth of the remarks occupying the media then, is quite obvious and clear, it is that every chancellery obviously rejoiced at the intervention of the Russian forces in this conflict, considering that everyone is going to lose, before what would be a dismembering of the old Russian Empire, and that this would create instabilities, would be the source of local conflicts which would only multiply, spread, with consequences that are difficult to foresee, and that it is undoubtedly better for everyone, for the West as well as for those who are immediately concerned, that this problem should be settled in a strong way, if it proves obviously to be possible, and in any case does not make the neighbouring little republics want to go along the same path. That is the truth. Is it a good thing to say it? I mean, if you say it, what do you expect as action, as effect? I am only giving you this little example in order to bear witness to you of the fact that the relation to disrespect, with regard to the truth, as it exists at the principle of social functioning, deserves to be treated with some delicacy, in other words the revelation of the truth can have still more baneful effects than dupery, the lie that people talk about.

I could take more tangible examples if you wish, we are in the Christmas period, the take-over of vacant apartments for the homeless, everyone should have a crib, this is undoubtedly a requirement that is universally accepted. Who could go against such a requirement? But the truth is that if there are apartments free, that can be requisitioned, that can be occupied, it is because they were constructed within a certain form of economy, which is called a market economy, namely, constructed for speculative or com-

mercial ends, and that these ends rule this universal I was speaking about earlier, because if this universal were to be applied to the construction of apartments, there would be no apartments. There would not only be none to requisition, but there would be none to live in, or we would do what is done in other countries, namely, we would be led to have several families living in the same apartment. So then if there are apartments, it is precisely because this requirement is not the one that stimulates their construction. And therefore the major and honourable protest against this state of things nevertheless represses a truth which is the core of the affair because the aforesaid protest can never, apart obviously from the consoling demonstration that it can furnish for some people, can never resolve this problem. This having been said, and it is extremely banal, it has to be said, it is hard to see the slightest benefit to be expected from such a statement, because the only action that this can involve, is to put a break on the ardour of the decent people who are engaged in this movement that favours the requisition of empty apartments, deprive them of a moral argument. So then, you see that here again, quite close to us, the appeal to what is supposed to be the truth of things will not have simply beneficial effects.

And this reminds us of this other point, that I would like to evoke again with you in this regard, which is no doubt the one most difficult to accept and especially to situate correctly. The fact is that there is no social organisation — and the family is the most elementary form of it — which does not function on a deficit. There is none such. And every experience reminds us that where people tried to reduce or to resolve this deficit, it did not fail to emerge elsewhere in a way that was camouflaged but infinitely more serious in its consequences. So then in every social organisation, for it to hold together, there has to be something missing. There has to be something which does not work, there has to be something which fails. And you see how I am rejoining here what I told you about the truth, about the little a-object, and about the Real. Something must fail, otherwise no group holds together. The only problem that may concern the psychoanalyst, in the measure that he does not intervene here in the name of revolutionary, social or other ideals, the only problem is to know how to situate this flaw in such a way that he can lead the partners or the protagonists at least to try to entertain it, seek less to be consoled by it, seek less to tear themselves away from it, than seek to respect it at its proper place, to have a little respect for it; to have respect for a flaw, you must admit is bizarre, because here there is no question of charity, nor of pity, but of being capable of recognising and accepting the flaw where it ought to be and where it cannot but be.

This is what ensures obviously that there are partners who, because of this flaw, are held together by hatred. It is obvious that reciprocal hatred has a great sticking power in the conjugal bond. We all know couples who hold together perfectly well and very solidly thanks to the hate that they have for one another. If we had not remained the barbarians that we are on these problems, the couples would be a little more informed, a little more alerted, and they would have less need to hate one another. They could have a little bit of distance and a little bit of humour about this hatred, because this hatred is terribly lacking in humour. Hate is always aimed at being. If therefore we were a little bit civilised, a little bit educated, we could have, with regard to this flaw that brings us together and which makes us love one another — since it is a flaw in the other that makes us love him — much more tolerance.

You see that the same problem, at a completely different pole, the problem of the flaw that holds human groupings together is posed no less obviously in psychoanalytic societies. You know that I set up disciplines, which moreover do not have many followers but anyway I set them up all the same; so then I founded one, a very remarkable one moreover, which is *discipulology*, which is a very important, even though ignored discipline, but you will see, you who are younger, you will see the success that *discipulology* will have. There is another discipline, I have not found as nice a name for it as the preceding one. It is the study of the point which, in a way, ensures that at a given moment hatred, instead of being the cement of union, leads to *a passage a l'acte*, not action, *the passage a l'acte* which leads to disunity. This moment when the group which up to then was held together by a strong reciprocal hatred — hatred can be very lovely, is that not so, at a given moment, there was a word too many, no doubt the subtle thing is to know which one — which means that no, it was no longer possible. If you find a word for the discipline that would study these passages, I would be very grateful to you and it would certainly be a field of study and of reflection which could be recognised as a public service, you could get grants for it and everything.

The last time I evoked with you another problem, which is the very different valency taken by the copula, which is so well named, according to whether it is exercised on the male side, where it comes in a way to affirm what is involved in being, and makes being believed, it is above all that; on the male side people believe in being. While on the female side, there remains this essential uncertainty as regards the links which attach the subject to a certain number of attributes; are these attributes really one's attributes? Do they really hold up properly? Do they manage to constitute a

being? The precarious character, luckily moreover, of the copula on the feminine side, even if this leaves open in the woman this questioning about the validity of her being, when you take up the logical organisation which dominates on the feminine side you see that other consequences come from it and that they are highly clinical, I mean verifiable by the phenomenology that we have to deal with. For example, it is quite certain that, on the feminine side, the *Bejahung* can remain an uncertain process. In other words is what is proposed here in the perceptual field good or bad? Is it acceptable or unacceptable? Is it to be taken or is it to be rejected? This very important question may find itself much less assured on the feminine side. And this explains perhaps why there can be in women, in reaction against this state of affairs, extremely vigorous stances about what is to be accepted and what is to be thrown out, to be cleansed, and what is to be expelled from this field.

Another problem that deserves to be taken up again, is the question of punctuation. In this logic, since as you see we are led to distinguish two logics — already there is not just one logic — and luckily, we find ourselves, as I said on several occasions, relieved from having a pretension to the universal. There are at least two logics. On the woman's side, the final point, in other words what comes to close the sense, this final point remains for her also uncertain. I mean that in the measure that the conclusion effectively supposes the choice and therefore the expulsion of a certain number of possible senses in order to privilege one, the true sense, and you can see how the feminine position can correct common sense precisely and for reasons independent of one or other speaker, but for reasons that are imposed on them. This problem of punctuation, and therefore of conclusion, gives rise for us to the problem of the treatment and the end of the treatment since, without forcing things too much, one could say that if the end of the treatment implies an irrefutable conclusion, a conclusion which leaves no further place for scepticism, nor to the idea that all we are doing is proceeding by models, we might think that the defence against the end of the treatment shares in a logic proper to the feminine side of things, namely, a refusal of conclusion which is also, this conclusion, that of castration. If a woman is not not-all in it one can easily conceive of the way in which she is effectively entitled not to want it.

Why am I making these remarks? Because they come back obviously to the problem of the deficit proper to the constitution of every community, including the conjugal one, to the fact that conjugal conflict is therefore all the better grounded, it has all the more rights, it is all the more legitimate — the couples are not always legitimate but the conflict between them

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always is, it is the only thing which is really legitimate in the affair — and it is legitimated by the fact that each one of the partners is attached to a different logic. You see how getting out of barbarism would imply that these elementary, primary, crude, rudimentary features should at least be simply known, and should form part, as I might say, of day-to-day thinking.

It is then in connection with Schreber that there arise these remarks which are only a resonance-effect of what he writes. Take for example the sentence about hallucinations at the beginning of this superb Chapter V. He tells us the following:

*"Apart from normal human language there is also a kind of nerve-Language of which, as a rule, the healthy human being is not aware."*¹ (69)

It could not be better put: it is obvious that for the normal man, as he says, ordinarily, the relation to the Other is completely unconscious; the fact that the message comes to him from the Other, that there is a *nerve-language* which is what is inscribed in the Other, Schreber is right, the normal man is absolutely not conscious of it and despite Lacan this lack of consciousness remains general.

*"In my opinion this is best understood when one thinks of the processes by which a person tries to imprint certain words in his memory in a definite order, as for instance a child learning a poem by heart which he is going to recite at school or a priest a sermon he is going to deliver in church. The words are repeated silently (as in a silent prayer to which the congregation is called from the pulpit), that is to say a human being causes his nerves to vibrate in the way which corresponds to the use of the words concerned, but the real organs of speech (lips, tongue, teeth, etc.) are either not set in motion at all or only coincidentally."*²

And this "only coincidental" is itself absolutely admirable because precise studies have shown that in the case of verbal hallucinations, there are phonatory movements of the larynx. But what is very fine, is to give, in connection with these silent prayers, the example "of a child learning a poem by heart which he is going to recite at school", in other words of the child who is confronted by the power a text imposes on him and that he the

1 - *Memoirs of my nervous illness*, p. 69.

2 - *Ibid.*

aforesaid child is going to have to learn by heart, and then "a priest for a sermon he is going to deliver in church", here there is a further notch, because the priest's sermon is dictated to him in a certain way by this authority, this superior almighty, but the priest is going to be here the intermediary who is going to transmit the aforesaid sermon, to provoke among the faithful from his pulpit this mental prayer, in other words invite them to take up themselves what there had been transmitted to him, the priest.

One could note that it is true that our educational system expects the child to learn by heart, namely, to take up again in a direct style the message that we address him; that, in our educational system, there is something that shares in the ideal of madness, if it is true that the madman is the one who takes up in a direct way the message that comes to him from the Other. The child that satisfies people is indeed the one who effectively repeats in a well-behaved, direct fashion, the messages addressed to him, which in general after a certain time becomes a little disturbing obviously if he sticks too closely to it; but in any case the child who fails in this attempt — here again, for quite legitimate reasons, it is a pity that our educators do not take it into account — this child is considered to be either an artist, or a bad subject, but most often as a bad subject of course, except when he has the talent to make the audience ecstatic about his childish words. This Chapter V begins then by a putting verbal hallucination in place in an extremely precise, extremely correct way which only reminds us what we ourselves owe to the Other and also in what circumstances this Other begins to speak to us, even if we are happy neurotics. You often meet on the street people that you think are talking to themselves; they are visibly plunged into a certain dialogue, sometimes even their lips move and in the way they are miming, they seem to be in the process of chatting with someone; it is obviously perhaps a conversation left in suspense with a friend, but whose interruption is so inadequate, so badly settled that it leaves in the speaker a need to pursue this dialogue in order to justify a better placed interruption. But most often this dialogue is obviously carried on with the big Other, and not with one's fellow.

What are the circumstances that ensure that this dialogue is engaged for the one who I am calling the happy neurotic? I do not believe I am being inexact in pointing out that on every occasion what is in question is the debt of the subject with regard to the Other. It is banal to evoke what the novelists call the voice of conscience, which sends us back to Dostoevski and what happens in the criminal, for example; when effectively, it is the major outrage that had been committed with respect to the big Other, and when at the same time, it seems, there is put in place in him a nerve-ian-

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guage, to take up again the term of Schreber, *Nervensprache*, which he obviously experiences as guilt inducing; and it can eventually be his plea, he can pass days pleading against this statement, this *nerve-Unguage* in us, pleading to try to justify himself either by accusing himself, or by defending himself. But what interests us in the affair, is that the *nerve-Unguage* is only unleashed when there is something which in the order of language, happens to have been seriously disturbed, seriously damaged, seriously thwarted; that there has been introduced a disorder, like for example the crime of one's fellow, murder, and which means that the *nerve-Unguage* is unleashed and that it is therefore the problem of debt, of abuse, of excess, of ὕβρις which is finally liable in each one to provoke this *nerve-Unguage*, to unleash it, even if it does not have a psychotic character and that one even sees in it on the contrary, a sort of moral testing; let him make out as best he can with what is called at that moment his conscience.

I was reading a magazine today — since the preparation of the seminar leaves me with a lot of leisure — I was reading in a magazine that there are crimes, particularly collective ones which, finally, one cannot describe, one cannot speak about as one should. The novelists who have tried it, or indeed those who have lived through these collective experiences, when they wanted on their return to write about them, their writing always found itself lacking, self-defensive, in giving an account of what they had lived through. I think it is quite correct. There are a series of events which can come to the point of breaking the order of language, that this order of language - in the measure that it stipulates, precisely, between the author of the message and the addressee, a pact - is unable to describe events which for their part imply a radical rupture with the aforesaid order. Effectively, the communication, in fact, whether it is in the form of a novel or not, whether it is a narrative, whether it is a testimony, or something else, will always be on the wrong track. Moreover, those who describe it have the feeling that they would risk normalising the event by the narrative, which is not wrong either. In other words, to bring it once again onto the rails of what can be said, of what can be articulated.

Another minute for my own caesura of this seminar to satisfy me a bit better. In these hallucinations of Schreber, I am passing over "*having to think incessantly*", in other words the fact that this word coming from the Other is therefore incessant, in order to come what the rays, as he says, want

"they continually wanted to know what I was thinking about. For instance I was asked in these very words: 'what are you thinking of now';

*because this question is in itself complete nonsense, as a human being can at certain times as well think of nothing as of thousands of things at the same time."*³

You see the relief one can experience at thinking nothing, the luck that one has to think of nothing.

"Because my nerves did not react to this absurd question, one was soon driven to take refuge in a system of falsifying my thoughts. For instance the above question was answered spontaneously: 'he should' scilicet think 'about the order of the world'; that is to say the influence of the rays forced my nerves to perform the movements corresponding to the use of these words."

And a little footnote:

"The word think was omitted in the above answer. This was because the souls were in the habit — even before the conditions contrary to the order of the world had started — of giving their thoughts (when communicating with one another) grammatically incomplete expression; that is to say they omitted certain words which were not essential for the sense. In the course of time this habit degenerated into an abominable abuse of me, because a human being's nerves of mind (...) were excited continuously by such interrupted phrases, because they automatically tried to find the word that is missing to make up the sense. For instance as one of innumerable examples I have for years heard hundreds of times each day the question: 'why do you not say it?', the word 'aloud' necessary to complete the sense being omitted and the rays giving the answer themselves as if it came from me: no doubt."

Here is the reply, it is in inverted commas, but that the rays themselves give in his place, as if he were the one who said such a thing. Question: "Why do you not say?" "Aloud" understood, and the answer given by the rays: "Because I am stupid perhaps".⁴

What obviously strikes us in this operation, is that the hallucinatory messages are so clearly organised by an edge, by a caesura. For example,

3 - *Memoirs of my nervous illness*, p. 70.

4 - *Ibid.*

edge: "Why do you not say it?", caesura with the phrase which implies the "aloud". And not alone therefore is this hallucination in a way organised by a caesura, but it is from the place itself, as I might say, thus isolated by the caesura that there comes the response: "Because I am stupid perhaps".

This type of device that Lacan uses to take up Jacobson's linguistics, and in particular the distinction between the phenomena of message and of code, and therefore the fact that hallucinations can include messages about the code — we will see this further on — and phenomena of code about the message, has for us also the merit of reminding us that for want of the proper caesura, hallucinations are organised from the angle of what one could call a neo-caesura because it is carried out inside the sentence itself, and that the aforesaid caesura refers therefore at the same time to a sense whose support, whose referent is of a completely different nature to the organising referent of what is called good sense or common sense. You see nevertheless how the possible organisation of a sense by the hallucinatory ejaculation passes by way of a phenomenon of neo-caesura on the one hand, and how on the other hand there is illustrated the fact that this cut is necessary for a dialogue to be possible. This caesura illustrates from what place the answer comes. This is worthwhile because it reminds us what a dialogue is, its virtues and its limits and also the nature of what a good dialogue can be; good dialogues have become rare. When you happen to have a good dialogue with someone you are almost surprised at it, we no longer know how to dialogue.

The next time, namely, in February, I will try to take up with you this interrupted dialogue. Have you any remarks to make? Alain.

A *Dufour* - If you will allow me, sir, a line of thought and a question about hatred that one may believe to be well founded. There was a French mathematician who had his moment of great celebrity, Rene Thorn, (*inaudible*) his first theory was called catastrophe theory, and I had as a teacher a psychiatrist who taught us to use this theory precisely to do what you are inviting us to do.

Ch. *Melman* - I was hoping to be original.

A *Dufour* - How these affairs seesaw. Moreover he was not interested in hatred, anyway not especially in hatred so then I do not know whether one could call that "catastrophology". It's a little heavy.

Ch. *Melman* - It's a little heavy, yes, but in any case you are right to point it out to me, between now and the next time I will surely take an

interest in this business which did not madly excite me at the time, but perhaps wrongly.

A Dufour - Nor Lacan, I believe.

Ch. Melman - No not him either.

A Dufour - And the question, after all, the characters of Dostoevsky are often insomniacs, I think I remember that you yourself pointed out to us that insomnia can be provoked by two things, either by debt, or I believe, an offence also; and my question, is whether these two phenomena constitute not simply the two sides of the same strip, but one and the same strip?

Ch. Melman - Yes, one could surely..., there is an offence, yes that is interesting surely, namely, to tackle the question of offence in the perspective of debt, I find that in fact very interesting. One is offended when one has not been treated as is one's due; as is our due. Yes, yes I would say the problem of debt back to front, if you wish...

G. Nusinovici - Do you think making a hallucinating mental patient play a role, give him a role to learn, may calm the hallucinations?

Ch. Melman - Yes of course! If one occupies his *nerve-Language* with something else; so then....even though there is the faculty of double or triple simultaneous utterances, namely, that it can speak on several tapes at the same time, but one can always try, and then it is cultural. No, in reality one sees it clearly in Schreber as he tells it, if it were necessary, the fact is that simultaneous utterances of the voice are perfectly possible, so then he can very well learn and recite this text at the same time as there is unfolding some hallucinatory spelling out. There are different frequencies!

An inaudible remark concerning the fact that Schreber would have been a good analyst.

Ch. Melman - Analyst, I don't know. But in any case, he was a good clinician, that is sure, I mean that he was much more faithful than specialised clinicians, much more faithful than them to the narrative and the analysis of phenomena. And then truly, he told it, against all the odds, and in the hope that there would be at least someone to hear and to listen to him, which happened rather late because obviously his book was thrown into a corner, was forbidden. Well then you see, he did all of that and he remained, despite everything that he suffered, he remained optimistic. He said:

"There will be someone who will understand all that with me, and who will understand that what I am saying is true, that they are not hallucinations, that it is true!"

Lecture IX

9 February 1995

This evening we are going to tackle rather strange themes — as usual moreover — but which may question each one of us about what is involved in our method.

The first will consist in taking up again very rapidly the question of the mother tongue. What is a mother tongue? With this kind of question, obviously, we are immediately sensitive to an injunction coming from the signifier. Naturally, we look to the side of the mammy. It is "the tongue spoken by mammy", which very often is incorrect. The mother tongue is not necessarily that of the person who mothers the child; in numerous cases, this tongue, for example when it is that of a nanny, has not become the mother tongue, even if the way of speaking of the first mammy has effects on the child that we find difficult to evaluate, effects that it would be, I think, interesting to try to take up again and to specify. But in any case, the mother tongue is not, from clinical evidence, the tongue first heard by the child. I tried to introduce an element which could, while conserving the mother, put us a little on the path by saying that it was "the tongue in which the mother was lost", which had the advantage of preserving the adjective and therefore of not making us lose our bearings. Finally, in reflecting a little bit on it, we all know what a mother tongue is. The strange thing, precisely, is that we know it. When I tell you, you will agree that you know it, that it is obvious. We will then ask ourselves, how it happens that something as obvious as that, and which manifestly was known by everyone, nevertheless has not been clearly articulated? I am not going to make you wait any longer. The mother tongue, is the tongue in which I can speak as master. There you are. It is very simple, but that is what the mother tongue is. I can learn a foreign language and know it perfectly; even if I have a mas-

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tery of it, I can nevertheless only assert myself in it by an affected mastery, a mastery which is a façade, a masquerade, a borrowed mastery, a mastery of competition, of demonstration. But my mother tongue, is the one in which I can speak as a boss. So then you are not going to tell me that you did not know this kind of obvious, stupid, definition.

What is the obstacle to such a triviality being clearly stated, with the diverse consequences that it may have? One reason may be that this definition is not valid for everyone since for a woman theoretically, whatever may be the tongue spoken by her, she does not function in it in the position of master. It is therefore a definition that is not valid for all. It is valid simply for those who believe themselves to be authorised to function in it in a position of mastery and, in a way in speaking it, find themselves recognising the mastery that henceforth is theirs. It is also a definition which, in passing, enlightens us about the facility women have to be polyglots, to learn tongues. It is not obligatory, obviously, I see people frowning, but I think that, on the whole, it is verified. So then two questions; firstly does not our difficulty in putting forward this triviality come precisely from the fact that we can only think out a concept if it is valid for all? So then, here, we are embarrassed. Second question, should we not study each one of our concepts from these two angles? In the seminar *Encore*, Lacan gives a very curious definition of the concept as it is supposed to function for psychoanalysts, a concept never does anything but approach the real. We should take up again, I did not bring it, the exact definition that he gives of it, but this fact of approaching the real thanks to a concept appears curious. One might rather think that a concept displaces the real by the new cut that it introduces into the field of reality. But should we not also study, take up our concepts again, especially when they are capable of embarrassing us, by tackling both their faces? We may come across this question again; I am obviously passing over the clinical incidences of the matter, I am leaving that to one side.

I continue, simply by remarking to you that on the occasion of our *Journées on Jealousy*, we were able to see effectively that jealousy is not presented in the same way for a man and for a woman. This means that it is not simply an identical concept whose two aspects are to be studied but that structurally, it is not the same phenomenon that is at stake. We would then have to envisage here a clinic that each time would tackle this structural disposition from one side and the other. I am sure I already told you that I worked here on admissions in the male ward, and that when I had to work, when I was on call, in the female ward, I was always very embarrassed. I lost my bearings and to make rapid diagnoses as you had to, I no lon-

ger knew where to put myself. I was dealing with a different pathology and I greatly regret that classical psychiatry has completely neglected, passed over in silence an aspect which, nevertheless, in these circumstances appeared obvious to me. The pathology was in no way the same.

Let us come back to the second point about the question of jealousy that has been evoked. Here again, a certain number of trivialities, which can be said about this passion, have not been spoken of up to now. Now, in the course of these *Journées*, our colleagues were able to put forward remarks which were not particularly brought out, about this question; is what is obvious about jealousy not linked to this phenomenon that I was evoking earlier? When one says jealousy, it must be studied, here again, in its two different places. I would like to illustrate it for you this evening by testifying first of all that jealousy is not envy, even though we often call envy, jealousy, by metaphor; because envy has a bad reputation while jealousy is much better accepted. One can say more easily that someone is jealous rather than envious, is that not so? But we could remember that envy is a dual game, is played by two, even if it is under the unrecognised gaze of a third. It is then the object concealed by the other, the small other, which feeds my envy in so far as the other appears to me here to be responsible for the privation or the frustration that I experience since he is the one who holds this object that provokes my envy. Note in this connection how, at the same time, envy — one can, within these more restricted walls, say it without too many risks — is first of all stimulated by the image of my friend, because if a fellow begins functioning for me in this register, valorised as he is by some object, friendship obviously supposes that the aforesaid object can shift from one to the other, a sort of exchange or of reciprocity of looks. But it is usual for friendship to be organised in a couple, and this object remaining thus represented by one of the elements of the couple, the one who provokes my envy, is obviously in the first place my friend, the one I am very fond of. This evokes in passing, obviously, the apparent complexity of friendship and the way in which in any case it so easily turns and can provoke, to the surprise of the protagonists, these flowerings or these reversals of hatred. But we are so made that for us friendship has this type of structure. Here again, it would obviously be necessary to envisage it in a different way in men and in women, but I am not going to develop something that would not contribute very much more, to tell the truth. There is thus signalled the way in which desire comes to substitute for this rivalry, for this envious friendship, envious rather than jealous, the complicity of a possible enjoyment of one and the other, organised around the fall between the two of this object; even if, by way of delega-

tion, one of the partners, to stimulate desire, consents to be reinvested with it. And the way in which the lack of enjoyment experienced on the occasion of this sexual realisation is able to make appear, as a third, the real of the object causing the fall between the two, of making the d-object appear in the real and to note that, henceforth, it is what is going to be invested.

It is in effect remarkable that in jealousy, it is this third object which comes to occupy the field of the investments and it is curious to note that this fact has not been up to now clearly underlined. The man who is jealous about his wife — anyway, who is jealous...you see immediately the ambiguity that is introduced — the partner who is supposed to be stealing his wife, sees by the very fact of his jealousy his field of consciousness invested by a new object which is no longer his wife, but of course this man. He is the one who interests him, who occupies his field of consciousness, in a way that obviously torments him but in any case will not leave him be. In jealous behaviour, everything is done, in the case when this jealousy is pure fantasy, an idea, to provoke situations through which this jealousy will be verified, validated. We know well the type of conduct where the jealous man or woman literally throws his partner into the arms of a third person, eventually his best friend, in order to find some comfort in it.

This is the interest for us of noting the degree to which, here again, phenomena of structure organise our clinic and the way in which the rationality given to these phenomena is at once correct, exact, and at the same time impoverished. Correct and exact, why? Because all the clinical features, which refer to this third person effectively, signal that what is at stake there is an object of a particular, singular power. The jealous person sees it everywhere, he finds the signs everywhere, and then also the fact that he attributes to this object — let us pass over the fact, which is without interest, that he has a permanent erection — an enjoyment obviously, of superior quality and which is precisely the part that has been stolen from him. We should be particularly interested in the way in which we rationalise, in which we put into a myth, in other words into clinical signs, these phenomena which are structural, the way in which we are capable of accounting for them. And this in the stereotyped way that you know. This indeed is why jealousy — you see right away the further step that is taken — is always homosexual. The person you are jealous about is always obviously of the same sex. Or it is indeed in him that the jealous man or woman is interested.

People also mentioned quite correctly, during these *Journées*, the relation between these manifestations and what after all may be a reality. The objection, which of course is very valid, was made and comes to mind. The cue-

kold is someone who exists. In that case, how can one speak about delusion — because it is one — while the reality on the contrary supports the validity of the passion? This remark, which here again appears to be self-evident, is very strange. You should always be prepared to be astonished at what seems nevertheless to be self-evident. Why is it strange? Because jealousy seems to us to be effectively quite natural. If I am a cuckold and if I am jealous, the passion that possesses me is well grounded and is self-evident. Namely, that it is not noted in this case that the feelings which may possess the male or female cuckold could be of a different order than jealousy; there is a whole range of possible sentiments which go from rage to pain passing by way of revolt, going as far as the attempt to recover the beloved person, without jealousy having necessarily the slightest place in all of that. Why jealousy then? In reality it simply makes emerge again, but in a relation which this time is made with this homosexual third, the previous position which was that of the envious person. Namely, a dual relation, the other being supposed to possess this object, this precious object which he stole from me and whose lack is making me suffer. This homosexualised third, in this return to envy, becomes in an outstanding way the figure of an ideal since the mirror stage effectively constructed for me an image of my fellow which originally worked as an ideal for me, the possessor of this object that he steals from me by his very presence.

What may above all interest us, is the way in which, firstly, jealousy may appear to us to be a justified feeling, a justified passion, and subsequently the way in which it is, as I was pointing out, socially acceptable. Acceptable because it easily provokes, this is a remark that was made to me, effects that can be contagious and therefore provoke sympathy. This reminder and this restatement of what we studied that weekend in order, here again, to draw your attention to the trivial character, known by all, of these elements that I am re-evoking; while apparently, they remain in the shadow, which as in the previous case gives rise to a question. What type of social complicity possesses us for us to take care in a way that all of this should remain protected, that one does not touch it, that one does not touch too much these movements, this type of passion? Is it not here again differences of structure or perhaps a disposition which ensures that jealousy is undoubtedly more frequent in a woman, is this not the reason why we prefer to cover over, in a banal way, from a certain shame, this phenomenon?

Under the rubric of strange phenomena, I am going to evoke for you a third one which for its part allows us to make a bridge with our friend Schreber. Here again you will agree with me that what I will tell you, once I have articulated it for you, will appear as always known. And neverthe-

less, if I questioned you abruptly by saying: "What is a father?" I believe that, apart naturally from the writing that Lacan gives of the paternal function, apart from the reproduction of this algorithm, you would be a bit embarrassed. Unless you contradict me. If one of you does not mind offering me a definition, that would show that I am wrong. Does one of you have a proposition to make about it? Nevertheless we all have in one way or other an experience of it, under different headings; eventually we make it function.

J.M. Faucher - How one who recognises the child?

Ch. Melman - Good. Yes, it is a good definition in the sense that recognition, here, can be expressed as *Bejahung*, in other words, it makes the child enter into the world of living beings, of what is legitimated to appear in the field of representations. A good definition but which unfortunately is only one of the aspects, perhaps even a secondary one, and not a primary one, of the paternal function. So then we should first look at the paternal function. What is it? What does it consist in? I am addressing myself to the honourable fathers of families.

M. A - To give one's name?

Ch. Melman - Which is close to recognising the child, since one goes with the other in general. One can give one's name and then afterwards withdraw.

R. Majster - To possess the mother?

Ch. Melman - It is not a bad idea but first of all you have to get there, and then afterwards...

Mme B - The one who, named by the mother, accepts this place.

Ch. Melman - Yes that is also a good definition.

F. Heilmann - You put forward, some time ago things about debt. You said that the good father, is the one who does not leave a debt to his son, something like that, for things to be able to function.

Ch. Melman - The father did not leave a debt to the son? I do not know whether I said it quite like that.

[Different movements in the audience]

E Heilmann - It was in connection with obsessional neurosis, you were showing how the father of the Ratman had a debt that he did not pay and that consequently...

Ch. Melman - Yes, of course... the only problem is that I do not believe that there is ever a father who can discharge his own debt. What he trans-

mits, I believe all the same to have rather said that, you frightened me a little bit there, what he transmits to his son is of the order of debt, namely, the uncompleted task that he himself had not been able to assume completely. So then he says to him "now over to you, old boy!"

/. **Delorenzi** - To be a father, is perhaps also to lose the place of son, there is something of the order of death which passes through this.

Ch. Melman - Yes, surely, but I do not know whether it is for the father to completely lose the place of son, there I am not certain..., perhaps rather to show oneself to one's own son as being oneself an exemplary son, a model son. So then?

M. C - The one who prohibits the mother.

Ch. Melman - The one who prohibits the mother? Yes.

So then to confuse you a little bit, I will take up from Lacan the following remark. The paternal function can act in certain cultures without being in any way identified by the signifier father. That is a little annoying is it not? Lacan pointed out in a seminar that the fecundity of a woman in certain cultures could be attributed to the intervention of a particular animal, a particular object, a particular spirit, without any of these elements being called father. This indeed is the reference made to the sacred stone to which there would be attributed the fecundity of the women of the tribe, for example. In other words, the name father in certain cultures may not have the investment, the semantic field that it has among us and therefore the fecundity of women just as eventually that of animals or that of crops, is going to be attributed to an agency which is no way described as father. That is why, if we detach ourselves for a moment from the fact that amongst us the aforesaid agency is thus named, with the consequences that this has, the fact that it can be otherwise sends us back to the question, what is the paternal function? This would allow us then to understand much better what we for our part call father. There again, since I do not feel like making you pant with impatience, I will tell you that in the measure that the tongue is able to convey what will be for one and the other sex an effect of power as regards identification and the exercise of sexual desire, what here in the tongue is liable to have this effect is linked to — are we going to say the loss of an object? — in any case to a prohibition which electively concerns an object. There is no culture that does not recognise, which is not distinguished, by such a prohibition. There is something *that must not*, which is forbidden to the subject. And this prohibition is outstandingly linked to the possible exercise of sexuality and has at the same time a fecundating effect. There you have, of course, what constitutes, are we going to say, "the paternal" function? In any case, what supports the paternal func-

tion. Only from the moment that I named this agency "father" I make of it an agency that is no longer prohibitive but protective for the exercise of sexuality. I make of it this time a favourable, benevolent God who sustains me who supports me in the exercise of sexuality. On condition of course, that he gives the example himself, which means that the Name of the Father, and this is where we come back to Schreber, the Name of the Father has a very precise function. Now — and this would deserve to be underlined because bizarrely it does not seem to be usually evoked — properly speaking, in our culture, there are no longer any fathers. And if I am evoking it for you, it is because I was led this morning to debate it with some legal people. I suppose that none of you, apart from Jean Perin, know the law of 4th June 1970. Do you know it?
/. *Perin* - Joint parental authority?

Ch. Melman - Yes, there you are. Parental authority, namely, that there is no longer a father in the house, the child no longer has any relation now except with a parental authority which is equally shared, then, by the man and the woman.

/. *Perin* - There was a little modification in July of last year, but it went even further than that, because in fact, if the couple is not married, the authority was in fact devolved onto the mother and the father had to ask for it explicitly with the agreement of the mother. Since the month of July, that no longer exists, it is automatic.

Ch. Melman - What no longer exists, is the fact that the father is obliged to go to see the judge of matrimonial affairs to ask for parental authority to be divided, namely, that he has a little piece of it. I find it absolutely fabulous that we, psychoanalysts, should not know of this kind of modification of the law and its consequences on the life of our darling little heads. Because, there is no longer a head of a family, in a family there is no longer One authority. There is only divided authority, the word of the mammy being as valid in this respect as that of the... gentleman. And you will say to me "that's very good! It is very, very good, because why would it be otherwise?" Do you agree with that?

Mme D - We started, I believe, from the right of life and death over children, over women, we started a long way back.

Ch. Melman - We started a long way back, namely, from the right of life and death over the child, and over the woman?

Mme D - Over the family.

Ch. Melman - We started from there with Roman law, in any case ancient Roman law because at the time of the lower Empire, in the 3rd and 4th centuries that is not how it was. But it is true that we started from there.

Only, you know there are ways of shirking things, or installing a lack in the couple, which are at least as deadly as the fact of exercising a right of life and death. The right to life and death, to my mind, can be exercised in different ways. But it is all the same interesting for us to note. I am happy to be able to give you this information because you did not know it, that there are no more fathers.

M. David- It was so that there should be no more all-powerful mothers. What happened, is that in the majority of cases, the mother alone had rights over the child. So then, to avoid the situation, to favour fathers who had no rights, not being married to the mother, they said "in every case, marriage or not, there is joint authority". Therefore the first goal of this law, I believe, is that it gave back to the concubine the right over the child that he did not have. Namely, that a woman who was not married had all the rights over her child.

Ch. Melman - You are extraordinary, because you are coming to the help of the daddies. But what you are evoking is only a particular case which does not

Mme D - Yes, but because it gave different results.

Ch. Melman - ...a particular case and which is only applied in the case of illegitimate couples. But legitimate couples are challenged in the same way because the parental authority from which they may authorise themselves to intervene is the same for both. They are in this respect in a strictly similar position. Which means that the couple, inevitably, is a hybrid with two heads — which really gives a funny shape to the agency which is evoked perhaps in your mind — and that each one of them is going to want to inscribe descendants along its own filiation. This is what most often happens and the effects are not quite the same for the child when he is inscribed in a paternal line of descent or a maternal one. In any case, the chap who today wants to express his style in his family, I am saying no more, this chap can see himself brought before the judge who is the last agency, explicitly provided for and he will put things in order, is that not so? If this style, obviously, displeases the mammy; and what is also very curious, very interesting, is to know that the duties, the rights and duties of parents are the rights of "guardianship, supervision and education" this is what characterises the duties of parents. It is a rather stiff definition, it is quite apparent that parents can give these rights of guardianship, of supervision and education and this moreover is what is often done, to mercenary people. But in any case, this is what summarises the rights of parents.

In the audience - The rights or the duties?

Ch. Melman - Rights and duties, in other words to supervise their health, their security and their morality. This disposition, and this is why I am bringing it in, I am presenting it before you, intervenes at the end of a long evolution of parental rights, of paternal rights in history, an evolution which is going progressively to restrain, to diminish, to plane down paternal powers. There is a regular curve that marks the decline of paternal power, in particular at the time of revolutions. The revolution of 1789, which manifested against all despotism naturally wanted to abolish the rights of the father in the family. There are very pretty phrases from Cambaceres on this, I did not bring them for you, it doesn't matter! But it is really the figure of the despot that it is a matter of abolishing. All the authoritarian regimes have also wanted to diminish, abolish, weaken the rights of the father in the family. And today, we are at this point, marvelously little signalled, legally, there is no father in the family, there is no head of the family. There is a homosexualised couple, because they both claim the same authority. Before there existed also a double authority of course, but it was differentiated, the child was necessarily sensitive to the difference, to the nuances that existed between the two authorities. Here, they both lay claim to the same parental authority.

It was one of the elements that I tried to evoke this morning with these legal people, why? Well, because the father is of course a factor of injustices, inequalities, and arbitrariness. A father is unjust, there is no equal distribution, either in his heart, nor formerly in his goods — even still today — he really decides as he wants, he is authoritarian, he introduces inequality, and it is obvious that all these effects, inequality, authoritarianism, arbitrariness, injustice do not have a good reputation today. People have a poor opinion of it, it appears to be neither logical, nor reasonable. This inequality introduced by a father is nevertheless the possible condition for the exercise of desire; this injustice, this arbitrariness are obviously those of the master signifier. More especially because the cancellation of the paternal power is obviously only done in parallel with the reinforcement of established power. It has always happened like that. When you diminish the powers of the father in the family, it is always to the advantage of the power of the State. And it is obviously the case today; the judge of matrimonial affairs is encumbered by a series of affairs that previously were regulated in the family. Destroying the power of the father does nothing to destroy, obviously, another arbitrariness, which is that of a death bearing equality. Because difference is necessary for things to work, inequality is necessary, torment is necessary, envy is necessary. It is certain that the children who succumbed

a little bit too early to the repression of envy in favour of love, those in whom this repression was too strong run the risk of subsequently lacking the energy to lead their own existence. This has been clearly demonstrated.

I evoked with you the fact that jealousy was a form of psychosis socially well accepted, well installed; it is right, when we are studying Schreber, to consider that the social democratic claim for equality, for justice, an outstandingly sympathetic claim, can have this type of effect of leading us to psychopathogenic arrangements. In the years to come, we will see who is the first to be bold enough to make the relation between this law and the type of manifestations, of difficulties that we can note among the young and which one day will be confirmed in that there will thus be, not unveiled, it is obvious, except that and there again, I am astonished, I am surprised, I ask myself why, we psy, in connection with this type of law establishing parental authority, parental authority which has been confirmed, listen to me, by a vote of the United Nations, which made of it a law of universal range, namely, really the type of engagement, the force of engagement absorbed by these arrangements, we ourselves, as with other obvious things, the mother tongue, jealousy, etc., we remain remarkably silent. Strange, strange! This renews our fraternity with Schreber since he tried for his part, to get out of things in the way that we know.

In what concerns us, we who do not have to make ourselves the guardians of an ancient order, of an established order, or be nostalgic about this order, namely, the epoch when fathers have had at least the right, even if they did not always take their responsibilities, had nevertheless the right to show themselves, to let out a roar. Here, there is no right to let out a roar, it is not in the texts, in any case, not without the authorisation of one's wife. If we do not have to privilege or magnify a time which is all the same that of all the neuroses, since the exercise of this paternal right is not unaccompanied by these consequences that are called neuroses, phobias, perversions, we have in return to try to measure the effects of these transformations which surely have advantages, surely have benefits, but which also will cause a type of damage, another type of damage which interests us, that we should identify, and also know how to treat.

I will conclude this evening by the following remark, if I have not already made it. I went to a colloquium of an association of Martinique students, a colloquium on paternity. Once again, I heard the psy denounce the ravaging effects of paternal lack in the West Indian family. And they almost all did it, there also, it is extraordinary, in the name of a supposedly metropolitan, supposedly patrocetric family, a kind of family which exists no more. But they continued to say that in this West Indian family, the father

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is never there, he does not live in the house, there are children of different women, and the poor kids suffer from it! But the normative family that they evoke as a counterpoint, where is it, it is nowhere, nowhere. Where does it exist? Except perhaps in completely archaic and backward regions; I imagine that in the depths of Albania, there must exist such families. So then it is up to us to be sensitive to the subjective transformations thus induced, to the different symptoms that indisputably emerge, to the different forms of intelligence that manifest themselves, to the advantages produced. It is up to us to be sensitive to the new clinic which is emerging under our eyes, and to the new problems posed to us as regards their eventual style of resolution. Here then this evening are the three motives for astonishment that I wanted to bring you.

Do you have any remarks? Maya?

M. Malet - As regards the rights of the child, before listening to you this evening, I thought that the right of the child always manifested itself at the father's expense. And with respect to what you have said about parental authority and the homosexualised aspect it has, all of a sudden I said to myself, does the right of the child not contribute something rather in terms of a sexuation to this new authority, that it is not necessarily at the expense of the father's authority?

Ch. Melman - I must tell you that I would have a lot of reservations about this concept of the right of the child, in the measure that I do not think that one can have a valid autonomous right before being introduced to sexual responsibility. And therefore the possibility of a child's right is a problem for me. Because if what one calls a subject can only be recognised from the moment when he lays claim by his age to the right to share, to take on board sexual responsibility, I do not see, before this moment, what can sustain, I am talking from the point of view of structure, what can give a valid support to what is supposed to be a specific right. But listen! To speak about the right of a child supposes here a person who might be in competition with his partners and therefore would have to ensure respect for what he is, on his side. Effectively, note, if there is a hybrid and bicephalous parental authority, necessarily, one can imagine then that a kid might have the impression that in the middle of his parents' struggle, he has for his part his own rights to preserve, one may think. But otherwise how can you think that the parents will get into a conflict about the possession of goods for example, or the invasion of the rights of the person, with their child? What is this new type of contract between the child and its parents?

J.P. Etienne - To stay with the legislation, the law of '93 has all the same explicitly provided for the right of the child to be heard in all the procedures concerning him.

Ch. Melman - From 13 years on.

J.P. Etienne - Obligatorily from 13 years on. But below that, it is up to the appreciation of the judge who decides to hear him or not and if the judge does not hear him, he has to justify his decision. So then there is all the same in French law this principle, this right which is recognised to the child this right to have his word heard in disputes which concern him, in general family disputes. But that can also concern other aspects of the family than family disputes.

Ch. Melman - As it happens I hear at present from social workers, many stories about children who report acts of violence, most often sexual ones, but not only, to their teacher, schoolmaster or to the social worker. Which obligatorily involves informing the judge and starting a judicial action. We are satisfied with that are we not? This really appears to us to be a proof of our humanity, and who can effectively criticise this possibility? Only, like me, you know, you have spoken about it and you have written it, you know that the effects of the procedure can be more dangerous than the way in which formerly families stifled these stories, by putting them under cover between themselves, keeping them like that, closing their eyes. Which means that to my eyes, the problem is only pushed further back.

These famous rights of the child, I am going to give you — if I had to but I know that it is not necessary — a pile of examples. A little African girl who comes to school showing the marks of blows. There is an inquiry, it is the mother who is hitting her. Why? She is hitting her first of all because she, when she was a little girl over in Africa, she was hit, that formed part of the modalities, the ways in which one could be educational. It is considered bad among us but it is not necessarily reprehensible elsewhere. And then secondly, since her authority as an African mammy is no longer respected by her daughter who is into the joys of western life and completely denies this authority, she has no other means, in the eighteen square metres where the four of them are living, than to strike her — with a ruler — which aggravates the affair; even if she struck her with her hand, but she struck her with an instrument. So the judge has the business in his hands. What is going to happen, for the child and for the mother? I am not talking about the judge. What is going to happen, for them? I have no answer. I simply want to say that it seems to me that the problem is only displaced. We are not going to delay, but I could tell you twenty-five stories of this type that are much cruder and which makes us much more perplexed than this one,

and in particular sexual stories, of course! And the way in which our procedure is going to unfold, the consequences that arise from punishing the guilty... are we making progress with this notion of the child's rights? Perhaps... are we not? Perhaps... This deserves in a particular way to be observed and carefully judged, gauged.

R. Fonseca - Do you see a relation between this situation of the paternal function and everything that one sees in the clinic, labelled in the psychiatric clinic as borderline cases?

Ch. Melman - This is what has to be verified in each case. I do not think that we can generalise at the start in an exaggerated fashion, but in each case, it will be interesting to verify, to see.

That having been said, until next week!

Lecture X

16 February 1995

First of all I thank those of you who sent me remarks about the last seminar, remarks that I will take up again, about this question of parental authority which I could specify further if you wish. I would appreciate if you would also bring your own specifications.

I asked Jean Perin to speak to us about the way in which Schreber brings into play the relation between law and theology. An important question, not simply because Schreber was a remarkable jurist but, as you are going to see, it is a question which in a lateral way continues the one tackled the last time, what is a father?

So then Jean, we are listening.

Presentation by Jean Perin

The theologico-juridical delusion of President Schreber.

President Schreber admits that his relation with God surprises him, because his culture as well as his education had put him rather in the agnostic field. He was a disciple of the *Aufklärung*. The *Aufklärung* is also the natural law that Montesquieu, in his *Lettres persanes* (letter 83), expresses in this formulation: "So then if there were no God, we should still love Justice... and if he existed he would be necessarily just". Freed from the yoke of religion we are nonetheless subjected to justice and equity. We recognise in this formulation the very famous *Etiam si daremus*¹ hypothesis of theologians.

1- *Even should we agree [what God does not exist]...*

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In his delusion, Schreber is going to rediscover this ancient theologico-juridical speculation of medieval philosophy which he knew very well. He says explicitly:

"I believe, by the choice of these examples, to have rediscovered exactly the tone which throughout the centuries was that of the formulations by the scholastic philosophy of the Middle Ages on the question of predestination and other related questions".

Schreber in a passage from Chapter XIX of his *Memoirs*, expresses himself as follows on the relations between divine omnipotence and omniscience and human free will:

"Does God know the future? And if the answer is yes, how can this be reconciled with experience, where it is impossible to doubt human free will? This question has, from all time preoccupied men. To reach the correct point of view, one has to recall that in a certain sense, for God there does not exist either past or future... God remains identical to himself— this reminder of medieval thinking appears as an attempt at cure because the delusion has produced two Gods — throughout time; this is the meaning of the concept of eternity".

Then he goes on to quote examples to illustrate what he is saying and specifically the following, worthy of scholasticism, which is to ask himself if God could foresee:

"What would be, among the hundreds of millions of numbers in the lottery the one that will win the jackpot".

A question, as we see, about the relation between the real — the mass of tickets — and the symbolic — the criterion of choice. The example of the midge caught or not in the spider's web is also very evocative. In Chapter XX, he will say:

"That God cannot understand the human living being, the human being as organism, or appreciate correctly the proper functioning of his thinking".

Already, in Chapter XIII, he had claimed that his commerce with the souls had taught him that God did not recognise living beings. In certain

passages of his *Memoirs* he is going to refer back to the authority of natural law. He is even going to call on it. In note 96, he speaks about:

"The enormity of the attack on the most fundamental rights of man to freely dispose of his nerves".

It is remarkable that Schreber, a jurist, here understands the right as a liberty or faculty, namely, as a subjective right. Again on page 154 (?), he claims the right, in the name of natural law, *"not to think of anything"*.

It is time for us to refer to the essential, foundational text of natural law, which is found in *The law of war and of peace*, by Grotius (1627)², a very great Dutch jurist who was expelled from Holland because of conflicts of religion, of doctrine. Expelled?... He left of his own accord, because it is thanks to his wife that he was able to escape from prison, hidden in a book-case. So then he always lived in France and it was to King Louis XIII that he dedicated his work, who moreover had asked him for it. It is found in paragraph II of the *Preliminary discourse* or *Prolegomena*. Here is the text:

"Everything that we have said — it is a matter of the great principles of natural Law, of debt, etc. — would have taken place in some way. All the same we agree something that would only be a horrible crime, if there were no God, or if there were one, is not at all interested in human affairs: the reason for which is partly in us, partly in a perpetual tradition held by everyone that persuades us of the contrary from our childhood... Now from that, it follows that we ought to obey this Sovereign Being as our Creator... "

Then in Book 1, Chapter I, paragraph 85:

"Besides, Natural Law is unchangeable, to the point that God himself can change nothing in it. Because even though the power of God is infinite, one can say that there are things to which it does not extend because they are things that could not be expressed by propositions having any meaning".

Schreber writes in Chapter XIX:

"For God, such as they are, these questions are equivalent and devoid

² *Le droit de h guerre et de h paix*, Hugues Grotius, trad. Barbeyrac, Publications de l'Université de Caen, Centre de philosophie politique et juridique, 1984.

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of meaning... but they contain a manifest contradiction. As it is impossible for God himself to bring it about that two and two are not four, it is not possible for him either to bring it about that what is bad in itself and from nature is not such."

"Don Juan - I believe that two and two are four, Sganarelle, and four and four are eight.

*Sganarelle - That is a beautiful belief! Your religion, from what I see, is therefore arithmetic. "*³

It is true that Grotius had been accused of atheism.

I read the German, English, etc. and the three French translations of Grotius. The translation by Courtin (1687) deserves to be quoted because it highlights better the idea of place than that of Barbeyrac, in the eighteenth century:

"What we have just said would not allow there to take place — the syntactic caesura separates out the place, makes of it a τόπος — all the same, which is not possible without an enormous crime, we would remain in agreement that there is no God or that he takes no part in the things which concern us."

The verb "to allow" — does not leave — means "to cease"; it will not cease taking place, which introduces a logic of the order of the necessary. As regards human affairs *negotia humana*, these are the things that concern us. These things, the "nature of things" of saint Thomas, which do not concern God, concern us.

The first chapter of the *Memoirs* of Schreber show the relation with this theology:

*"due to the light emitted by the sun and the other stars God enjoys the faculty of perceiving, men would say of seeing, everything that happens on earth" — you should note here the notion of "benevolent spectator" of Leibniz who takes up again the hypothesis *Etiamsi daremus* — "it is in this sense that one can speak about the sun....by using an image, as the eye of God."*

This, he specifies,

"Before the order of the world was disturbed".

If we take the whole of paragraph 11 of the *Prolegomena*, we see a contradiction that has embarrassed commentators. He does not exist and we owe obedience to him. We can get out of this embarrassment by automising the hypothesis and making Grotius a secular thinker. This is what Georges Gurvitch does in considering him as the father of social rights. One could on the contrary say that the hypothesis introduces its own refutation but it appears difficult to sustain that. Our text seems to be indeed the effect of a cut, this disruption, this gap that some people have sensed in the work of the jurist, can be found throughout many medieval texts. Because Grotius is not the first to put forward the hypothesis. He should thus be placed in his scholastic framework. The hypothesis *Etiam si daremus* appears already during the high Middle Ages, in particular in Duns Scotus. And then in Gregory of Rimini. The latter, trying to define sin in his commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard from 1344 is going to combine two **Augustinian** sentences in which he makes sin appear as a voluntary act going against the law of reason. Right reason **is** the criterion, the *ratio recta* equivalent to the *divine ratio* by saint Augustin. But for Gregory, this reason **is** right before being divine. It would remain valid, he says, even if divine reason or God did not exist, or made a mistake, because the actions which would be contrary to it would nonetheless constitute sins. The *recta ratio* acquires an autonomous weight, even beyond what saint Thomas had admitted. There exist then actions that are good or bad in themselves. And against Ockham, Gregory considers it to be inconceivable that God should organise things so that he should be hated; the *recta ratio* is imposed on God himself. And nevertheless, Gregory objects, is human sin not conditioned by divine commandment? What is at stake in this whole debate is nothing other than the conception one has of the law and its obligatory character. For some people, obligation implies the command of a superior, we would say of an S_j, while for others a rational logical necessity is enough to constitute it. **The** second scholastic is going to inform us about what Grotius says is the greatest of crimes — *sine summo scelere* — or the hypothesis itself. Victoria, a canon lawyer from the 2nd Spanish scholastic period, will say that the human being, capable of reasoning, would be capable of sinning even if he did not know of the existence of **God**. This is pure Gregory! But Victoria takes his distance from what Gregory imagines, namely, the possibility of a sin in the absence of law, or even of divine legislator. Because in the proper sense, sin implies for him a law, starting from the existence of a legislator, even though the law can be

communicated by "natural light or by revelation". All these authors correspond to one another. And the fact of recognising the necessity for there to be a law, of a superior who lays it down, does not necessarily imply a juridical voluntarism. Therefore, in the mind of Soto — do not ask me who he is, he is again a philosopher, a jurist, a Spanish canon lawyer - the *ratio mali* can be conceived, he says, *estiamsi per impossibilis cogitationem loquendo nec Deus esset neque alius superior*⁴. The difference with Hugo Grotius is substantial. This time we are talking about an impossible. It is an impious crime. These theologians, jurists and philosophers, exchanging arguments and counter-arguments, disputing — what a happy period — taking up formulae again, modifying them, substituting one signifier for another, or turning around a place that we can locate as a real.

Again an example taken from this immense textual fabric. Molina, who affirms that a law must have an author who can only be God, concedes to another, Gerson, that if *per impossible* there were no God, if it were of ourselves that we had the natural light of intelligence, which shows us the good to do and the bad to avoid, these judgements of our intellect would not be properly speaking laws, because they would not come from a superior and could not then involve either fault or sin with regard to God. Here the hypothesis engenders a consequence opposite to that of Grotius. Which only confirms us as regards something constituting a cut in medieval thinking with specifically ancient thinking. Even though it is a superior that is in question, it nevertheless remains that the different rights in question do not really evoke a hierarchy of a pyramidal type, as in Kelson. This is testified by paragraph X of the *Prolegomena* entitled also by Grotius *On certainty in Uw*:

*"The actions with regard to which Reason furnishes us these principles are obligatory or illicit of themselves, and thus they are conceived as necessarily ordered or prohibited by God. And the proper character which distinguishes natural law not only from human law but again from voluntary divine law which does not command or prohibit things obligatory or illicit of themselves and of their own nature, but which renders obligatory what it commands and illicit what it prohibits, just by the fact that it prohibits them. So then, if God orders someone to be killed, he does not by that authorise homicide. **

4 - The reason for evil is conceivable even if, an impossible thought, there were no God nor other superior being.

The hypothesis implies a third term. Scholasticism and Grotius confirm that obligation originates from an S_j. We can say it like that, but by placing God in the real, the impossible, medieval speculation ensured that he exists in a different place to that for example of Marcus Aurelius:

"// the gods, says Marcus Aurelius, were in no way concerned with us, which is something one can think without bUsphemy — remember 'the greatest crime', of Grotius — why should I not deliberate in myself? It is up to me, in effect, to deliberate about what suits me. But what suits each person, is what corresponds to his natural constitution. Now my nature is rational and social."

It is surprising to note that Grotius stated the hypothesis in its medieval tenor in ancient terms, those of the emperor Marcus Aurelius. What is this impious crime, the greatest of crimes? The references of Grotius to the Stoics shows that for him, the concept of nature preserves an echo of the Greek φύσις which was totally repressed by the Fathers. Curiously, after the statement of the *Etiam*, referring to Chrysippus and to the other Stoics, he tells us that we must seek the origin of law in Jupiter himself; that the Latin word *Jus* comes from *Jupiter* exactly as from *ossum*, there came *os*. So then law originates from the dismembering of *Jus-piter*.

The necessity highlighted thanks to the translation of Courtin, in the 17th Century, we can write as 3x. Φ_χ. The impossible of canonists, we will write as 3x. Φ_χ. Our way of writing gives us the substance of medieval speculation, and that Schreber finds himself in the position of being God's wife, what the delusion of president Schreber shows us, is what the juridical canonists warded off. By taking their guarantees from God, they made of him guarantor. The commandment, the master-signifier obliges in the measure that the object has fallen. Otherwise it is the object which commands, with all the ravages that we know. In this respect, the final enjoyment of Schreber unveils for us the ultimate foundation of law. As a jurist, president Schreber knew, as a disciple of the *Aufklärung*, that human laws, that of the codes, as compared to natural law, our universal laws valid for all, were articulated, as Montesquieu showed in the *Spirit of Laws*, in Book 1, chapter I, under the category of the possible:

*"Before there were constructed Laws, relations to justice were possible. To say that there is no just or unjust except what is ordered or prohibited by positive Laws, is to say that before one drew a circle, all the radii [rays] were not equal. **

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But before the circle was drawn, did the radii exist?

Ch. Melman - That is a very fine piece of work that Jean Perin has offered us! It is obvious that one would have to listen to it again, but I am not going to ask him to go through it again, you will have this text at your disposal in the near future. It is an extremely precise work which informs us, we who are laymen in the matter of law and the history of law. As you see, the question of a law which might be imposed on God himself and the question of a law — it is a theme that we had discussed at Cordoba — independent of all rationality have been boldly tackled by medieval theologians and jurists as well as by Grotius, in the 17th century.

And this is one of Schreber's constant complaints, that the miraculous events that torment him are, he says, "contrary to the order of the world". He puts forward the idea that God himself or the gods find themselves drawn into this business by the power of Flechsig's soul which manages in a way to hamper them and to prevent them from acting, of exercising by means of their rays, the beneficent action which is proper to them. This is obviously very important for us because this poses again the question of what Lacan will call much later the law of the signifier, in so far as it invites us to respect an order that we therefore would no longer qualify as natural — we certainly do not talk about natural law — but with respect to an order which is indeed that of the signifier, because if we are to believe all this speculation, this order is law for the creator himself, hence of course, we have so easily the accusation of blasphemy risked by these jurists or these theologians.

This concerns us today, in every respect, us analysts, because it poses the question of the order that we are able to respect, even to celebrate, once we detach the law from its relation to the Father. You see that this speculation went very far because it went as far as to pose the question of whether natural law is able to provoke sin. Do we want to sin? Do we like sin? Are we comfortable when we are sinning? Do you find your salvation in it, if the relation is created here not to the law willed by the Father, but to what is imposed from the signifier itself? Lacan said that in the last resort, the ten commandments were nothing other than the laws of the word⁵.

So then, thanks to this fine work by Jean Perin which requires a certain erudition in these matters, we see clearly how Schreber comes to take up this question again, and that on this occasion, he formulates one which is

5- Seminar 1959-1960, *L'éthique*, lecture V, 16 December 1959.

that of whether if, finally, God is interested in human affairs or leaves them be. He is not the one, obviously who invented this question, because it had already been articulated in what Jean Perin has reported to us here. But Schreber teaches us that if he thinks he is abandoned by God, it is indeed because he does not find a place for his subjective position, no place in the locus where God himself is supposed to be. Because what Schreber illustrates by his failure — as always we should interest ourselves above all not in the physiology but what makes it go off track, the failure, this is what enlightens us — the feeling of closeness to God or the feeling of belonging to the divine power can only come to someone who is able to come, *qua* subject to take his place in the house of the Father. In the measure that this dwelling place is lacking to him, one can see that he experiences himself as given over to his capriciousness and, of course, with the feeling that, either God does not understand him, or that God is not interested in him. But it is true that if God, and on this in Schreber there are extremely sarcastic questions that Jean Perin picked out along the way. So then if Schreber questions divine omniscience, does he know all the numbers that are going to come out in the lottery? Does he know that in such a place, on such a day, at such a time, a particular midge is going to be caught in the web of a particular spider? Which is really a very fine presentation of the human condition, of course! I am convinced moreover that this question of divine omniscience connects up — this would have to be researched or we would have to ask specialists — with the speculations of the Talmudists about the limits of divine knowledge. How is it possible to think in effect that God should ignore these kinds of phenomena? But if God has this omniscience, and there is no longer the slightest flaw in his field, the slightest fold which would allow the subject to find shelter there; the apologia for divine omniscience is at the same time the reduction of the subject to being nothing more than a wanderer in the world. And in connection with the "wanderer in the world", I will show you the next time a very strange speculation that Schreber makes about what in the German tongue is not described as in French *Le Juif errant* (the wandering Jew) but the eternal Jew, *der ewige Jude*, and the little consequences that we are in a position to draw from it.

In any case, and before I stop to ask Gabriel Balbo, despite my intervention, to bring us his remarks, I would underline that it is only from the fact of being divided that the subject is able to experience, to live this narrow margin of liberty which allows him to think that he is not a pure toy of the signifier, that he is not a puppet tossed about by all the effects of the signifier. It is only, we see it clearly on this occasion, the division which

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protects him which is able to introduce into this system what the theologians will also call his liberty, his free will, which effectively is going to allow him to be himself God's wife, to undergo Schreber's fate. It is a dimension to which these texts of Schreber and these remarks clearly introduce us. In states described as passionate — we were speaking about jealousy the last time — the aforesaid division is effaced and the subject is no longer effectively anything but the echo of the orders that he receives from the signifier.

My dear Gabriel, I beg your pardon, I hope that by these few remarks I am not upsetting too much what you have also been good enough to prepare in connection with this text.

Presentation by Gabriel Balbo

Since you spoke to me about it and as it happens effectively I am working also on this question of the father with respect to the child, his function for the child. I am starting from this hypothesis, from what Lacan said in his seminar on the *Formations of the unconscious*, where he says that the paternal metaphor, is quite simply the possibility for the child of substituting one signifier by another, which is just as important and full of sense. And then, at that, I did a whole lot of work on it in order to try to understand myself what it meant, and this led me to carry out a whole research on the origins and specifically, in the century of Grotius, on the way in which learned men, specifically physicists, also questioned themselves to give an origin to their science namely, to try to determine what might proceed, in their science, from God and at the same time be opposed to him. On the side of the law, this is a question that I would put to Jean if you would not mind replying to it, because if this question of law, is the question of enjoyment, does enjoyment proceed completely from God or not?

What is interesting, is to see how Galileo, Descartes and Newton in their relation to God, to conceive of physics, are caught up in it. As regards Galileo, one has the impression that with respect to God, when all is said and done, the researcher and the learned man take a certain distance. Starting from the *impetus*, impetus, a term which allowed Buridan in the Middle Ages to dissociate the Aristotelian conception of the mover and of the body in movement, Galileo is going to take hold of this notion and construct from it his whole conception of gravity. And starting from this notion of *impetus* it was good logic to consider that after all, if the *impetus* was the impulse, the effect produced should usually, all the same, rebound on the cause, should reduce its import; progressively, the effect ought to reduce and soon interrupt this cause in such a way that one comes back to this inertia, namely, to this absence of work, everything coming back into order. Galileo showed clearly that there is impetus, that it springs up, that it turns, that it rises, that it grows, but also and above all....that it falls! Finally, this is going to be what is serious in the matter, namely, that for him, every movement is going to have this reference-signifier which is the fall, but which is going to allow him then to conceive of a relativity in this world of movements that he is thinking out, because it is to him that we owe the concept of relativity in the way that it is obviously going to give the vortices of Descartes. Descartes, for his part, is going to say no. We must get out of this tangible space Galileo speaks to us about. In a text entitled *Le monde et ses lumieres*, he clearly shows that it is necessary on

the contrary to think out an imaginary world, beyond the sphere of what is fixed, in order to be able to conceive of a movement which does not come from below, from what falls, but from on high, namely, from God. This time, God arrives unambiguously, it is he who gives movement to things, and this movement, like God is unchangeable; it is constant. So then things are going to have to divide up. This is how we are going to have already, as you see, as compared, let us say, to this Galilean enjoyment, a French rationality, but which all the same always tends towards a certain relativity. It is Newton who is going to give it an end, that I would call almost Victorian ahead of time because it is going to last two centuries. Newton is going to think out an absolute space and time, which are the attributes of God, compared to which all the space and time of the scholars, and of ourselves, will only be relative. And this is nevertheless what is going to allow him to reconcile gravity and inertia.

The foundational experience for all of these people was the bucket of water; you make a bucket of water revolve at high speed, and you see that the water hollows out and comes up the walls. It is hollowed out, that is gravity, and it rises, that is the force of inertia. When one turns like that, one has only one desire, it is to get out of it in order to rediscover one's peace. Well then for water it is the same! So then Newton says, that all of that, this whole observation is correct, but will someone explain to me why — neither Descartes nor Galileo did it — the planets turn around the sun and not one of them goes off at a tangent, as he said, in order to find, to rediscover finally its peace. Well then, he says, it is very simple, the fact is between gravity and inertia, the energy is opposed and equivalent. That is why they will turn indefinitely and it can be foreseen mathematically. In his case also there is this reference to God but you see that in this sequence, I could take other ones, even though there is a ceaseless reference to God to explain science, little by little one clearly sees that this God is, how will I put it, domesticated, limited in his attributes. You know that Newton, is all the same the only one who ennobled God. He made a *Lord* of him, our *Lord* — you have to know, when you visit the House of Lords in London, in future your heart will skip a beat, because you know that God has sat there in a certain way. This *Lord*, why was he thought out by Newton? Because of course, a lord has a domain, must have a property. This property, Newton recognises as his, recognises his enjoyment, but at the same time he reduces it to an absoluteness which is an inaccessible space-time, thanks to which we are at peace. And what is very interesting when you read Newton, the *Principia*, is the degree to which the whole mathematical and physical demonstration ceaselessly refers to the scripture, with quotations. There is ceaselessly the testimony taken from

God about what he is in the process of proving. But in any case God found a domain that certainly exists but which little by little is being restricted. Moreover, in Newton's time, the Archbishop of Canterbury attentively read everything he wrote and was on the lookout really for the moment when he could put him unambiguously on the index because he really had been too sacrilegious. And he was helped in this by Leibniz, who was obviously supported by the Princess of Wales. All of this was done within the family, you see that, progressively, they too tried to limit this divine power, to bring it about that its attributes should be reduced, by including it in the demonstrations that they were carrying out. Finally all the laws that we establish about the functioning of the universe, what Descartes called nature, fundamentally, more or less, God made them for us.

And this is what led me to say to Jean Perin that in the last resort, at that epoch, it was not simply in the area of law, namely, in the area of Grotius, but in the area also of philosophy and of scholars that there was this attempt to construct again between knowledge and God a proximity, a limit, or something that would ensure that one could think more freely. It being understood at that time, despite everything, that this divine presence on the side of the religious was indeed there, it was Galileo who was finally summoned by the Inquisition, it is Newton who was ceaselessly obliged to sustain his demonstration by biblical texts, and Descartes who for his part escaped to Holland to publish what he edited, quite simply in order not to be disturbed by religious people. All of this to say that the big Other presented a difficulty for them.

Obviously, when one sees all these constructions that Newton, Descartes and Galileo construct to adjust as well as they can this relation between science and God, and as regards Newton, this relation lasted two centuries up to Einstein, which is very astonishing, this is why in a way it is no less delusional than for Schreber. You ask yourself how that could hold up to the point of producing at the end of the last century ether, a concept of astonishing scientific abstraction, imprecision, but which corresponded again in any case to the absoluteness posited by Newton of a space and time which for their part, never moved. So then for a while, the question obviously that one puts or that Schreber perhaps puts, and that I am putting to Jean after all he said about law, is the following: yes or no, is the idea of God from what Schreber says of it, delusional?

/. **Perin** - All these people corresponded with one another.

G. Balbo - Absolutely! All these people corresponded with one another and knew one another.

J. Perin - And Grotius with Galileo. They were all more or less under surveillance and persecuted.

G. Balbo - One can also clearly see among these researchers this desire to give to their sciences a paternity other than that of God who was at the foundation of the paternity which, up to then, was self-evident. To take up again what Lacan said in *Un discours qui ne serait pas du semblant* when he speaks about the zero as being the point at the origin of every series, it is around this that it turns. But this is not the step that they take; on the contrary they preserve this relation to God, a preservation which is not perhaps so negligible and which perhaps also allow there to be limited certain negative excesses of scientific discovery. There is not in the relation that they have, that they are trying to establish with God, there is nothing that tries to limit the enjoyment that this freedom that one may take, through science, from him, there is also this something which would make of God the signifier of lack, what they do not have. And in general that is what I wanted to say.

J. Perin - I am not really going to answer your question, but what interested me in this study, is to see that this idea of a God who does not exist was in a certain way secularised; and it is something to which moreover Pierre Legendre is aware of in a least two books, he says it in his own way. The fact of having secularised that, this is due to Georges Gurvitch especially, is quite astonishing. This completely put this business of God..., this repressed it but it returns. I think that that is it, I did not insist on this question but it is going to return, specifically in Schreber, in a delusion. To say whether the idea that they had of God at that time or in the Middle Ages was delusional is very difficult to say. You would have to look at all the texts; when you read them, it is amazing, there is a ceaseless sliding of words. In Grotius specifically, in his "right of capture" from 1605, where he tries to legitimate the capture of a boat by the Spaniards; fundamentally, he is constructing a "law of the sea". It is absolutely fantastic to read it! And even in "the law of war", he speaks of "the law of the sea". What did they do there? For my part I think that they barricaded themselves somewhere. There is a cut as I indicated in the text of Grotius, but I think that you find it everywhere. You would find these gaps, these ruptures, in that whole corpus, not uniquely in Grotius, it is true that one has for example a negation, a grammatical negation in the text that I quoted, but there is another one, underneath. Which makes us think that there were two negations and that moreover one could write it like that, $3x \cdot \langle 1 \rangle x$ that simplifies so much, oceans of texts, all of a sudden, that brings us back to some formulae which then allow us to navigate. But they were certainly in contact with some-

thing. Grotius for example uses Aristotle in a quite extraordinary fashion, he takes the four causes of Aristotle and this has no longer anything to do with Aristotle! He is going to take the four causes and he is going to make four things, like that, and that gives him a tetrahedron. He is going to operate on that like mathematics; he was a mathematician and his idea of law, was a mathematical law — like Leibniz a little after in his *Universal jurisprudence*. Once God is affirmed in his existence, there is nothing more to do. It is quite clear in Grotius, once it has been posited that he exists, then it is very difficult. And even one could say in Montesquieu when he speaks about radii, he is speaking about writing. He says when one draws a circle, all the radii are not equal (*égaux*), it is amusing, it was not ego; there again, things are floating a little bit.

Ch. Melman - It is precisely on this idea of equality that we could now pursue very briefly the remarks that you have introduced.

The first remark will be to get you to note the way in which, in a way that one might think unexpected, analytic experience leads us to make this type of questioning re-emerge. Between the *recta ratio* that you evoke and the law of the signifier, there is a considerable step, an essential step that deserves to be underlined. Because what is right reason? Nothing is more uncertain than what is right in this matter, while the law of the signifier contributes to a renewal of the question that, apart from our little milieu, remains neglected or unappreciated. The second point, and which takes up the question of equality, concerns, after what you evoked, Gabriel, entropy, this natural tendency, whatever Newton may have thought about it, of a return to immobility and equality. A manifestation that we see being produced in an outstanding way in the field of analysis, among analysts themselves. I am always very surprised to see how the mass of things that one may set in motion, at the end of a certain time end up by becoming completely slack, and the degree to which concepts which were virulent and extremely impetuous at the beginning are deadened and no longer make anything whatsoever move. Therefore a tendency to entropy and therefore to equality. Now, here is what we can add after what you have said or what Schreber has opened up, to what I contributed the last time, these remarks on the subject of parental authority. Parental authority is obviously one of the manifestations of the egalitarian concern of our time. One can say that there is no longer a head of the family, but there are two people who are responsible, two deputies, as you wish, because they share a mission, and with respect to this mission they are found to be equal. I am not developing the effects of all of that

for the child, that is not where the problem lies but I am simply insisting on its realisation, in the very heart of the family; which again underlines this other recent juridical notion of the rights of the child, everyone here has his rights, including the child, so then a further step towards the realisation of equality, of what, a moment ago, was illustrated by the phenomenon of entropy. Equality, namely, at the same time the loss of any *impetus*, of any movement, and therefore inertia, and therefore death. This aspiration to entropy, to equality, one could imagine that it is a movement that is inscribed in the line of descent of the love of God. For what reason? Because, since we also have the testimony of it verified by the sacred texts and by our daily experience, the big problem is obviously that the father's love is not equal. Positing the father and the love of the father, whether it is that of the father for his children or of the children for him, will not fail to be accompanied by effects of inequality, of injustices. If you take our republican motto, you can note very clearly how it goes directly against love for God. The love of God is outstandingly unequal, it only leaves us very little liberty, it makes us completely dependent. As regards fraternity, we know what it is worth, it fails right away, from the start. One person knifes the other, and then another is going to sell his little brother and so on up to our day where this calmly continues. And this appears normal, it is the order of things.

The concern for equality can very well be understood, and I think that this has been said, I cannot remember by whom, as a manifestation, above all, of a sincere love of God, namely, an attempt finally to realise His programme, His intention. But as we know, there is always a price to pay; if the price to pay is inertia, immobility, boredom, death, that's another affair! Afterwards, one can do one's best to tackle each one of the problems in its time, when it arises. Let us therefore have a little look that is at least admiring at this juridical *success*, that of the law of 1970. I think that those of you who might hear my remarks as a rebellion against parental authority would be radically blinding themselves. It is simply a question of measuring and of judging what is being constructed, and how the law of 1970 — you see how I am advancing — guarantees the end of the family organisation. I think that it is possible to announce such an effect from a law of this type. This, of course, to the advantage of other organisations that will be constructed and will be founded on the principles of absolute inequality, and which will be moreover celebrated; people will find the way to valorise them, to praise them as such. But that is what is inscribed there and it is worth taking the trouble to note its premises in what we see being produced, already manifested in the breakdown of generations. Must one justify

oneself every time in order not to give an excuse for misunderstanding, which is so easy in this domain where everyone always hears what he wants? One is always, necessarily, highly suspect when one touches this type of problem. But this only underlines what is involved in our little responsibility in this affair, which consists — I appreciated it for my part during meetings, for example, with these jurists that I was speaking about the last time — precisely in making our difference understood and therefore to reintroduce into the debates this inequality, this hiatus, this disorder which we consider to be necessary.

In recalling all that, passing by Grotius, passing by what Gabriel took up again for us regarding the evolution of thinking in the field of physics, one clearly sees that what was applied was a type of speculation that is very familiar to us because it concerns the way in which signifiers hold together and the way they turn, namely, the problem of metaphor; metaphor, is one of the forms of inequality, in fact the inequality of the signifier with itself, the metaphor is saying that the signifier is not equal to itself. There is a sort of originating inequality, attached or not to the movement thrown into gear by some mover or by some evil genius, but an inequality in the very functioning of the tongue since it is the operation of metaphor which reminds us of it and which brings us back, to conclude, to the question of what is a delusional metaphor. You ask the question, was all this speculation delusional? It is really not the word that would come to my mind. I would even say that the speculation of Schreber in this regard is not delusional, but on the contrary very learned and very correct. We should then take up the question again of what a delusional metaphor is and at the same time, of what are for us the limits of metaphor.

C. *Veken* - I wonder if on the side of reification, there is not a delusional aspect to the metaphor. Because what Gabriel was saying is as if, in abstraction there was a reification of the domain of God of this property attached to his title, a reification in scientific abstraction, but always there. And it is there that I have the impression of something delusional.

Ch. *Melman* - Yes, perhaps.

Gabriel *Balbo* - It is indeed on the side of the real that they placed God, but, precisely, they placed him on the side of the impossible. All these laws, it is indeed we who have made them.

C. *Veken* - So then it is not delusional? It is on the side of the real.

Ch. *Melman* - Except that — and this is of course the reproach of blasphemy which could legitimately be addressed to them and which sends us back to the problem of the Borromean knot — if God himself is subject to

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the *recta ratio*, there is no impossible. We will try ourselves to get out of this circle if we can manage it.

Do you have any more remarks, here right away?

C. *Lacote* - I have a tiny little question. It seems to me that at the beginning of his *Memoirs* Schreber noted that he has read Kant very carefully. And it would be very interesting to continue this reflection, because in Kant's *Critique of metaphysics*, something that Schreber knew well and when he speaks at the beginning of his *Memoirs* about the categories of understanding and sensibility, he takes it into account.

Ch. *Melman* - That is a very good idea. We will find out who is the Kantian, male or female, among us, *Lacantienne*, this would certainly be very interesting.

Lecture XI

9 March 1995

We can start again then from the fact that repression is not an accident of a cultural order; it is not a phenomenon linked to our beliefs, since we can verify that it is internal to the very functioning of every tongue, because the proper operation of every tongue, which is to operate by metaphor and by metonymy, necessarily implies having as a referent, having as a locus giving sense, at least one element that presents itself as being absent from the chain, and therefore suspected of having been struck by repression. I think that we have always to come back with admiration to this seminar of Lacan's which opens the *Ecrits*, the seminar on *The Purloined letter*, where we see the way in which the principle of repression is, as I might say, still more original, more essential to the functioning of the tongue, since if the repression that I am invoking is that operated on a signifier, we see in this seminar on *The Purloined letter* the way in which it is the letter itself which originally is periodically struck by impossibility and is therefore pushed underneath. In other words, a mechanism that is antecedent to everything that we could imagine as proper to sense and which would explain, or excuse, or justify, repression. In reality we are led to think that it is because there is first of all repression in the operation of a tongue that there is sense, in other words it is not because there is a sense, in particular a sexual one, in the tongue that the elements may be repressed, but because there is at the start, in the very operation of the tongue, a repression that in connection with this seminar we see being brought to bear on the letter, that there is something sexual. This seminar is for us more intriguing in the measure that it supposes that reading or, more precisely writing, would have from all time accompanied speech, including in the populations who are apparently deprived of this graphic instrument. We will be led to look again, on the occasion of an evening that is being prepared at the *Association*, at the pro-

blem of the relation and of the difference between the letter and the signifier. All the more so because the text of another writing of Lacan on the *Agency of the letter* is liable to confuse matters.

At the point that we are at in these few introductory remarks, how is the letter isolated, since in the Markoff chain it is a deliberate phenomenon of writing? Let us suppose, for example, that a system of writing is put in place in a child contemporaneously with the exercise of speech, since after all, the unconscious is indeed a writing. It is a writing whose elements irrupt and inconvenience or oppose, or do not simply inconvenience or oppose, but come to possess or organise deliberate writing, voluntary writing. The reading that we make of the remarks of a patient suppose the writing of these remarks, brings writing into play, namely, that at such a place, for example, such a letter was modified and this modification supposes therefore the exercise in the operation of the unconscious of a writing, namely, the isolation of the letter as such, and Lacan says it explicitly, by this metaphor of lower case letters which are arranged there, or again when he evokes electric signs that move. How can we understand this isolation of the letter, except by what is precisely the exercise, in the chain of sound, of cuts able to bring about falls, or mutations, or translations, different signifying operations, signifying just as much a phenomenon of censorship as the expression of unconscious desire, and which is thus arranged in the unconscious in this sort of set of pigeon holes, a series of constitutive elements. Are we going to say an alphabet? We are tempted to say so because it is very likely that it is in this way that the alphabet is constituted; but we see at the same time how each of the letters of the alphabet has a history because each one finds itself connected to the network which was able in a way to command, precisely, its isolation, its caesura. This written letter, are we going to pronounce it in the way that, at the beginning, it came in a way to give body to a sound? In other words in pronouncing this letter are we going to rediscover the original or originating sound whose cut gave body to the letter? Nothing is less sure, if only because when we read a text we do not spell out an alphabet, and at a certain number of contingencies or of necessities, of the order of articulation, for example, obviously imply a homogenising of articulation which may eventually cause there to be completely forgotten what the original phonic expression was. It nevertheless remains that even if I pronounce differently what came at a given moment to constitute, to give body to the letter, even if I pronounce it differently, this letter for its part has as a property — and this indeed is what distinguishes it from the signifier — being identical to itself. Those who want to tackle this question and also object to the Lacanian formulations never fail

to refer to an article of Freud where he says that "the unconscious treats words like things". But here you have to reflect. I believe that the emphasis that we have to give concerns what makes the thing. What brings it about that there are things, if not precisely the fact that through its trajectory the letter is going to take on this quality of being real and of being expressed as a thing.

I draw your attention to articulations which are familiar to us, but which I would not want to become so worn that we forget all that they contain in terms of being paradoxical and intriguing. Let us take for example the *Fort-Da*, where we see very precisely that the child rejects the thing in order to better assure, or establish its presence; in other words, we see this unconscious intelligence of the child which is taken up in this defile in which he is led to live out the fact that for the object to be present, including when it is physically absent, the mother for example, it is necessary that there should be first of all a kind of foundational disappearance in order for the stable world of representations to be organised, and therefore that the child is no longer obliged to cry when the mother is absent; as if she might leave and he would never know if she was coming back; while if the world of representations is stabilised for him, mammy has gone away, but in a certain way she is there all the same, she is never completely gone. I suppose that every mammy remembers the phase when the baby — this is why the *Fort-Da* is in no way exceptional, or singular — spends his time for example throwing objects, objects that he demands subsequently, requiring to have them again in order to throw them away, which is obviously altogether equivalent, analogous to this famous *Fort-Da*. Which never fails moreover to involve for him a form of dissatisfaction since, whether the object is present or absent, it is never quite that, and as we know it is a "never quite that" that can last, which can take quite a bit of time.

Let us pose now, in connection with this *Fort-Da*, two questions. Firstly, what is this object that we describe as primordial? We do not know what this object is. When one says primordial, one isolates an element, but without knowing very well in what this primacy consists. What is its body? In the *Fort-Da* it has a body, it is the reel. The second question is the following. In this moment which is nevertheless decisive for the constitution of the world of objects, there is no intervention of a prohibitive, castrating type, there is no intervention of the paternal order, it is a procedure which appears indeed to be simply linked to the fact that the nurseling is, at that moment, engaged in his first experiences with language, except that this primordial object does not have a specific body. At the point that we are at, in the *Fort-Da*, he does not play with his excrement, or with his dummy, or

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with anything whatsoever. This primordial object, we can understand — this in any case is what I would like to propose to you, even if it is only as a tothing stone — as the isolation of what is coming to function as a first writing, namely, as the first constitution of the letter. We are always talking about primal repression. Here again the primordial principle! We speak about primal repression, but I am posing you the same question again? What body are you going to give to what is thus originally repressed? I think that you will find it difficult to propose something. What is perhaps more interesting in this connection, is to say that it is this repression which is going to create the origin, I mean that if the concept of origin is put in place for the speaking being, it is because of this first repression.

The last time, I believe that I told you that there is in the tongue this locus to which the operation of metaphors and metonymies is referred, this locus which is going to make sense and which, at the same time it seems, in a particularly widespread way, is also going to create the origin, namely, present itself as being the cause of this operation of metaphors and of metonymies; and in recalling what Lacan says, so clearly in this connection, that the metaphor makes sense. Why does a metaphor make sense? Well then, because the metaphor makes understood, or puts to work, makes function, the cut in the chain, and that is why the metaphor makes sense and why this sense is dangerously sexual; dangerously, since, as for the sleeping Booz, this will end on this *"golden sickle carelessly thrown in the starry sky"*. This evocation, as I might say, reminds us that if the metaphor makes sense, it is because what it makes understood, is what *his sheaf* makes understood... If for example the author had written "his penis was neither greedy nor hateful", you would have rather a feeling of outrage, of violence done to the language. Nevertheless his sheaf here, this indeed is what it essentially evokes, and what is to be understood in this *sheaf*, is indeed the cut which makes it possible, which means that there is a *sheaf*, that it binds (*ca gerbe*)\

Metonymy on the contrary, he will tell us, is non-sense. It is strange! For my part, I would like you to guide me from time to time about things that we go on about so much, how do you explain it? I was full of good will in saying why the metaphor, is what makes sense, I think that I have clarified it; for metonymy how can you help me? We should perhaps make a detour here through this other cause of strangeness which is this little ^-object, which is then a letter, Lacan will give it this strange status of being a corporeal object, and what is more, in a way that can appear arbitrary and on which he varied, not just any object whatsoever. How do we make the passage between this pure operation of the letter and this cor-

poreal object which, with faeces, we see clearly is a real object detached from the body, like the placenta, surely. And, as you see, Lacan does not make of the separation from the mother the locus of the cut, he situates the cut in a completely different way, he does not situate it at all, not at all, I would say, Oedipally. Now for the look and the voice, the real nature of the body object is already more enigmatic, and nevertheless Lacan insists clearly on the real character of this loss; and we can observe in the clinic a certain number of manifest consequences if, for example, this \hat{a} -object is awkwardly handled by the analyst, this can have harmful clinical consequences on the functioning of the organ, I mean involve organic lesions, for example at the level of the look; this forms part of the mysteries that the ophthalmologists know about, quite paradoxical accidents the causes for which are sometimes found, sometimes not, but in which an analyst may think that this effectively involved a too risky and perhaps too correct manipulation of the \hat{a} -object for example, and because of having hit the jackpot brings it about that at the level of the retina, there is produced a certain amount of damage, as if here effectively there was a type of validation of the fact that in order for the retina to be able to function peacefully it is necessary that this look-object should be quietly in its corner. How do we make this articulation, how do you do it between this literal object and these corporeal objects which are going to be thus separated from the body and, I remark here again to you, without a particular intervention of the paternal policeman. In general even, the need for cleanliness, for example, is something that happens between the mammy and her child; it is an affair between them. This putting in place that I am taking up again for you, for us, in connection with Schreber will allow us to isolate better, I think, a certain number of phenomena which are proper to him and in particular, I am leaving that for the moment, this question that I opened up, I am leaving it in suspense, you can well imagine that I will come back to it, but where I am taking up what for Schreber will clearly illustrate that what we make into an origin is that because of repression, in the very manifestation of the tongue, there is then here a support for the organisation of desire and therefore for the sexual sense given to the object thus repressed. Henceforth the sexual sense given to everything that creates a cut, therefore the putting in place of what we think immediately, and I think that this thinking is common to the most rudimentary social organisations, if this term has a sense, namely, the idea of the origin of the cause.

I recalled the last time, this curious intervention in Schreber of what he calls *Der ewige Jude*, which in French is "the wandering Jew", and in

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German therefore "the eternal Jew", and about which he tells us interesting things. In any case, I refer you to this chapter VI, I am not going to reread for you what he says about it, but the intervention of this "eternal Jew" may allow us to suppose the fashion in which, in our patrocetric culture, it is indeed to the figure of the aforesaid Jew that there could be attributed the cause, the origin of repression; if this is the case, one can imagine why the aforesaid sinner does not get a good press, because in order to do such a thing, it is really necessary to be someone who is a deceiver, avaricious, crafty, someone who does things behind your back and who corners you without you even knowing how. To put it another way, it is clear that the divine blessing does not happen without there being in return the curse that the subject may address to the one that he tries to locate as his creator. I do not think I am going astray or offending you too much in situating for you how, to the blessing of the one, there replies the curse of the other, in other words: "Go and fuck yourself!"

I am recalling all of this which, I believe, is very internal to Lacan's approach in the measure that his permanent effort is to laicise, as I might say, our relation to the signifier, not of course with a malicious intent but rather from a concern to put us in a more correct relation to the father which is such a twisted relation, whether we are sons or whether we are fathers ourselves and which it has to be said is such a misfortunate relation. Do you know people who have a good relation to the father? If there is someone who does, raise your hand. One finds in novels figures of fathers who are interesting, beloved of course, valorised, but, as we know this love is always paid for by the neurosis of the son. We have therefore to appreciate what in Lacan is opposed to Freud. That is no doubt why those who consider themselves to be exclusively Freudian are right in having a grudge, and even a whole lot of grudges against Lacan, because in everything that I have evoked and which is nevertheless constitutive of the subject, the putting in place of the phantasy for example, does it necessitate paternal intervention or is it not there in any case, whether he is there or whether he is not there?

So then you see the way in which Lacan's intervention turns clearly into a matter for discussion what we adopt so easily with the Oedipus complex, I mean the way that Oedipus complex comes to act here as a stopper and a closure for thinking, for cogitation. But the Oedipus complex is not an invention of Freud's. Everyone had effectively lived it, it formed part of his lived experience, there was no need to read Sophocles to have all the wishes you know about *vis-a-vis* one's father. But at the same time, is it not also true, or is it not a style of lived experience that is at the same time a defen-

ce? This is where it becomes paradoxical, this is the way in which castration becomes in itself a defence, so then really, well done!

We have had some study days on jealousy. Jealousy is obviously organised by the concern to be unique, to be the One, the only one. But we know the degree to which this contravenes the operation of desire, in particular in any case on the male side, or indeed the fact that desire necessitates this Other dimension, that the success of this unification obliterates. But is this idea of One-love (*l'amour-Un*) not precisely something that finds its source in the Oedipus complex in the relation to the father? Is this One-love not an interpretation as I might say of the parental position, of the lived experience of the parents and of the difficulty that children have, the scandal that can be represented for them by the revelation of the fact that their parents no doubt may have loved one another but nevertheless, for one or for the other, or perhaps for both, the spouse has not always been the unique object. In other words, is the love for the father, the Oedipus complex, because the Oedipus complex is hatred for the father, but it is this hatred which turns into love, well then! Is the Oedipus complex not something which comes to organise the world of representations by objects of which one has been reserved for you, has been prepared for you as being yours for good and all, the true one? Is the Oedipus complex not precisely a way of denying our world of representations, does the Oedipus complex not say something of the style "to everyone his true object", for example? Hence what I called earlier the curse by which the subject replies to this blessing that he received and the fact that he will pass his existence with the idea that he has been swindled. So then, either he has not succeeded, he was not able to take his chance, therefore he is depressed; or indeed he is a little aggressive, or paranoiac, and then he protests and says that he has been swindled, that he has been deceived. He has been deceived because he was led to believe already in the Oedipus complex that he himself was the beloved, the one-beloved. It is no doubt in this way, I mean at the narcissistic level that there is constituted the first will for unification, unification is not a good word, but for exclusivity of the beloved object, because if I am not myself the exclusive object of the love of a father, in that case what is a father? In other words, does the love of a father not suppose that his children are exclusive for him?

There is this famous story of the sacrifice, should we say, the sacrifice of Isaac, or the sacrifice of Abraham. What do you say? In this hesitation there already lies the problem, you do not know whether the sacrifice is supposed to be that of Abraham or that of Isaac. It is the kind of story which provokes — I do not know whether anyone has made a catalogue of all the

commentaries there have been on this famous sacrifice, I am sure it would take up a certain space — I heard one recently, on the part of an analyst who has a certain reputation, and that was rather unbelievable, she attacked Abraham, saying that he was a disgusting character, what a man! He hears a voice that says to him: "You shall take your son and then, crack!" And then what does he do? He takes his son, he is ready to do it and if at that moment there had not occurred the intervention that you know, he was going to do it, the brute! So then can you imagine, what a father is? And then to go on to say that Abraham is the father of humanity, no! What state are we in? To my sense, what this story is telling us, is that if God is a father, which is all the same the great invention precisely of the Eternal Jew, he can ask anything of his children, but he cannot demand of them their own sacrifice, this he can no longer do, I mean that this is the problem of the relation to all these gods who were satisfied by human sacrifices. This is the great change, it is that if God is a father, this is the kind of thing that ties his hands, he can no longer do everything, he no longer has all the powers, he can no longer be arbitrary, he cannot ask for that; in any case, if he is a father, he cannot rejoice at one of his children being sacrificed to him, this is not his pleasure now. And it has surely remained moreover, for those who know it, in the Jewish tradition, where death, whether it is accidental or otherwise, is lived with a particular violence, as being of the order of an accident, and as being particularly difficult to tolerate. We will better situate why, on this occasion.

When you take up Schreber's *Memoirs* again, you will find on Schreber page 82? the schema, the drawing that he made of the asylum or the clinic in which he is locked up and it is a very interesting drawing. Those who are interested in drawings will not fail to be astonished at this one since this clinic on this plan — which is remarkably constructed, which testifies in Schreber to an excellent spatial orientation — this plan therefore of the clinic is obviously anthropomorphic. The head is occupied by the villa of the director, then the body comprises the vestibule, the offices, the laboratories, the hall and the chapel; and then there are two wings, one is the female wing and the other the male wing. It is an interesting body as you see and this not only because this poor Schreber was thrown, at the most critical moments of his panic and of his anxiety into the female wing, on the pretext that it was quieter there, but also why is this plan interesting for us? Because you will see that there is a place where he will explain to you that God in reality is double. There is therefore a lower god and an upper god; a god who is charged with gelding, this is the god then who wants to transform him into a woman, it is an Aryan god called Ariman,

an Indo-European god, as they say, and then there is his pal the upper god, Ormuzd, who for his part has the faculty of restoring virility. You see there re-emerging with this divine supreme agency this bisexuality, one part being able to lend itself to express itself as female and the other on the contrary sustains what is involved in the male identification; and in which we rediscover obviously, for our part, this ambiguous ambivalent character of the phallus, the one that Lacan said you discovered by saying the at-least-one; instead of saying the at-least-one (*un*), one should say the at-least-one (*une*) and then he found fault also with the fact that in the French tongue, the penis, the little names that were found for it were almost all of the feminine gender.

On a previous occasion, I drew your attention to the fact that what organises our family life today is what is called parental authority, itself equally divided between father and mother, one and the other charged to represent this parental authority on an absolutely equal basis. And I told you that this introduction into the juridical field with all the practical consequences that this has in the life of families, that such a device evoked perfectly the provocation of psychosis. Why? Because we clearly recognise ourselves that the phallus is an instrument undoubtedly which symbolises virility, but it preserves also a place which is outstandingly feminine; so that libido is therefore indeed one (*une*) for the man and for the woman because it is the same staff to which both one and the other are going to be moored, going to be attached. Why should we pay some attention to this new agency which has authority in family life, and whose trace I am showing you in Schreber, because his drama is going to consist, to be inscribed in the phallic order while at the same time renouncing, in accordance to what he considers to be the divine commandment, the divine order, his virility? And you know the type of solution that he found and which cured him, namely, to disguise himself as a woman. So then, why would this parental authority deserve the psy paying a bit more attention to it, even though it seems to correspond perfectly to what the structure infers? For the following reason. I do not need to evoke for you here families where effectively the daddy and the mammy function as a perfect unity, there are families where that exists, a type of block perfectly welded together, and for the offspring this has rarely been favourable and it was for them rather the image of a nightmare. I should have asked Marcel Czermak. He brought back from one of his journeys to Ecuador, he has perhaps shown it, he loves to show his discoveries, an object which is then phallus-shaped, outstandingly phallus-shaped but whose shapes are at the same time feminine and where this unique object also evokes an intertwined couple. For my part I must say

that this type of object always has a curious effect on me, that is not all that nice. But the problem, is that this parental agency which is unique and represented by the woman, what are the effects, the consequences for the child? Well here the phallus entirely loses its power of separation and of creation, since what it represents in these circumstances, that I have just mentioned, is a couple completely collapsed in on itself where one and the other are strictly equivalent; the phallus here is no longer the agent of something which could be a cut, of what makes sense and also, this is where it becomes bizarre, of what makes a creation. The Other dimension finds itself in a way collapsed together and because one and the other now find themselves perfectly and happily united — we are coming back to this unity that I evoked earlier — they are truly one for the other, because they are both one and the other in their relation to the phallus, strictly equivalent, similar, identical and you see the way in which this type of success can only with great difficulty allow a sexual identification for the offspring, but it can only all the more easily induce in them something like a bisexuality, and at the same time here again it is paradoxical, sexual enjoyment ceases to occupy its primal place because this collusion between two partners masks what is involved in the difference between the sexes and also that what can unite them is not only of the order of love, or of convenience, or of arrangement, or of juridical responsibility, because both have the same juridical responsibility *vis-a-vis* of the child, but that what unites them is this separation which supports, which values the sexual. I mean that it is because they are separated that there is between them something sexual and that their couple then is able to present the phallic agency with the asymmetry linked to the difference of place of one and the other. I am not at all surprised that we rediscover in Schreber, throughout his history a problematic of this type and what is involved in the appearance, I mean in the making present, in the showing of the phallic, takes precedence in a way over sexual activity itself.

Here is the circuit that I wanted to complete this evening. I hope that it did not appear too arduous or too abstract for you. What interests me and what I would like to hear your remarks and your contributions on is the difference between the signifier and the letter, whose exploration can do nothing but make more firm our cogitation and our practice. The signifier is the unary trait, but the letter is not the unary trait. And even Lacan, I believe that it is in *D'un discours qui ne serait pas du semblant*, speaks about the incommensurable character of the One and the \hat{a} -object.

You see also how, in Lacan, this approach puts radically in question our approach to incest. Lacan was discrete about this, but we have to take up

what was so discrete in him; and for that reason, to those of you who do not know it, I am announcing that there has been created in our *Association* an office for lost questions, and that this office for lost questions is going to have as a task precisely to take up all these matters that embarrass us because we do not know what to do with them, and therefore we have a tendency to leave to one side. We agree to leave all of this to one side because first of all we think that there is no one to answer it — if Lacan were there, he would not have answered either — and then also it is very embarrassing. But when Lacan says that finally in his eyes there is no other incest than the one that consists in the sexual bond linked between people of different generations, an old man with a young woman or inversely. Here is the type of transgression where Lacan maps out what is supposed to be incestuous. But it is true that if one no longer makes of the mother the object fallen in the phantasy, it is all the same necessary for us to be a little bit consistent ourselves with our theoretical elements; we are really, I think, schizophrenic in our approach, we are perfectly satisfied with a *patchwork*. So then sometimes people bring out the horror of incest, sometimes the a-object, anyway we always fall on our feet obviously! This is already something quite certain. But how do you make the organisation of the phantasy function with the prohibition of incest? Now, do not start saying that I am making an apologia for incest. I was told that once, but it is stupid, it is idiotic, I do not see why it would be necessary to make an apologia for anything whatsoever in this domain, any more for incest than for anything else, even if it is more widespread obviously than is said, but this is of no special importance.

This in order to highlight for you, because we are at the heart of Schreber's problematic, the manner in which this story of Schreber gets the question of our relation to the father moving again. His own was then this famous orthopaedist, pedagogue, educator and, as you know, the little gardens that this daddy invented, have still a considerable importance in Berlin. The Berliners all have, anyway a great number of them, on the periphery of the city, a little bit of a garden which is still called a *Schrebergarten* and to which they can go, between two television programmes, to tend to their radishes and that is done a lot. So then you see that Schreber's daddy, who was then obviously daft, did important things that continue to live on. But when you have said that Schreber's daddy was therefore this type that now you have calibrated, mapped out, who made these attention apparatuses which ensured that children sat up straight at the table, etc., once you have said that, how do you then pass to the psychosis of his child? This is what we will have to try to see next time.

Returning to Schreber

Do you have questions?

J.M. Faucher - I have a question to pose about a sentence of Lacan's in the text called *Ou Pire*, a sentence which poses me a bit of a problem in connection precisely with this incommensurability between the One and the small *a*. He designates the place of in the discourse of the master as being where being makes the letter [*l'être fait U lettre*] (*U*). Therefore consequently there is something there that I do not see very clearly.

Ch. Melman - Well then! Listen do something for us, because it is a formulation that is both very precise — and you are right to take it up — so striking, well marked, bring it to us here the next time and then we will discuss it a little bit, but bring the whole sentence and then a little bit what comes before it and what follows it. But there we are effectively, here is the office of lost questions which is beginning to function this evening, this is the type of formulation which calls for our attention in an outstanding way. Because fundamentally Lacan's technique was "let whoever can understand". That was his knack, in other words: "For my part, really I am not the one who is going to force you to understand", and he was quite right.

M. David - Is the signifier that makes a trait the phallic signifier, or is it every signifier?

Ch. Melman - Every signifier, every signifier, and with in addition, this thing that is so perplexing, which is simply that this unit cannot be reduced to the word, namely, that what may have a signifying character can perfectly well be that I introduced for example, into a word the letter which subverts its sense. This completely contradicts what I was saying earlier, but here is a letter which is going to function as a signifier; or it can be a syllable which is going to have an effect as signifier, so then we should explain ourselves, an effect of the signifier, what does that mean? We have to explain ourselves on this, perhaps the word! What is worse, Marielle, this can very easily be in a word an elision and what can have the value of signifier is this elision.

G. Pariente - Disappearance in P_{erec}.

Ch. Melman - Yes, except that in P_{erec}, it is an exercise in style.

G. Pariente - Yes, but you don't notice it when you're reading it.

Ch. Melman - Yes that's true, but anyway in the case that concerns us, it is in the word, it is the elision of a particular letter — I was looking for an example which does not come to me right away or which does not seem the right one to me — and then there is the signifier which is going to have, as I might say, a surface, and Lacan will say that the sentence can, may, in certain cases have the value, be constitutive of the signifying unit.

C. Veken - Namely, the letter in so far as it is distinguished from the signifier, that is clear, but nothing prevents a letter not being a signifier, I think you can say it that way.

Ch. Melman - One can say it that way in this type of operation. But in order immediately not to leave you with pseudo-mysteries, it is quite obvious that each time, one sees in what way it is a cut in the chain, it is the cut that is going to isolate what makes a signifier.

C. Veken - It is a bit like the dream-work.

Ch. Melman - And to the point that it can be the cut just by itself, namely, nothing other than that.

Lecture XII

16 March 1995

I had begun the last time some remarks about the problem of the distinction between the signifier and the letter. Yesterday, I finally got my hands on the book that Jean-Claude Milner has produced, called *L'œuvre cUire*⁶, about which, I think, I will be led to speak to you again because it is a book that deserves our attention and our remarks. Here is what Jean-Claude Milner writes on page 128 about this distinction:

"Now, the letter is not the signifier. Their distinction may have remained confused in the first approach made by Lacan, in particular in 'The Agency of the letter'. "

This is what I had pointed out to you.

"This distinction is emphasised and is perfected in the course of the second classical period— he distinguishes two periods in Lacan, a first and a second classicism — (indeed particuUrly in seminar XX). Here are its principal elements. The signifier is only reUtion; it represents for; the letter certainly has rehtions to other letters but it is not only rehtions. Being only a rehtion of difference, the signifier is without any positiveness; but the letter is positive in its order. The signifying difference being prior to any quality, the signifier is without qualities; the letter is qualified (it has a physiognomy — I suppose he means a shape — a tangible support, a referent, etc.). The signifier is not identical to itself, having no self to which an identity can be linked; but the letter, in the discourse where it takes its pUce, is identical to itself. "

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You see, on this we are more or less in agreement, this is what I told you the last time.

"The signifier being integrally defined by its systemic pUce, it is impossible to dispUce it — its systemic place, I suppose that this is its box — but it is possible to displace a letter; also the literal operation par excellence comes from permutation (as is witnessed by the theory of the four discourses). For the same reason, the signifier cannot be destroyed, at the very most it can 'be not in itsphce'; but the letter, with its qualities and its identity can be rubbed out, effaced, abolished. No one can catch a signifier in his hand, because it only is through another signifier; but the letter can be handled, if not captured."

And he quotes a sentence of Lacan's that designates here the formula for universal gravity:

"This writing [is] is what is resumed in these five little letters written in the hollow of my hand."

In other words a phenomenon like universal gravity, is these five little letters written in the hollow of my hand.

"Being dispUceable and graspable, the letter is transmissible; through this proper transmissibility, it transmits what it is the support of at the heart of a discourse; a signifier is not transmitted and it transmits nothing. It represents, at the point of the chains where it is encountered, the subject for another signifier. The signifier is not instituted; whether one calls it arbitrary (Saussure) or contingent (Lacan), it is certainly not equivalent, but matters little with respect to what is said in the two cases, that the signifier has no reason to be what it is, and first of all that it is not as it is; because it has no identity to itself; because there is no self; because every self is reflexive and the signifier cannot be reflexive, without immediately being its own second and another signifier."

It finishes soon.

"The letter, on the contrary is always dependent on a decUration; in this sense, it always has a reason for being what it is, even if this reason is a pure and simple decision; this is why it is always part of a discourse."

He quotes a sentence of Lacan in seminar XX:

"Radically the letter is a discourse-effect. It is nothing without the rules that limit the way it is handled, but given these rules, each letter is what it is, as it is; it can have reflexivity; it has a self. Now the rules of how the letter is to be handled can be stated."

And he quotes Lacan, again in seminar XX:

"A writing... only subsists if in order to present it I employ the tongue that I use. — In other words a writing only subsists if I say what are the rules that I am applying to the handling of the letter. The one who states these rules by that very fact occupies, while he is giving them, the position of a master of the operation of the letters, if not an inventor: Prometheus or Cadmus, Claudius or saint Cyrill there is no master of signifiers; there is no inventor of them (outside God, if this type of thing were to exist). In the language of the school, the signifier depends only on the agency S; but the letter links R, S and I, which are mutually heterogeneous. Also, everything that concerns the signifier will be said in a vocabulary of chain and alterity. Reduced to its skeleton, everything that involves the signifier can be brought back to an S j (a signifier), S₂ (another signifier), \$ the subject barred by the interval between S j to S₂, a (what falls through the effect of the bar). But what concerns the letter will be said in a vocabulary of encounter, of cornering, of contact, of between-the-two".

You see, everything that concerns the letter is no longer S j, S₂, a, \$ — these formulae are no longer a skeleton — but will be said in a vocabulary of encounter, of cornering, of contact, of between-the-two.

"These vocabularies are multiple, the geometry of the line, topology, the logic of quantifiers were used in their turn. They were used particularly to articulate the doctrine of the matheme, in so far precisely as the matheme depends on the letter."

That is what I wanted to read for you and it will, I think, have for you this fascinating and dramatic effect which consists in seeing how the best of perspectives nevertheless does not avoid error. This is not what I am going to develop for you here this evening, this is not what interests us, I am taking up again simply, and I am obviously *a priori* happy to see this dis-

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inction confirmed in this book. The letter for its part is effectively identical to itself, even though, as Milner remarks, it is difficult to say that it is not the relation that characterises it. But I will take up Milner's book for you because it is undoubtedly worth the trouble and, I suppose, will not fail to impress you, and I would be very happy to hear your remarks about it and the way in which precisely you are able to draw the distinction between the riches and the correctness of this book, and the places where, in a way it ought to challenge us from an epistemological point of view, from one sentence to the other, where there is a sort of see-saw which takes place which means that one is suddenly, without expecting it, plunged into error. To give you simply a sample, can you say that the signifier is without quality? Can one even say that it does not have a self, since its quality, the quality that we recognise as foundational for it, is that of the unary trait; this indeed is its quality, it is this quality that is going to allow it obviously to support all of those with which we would want to constitute the shimmering of our world. But in any case, this unary trait, is indeed what constitutes this self. And one cannot even say that, from this perspective, the signifier does not have either positiveness or reflexivity, if effectively we reduce it to what is its positiveness, by being only a unary trait. To reduce it to this quality allows us at the same time to grasp, what we do not have in any case in this paragraph, what distinguishes it radically, effectively, from the letter. I tried the last time to highlight it for you, by evoking once again what Lacan called the incommensurability between the signifier and the d-object but I believe that now, we are beginning to grasp it properly, because if the letter, as I tried to highlight it even though this is not found, it seems to me, in an explicit fashion in Lacan, if the letter is not individualised, is not embodied, does not take on precisely this singular positiveness by being only the effect of the caesura, from the fact that in the sound chain, there will be found a phonematic element which for reasons that we do not know is found to be withdrawn, has fallen underneath.

I tried to recall for you that in this way there is constituted a world of letters, with effectively this positiveness that they take on by finding their locus in the real, namely, at the same time to be no longer grounded by what would authorise any other operation than simply that of their contiguity. What is admirable in the unconscious, is indeed that it has no other material than this contiguity of letters that do not know any punctuation. Not at all, you will say to me, because Freud clearly shows how punctuation can be understood in the dream, how a particular element can be understood as a full stop. But this punctuation does not belong, properly speaking, to the material of the unconscious. It belongs to a process that

with this material of the unconscious, articulates what would be understood by some speaker if he pricked up his ears. It is therefore the message that is organised with a punctuation. But the unconscious itself only has this punctuation in a way if it is the effect of a caesura. We can imagine effectively that in such circumstances, it is the punctuation itself that was drawn underground but it will not function in the unconscious as punctuation, it will function as a sign, as a letter no doubt equal to the others, or like a body, I do not know, equal to the others, therefore the unconscious constituted by this literal chain which does not in any way know punctuation and which does not know any caesura.

This is a domain that we would have to develop, because this unconscious, is what we call the knowledge of the body. And people address themselves today more and more, to validate an opinion or a way of behaving, indeed an ethics, people address themselves to what is supposed to be the wisdom of the body. In other words, because it does me good, it must be good. And I only have to recognise its acceptability in the symbolic field quite simply because it does me good. And my opinion is as good as yours, because mine, in any case, makes me happy, while yours makes me sad; so you can shove yours!

It is this whole movement which also ensures that what are called doctrines are thought ill of, they are completely out of fashion; the doctrine which is never anything but an established body of knowledge, and always, for its part, organised not simply by punctuation, but by a limit. A doctrine is always organised by what is to be accepted and what is to be rejected. A doctrine, is always what says what is good and what is bad, a doctrine has always in a certain way a relation with an ethics, a doctrine, is obviously on the side of the master signifier. But today, we are supposed to be liberated, and therefore fully authorised to express, each one of us, what is involved in the knowledge of one's body. This prevalence accorded to the knowledge of the body, this responsibility delegated to it to decide about what is good and what is bad, in behaviour, etc., this responsibility has absolutely flagrant clinical consequences. I am passing over obviously the consequences in the political field, but you can, if you want to pay attention, observe them in the singularities of contemporary debates in which effectively it is what are called very subjective opinions that at once decide and at the same time one sees the reticence of our candidates to express themselves starting from what might be a doctrine. But the clinical consequences that, for their part, interest us more immediately are for example in the field of addiction. Addiction is obviously a rule of behaviour which is authorised by this great principle; once the body finds that this is good for it, well

then, there can be no valid motive in the field of this world to bring it about that any opposition to this approach is justified. This indeed is how addicts think. What have you got to say against that? Everything you say is absurd, has no place, not only does not hold up but does not have a place.

We have here, and thanks to Marcel Czermak, debated at length the question of trans-sexuality; to know whether first of all we are dealing with a psychosis or not, and afterwards whether it is legitimate to authorise a transsexual to bring about an anatomical and civil change of sex, since I believe that in our legislation, it is now authorised.

/. **Perin** - In jurisprudence, not in the laws.

Ch. Melman - In jurisprudence, so there are judges who have authorised it.

/. **Perin** - Absolutely, the Supreme Court of Appeal.

Ch. Melman - Oh that's superb that is! Why? Because what happens in transsexuality? Exactly what I am in the process of telling you. There are people who say that the knowledge of their body tells them that they are of one or other sex. In the present case, it is of a sex not only contrary to the anatomical sex but to the sex of their civil status, and in the measure that the knowledge of their body enjoins them, they have no other recourse than to have it recognised.

Putting the question in this way returns us to the debate about the behaviour that we should adopt. Ought we effectively to celebrate the primacy of this knowledge of the body? Or make the following objection which moreover is not of an ethical order but of an economic order that, in this approach, we encounter the following paradox, of a neurophysiological order. Undoubtedly in this type of approach to the world, a product considered good can, at unexpected moments, go into reverse, have effects which completely tip over and show themselves on the contrary to be bad, neurophysiology in effect teaches us on this occasion that — this is also important and interesting for us — this wisdom of the body does not prevent the same product having paradoxical physiological effects. Very frequently in circumstances that an addict cannot master and that he attributes to the bad quality of the product or to God knows what else, this sample or this injection will not have the usual beneficial effects but catastrophic, nightmarish, terrifying, painful effects.

This reminds us, if it were necessary, that the question of what is good and of what is bad is not up to the wisdom of the body. The wisdom of the body, this unconscious whose material I evoked earlier as being a literal

chain without punctuation or caesura, is effectively organised by a great knowledge, because it is the effect of it. This knowledge is effectively that of orthodoxy, of ὀρθή δόξα, it is the effect of a caesura, namely, of what is attributed to a phallic intervention, a phallic injunction. And we know that this knowledge of the body, effectively is a deposit of this common sense, the one that phallic enjoyment represents. But this knowledge of the body nevertheless is not enough, since the decision about what is good or what is bad was first made in a field that is not that of the knowledge of the body, since it is the field, precisely of doctrine, the field of the master signifier. It is this field which has come to organise the knowledge of the body. Which means that in the last resort, this knowledge of the body which undoubtedly knows much more than what each of us can acquire of it, exhaust of it, handle of it, it must be said, this knowledge of the body, nevertheless, in its determination of what is good and bad, is itself the product of a decision made elsewhere at the level of the master signifier. So that the recognition of the good and the bad is made less by the exercise of corporal physiology than by signifying decision.

That is why also to say that the signifier is without qualities, is an approach whose radicalism is much too rapid. Because it is easy to see that the range of signifiers imposed on us is easily situated in this perspective; they spread over the range of an arrangement that ceaselessly tests their qualities. It is not at all the same thing if I say: "This is a man" or "this is a zozo". It is nevertheless the same person who is designated. To say then that the signifier is without qualities is at the same time rapid and disputable. But there is more, which is of greater interest to us. It is always this question of the incommensurability between the signifier and the letter, between the one, because indeed that is what is in question, and the letter. And we can finally understand whether effectively the letter having the real as its field, its base, is indeed situated between zero and one, without it ever being able to reach these limits. This type of organisation reminds us why there is no other relation between the letters than a relation of contiguity. When you take up the *Traumdeutung*, what is absolutely marvellous, it is the most stimulating and refreshing book there is because, when you see Freud studying all the rhetorical procedures of the unconscious you finally notice that they all have only one means, contiguity. Similarity, for example, just as much as reversal, opposition, affirmation by negation, the different rhetorical procedures that we know, have no other means of expression in the unconscious than contiguity. There is no other one. It is because one element comes after another that there is between them a link that you have to decipher correctly.

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But you understand also at the same time why, because of this organisation, there is no contradiction in the unconscious. For there to be one, there would have to be in this chain a limit and something which is a principle of exclusion, which says that this is acceptable and this is to be rejected, this is yes and this is no. But in the unconscious there is neither yes nor no. And therefore at the same time, of course, there is no contradiction in the unconscious. This indeed is why we are ourselves so easily and without worrying ourselves so given in our behaviour and in what is called our reasoning, to all the contradictions you wish. The major factor, and Lacan, if I remember correctly, says it clearly, is that the existence of the unconscious supposes that there is a writing, even if we are dealing with a population without writing. There is a writing and, at the same time, a reading since these elements introduced into the unconscious will not fail to re-emerge in the spoken chain and therefore present themselves to be read. And it is indeed for this reason, and we have spoken about it with child analysts, with Jean Bergés for example in other circumstances, it is obvious that a child, *a priori*, necessarily knows how to read, the real problem being to know why he is thus prevented, this is where the question obviously becomes interesting, to give to this faculty that he has the figurative expression that we can.

This leads us again to another consideration, which is the distinction between the effects of the word and of writing. Now you will see that there is at the beginning of this book by Jean-Claude Milner, that I warmly recommend you to read and on which I would ask you to reflect because you will see, I believe, all the profit that you can draw from it, a whole first chapter, "Considerations on a work". What is at stake is Lacan's. Now it is admirable! Since Lacan took care to say that really, if people were going to charge him with having produced a work, he would really feel himself to be the lowest of the low. He said it in, perhaps, the second or third seminar before he stopped. To speak about the Lacanian work appeared horrible to him. It would be necessary of course, for example, in reading this first chapter "Considerations on a work", for you to reflect on what Lacan refuted with this type of displeasure, even disgust at the idea that one could charge him with having produced a work and why a person as well informed and aware as the author of this book plunges into it right away, why he has a need for what he calls a work. So then you will see that.

This obviously connects up with the question, discussed in this chapter I, of what is the difference between the *Séminaire* and the *Écrits*; you will see the way in which — and here again, I would appreciate you being able to formulate it clearly, because I believe that from what I have recalled,

here, immediately, this distinction becomes clearer - this essential distinction is warped, I think that this is the word. And while Lacan said that he only expected effects from the word, and that he says in the introduction to the *Ecrits*, in the seminar on *The purloined letter*, the dangerous effects of writings which, he says, take wing; he has some very fine metaphors in which he expresses the fecundating and inseminating effects of the word while writings take off like so many crazy bills⁷; the bills recall of course what you have to settle, to pay for it. You will see how this distinction which is radical for Lacan is twisted by the author and how his need to twist things in this way can be instructive and educational for us, and bring us back effectively to the question of what is transmitted.

Can one say in effect, as in the chapter that I have just read for you, that the signifier transmits nothing? First of all it is clinically completely wrong. If only because the becoming of the subject has indeed as a referent, as a motive, the signifiers by which it has been marked, by which it has been stamped, and you have obviously all the clinical examples; take that of Freud and his famous *GUnz* on the nose in which, by the changing of the tongue from German into English, the signifier is not only transmitted, but is strictly the same, even if it entails changing the sense, namely, that "a shine on the nose" becomes "a look at the nose", *GUnz* becoming the English *glance*. It is quite clear that what we pass on to our offspring is, no less, a certain number of signifiers. So then to say that the signifier does not transmit anything, is a really curious proposition. But what did Lacan mean when he put forward in connection with teaching that "only the matheme is what is integrally transmitted"? No doubt it would be necessary, to explain this eventual possibility, the formula of the phantasy, *\$0a*. It is obvious that either it is transmitted integrally, or indeed it is not transmitted if I take something away from it. To understand that, it would be necessary to come back to what Milner tackles in this book in I must say, a dramatic interesting way, the question of science.

You will see he puts forward a certain number of propositions, "the subject of the unconscious, is the subject of science", "Freud's scientism", and the way in which Lacan considered that if the subject of the unconscious, is the subject of science, psychoanalysis had itself to be scientific. This book will give you the opportunity of firming up your judgement and your own positions precisely in connection with splits and delicate choices, it is therefore in this respect an outstandingly educational book, it teaches us a lot

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of things. And in particular, you will see what Milner says in connection with science and finally his embarrassment in characterising it since science is supposed to have started with Galileo, namely, the mathematising of the universe. The difficulty for psychoanalysis, if one carefully reads Milner, is that the latter substitutes for this quantification — with science the world precisely loses its famous qualities in order to be only quantified — psychoanalysis returns from it to this famous literality, which, in a certain way reintroduces quality where science had expelled it, had excluded it. But let us ask the question: can we say that science effectively began with Galileo? Even if, as Milner recalls quoting Koyre, for whom science dates from the cut between the ancient and the modern universe and that this cut is that of Christianity, I would pose the question to you in the following way, does that mean that the Greeks did not know science, that they had no idea of science? For my part, I must tell you that this seems to me to be a rather crude assertion. And not only because they appear all the same, and much more than Christianity, as the great inventors of it and that they took it after all very far.

What will we give then as a definition of science? What is scientific and what is not? I am going to propose a definition for you and perhaps you will tell me if I am mistaken, or if you have a better one in your pockets. Science is this postulate that the world is organised by a knowledge which owes its efficacy only to its consistency, namely, in no way to the intervention of some Creator, but to nothing other than the arrangement which gives consistency to the syntax, if you wish, to this knowledge. I have the faculty of getting to know this knowledge, this is given to me, this is possible for me and this type of arrangement determines me no less. It seems to me that this definition of science can be provisionally held on to. In any case, I would like you to propose some counter-examples to it.

So then, where there is a cut — here, I am taking up exactly what Lacan says — with Galileo, is when there come to be substituted for the signifiers supposed to support and organise this knowledge, not, says Lacan, Galilean mathematising. but the little letters in so far as they prove at the same time to be the support of all the values that their arrangement was able to make them support. It is in this way that Lacan introduces the entry into the field of science, in pointing out the degree to which with the formalisation of logic, which all the same began with the Greeks, the substitution of a letter for a series or for a signifier, the Greeks were not far from it, but they found themselves stopped there, stuck there. And that is why Lacan will say that these famous Jews, still them, always them, found themselves right away, because of their atavism plunged with all their bodies and hearts into the

operation of science from the moment when their analysis of the sacred text was carried out, is still carried out for them by means of a literal analysis which effectively accords values to the different letters. Which are what? The ones precisely that the letter acquires in a different chain in which it has been taken up and which comes then, at that moment, to be woven, mixed into the chain under consideration, which comes then to modify and transform the initial value. It is to this in any case that Lacan attributes what he considers to be the Jews equal footing with science.

So then you will see that, not simply about the question of the word and of writing, since now, we would have to come back to the question of why the word is able to be fecundating, and to take up again, spin out the metaphor, to say eventually why it can sustain a seminar, while you never know what becomes of a writing. There is even a strange question. Do we know of a happy fate ever encountered by a writing? It is absurd to pose this question, but after all, I say to myself that it deserves to be posed, do we know a single one, a writing of which one could say "hullo! That one really had good effects"? Go on, name me one, apart from my seminars.

Mme X - You said it yourself, the *Traumdeutung!*

Ch. Melman - The *Traumdeutungi*

G. Partente - Evariste Galois who was rediscovered by Poincaré, I don't know how long after his death.

Ch. Melman - So what, why is this a happy outcome?

G. Partente - Because he was dead!

Ch. Melman - I don't see.

G. Partente - He could no longer read him, anyway he was no longer there!

Ch. Melman - And you think that Lacan's *Ecrits* are going to have a happy outcome now that he is dead? It is a question, I find that it is a question. Do we have, from a single writing, the example that really this writing, one could say had happy consequences?

M. David - Life by life, yes! If one takes one's own life, in my life there were books that had happy consequences.

Ch. Melman - You are the one who is saying it!

M. David - That brought me happiness and that...

Ch. Melman - Listen, bringing happiness, is something else!

Mme Y - Joyce, perhaps, no?

Ch. Melman - Ah yes! There was a happy outcome: the whole crowd of parasites feeding on Joyce as we now have obviously the same crowd of parasites on Lacan! And what will we get from it? For my part, I would like

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one day here for us to begin to write a text that would have happy effects, that you would show me how that should be done. Obviously you do not dare to quote... I don't know, for my part, take the texts as well of philosophers.

/. **Delorenzi** - That depends on whether you make a difference between happy effects and jubilation!

Ch. Melman - Ah yes! I am not talking about jubilation. Jubilation, is not a happy effect, it is a spasm.

Mme Y - And poetry?

Ch. Melman - But poetry does not have happy effects, it has hygienic effects! Poetry is the hygiene of the spirit.

/. **Delorenzi** - And Damourette and Pichon's grammar?

Ch. Melman - Aaah... Damourette and Pichon's grammar! I would not have thought of it... have you tried to understand it? You really need perseverance.

Lecture XIII

16 April 1995

This evening, it is you who are going to do a little work because for my part I think I have done enough, and so you are going to have to contribute something. If you wish, I could re-introduce some questions about, for example, what I tackled on Monday evening — some of you were there — on the question of the conjugal bond and of happiness. In particular what is it that gives us the idea of harmony, after all?

Obviously, it is not for nothing that music very quickly fascinated people, or mathematics. But we may think more immediately from where the idea comes to us of a possible harmony, even if it is not realisable; whatever may be the fundamentally heterogeneous character of the places of a man or a woman, even though these places are in no case able to connect, to fit together, to create a unit or even simply be inscribed in the same space. What no doubt gives us an idea of harmony is that these two places which are so heterogeneous are nevertheless joined by the possibility of a common enjoyment (*puissance*), of an enjoyment that is one, the same. If we were to suppose that the enjoyments of each one of these two places were different, we would not, I think, have the slightest reverie about the subject of harmony. We would have fundamentally renounced it; we would not know what it was. So then, if we are fascinated or solicited by harmony, it is no doubt thanks to the fact that there is effectively something that creates a bond. When one says the conjugal bond, it is almost an obscenity because what creates the bond, we know what that consists of; precisely this instrument which is able to start from one side or the other of a single enjoyment. This is what makes the bond.

So then, without our being able in any way in what concerns us, to bleat about the possibility of realising conjugal harmony, even if this is proposed to us as an imperative, as a duty — moreover it is not rare for the rea-

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lisation of harmony to be experienced as a sort of scenario proposed to families, to children, to the entourage as a success — as the accomplishment of a task; the couple must be in harmony. And we obviously understand why, since precisely, the discord proper to the couple is an offence to this imperative that for us is divine. There is therefore first of all the question of knowing how, in this discord, we can nevertheless express something that is different to the interpretation of this discord as the cause of a tearing apart and of conflict and of the consecration of failure. Since we know that the most usual thing is that in a couple each one takes on him or herself or takes from the other, or puts on the other to the debit of the other, the flaw internal to the constitution of this couple, internal to its constitution, since without this flaw there would be no couple. This flaw then is necessary, and at the same time, this flaw is experienced as the cause, no longer of discord, but of what will be experienced as a tearing apart, a scandal and a tragedy.

The tragedy is very important. The tragic moment is no doubt the one when the subject lets himself be possessed by the hue and cry, the demands of what in him is opposed to this scandal of discord. The agency which in him protests against the scandal of discord, is obviously the phallic agency in so far as discord is an insult, is an offence directed at the power of the aforesaid agency, and that one can understand tragedy as the moment when the partners allow themselves to be possessed by this scandalised passion, but when, in a way, they abolish themselves as subjects, and no longer allow there to be heard anything but the voice, precisely, of this agency which protests against the insult done to it. On Monday evening, I said some words about the etymology of the term tragedy, which I remind you is formed from *τράγος* which means he-goat and *ωδή* which means song. And the competent etymological dictionary gives this comical explanation: tragedy is supposed to be the song sung — it is so funny that I cannot even manage to find this droll invention that it gives — ah yes, it is supposed to be the song that is offered to obtain, as a prize, the he-goat which is the stake in the competition. But then, this etymology is absolutely droll because when you simply go and look at the Greek, you find, much more simply, *τράγος*, it is then the he-goat, but also — I am always delighted because when I go into etymology, I always believe I am fantasising, that really I am surrendering myself to the capriciousness of my wanderings, and then afterwards I search a little bit more seriously and I see that it was there, so I tell myself that I must have read it a long time ago and that it has just come back to me. *Τράγος*, the he-goat, but it is also puberty, the first desires, lewdness, which means that *τραγωδέω*, or that *τραγωδία*, the sub-

stantive, is exactly what I was telling you on Monday evening and which seemed to me to be daring: it is the song of the he-goat. You see! So then τραγωδέω, the verb, is to sing during the immolation of the he-goat at the feast of Bacchus, but there is no reason, obviously, not to continue to understand tragedy, as being the fact that, when you become tragic, the he-goat in you starts singing. If you say that, at least you know how salubrious and therapeutic it is, you have to take a shower then, because obviously τράγος also means the smell of the he-goat under the armpit. The Greeks went straight to it. So then when you start on your tragic party piece, you should begin by having a good sniff and then take a shower and that should fix things.

The surprising thing, I am more and more surprised and astonished at what we know, because the whole effort of our culture consists obviously in encouraging the capture by knowledge of a certain number of very savage passions. And the great idea of culture, is to dominate by reason, by knowledge, by the concept, a certain number of urges, of passions. If not, what is knowledge? If it is simply technique, it becomes very annoying. Now - and this is what I am recalling for you - how does it happen that this knowledge that we may have about this fundamental conjugal discord, about this discord which is constitutive of the *a-conjugo*, and which authorises sexual enjoyment, which allows it, how does it happen that this knowledge in no way prevents us from continuing to live the *a-conjugo* like barbarians, this is the term that I used, namely, like completely ignorant people. As if we were people who had not the slightest idea about this and that we continue in a way to produce the song of the he-goat; that we consider, one and all, that this is what ought to dominate over the knowledge that we have of it.

It is strange and one could ask oneself what creates the resistance for it to subsist in this way and that we prefer to live out the conjugal relationship in barbarism, like ignorant people. What creates the resistance? Why, after all, should we not consider that the conjugal relationship can do without the periodic intoning of the song of the he-goat? Obviously, we would do well to remember that after all, aggression in the couple, I mean participation in the tragic, forms part no doubt of the amorous display. It is clear, it is certain, when you look, in Paris it is easy, the pigeons going about their business, you see that there is a whole scenario made up of pursuit, of pecking, flapping of wings, refusals, songs, etc. But obviously aggressive expressions are not lacking. So then perhaps we can limit ourselves to preserving in a way what in this case should be better distinguished as forming part of the sexual display, this part, this aggressive repre-

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sentation which normally enriches our conjugal life. Except that it does not seem that the novelists or the dramatists have especially taken it in this sense. If this were not the case, it is perhaps, it is one of the hypotheses that I made, because the conjugal scene constituted today the place, one of the rare places perhaps, where we have the leisure to be possessed by the he-goat, that there are perhaps not a lot of places that we can have the opportunity in a way to let the he-goat sing, to hear his song and to make him sing, and that it is necessary to maintain, to defend in a way, the barbarous situation that we are living. Barbarism begins very simply when each one starts to reproach the other for a type of deficit that is independent both of his person and of his acts and which precisely is the deficit constitutive of their encounter, the *a-conjugo*. I am passing over obviously a whole lot of other considerations; I am not in the process of constructing a physiology of the *a-conjugo*, I am speaking just about this point. And barbarism begins with the radical refusal to bring into play this knowledge which is within everyone's reach. The other is perhaps involved in it in some way, or he is more often not involved in it, in any case, this is not where the problem lies. This poses a much more general question, of considering whether the totality of the circumstances which we use to express conflicts and perhaps to let the song of the he-goat be heard, is made up of **TOJtoi**, of events which are displaced; we spend our existence, caught up in conflicts which are always displaced, which are never, I would not say the right ones, but the right one. Because all the conflicts by which we are captured concern in fact a foundational, fundamental discord that for its part remains in a shadow, keeps being avoided. These conflicts can concern private life as well as their collective expressions in social life. Which means that there is no enterprise of this kind in which we can become engaged which is not an enterprise that is condemned to fail. Our conflicts are then systematically false conflicts, and so then it is hard to see how they can succeed.

So then you will say to me, OK, but in that case, does this mean no longer being duped? This real conflict of which you speak, this discord, what do you do about it? What are you going to make of it? How is it expressed in action, this reaction to real conflict? And have you ever seen this real conflict, being expressed precisely in a scenario, in a drama?

Well precisely, that never has been seen! It has never been seen because this true conflict, once it has been identified, is no longer a source of conflict. And it is not the source either of what might be a desperate attempt to sing a duet which for its part would be in tune, in other words to overcome discord. But it would surely concern what, starting from this

factual situation, should be the approach of both, not to resolve this discord, why after all not make it fruitful, and why must we resolve discords which are obviously the matrices of life, why do we have to resolve them? But why also do we have to live them in conflict and in conflicts that are completely displaced and lying with respect to their matrix? So then what would be surely proposed in that case, if it were thought out, would be a way, other than conflict, of living out discord and something different to the **Utopia** of an **impossible** harmony. Something different, but what? What would this be? Well then, this is a question which does not appear futile to me but which would make the habitual scenarios of conjugal life, which have a considerable conformity, less stereotyped and less annoying.

The problem is not to aim for happiness because happiness has the particularity of not being able to be aimed at; once you aim at it, you cannot but miss it. Perhaps we are encountering here a precise historical situation that comes from Saint-Just. He recalls this moment when "happiness became a political factor", when the question of happiness entered into history, when happiness became a demand. This did not happen of itself, but obviously after a certain number of works, of discourses, in particular those of our philosophers of the 18th Century, of Rousseau among others, since no doubt harmony is the phantasy of a paranoiac. This demand for happiness condemns it to be missed; this is clear and verified. It is not a matter in any way then of bringing up the question of happiness in this affair, a demand for happiness, because happiness here again, can only come as a bonus. It does not care whether we deserve it or not. But this bonus can only in a way show itself obviously in the measure that the rules that organise our conjugal life are respected. It is a capricious bonus, it is not at all obligatory or necessary. But in any case it is possible for it to show itself from the moment that these rules are not contravened. That is why I gave the appropriate etymology of happiness, the fact of knocking into the right place, not to knock up against just anything whatsoever.

Knocking into things is very important and not only in schizophrenic kids. If they knock into walls, it is because they were not given access to the knock that would have allowed them not to be carried away by this flux of anxiety and despair, hence the need these kids have of finding something that resists and hurts them. Only we may consider that it is not the right sort of knock (*le bon heurt*), and moreover this does not bring about their happiness (*bonheur*). But we, we for our part are like them. We also, we knock ourselves against anything. We use the pretext of everything that can serve as an apparent obstacle to bang our heads against it and, obviously, do not encounter any other happiness than that of masochism which is not

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nothing but is not everything either. Hence the resurgence once again of the question, what is the obstacle to these truisms that I am proposing to you, because they are trivial. If you take the formulae of sexuation what I am telling you is found in these formulae, is that not so?

So then to try to understand what creates the resistance and why we prefer to bang into anything whatsoever like little autistics, this is why it is intolerable for us to see a child of eighteen months or two years knocking his head against walls, it is because he gives us an image of ourselves and the question is then to know what is displaced by this type of remark that I am in the process of making. The question was put to me by one of you, this knowledge that I was talking about on Monday evening, which ought to allow us the right type of knock, (*le bon heurt*), what is its object? It is true, knowledge has necessarily an object. What one? What is it the knowledge of? Here there is an answer which in any case is the one that came to me and effectively, which I tell myself if it is the right one, explains perhaps the why of this refusal. This would lead us to take up again what Freud said with his bloody death drive, because what has not been sufficiently remarked on, is that with the introduction of the death drive and in so far as it proves to dominate Eros, to be prevalent, the object of psychoanalysis changes, it is no longer the same. Up to then, the object of psychoanalysis, was precisely Eros, in other words the he-goat, this little thing that stinks, but which has an effect. When you introduce the death drive and when you say that it dominates Eros, from then on what is the object? The object is death.

Lacan for his part says that this he-goat, is also the emblem of death, in other words, he refuses this separation into two antagonistic drives to say that the sexual drive is not separable from the death drive. But we could say then that death is the hidden face of the he-goat. If the he-goat is there to give an image of forces of life, death is his hidden face, even though this he-goat is not without all the ceremonies which consist precisely in putting him to death, but anyway, I would be really incapable for my own part of getting very much from it. Moreover, we are not very well informed about these cults which were often, as you remember, secret, esoteric.

What is verifiable, is all the same the following: neurosis is what? It is a defence against life, it is a defence against the he-goat. Which does not mean that the neurotic is an apologia for death, because to be a defence against the he-goat, is at the same time ignorance of death, it is at the same time a refusal to know it. Every time social circumstances make death present in a community, life suddenly takes on a value and a flavour that it did not have the previous day. What seemed up to now to be a daily banality, suddenly

becomes the gift that is granted every morning. Perhaps we evacuate death so much from our conceptual and social system that, precisely at the same time this evacuation allows us to despise life, to snub it, to protect ourselves from it, to answer it by all the ruses that we have. Stamp on the thing! Or again to take as a burden all that we know about it which is very rich. But if this ordinariness is put into perspective by death, it becomes completely different. Now, how does it happen that this putting into perspective, that this perspective should be systematically obliterated. No doubt, in our culture, we receive life as a gift. And anything that is a gift, a present, we are always suspicious of, we are embarrassed by it. When someone arrives at your house and offers you a beautiful present, a real present...pffft! How are you going to manage it? Well there were happy societies, this still exists a little in a spontaneous form, where one answered by a bigger gift and the other has to answer you by a gift.

/. **Mimran** - The potlatch!

Ch. **Melman** - And everyone, like that, at the risk, of course, of ruining oneself and this does happen in African societies. It is a way of trying to settle the problem. It is clear that for us, this gift that we receive, life as a gift, we do not know very well, we answer or we do not answer very well, because we are essentially trying to dampen things down, namely, to play dead. Neurosis is a particular way of playing dead. And if a war breaks out, you see neurotics adjusting themselves very well all of a sudden! States of depression also. People of my generation had the advantage of knowing that close up and in this respect war is a remarkable medication.

So then, first question, how does it happen that we obliterate to this point this fact that our life is put into perspective by a point, even one situated at infinity, it does not matter, which is not that of a look since we put there a look on which we bestow eternity and therefore no doubt we believe ourselves at the same time to be eternal, but a point which is rather a black hole. How does it happen then that we completely obliterate this putting into perspective and believe ourselves to be eternal?

On the whole, when you see how we live or when you listen on the couch to how we live, it is obvious that everyone lives as if he were eternal, really as if, day after day there was no urgency. If there were a feeling of urgency analyses would not last so long, people would hurry up a little, would look at their watch and say "hey! I have to..." But it is not the case. Everyone lives absolutely as if one morning was going to follow another morning. That may appear curious except when you think that this famous

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object of the knowledge of the psychoanalyst one that is able to correct what is involved in our deliberate and prolonged defect about the *a-conju-go*, that this knowledge has an object which, as Freud says, is no longer Eros but death. And if you put in the centre of the couple an object of this type, you will see how many conflicts are relativised by it in a surprising way, take on a more exact, a much more correct dimension. How does it happen then that we continue to want to hide to this degree what I called earlier this hidden face of the he-goat? Why do we always want to live as if we were eternal?

So then life as a gift, life as eternal, all of this has obviously the closest relation with this Father who is supposed to have given us this life. As if his own death guaranteed for us our eternity, something of that order. Lacan gave an answer — hey, I said that I was going to make you speak! — one day; from the time that he began to show the signs of his age, questions arose in public about the imminence of his death. I well remember meetings of psy, and people bluntly throwing in his face that after all, if he was saying what he was saying, etc., it was perhaps because he felt he was getting close to the black hole. And Lacan who in this regard had a certain stoicism answered his young interlocutor "it would seem that you yourself think that you are immortal!" which was surely the case... because it is the case!

So then this type of remark makes us advance into what an institution is. Because what is proper to an institution is to hold together what is in discord, the two heterogeneous places, that is the task of the institution. Like the institution of marriage, and other institutions, any ones you wish, religious, teaching, society as such. We are going to elect our next president; the whole work of the president, is to hold together people who occupy heterogeneous places and therefore risk giving expression to conflicts whose virulence can go very far, the aforesaid virulence having never resulted in anything whatsoever being resolved. Never! The work of politics, when it is good politics, is to say what is necessary, to give the speeches that are necessary, to let go what is necessary so that it continues, so that the marriage holds together, carries on. Today people talk about social breakdown, etc. you have to grant what is appropriate and to grant means first of all providing the discourse that allows it to hold together. On Monday I used a formula which appeared to me to be good in this discord, what makes itself heard from the place of the object is always what objects. The subject, when he makes himself heard by taking a reference to the object, always objects. In other words, there is always some objection. As long as there is an object, there will be objections.

There are women obviously who want the aspect of object to be set

aside and that what should above all be heard, is the objection, which gives the certainty at that moment of having a soul, because the soul, is obviously what makes the objection, what objects. And then again one hears this protestation: "He treated me, he wanted to treat me like an object!", which seems to be the worst of insults. There again, it is very droll, because after all, to want to treat someone like an object, is it not also the supreme compliment! After all what can one do better? It is not treating him as a representation, as a semblance. It is therefore something very risky. But this gives rise to the objection: "He wanted, he wants to treat me like an object and therefore is not concerned with my soul". I am only mentioning that simply to recall not the tragic but the comical side of our love life and of our loving dialogues, because this is part of them, is usually very well accepted, accepted with all the compassion coming from the heart, from the entourage.

As regards the institution, in particular the analytic institution, one of the big problems — I must say one of my great torments — was to see from the beginning that it is not that the analytic institution has not resolved discord — because in an institution, there are then two heterogeneous places, and there are therefore always people who think they are functioning at one place or at another, and therefore there are always objections, complaints, demands, etc. — so then the problem was not that of the flagrant disagreement that dominated this milieu, because I do not see why the analytic world should be a happy island, but that in any case, this state of disagreement, of war between people seemed to be taken as the natural state of social life. I sincerely confess to you that I cannot settle this. This war that was carried out between colleagues seemed to be recorded each time by them as the natural order of the aforesaid organisation and there could be no recourse from it. Should we then take this discord as a happy generator of this war that has been celebrated as the source of everything and therefore respect in our social life, the war of each person with respect to the other? Must we consider it to be the last word that we have to articulate about this discord, or rather being articulated from this discord? Or indeed should we envisage that, this discord being in its place, it is not perpetual or universal peace that is henceforth indispensable; we are not going to write like Kant a *Project for perpetual peace*; but that war is perhaps not the last word of what can be understood from this discord, because war can only sharpen the edge of this discord without other consequences. What other consequence can there be?

This is a reprise of some remarks on this question, remarks made in a very, very strange atmosphere, because I am supposing that these trivialities

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about the question were never articulated. Which is already very curious, if it is true! If you can bring me a text in which this was spelt out, I would be delighted.

G. Pariente - Heraclitus!

Ch. Melman - Not about the *a-conjugo*.

G. Pariente - The logos which is always...

Ch. Melman - Yes, yes but not in connection with conjugal life, that was not his concern. And besides, precisely, our question is whether we are going to be satisfied with celebrating war.

/. *Mimran* - If I may...

Ch. Melman - What is it Jacques?

/. *Mimran* - You don't seem to believe a lot in the couple!

Ch. Melman - I agree.

C. Lacote - People usually oppose conjugality and liaison and Lacan, I no longer remember where exactly, said that the couple in analysis, between the analyst and the analysand, was a true liaison. There is something in the analytic liaison that leads to this good knock (*bon heurt*) with respect to the real. In particular, it is with respect to that that the end of analysis can be defined. On the other hand, one has constant clinical experience of the good knock in the very course of analytic work while the conjugality of the patient is resisting what you have just described. So then how are we to think of this opposition between liaison and conjugality, given that Lacan does not seem, as regards the analytic liaison, to oppose in a special way the fact that there is on the one side abstinence, on the other sexual enjoyment? This is not what appears to him to be what best discriminates.

Ch. Melman - **Yes**, yes, that is very true, except that what is at stake is a liaison that in the most ordinary cases, remains chaste, in other words is not put to the test of what conjugality implies. So then it is very true and it is effectively something to be thought out, the fact that the analytic situation is a liaison. But it is a liaison protected by the rule of abstinence.

C. Lacote - Yes, but he takes, he could have said "a chaste conjugality". He said "liaison".

Ch. Melman - No. But I find it very good effectively to introduce in this connection this remark that the analytic situation breaks this discord, but at the price, I am saying, of the rule of abstinence. It breaks it and perhaps this is precisely what gives it its charm.

D. Sainte Fare Garnot - Is it because of this discord that you spoke about *a-conjugo*, to be understood with a privative a, while habitually, you speak about the *conjugo*?

Ch. Melman - But yes, exactly! Absolutely! I will all the same have introduced a word into the dictionary, it will be *Xa-conjugo*, with 1 apostrophe. Absolutely! This being so, what I am articulating for you is produced, I assure you, in a cultural context which is extremely strange and which I have, for my part, a certain trouble in defining, but which is precisely the disdain, the refusal of any structural reference. This is what is called the refusal of ideologies or of doctrines, which is nothing other than the refusal of coherent thinking. Now happiness is only linked to the emergence of a sign saying "that's good!" and not to what is supposed to be a state of the body. For example, take a situation like addiction; it seems to privilege the knowledge of the body since it is the body that settles and decides what is good or bad; at the same time, all other knowledge is rejected, the addict does not believe in any knowledge other than that of his body which knows what is good or bad. Now, what do you see in him? Firstly, the same product can have quite paradoxical effects. He will explain it by saying that it was impure, or that it was shoddy goods, or something or other, but in reality, it can be completely the same and have radically opposite results. Instead of getting a *flash*, it can be catastrophe. That is a first remark. Second remark. To be convinced that the drug is good, he very often needs a pal or several pals so that they do it together and then he can verify in the other, in his fellow, that it is good. Because if it is good for the other, then at the same time, it induces the fact that it can be good for him. It is obvious that it is reciprocal.

We see then, as I might say experimentally, that where one would want to affirm this belief that happiness comes from a state of the body which promotes itself, I would say as such, even here, it is nothing of the kind; in any case, it is not guaranteed, not at all guaranteed, so then an indicator is necessary, there must be a sign which says "that's good!".

So then in the case of our *conjugo*, what might be the indicator to say "that's good"? Well then, it is outrageous to say it, and that perhaps explains why it is refused, this indicator has no other shape than that of death and it is what says "But yes! Life is good!". Because as long as only the *Bejahung* was at stake, namely, what was put in place as good starting from a paternal imperative, because it is reduced to this in the final resort, well then, you can always question it and believe that it was good, it was rather something on the side of waste product, of what was rejected, refused. There are people who spend their lives going through dustbins, and not simply because they need to but because they are convinced that finally what is good and rich is found there and that the invitation addressed to them to stop it was false; they were deceived. The indi-

cator that I am in the process of evoking is therefore of a different order to that of the *Bejahung*. I obviously would not know what to call it, for the time being.

M. Arnoux - But at the level of children, of small children, when there are small children, amongst what is most terrible for them, all the disagreeable things that may happen to them, anyway one of the most dreadful things, is when they learn that it is going to happen to them, that they put questions about the fact that they are going to die one day, and I find that this is always an extremely difficult moment, there is nothing more frightful than that.

Ch. Melman - I don't know. There it would be necessary no doubt, it would be a good thing moreover to collect the works that have been done on this, if they are interesting, on the modalities the child takes up on learning about the deaths that may happen in his entourage, and to my knowledge these are extremely variable modalities.

M. Arnoux - No, not the death in the entourage, no, the fact that death in their entourage prefigures their own eventual death.

Ch. Melman - I don't know what they put under this term. It is not enough to use the signifier for it to be death that is at stake; and no doubt we ourselves would have here... anyway, in short!

S. Thibierge - As regards your remarks this evening which effectively clarify a little certain aspects of those on Monday, how do you judge baroque art, which was all the same an art which showed this indicator that you are evoking this evening? Do you think for example that the social bond which took its authority from this epoch that is now gone — since we are no longer in an epoch in which, I believe, people take their authority from the baroque — had a relation of a quite different order than ours to this type of indicator that you are evoking?

Ch. Melman - Listen, I must admit that I have not thought of it. Your remark appears interesting to me, like everyone else I was very interested in baroque art being obviously sensitive to its very joyous, very gay, very stimulating character, the type of acceptance that it seemed to imply. But no doubt I ought to take up the question in order to answer you otherwise than in a cutting way. Perhaps you are right but it would be necessary to look again at the place given to death at that epoch, perhaps what baroque art also owes to the great crossings that were being risked at that moment. I don't know, I can't answer you, Stéphane.

C. Lacôte - To answer Stéphane a little bit, when we did the cycle on the baroque at *the Maison de l'Amérique Latine*, all the same there is a very distinct element of what you are saying in this indicator, the fact is that death

is always linked to the extreme vision that one may imagine that God has of it, namely, that God is in the circuit, while the indicator of death, even though Lacan takes it up, a little bit like the relation of Freud to God, does not seem to me to be linked to a perspective of change and of metamorphosis but of going to the limit.

Ch. Melman - Undoubtedly!

V. Nusinovici - Sir, in connection with this indicator, does it make itself present in the same way to the two parties, to each sex, and do they have the same grasp of it? Is it synchronically the same thing or does that push back further, does that displace the question of discord or put it differently?

Ch. Melman - Yes it's true, it's a question. I don't know, I couldn't tell you, Valentin. Because one sees here that effectively, if Eros is a source of common enjoyment, here it is not at all a matter of a referent which gives rise to a common enjoyment which might be for example of a masochistic type. This is not at all what is in question. It is a matter simply of the type of referent that might give its value to this enjoyment and render vain or futile the habitual modes of defence against it. Now, is it the same apprehension? I do not know.

G. Balbo - What you said about the way of finding the strange outcome that war is to this discord or to this heterogeneity in societies and in institutions, made me reflect a lot on the way that one sometimes finds there being produced in treatments something about three which is not a symbolic outcome, precisely, and which is producing three in a way that would be, fundamentally, something that not alone does not resolve the question of heterogeneity as you have posed it, but consolidates it in a way, I would almost say starts it up again. And it is not only in the clinic that one sees this. For example also, this heterogeneity as you develop it, I find that very interesting, it seems to me that one also finds it in the relation that can be established between the clinic as one observes it and the theory that one makes of it. You know, one sees that particularly in child analysis, clinical observations of such precision that they become in a way the ell by which one measures the theory that one constructs of it; but, and this is a three which is not a third or symbolic outcome, the fact is that this ell becomes very quickly the metalanguage of the theory of the clinic that one has observed, namely, that quite calmly, one is like that in this three which is supposed to be the Other of the Other. And then still in this perspective of three, or rather this production of three that one has in the treatment and, as you say, in war, perhaps also it would be a way, what you say there about discord and about the good knock (*hon heurt*), could be a new way, any-

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way another way another way of tackling the *sinthome* as Lacan theorised it in his seminar.

Ch. Melman - Mm, surely!

D. Sainte Fare Garnot - In connection with what you were saying about the neuroses that more or less disappear during war, I would like to put two questions, or perhaps an objection first of all because that filled the churches and the other places of worship, so then it was rather something that generated neurosis, all the same you see that always in times of conflict. And then the question: is it not this object that is completely outside — the war is completely outside — instead of being inside, at once real, and with its imaginary effects.

Ch. Melman - Perhaps.

/. **Mimran** - But there is a book by Lacan with Henri Ey, on the disappearance of psychoses in times of war, in England in particular.

Ch. Melman - Yes, it was with Lebovici that he did that. You are right, he made some remarks on this, yes. Remark, other disturbances obviously appear in time of war.

/. **Mimran** - And when the war stops, the symptoms come back.

Ch. Melman - Ah yes! So then you see that it is a powerful treatment.

Lecture XIV

11 May 1995

So as not to find myself too divided, from organising the different centres of activity that occupy me at present, I am going to try and connect them up, thanks precisely to Schreber. I will try to show you how our common destiny seems, more and more, to be effectively Schreberian. In this diversity that currently occupies, captures me, I will note once again a phenomenon which does not fail to surprise me and appears to me to deserve better than simply contempt, disdain or acrimony with respect to our colleagues. This remark concerns the ineluctable tendency, the apparently fatal slope of our associations, of our groupings of psychoanalysts, to renounce the specificity of our discourse in favour of others, that are not better constituted or perhaps are better constituted but which clearly exercise attractions that we understand badly. Because the problem of a grouping of psychoanalysts is whether it is there to encourage the work of its members or to weigh them down and on the contrary encourage what I designated by this phenomenon of entropy, this relapse which ensures that one finds one's ease, one's folds, one's comfort, one's tacit agreements by taking up again or by rediscovering old discourses. And in a very strange way, as if this whole very refined very delicate, very sophisticated apprenticeship we undertake, as if it were radically forgotten. Will we ourselves manage to escape this future? Because it is obvious that up to today, we see no group that has effectively validated its coming together by this sort of vivacity, this sort of lightness, this sort of flame, this pleasure in exchanges, this life of the spirit that one might expect from a group of analysts, instead of this kind of lid that is put on each time and with the feeling of taking up again the same arguments, of talking again about dogmatism, of God knows what. It is a phenomenon that deserves better than simply astonishment or surprise, which deserves analysis. But why is it this way? I do not

think that it is a characteristic of groups of mathematicians, or of geographers or of nurserymen. So then what happens to us for there to be the feeling that it is always necessary to put oneself in the detestable, abominable, and so ridiculous role of being the one who has to lift the lid, to keep watch, to supervise, to be the guardian, this whole grotesque comedy and without there being a voice or a finger lifted to question what we are doing and what is happening?

So then, because I will not yield in any way to this facility that consists in cultivating acrimony, I suppose that this difficulty is linked to the specificity of the psychoanalytic discourse. Let us start again from what creates the social bond. What creates the social bond, is a discourse that organises places. The places are conventional, but there are certain perfectly well established discourses in which we are at ease and in particular — I am taking up the theme of harmony that I evoked the last time — where we always have the Utopia of a possible harmony, of a possible reconciliation between the master and his pupil, between the master and the slave, between the hysteric and the master, a reconciliation on condition that each one puts himself into it and that the Utopias are happy; the possibility of establishing there a harmony, in other words to get away from this castration which sticks us to subjectivity and which ensures that we only exist in badness, or in misfortune, suffering. But if you consider for a single instant the psychoanalytic discourse, you note that between *a* and *\$* no reconciliation is thinkable since, on the contrary what is experienced, is the incessant flight of the one with respect to the other, since the one is only sustained by the eclipsing of the other. The object can only emerge if the subject is eclipsed, it is the price for the object to emerge and on the other hand the subject only subsists and only exists on condition that the object is lost, that the aforesaid subject only has to deal with these unfortunate representations that we have to study in a few days time at Reims. And therefore that the psychoanalytic discourse is perhaps the one which, by its organisation, best actualises the un-reconcilable, the irreducibly irreconcilable character of two places which support here the protagonists of the social bond. As if one could never exist except on condition of eliminating the other.

I wonder whether it is not to this arrangement that we owe what I will allow myself to call the fundamental antipathy of psychoanalysts for one another. Because I have never noted great affection, nor great tolerance, nor great sympathy, nor great respect for psychoanalysts among themselves. And if it is true that all that is offered to them, as a style of social bond, is the configuration that the psychoanalytic discourse organises, we

can understand that there is between them a wish for reciprocal extermination. If it is only perhaps by finding a little bit more serenity and tranquillity, of comfort and peace, in the stock discourses, discourse of the master, university discourse, and in the marvellous and very rich discourse of the hysteric.

This weekend I must go and talk, once again, about the history of the Ecole Freudienne de Paris, *Life and death of the Ecole Freudienne de Paris*. Looking back, I can clearly see the way in which the term school proposed by Lacan was his desperate attempt to try to forge a social bond that breaks with the predispositions proper to the psychoanalytic discourse, this *readymade*, proper to the psychoanalytic discourse, by putting each one at the same level of equality in ignorance, namely, challenging whoever might present himself in the school in the name of a knowledge — in a school, we are all there to learn together and to try to see a little bit more clearly — and therefore to put each one at the same level of ignorance; to establish in a way a fraternity in ignorance, with the exception that each one tackles what constitutes his own question for him, his real, in the terms that are those of the school. Because if not, no one can be understood there, there must then be terms which are proper to the school, a way that is proper to the school of posing, of tackling the real, but each one having *vis-a-vis* this real his private avenues and his private interests. It is therefore starting from these observations, which never fail each time to move me and which are very wide because I find myself encountering people belonging to very different groups who are animated by the best of intentions and where each time I am shaken to note that no, nothing is taken as acquired, ever, in the field of analysis. Each time you have to take things up again as it was twenty years ago, thirty years ago, and it is always the same objections — the same.

Starting from these considerations, I will introduce another remark which concerns what we can legitimately call barbarism and I will give a definition of it and — this no doubt is what I like in it — one which is quite close to what the Greeks said about it. Barbarism is to forget that what organises the field of the Other, namely, at the same time our existence, is nothing other than language, than the tongue. And every time this type of forgetting takes place, we enter into barbarism whose clinical manifestations, at the individual as well as the social level, are absolutely apparent. I remind you that Lacan inaugurated his journal, *La Psychanalyse*, by translating this text of Heidegger on the *Logos*. This indeed is what is in question, whatever may be the use, the conclusions that the author of this article was able to draw from it elsewhere; they were not in any case the conclu-

sions of its translator. Its translator, from the same article, drew for his part very different conclusions. People celebrate today what is called, I have often spoken about it, the decline of ideologies. The decline of ideologies means something very simple, it means the fact of challenging the language character of the locus of the Other. The challenging of ideologies is nothing other than the suspicion cast on every discourse that claims to be dogmatic. Dogmatic! Because a dogmatic discourse is the only one which avoids confusion and the Babelism of what avoids the putting in place of a real. You must have a dogmatic discourse, namely, one that is logically constructed, to have access to the real. And if you do not have access to the real, you have then the exercise of a power over the signifier to which nothing acts as an opposition or as a valid contradiction, you no longer have anything but objections, opinions, but you have nothing consistent that can relieve you of the imperative character of the signifier.

One of the other centres of interest which is occupying me, is issue 3 of the *Journal Français de Psychiatrie* which should appear in the month of June and which is going to be about television. We are going to try to highlight with television technicians, professionals, how badly we are calculating the subjective incidences produced on the individual and the social scale by this type of technical progress.

If you want to play truant, I will point out to you the strange paradox which consists in making the fate of an election, a presidential one for example, which is not without its consequences for a great country, to make the outcome of the debate revolve entirely around something that is a televised match. This does not seem to disturb people in general. Nevertheless, the programme of the candidates is widely advertised, anyone can get to know it. What do people specifically expect from this televised drama, from this production, and which will be rather decisive in earning the approval of the electorate and allow them to vote — the spectators have only to lift or to lower their thumb — according to what will happen during that evening? The disappointment that followed this debate was absolutely universal in the measure that the two protagonists refused to put on a show. They did a radio broadcast, they went on television and they gave a broadcast like you would on the radio! As regards image there was nothing. There were no uppercuts, no kicks under the table, there was no drama, no killing, no hurting, no crushing of the other. No, they seemed to be completely indifferent to the cameras, which was, as you have seen in the papers, greeted with great disappointment. The journalists were frustrated but also, of course, the electors, deprived of a show. I know people who work professionally in television who fell asleep after a quarter of an hour in front of

the screen; and everyone knows that the audience participation dropped considerably, regularly throughout the programme. It is strange that this does not lead us to question ourselves about the tribunal that we have become so dependent on to make it decisive during a presidential election and the fact that a failure in the aforesaid tribunal saddens us, pains us; we did not get the pleasure we expected, even if the protagonists at the same time escaped what would, inevitably, if they had put on a show, would have made it tip over into the burlesque. At the same time, if it had tipped over into this, everyone would have been delighted, everyone would have had the feeling of becoming characters in the *Commedia dell'arte*, and that at the same time they were no longer serious, even if this was what everyone expected. This anecdote, which all the same deserves a moment of astonishment, brings us back to what Lacan wrote fifty years ago, practically in 1945, when he took up his mirror phase again. You will see it if you take up this text again; he announces what is going to happen, what I am in the process of talking to you about. He announces it! Which I must say is rather fabulous! And we, how are we to understand this phenomenon? What is happening here? What is at stake? No doubt a manifestation of barbarism. Why? Well then! What the television puts in place at the locus of the Other is no longer a discourse. Moreover there is now properly speaking a television language, there is a cinematographic language, but no one has ever isolated what a television language might be, namely, a putting into shape of images sustained by a discourse, by the operation of metaphors, of metonymies. So then, thanks to the television, what is at the place of the Other, is a look!

That is why, to speak about the television — and this is what people are trying to do — it is necessary to return to this English author of the 18th Century, Bentham, who understood the question perfectly well in the century of the *Lumières* and who, in *The Panopticon* described the way in which an appropriate architectural arrangement practically allows a single guard installed at the centre of the edifice to have, in a single circular glance, a view over all the prisoners in their cells. A look which exposes each of the prisoners without leaving them the slightest hiding place, the slightest bit of shadow, the slightest possible retreat. It is an absolutely remarkable premonition of what our epoch, after all, has succeeded in doing thanks to this television; at the locus of the Other, there is found today this look whose imperious character leaves no one at peace. There is a certain way of exercising power that Bentham foresaw. If some of you know this question better than I do I would like you to find me texts because it is likely that this started from the first naming which made of Louis XIV, the Sun-King.

I would really like to know who stuck this epithet on him. At the locus of power, you put a look, and the consequences of this kind of business, we are still not able to measure but we are trying to outline them in this issue, to pick out some reference points. And you will see the way in which it has come to possess our way of thinking, of functioning and of living. We will try to make that tangible.

Perhaps you would like an example? I am going to give you one that concerns us directly, a major programme devoted to the rape of children. It is extraordinary for several reasons. First of all because this means projecting onto these kids a look that **is** obviously shameless and obscene. The programme invites them to take their clothes off in front of everybody, even though of course it is justified by the fact that the look involved **is** a medical one — we are playing doctor — or judicial, or policing or moral. The obscenity of the act which may have happened to these children **is** reduplicated then by this kind of requirement of the procedure which has to have **it** shown to the whole world. I have the opportunity, I surely have said **it** to you, of working with social workers who bring me the type of problems posed to them by these cases of children exposed to sexual contacts on the part of adults, even sometimes to rape; they have a legal obligation to report this to the judge, otherwise they themselves will be guilty; doctors have been sent to prison for this reason. I see these social workers engaged **in** a concern both to make the affair public so that everyone can see **it**, and then at the same time a very great judicial concern. But what **is** never taken into account **is** the question of whether by being thus made public and exposed to an audience of policemen, educationalists, magistrates, the entourage, witnesses, primary and secondary school teachers, **in** short a whole circle of necessarily concerned voyeurs, the procedure does not seriously reduplicate for the child the immodesty of which he has been a victim. **Whether** the concern to get justice for him is not something that is prejudicial to him. To point out this, which is after all banal, goes against what is today the call made by all civil bodies for, the expression is a very raw one, this business to be put out on the table.

There follows a second consequence, and curiously it is not picked out either. We were speaking the last time about parental authority in so far as it makes the powers of the mother and the father indistinct. Not alone does it confuse them, it rejects their respective charms — there is now only one parental authority — but besides, this kind of hunt which is carried out today for the sexual misfortunes in families, is obviously always aimed at a principal defendant who is situated on the paternal side. Whether it is veri-

fied or not, because I have known a certain number of cases among children themselves where the accusations were obviously baseless, but this is something we also find among adults.

I am coming back here to the fact that we are also psychoanalysts, and as such, we have learned the degree to which it is phantasy that implies that there was real sexual abuse, namely, the frequency with which the little girl may be led to think that she has been really a victim of a sexual infraction, without her knowing it, while she was asleep, that she has been abused. And you see how we return — that is why I am speaking about regression and barbarism — to the place from which Freud started, but we are coming back to it as if there had not been this journey that Freud took, we are coming back to the real character of the phantasy. But, you will tell me, there is all the same the reality of contacts, of sexual abuse in families, things of that kind. It is obvious, it is clear! But the exhibitionism given to these abuses is not what is going to introduce into this domain the slightest tempering, on the contrary it introduces what has become the persecutory and paranoiac character of the sexual, namely, that our children are introduced, within our very families, to a climate where the sexual emerges as what is suspect, what is doubtful, what is equivocal. Go into a family and gently stroke the cheek of a little girl. You cannot know, after all, what that means.

You think I am joking? Not all that much; this connects up with my earlier remarks. Once you exclude from the locus of the Other the fact that it is arranged by a discourse and that for example you put a look in its place, effectively the sexual in so far as it is likely to damage the image, to spoil it, the sexual becomes persecutory and paranoiac. And in the measure that the structurally language character of this locus of the Other is opposed, the exchanges become nothing more than opinions which can find no point of equilibrium or of validity, or of rest, or of a reproach which is true and just, and the introduction into civil society of a requirement for castration, that you see being expressed, along with what is called the politically correct.

All of this exists once it is possible, thanks to this marvellous technical progress, to put in place geostationary satellites, namely, so many looks constantly connected to the surface of the planet and which are capable of transmitting the very well defined images that they pick up, to transmit them instantly with the speed of light anywhere in the world. People are delighted to say that there are satellites that are capable of deciphering the name of the paper that you are reading. You can imagine the type of police that this organises, mental police, there is no need for a super-cop, but of mental police. When I saw, during this televised programme on child vie-

tims of sexual abuse, old psychiatric comrades appearing there, I could see clearly the way in which the eye of the camera directed at them exercised a power which made them say things that were rather subject, subject precisely to the imperiousness of this look, and with the feeling that if they did not obey, if they did not speak in a conformist way, in a correct way, they would be excluded, they would be cast into the shadow. Exclusion, this famous phenomenon of exclusion, it is perhaps from this angle also that we should try to situate it.

Why tell you all of this? For several reasons but one of them is that we are studying Schreber and that precisely it is the Schreberian destiny, it is the way in which Schreber tried to resolve the impasse constituted for him by the lack at the locus of the Other, of a dogmatic discourse, of a discourse that holds together. So then for want of this discourse, the only way for him to try, to devote himself to make it hold up was to permanently expose himself to this look, namely, to incarnate himself permanently as the phallus to ensure that the order of the world would be more or less respected and therefore that the order of discourse would hold together. So then this Schreberian destiny, this duty to make himself beautiful and to feminise himself for a look that is permanently fixed in order to allow the order of the world to hold together, this is the type of destiny that we are approaching.

Earlier I recalled for you — you can see the type of circuit that I am amusing myself with — the Greeks. But what constituted the specificity of the Greeks? The fact that for five hundred years, they lived, they recognised themselves, they thought, they enjoyed themselves thanks to a text, which was not even a sacred text, which did not even need to be sacred, but a text of which, when one was cultivated, one had to know bigger and bigger pieces, fragments. They lived out their lives reciting Homer. After five hundred year the consequence of this was what is called philosophy. What they had lived, what made them emerge from tribal or clannish or totemic life was not commerce but being inside a text. It happens that this was taken up by this religion whose particularity it is to make of the world nothing other than a text, that it is this text which organises the world. It is amusing to think that it is a remarkable technical progress that is able to break with this sort of barbarism, represented by the dependence on a text. I could amuse myself — but this is always part of the digressions — by recalling the destiny of Schreber, the way in which we are led today, all of us, to make ourselves beautiful, to make ourselves beautiful for a mirror.

Those who invented the text which serves us as a reference, and who is therefore not Homer, which is perhaps a pity, moreover, always have a bad

press. They are blamed for it, and I would be inclined to say quite rightly. I think that it is quite right that they should be blamed for it, and I think they would be blamed for it even if one day they no longer existed. They maintain themselves thanks to the Text, or thanks to the fact that they are blamed for it. Hatred, is always a way of being named and of subsisting, it is even a very interesting way of subsisting. To subsist in hatred, in the hatred of someone else, is perhaps more comfortable than subsisting in love which is much more burdensome. To subsist in someone else's hatred, after all, is like Schreber, one feels concerned, one feels enveloped, one is not forgotten. You are hated. If you are hated, it is already because you are something. They do not look at you when you are passing as a man without qualities. No, no! What do they hate in this case? I am going to explain it to you in the following way. Fundamentally, what is found collected in different tongues about those who, precisely, invented this text at the locus of the Other, this is what is attributed to them, a set of features that are very precisely those that each one of us has to reject from himself; they are the support for what everyone has cut off from himself, treachery, felony, greed, anything you want, lewdness, everything that can be organised under the rubric of what one has to cut off from oneself. At the same time, they become what is closest to me and what Lacan calls the neighbour, namely, that I cannot detach myself from him. "They are everywhere! It is quite simple, I cannot take a step, they are everywhere." I cannot get rid of them because my being is precisely that.

I am surprised that on the question of being, it has not been remarked that, in a rather astonishing way, being, yes, has a name. But I refuse my being, and moreover when I used this name to describe the one that by this name I want to exclude from the phenomenal field, from the field of perceptions, from the field of what exists, from what deserves *Bejahung*, what has to be rejected from it, it is my own being that I am designating. And I believe that one can better understand that there is thus a conflict at least the equal of the one that I evoked earlier in connection with psychoanalysts and their social bond, a conflict between the concern to reject what can be named of my being or find itself incarnated by this name and the fact that this comes back to me all the time. But which also means that, of course, there is no need for existing individuals to support this being; this being exists all by itself and will continue to exist all by itself, even if one day there is no longer an existing person to incarnate it physically.

Another feature surely deserves to be reproached to these guilty people, to those who into this locus of this Other introduced this Text which continues to weigh despite our technical prowess. They invented a device that

absolutely did not exist before, the passion of the Father. It is they who invented the passion of the Father. In Homer precisely, there is nothing of this kind. The Greeks might love their city, with an attachment that I would describe as filial for their city and establish colonies on the sides, etc. But those who invented the passion of the Father, to be understood in the objective as well as the subjective sense, are these. So it is absolutely crazy that Freud had to go by way of a Greek myth to specify the degree to which this passion could imply a death wish, even murder, which is absolutely unacceptable and cannot but appear odious to those who hold to the religion proper to this text. This is why Freud appeared to them to be a heretic of the first class; so then he had to go by way of the myth of Oedipus, a Greek myth, and on the other hand he had to write *Moses and monotheism*, two extremes of his journey, in other words situate in this people itself the murder of the founding ancestor, which is obviously strange. But this passion of the Father, since they are the ones who invented it, the *of* to be understood both in the objective and subjective sense, obviously makes those who belong to this people really very special, it is true; it makes them special, bizarre, because they suffer. They suffer, these fools, from the fact that their fellow may by his conduct not show a paternal gesture, that by his conduct, their fellow can betray the confidence that their Father placed in his creature. They are moralists. One might ask above all why it matters to them that their fellow should be like this or like that, after all that is his affair. Well then, this shocks them, it is an offence to the Father, and one must respect the divine work in oneself. So then, this passion for the Father that they invented, does it not deserve, here and there a little genocide?

I was not able to get to a discussion that took place in the offices of *Passages* this week on this theme; I regret it, or perhaps not, I do not know, one never knows. What is described as genocide? What are the limits of genocide? You will see or you have seen, in the last issue of *Passages* a very brilliant article by a remarkable woman called Marthe Robert who considers that the only genocide is that of the Jews and therefore that the terms should not be made banal. If I had had to intervene, I would have allowed myself to point out that there is certainly genocide from the moment that the murder of a large part of a community — the large being very difficult to evaluate — culminates in the fact that the aforesaid community no longer finds a proper ideal to persevere, to continue to live. And that happens regularly! There are a certain number of communities in history who have disappeared, not because they had all been exterminated, not at all! But it is obviously enough to exterminate a certain number of them for the rest, if

they cannot take revenge, namely, spill blood again to reincarnate the Ancestor, the others are undone, disappear, are scattered.

It is not sufficiently noted that in the case that concerns us, this business of genocide was successful, it is a genocide that succeeded. You will ask me how? Why are you talking about this success? You do not see clearly, because on the whole you are much younger than I, that Europe today is constructed more or less without those who were the representatives of this people. This has certainly a few consequences on the aforesaid construction and on what is going to happen in Europe, it is certain. Not because of the merits or the qualities or anything whatsoever but because of the little events that I am in the process of rapidly evoking for you. But, this having been said, it is not to my mind exclusive to genocide. Surely not. But in return one can imagine that it can be exercised with a particular pleasure with respect to those who invented the genus, or the γένος — in German, that has a different sense, *Genosse* those who invented the passion for the Father.

I dare to hope that the circles that I am drawing for you, seem to you to have some consistency, that they testify to what psychoanalysis can contribute to this. It is true, it is funny to say it in this way but I am sure that some of you understand it very clearly. It is a problem; either the text, or the look.

If it is a look, and I will conclude this evening on this, if it is a look that is found at the locus of the Other, you no longer have access, from the very fact of the positive nature of this look, to what constitutes the truth of the Other, namely, the flaw in the Other. You no longer have any access to it, and at the same time, you have lost any access to what is called the truth, and moreover in the first place, to the truth about yourselves. Lost! Here the subject no longer has anything that can act as a support, from the very fact of the obliteration of the flaw. Lacan said that the image is what best denies castration. At the same time, you find yourselves not depersonalised — there will also be an issue of the *Journal Français de Psychiatrie* on depersonalisation — because those who find themselves depersonalised can nevertheless perfectly well sustain themselves in their subjectivity; you find yourself effectively reduced to a hastily improvised man, as Schreber sees them, experiences them and the object of what he calls the *Menschen-spielerei*, namely, that they are puppets.

It is perhaps from this difficulty that I experienced the problem of ana-

lytic groups, the shock of seeing that nothing is fixed, nothing is established and that everything may appear to start from zero every time, as today people take up from zero what was — 1895, can you imagine, a hundred years ago — Freud's starting point, namely, whether trauma is real or was part of a phantasy, the fact that we are coming back today to that, well, you can attribute that if you wish to my difficulty at encountering this problem in analytic groups, this risk of gravity which may have slipped into my remarks and that in truth I deplore. This is what I wanted to say to you this evening.

Do you have any remarks?

V. Hasenbalg- Yes, it is in connection with the passion of the Father that I would like to say a word, because I found in Fustel de Coulanges, I do not know what credibility he enjoys today because it is an old text, but the question of the father in *La cité antique*, was quite a business! In his construction, because he makes constructions about domestic religion, or the transmission from father to son, the almost sacerdotal role of the father in the family, that astonished me and I wanted to share it with you.

Ch. Melman - It was a familial, civil and religious power, which was something else, and we obviously no longer grasp its dimensions, because we for our part are used to it but it is something completely different to this relation of intimacy that we have with the father. A relation of intimacy and which is therefore no longer the exterior relation that a Greek, for example, might have for his father. It is thanks to this operation of which I spoke earlier, it is an agency that we can no longer even understand could have been exterior, and simply incarnated. But at no moment do we see intimate dialogues like those that we can easily have, of close, internal proximity, of internalised relations, of internalised passion with the Father. Which is something completely different to the set of duties or even the set of feelings that one may have with this family agency. There is therefore a click, there, which is decisive. It is the click, obviously, which at the same time gives a sacred character to the human creature, which in no case did it have among the Greeks. The Greeks might have thought that a man was beautiful or good or ugly, anything you like, but his sacred character, certainly not.

Any other remark?

Mme A - Yes just a little remark in *Moses and monotheism*. Freud under-

lines this fact that as long as it was of the order of an oral tradition, this affair of the murder of the Father, of the murder of Moses, was known among the people. It is from the moment that it was written that it was forgotten.

Ch. Melman - Yes you are right absolutely! That is the problem, you are putting your finger on a fundamental difference between speech and writing. **The** caesura is not at all internal to writing, and therefore at the same time writing can appear to dispense with, can appear to get rid of this memory. Especially, precisely if it is what is more a logical writing, for example, namely, that it only grounds its validity from its consecutiveness, not from some statement or other, simply from the consecutiveness of its terms.

C. Veken - In listening to you, I have the impression of a commentary of a phrase of Lacan's that I recently heard in a radio programme: "The task of psychoanalysts, is to maintain the enjoyment there may be in the word so that history can continue".

Ch. Melman - Yes, thank you for recalling this sentence that I must not have heard, moreover, or that I no longer remember.

R. Majster - It was at the Lille Congress!

Ch. Melman - It was at the Lille Congress? Ah yes. That is so relevant to present-day problems.

C. Veken - When history disappears it is barbarism.

Ch. Melman - Exactly! Quite so! I remain absolutely stunned by the fact that Lacan was able to see all of that beforehand!

Mr. B. - In connection with what you said about the genocide of Jews, I do not understand very well. Because the reaction of the Jewish people was rather, at the level of success, quite the contrary, to react, they became the founders of a country; this did not at all extinguish their identity, I believe.

Ch. Melman - Undoubtedly! That was their way, the classical and perhaps inevitable way to try to maintain something, but they are no longer the same.

Mr. B. - That did not kill their identity, even if it changed it.

Ch. Melman - They are not at all the same, and the relation precisely to the Text has necessarily become very different. Necessarily! But I am surprised that people do not make the remark — as I said earlier the genocide worked — that the community that existed in Europe and which had its specificity, its particularities, this community was liquidated.

Mr. B. - **There** were peoples who were annihilated by a real genocide, but not the Jewish people, peoples who were really eliminated.

Ch. Melman - Obviously. Surely! But we have a poor appreciation of the

degree to which what I would call the position of shit stirrers (*emmerdeurs*) they had, they had almost a kind of function as shit stirrers, we do not properly appreciate what it cost us no longer to have shit stirrers in the Europe that is being constructed, no longer shit stirrers of this type. But there are people that will establish it and who do not necessarily belong to this people but who measure it and will surely write about it. But we, spontaneously, we have a poor appreciation of it. People who upset you, who are always there with their objections, are always objecting. If only by existing moreover, by showing themselves and recalling, by the very fact of this passion, that the world is organised by a book, by a Text and not by a world of odds and ends, or of whatever you want in terms of progress, of gadgets.

V. *Nusinovici* - You spoke about dogmatic texts at the beginning and I was wondering whether on the one hand all dogmatic texts are planed down like that as regards the signifier and if, inversely, there are only dogmatic texts. Because, is Homer a dogmatic text? Let us say that it was on this type of text that here...

Ch. *Melman* - For the Greeks it was one. They considered it as a loss or as a sin to modify or pervert the text. For them it was one, it should not be touched. Obviously, since it was an oral transmission, there were necessarily different versions, but the objective, was above all not to touch anything, there was no question of an *aede* being well received by introducing some flattering modification, his audience would have taken a very poor view of it.

V. *Nusinovici* - Inversely, are there not dogmatic texts that have the opposite effect, namely, which have an effect of encouraging barbarism?

Ch. *Melman* - Listen my dear Valentin, that is not the problem and the debate is not to know whether a dogmatic text is good or bad. The problem is that Schreber devotes his life to try to get to the point that he is dealing with, that he can put in place a text which is consistent and therefore dogmatic, namely, organised by a meaning and which holds up. When people talk about dogmatics, you have to forgive me, they do not know what they are talking about. The popular and trivial use of the term dogmatic does not take into account in any way what is at stake. So then perhaps one day we will have a colloquium on dogmatics. I would be in favour of it, and we would learn a lot of things on that occasion, but we would learn especially to be much more respectful and prudent in the use of the term.

Eclecticism, namely, what is opposed to the dogmatic, is precisely what Schreber is suffering from, there are thousands of voices of chaps that he names talking to him. Everything, everyone speaks to him. So then what does the poor chap manage to do? He is being talked at from every angle,

all these souls scooting around in his skull. That is eclecticism, it is nothing else; that is eclecticism. When you write a text — I am saying you, it could be any of you — like all the Anglo-Saxon texts today which are eclectic texts, Mr So and So says, and Mr Thing says, but Mr Somebody else has contradicted him and the other one corrected him etc. and I know hundreds of psychoanalytic texts constructed like that, you are carrying out a Schreber operation which consists in thousands of souls trotting around in your skull, who stroll around; he says: "They are walking around in my skull". Why not? It is a way of getting excited like any other but, in any case, the trivial use of a term as important as that of dogmatic, and especially the judgement which is immediately stuck to it while one should first start to realise what is understood by it.

L. Ben Mansour—There are texts in the oral tradition, for example in certain geographical areas, there are sacred texts, for example the Koran. But *The thousand and one nights* were at the beginning texts which were in an oral tradition and which were only fixed very, very late; and there is also a second type of text that is called *the words of the Prophet*, and at the present time, what some people cannot tolerate, is precisely the texts in the oral tradition a little like Homer's texts.

Ch. Melman - That's it, yes! You are quite right Latifa, to remind us of that. Of course! That is why it is a pity that they are no longer taught to our children. In my time one learned pages and pages of poems that one knew by heart. I can tell you — I am not going to recite any of them for you this evening — I was taught, I did it because I was obliged to, pages and pages of Homer by heart. And I think I know what, for my modest part, I owe to the fact of being possessed by these texts. And I know a certain number of people, listen, those of you who have read the last book by Jorge Semprun, *L'écriture ou la vie*, you see very clearly how this boy who found himself at the age of seventeen at the start of the Spanish war, in France in a Paris lycée having lost his national, social etc. reference points, the way in which it is a selection of texts, a rather happy choice moreover, a set of texts that he is perfectly capable of bringing out along the way, and which obviously established him. In reading his book, you see it in an admirable way.

You see how there is posed again then in a different way the problem of filiation and in connection precisely with what it is to be Freudian or to be Lacanian, and of, should one be Lacanian without being Freudian etc.? I will show you next week the way in which this is going to clarify, for psychoanalysts, the problem of their relation to the text and the problem of

Returning to Schreber

their filiation. What does it mean to be Freudian? Is it to repeat Freud for example? To be Lacanian, is it to repeat Lacan? I think that with this kind of overview today, we can situate that much better next week.

Lecture XV

18 May 1995

This evening I am going to be particularly smart and treat, I believe in a way that is a little new, a theme that is essential for us. I will begin with a question that is still supposed to be a problem, that of primal repression, *Urverdrangung*, by reminding you first of all that primary repression is obviously proper to the physiology of language. In other words, there is no need for any authority to put in place, to organise, repression but that simply in the measure that, like the oracle at Delphi, language neither unveils nor hides but allows there to be understood, in the same way, its physiology allows it to be supposed that there is some primordial, original element which must be repressed, this element which ensures that precisely there is meaning. Without it, no meaning. Hence the supposition, proper to all those who speak, that there is a foundational repression, a supposition which moreover can remain, why not completely vain, because one might suppose that the real, effectively, remains empty of any signifier that might be injected into it by repression, and nevertheless, the aforesaid real makes sense; perhaps not the same as when there is an element injected into the real, but sense all the same.

This supposition, in any case, is reinforced by another physiology proper to language and which depends for its part, on the operation of the letter. I remind you again, I must have done it about twenty times already, of the importance of the seminar that Lacan chose to open his *Ecrits*, the seminar on *The purloined letter*, where he testifies that the physiology of language implies that there are, in the concatenation of the symbolic chain, elements which, at a particular stage of the chain, are forbidden, impossible and therefore supposedly rejected by it or not able, in any case, to be reintroduced into the rhythm of this sequence.

Having recalled this, I will take up a theme that you liked a lot the last

time, that I will call the Jewish invention. It consists in making of repression the locus of origin. This is how primal repression can be perfectly well understood as being the mythical evocation of a first repression in so far as it constitutes an origin. I can then set about loving it, understanding it as creating law and generating a prohibition of transgression since it is in a way this supposedly first repression that supports the meaning of language, that in a way creates sense. It will be enough, of course — and excuse me for using this term — to call this first repression, father, for us to rediscover elements with which we are, it has to be said, familiar. Thanks to this invention, let us suppose, we live this internalisation of the relation to the father, which is therefore no longer the relation to the father of the registry office, the father of the family, but which has become this intimate, personal relation, at the same time of course a relation to the law, since the transgression of this prohibition would also bring about the abolition of all sense, an infraction carried out with regard to it. The respect for this father is organised thanks to a cult which is less that of sacrifice or of ritual than of moral behaviour, because it is on condition of respecting this prohibition that each one is now going to find himself possessed by God. The relation to God was always an exterior relation, God was in a particular fountain, in a particular grotto, on a particular hill, on a particular mountain. The relation is now internalised and each one thus becomes the holy reliquary who, in a way, walks around with him on condition simply of being moral.

The inconvenient thing, or the effect, of this putting in place is that the possibility of sexual desire passes by way of a supposed economy of sacrifice — I am supposed to have renounced this object, whatever is repressed — and a contract made with the father. In other words, it is in exchange for this renunciation that I have access, that sexual desire is possible, the operation of sexual desire, not at all in so far as there is supposed to be some edict from the father authorising it but, there again, because of this physiology proper to language. If it is true that the possibility of sexual desire now passes through a supposed economy of sacrifice — which was certainly not the case in the neighbouring or earlier populations, they never posed the problems in these terms — if it passes through this and through a supposed contract with the father, we take on board the myth of castration.

Why a representation as dramatic as the myth of castration, with a threat to one's own sex? Because one can outline what supports the myth in the following way. If it is true that the real agency for sustaining the power of generation, this agency that I am now supposing to inhabit the real — if I give to this agency the image of the phallus, this outrage can, of

course, ensure that this agency vanishes and then, with this vanishing, the power of the penis. At the same time it can be imagined that paternal omnipotence can make a permanent threat hang over the sex of the little male, because in a way he needs the operation of this agency in the Other, and which only subsists on the condition of the respect that he grants it, in order for his penile activity to be possible. If it is true that this agency is no less found to be named father, one can clearly see how, at the same time, there is brought out, always in the myth, this intuition that his good will and also the fact that there is accounted for in him the debt that is nothing other than the acceptance of this repression, that the debt for each one, that my debt is recorded in order that at the same time my sexual activity should be possible.

The only advantage is that this possibility does not depend in any way on his caprice, but seems much more rather to come out of an idea of a contract, of a pact such that if I show respect for this agency, if I accept then this originating repression, in return I have access to sexual activity. In other words God finds himself under constraint, his liberty is quite restricted, and this is what Schreber tells us, God finds himself constrained to play the game; if I play it, he cannot do otherwise, for his part, than to respond affirmatively. I do not know whether what I am putting forward here appears clear to you but it has the advantage of giving to this myth of castration a physiological support which removes it from the reference to any image of an ogre, or a wickedness, or of evil, or of obscure power, indeed the intervention of a father. In this way, we no doubt connect up with the later speculations of Lacan — I am saying later because he developed them later, but they were there beforehand, they figured much earlier in his work — and therefore this has the advantage of reminding us that it is quite simply the operation of language that makes us enter into this dimension of shame and respect necessary for the game and for sexual activity.

But we grasp well enough how, around this arrangement, there can take place the myth of castration, namely, a threat bearing permanently on the genital organs of the little male, making him think that if he behaves as a delinquent *vis-a-vis* this law which is only, here again, that of language, he will have some consequences to undergo from it. It is, I imagine, thanks to this arrangement that there is organised the subjective importance, first of all of the contract and also the idea of justice, two dimensions which can take on a quite special importance in the subjective economy. They can be circumstances that are the source of emotion, the source of movement, the source of activity, of responses that may go completely beyond the real importance of the damage. It seems that everyone is particularly sensitive,

when they are exposed to a breach of contract, or again a failure of justice, or violation of a promise. So then, I am drawing a circle around this supposed exchange with the Other, supposed, because it always depends on the physiology of language, to bear witness to the way in which we are particularly vulnerable to any distortion of the mechanism, or to anything that might say symbolically that the mechanism has been broken, that it has suffered, as if it had to be defended at all costs.

One could connect in here the drama of the paranoiac, this idea that he has paid — and it is true that, after all, it is enough to respect the rules of language to consider that one has paid — and that he has not been paid in return; for example that he is not recognised; he has paid and he is not recognised. Hence, of course, this other idea that he needs a pension, which will only ever come in this type of economy as a simple response to what he himself has paid, he has a right to a pension because he himself has invested money there. We are still here at the level of the originating repression in so far as it is quite simply the repression that, for us, after this invention, has put in place the origin, the idea of an origin. So then, originating repression since it is the repression that puts in place the origin.

The problem that concerns us in a no less practical way is indeed about the repression described by Freud as secondary, this one specifying that there is in every phenomenon of repression a sucking down which is produced from the originating repression, a call; and then on the other hand what the subject is going to contribute to it, the way he is going to answer this call. The problem of neuroses, is of course what a subject is going to believe that he should commit to answer what Freud is going to isolate as a call, which is already curious. No doubt we should reflect on the reason why Freud situated there a type of aspiration.

We are going to be able no doubt very rapidly, globally, to situate the problem of neuroses, with this secondary repression, as being the procedure that is supposed to render homage to the father thanks to repression and at the same time to scoff at him, namely, to slip away from the law that he invites us to share, from having to bear witness to his power in producing us, in multiplying us. The shepherd is never happier than when his flock increases. Neuroses can then be deciphered as a sort of a trick which consist in responding to this call for sacrifice by saying: "Listen! You gave me access to sexual life, well then, I, in the spirit of sacrifice return it to you. Take it! I am giving it to you", a way of rendering homage to him, by sacrifice, and at the same time of jeering at him. Except, when the aforesaid sacrifice concerns this essential function which is that of priests where effectively what I might call their real sacrifice, renunciation of sexual life,

contributes towards giving to this agency in the real the character of being phallic. After all, to suppose that this agency is phallic, it is perhaps necessary to have people who really renounce their sexual activity, so that the image of this agency is in a way proved by. There are those who prove in this way that the aforesaid agency is phallic. Hence the fact, no doubt, that in a community people like there to be some who guarantee this function and that their eventual shortcomings at the task is experienced as being of the order of betrayal and that there is something beautiful and good in them making this gift.

Up to here everything is in order, everything is in place. The only problem is that this project fails. It fails for the simple, unexpected reason that desire for its part only deals with an object that escapes the law. Desire is not satisfied by the presentation of representations that are made, but it is at least sustained — even if this object is not aimed at as such — by this object situated beyond the law. Hence this type of well-known division, a very classic one, between on the one hand respecting the law that allows sexual activity, but at the same time, only putting in place the object that the possible desire is going to aim at. In other words, this law only functions in the perspective of an infraction. Hence this inconvenience which means that the subject will only have the impression of ex-sisting as subject, in what is now his intimacy, no longer by the exercise of the word of the Other, of the father in this case, but that his own voice can only make itself heard in the field of sin, a sin described as happy because it is the sin which allows there to be accomplished the will of the father. I remind you once again of this apologia for sin, because it is in a way the means the father will make use of to achieve his ends, he imposes the law on you so that you will break it and so that you will thus exist only in sin. Which tells us at the same time the way in which his power is reinforced, how there is thus going to be organised all political thinking, namely, the way to get people going and to hold on to them.

It is of course in this place that there is inscribed a split between God and his creature, a split to be understood, here again, in the physiological sense of the term, namely, between two remarks, the remarks of the father, and then, thanks to sin, or by means of sin, what can make itself heard from the voice of the subject. In connection with this split there is going to be introduced a type of distinction on which it is perhaps not vain to make a few remarks, because I have the feeling that we continue to live it out without being quite being able to name it, or to recognise it. In effect, in the case of this split, some people are going to take the side of the father and say that if there is sin, it is because of the lack in the creature, his bad will or his

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ignorance; this party will be that of undivided love for the father, and also, bizarrely, without hatred. This taking sides for the father situates the suffering of the subject as being that of the father. The subject only lives out his suffering in so far as the father is affected to see that his creature, the creature diverts the benefits that were granted him or indeed does not know how to respect them and therefore will suffer the world from a position that is the paternal position. You have recognised that this party, of an undivided love for the father — unmixed, that is, without hatred — is the Jewish party. It is very strange. I pointed out to you the last time that Freud went looking for the Oedipus complex, a Greek myth, but he was surely uneasy at finding in the foundational texts those which might have expressed hatred; eventually an occasional complaint, even a revolt or a questioning, of course, but hatred... At the same time also, no doubt a great sympathy for the imperious character of the signifier, this imperious character only recalling here with the power of the Verb, the nominating power of the father.

And then there is this other position which on the contrary lives out the suffering of the son, he who has not failed to love the father, to give him everything that he can expect, and who in return is found condemned to sin, to live out sin, to only exist through sin. It appears striking to me that in an institution — an institution that is conceived to make couples hold together, even if they are not of the same sex, but couples in so far as the people do not occupy the same places, there are two places — one hears suffering being expressed in accordance with one or other position, because an institution is by definition rickety and one suffers in it, whatever the institution may be; some will live, adopt, will live out the suffering of the father by saying: "Look at all that has been done for you and look what you are making of it! You have been taught, you have been fed, people were nice to you, people were devoted to you, people exhausted themselves for you and then you are still just as stupid!" The others will take the other position, which consists in saying: "We have enough of tyranny! What use is it?" I am abbreviating and I am caricaturing, but I above all want to show you that suffering depends much less on physiology than on the place in which one puts oneself, that one occupies, and that it can be dialecticised in two completely opposite ways which are of course going to knock into one another, and which is perfectly sincere, representing everything that is most authentic in a speaking being because it is the support of his ex-sistence: "I cannot renounce suffering because it is my suffering that allows me to exist; if I stopped suffering, I would be depersonalised."

So then we grasp at the same time the possible double scenario in accor-

dance with which suffering is organised, the fact that it will always be conflictual. Here again it should be noted that there is no suffering that does not encounter another one and which does not argue against it in order to contradict it and tell it that it is not right, that it is not the right one, that it is mistaken, that it is a false suffering, that it is particularly vain, and also will not get anywhere. Suffering is obviously a putting in question, as I might say, of this cardinal virtue of hope. The problem is that in the second position, that of the son, it is lived out, it has been interpreted as having to be redemptive: "I will be saved because I suffer." Can we say such a thing? Have we a single episode in history where we might see the way in which suffering effectively ended up by resolving something? In this connection one might open up a parenthesis which is not indifferent, on the problem of healing. Healing, is no doubt in an essential way, to no longer have need of suffering to exist. I had at one time developed the theme of the fixed point, that I very rapidly left to one side in order not to seem to be myself subscribing to it, but it is clear that suffering is a remarkable fixed point, opening up the following question, how would this ex-sist, what tests would he have, in the sense of what he would experience as subject, if there were no longer any suffering?

I am taking a step backwards, in connection with those who took the side of the father. It is obvious that their longevity is guaranteed, precisely by this love exempt from hatred, contrary to other communities that have existed. In order for that to last effectively, there must be a love that is pure and excelling that of all the others, the love of women, just as much as the love of goods or anything else. It has to be the first love and free from any dross that might unbalance it. In this context, among those who have taken the father's side, what is ex-sistence? Is it also sustained by suffering? There were, in the 18th Century, among those who belonged to this party, a very important movement that I invite you to consider, the Hassidic movement, a very strange movement because in the first place it invited populations that on the whole were miserable, to live in joy. In joy, in song, in dance, and moreover numerous elements of it remained even though really there was no special reason for it. But joy appeared to be the honest illustration that ought to be given by the one who respected the Creator. He ought to live in joy and therefore sadness or melancholy, melancholy that, for its part, has also been the witness of religious movements. So then, the only way of testifying, of living out one's ex-sistence, was joy, and perhaps some of you have been able to note in it the manifestations or the testimonies in a mood rather organised in the register of a rather tense and rapid expression of joy, as not simply a form of politeness, but also as testimony given

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of ex-sistence: "I know that I am ex-sisting because there you are! I have a hole in my hat, my boots are leaking, my wife is sick, the kids are brats, well then! Let us dance! Let us sing! Let us laugh etc."

The problem is nevertheless to know what analysts consider to be the manifestation which would be proper, for them, to best express the ex-sistence of a subject? If it is no longer suffering? If it is not joy, because really there are not that many reasons to rejoice, what is it then? This question is taken up again by the Borromean knot, since the subject no longer holds together except by a flaw — and that is all I have been developing here — namely, what does not work, the subject been led to organise his suffering taking support from one side or the other, if the subject is no longer maintained by a flaw but from a knot, then how is he going to ex-sist?

In Lacan's first conception, the subject could only have, in a way, the politeness to keep quiet, namely, to recognise that he was simply the effect of language and that his anonymity was constitutional, namely, that he was only one among millions and that therefore he had no particular need to bring it up. But for our part, while Lacan has very correctly pulled back from this position, what will we say about it today? This is the type of question that I am submitting to your sagacity and I would be very happy if some of you were willing to dream a little bit or work a little bit on it, because this very specifically poses the problem that one could describe as — a term banished from our milieu after Lacan — of what one could nevertheless call a cure; since I no longer need this flaw and therefore this defect, and if I no longer need sin to sustain me, the encounter with a partner, male or female, can be envisaged in a radically different way.

And to end this evening, I will make just one remark hoping that it annoys you a little, like my last seminar which, it seems, really annoyed, anyway, annoyed, I mean tickled people a little. Well then, in the party of those who have chosen an unmixed love for the father, does a woman sustain herself from the position of the Other, or does she sustain herself from a position which is marked by castration in a way, I would say, that would be equal, were it only for the multiplicity, the number of rituals, that she constrains herself to on a daily basis, is she maintained by a castration which is just as All as that of the partner? In this party, does a woman not maintain herself from a place that is just as phallic as that of the man? It is really good, you will tell me, because in that case there is a sexual relation, because there is always a little reservation to be made, except that the relation, in that case, allow me this remark, is less a relation between man and woman than a relation between phallic representatives, namely, that marriage becomes in it no longer a celebration of the agency, and therefore of

the father, except properly speaking by what would be the encounter between a man and a woman. But I would really like these remarks to have two advantages, first to valorise eventually remarks on the part of those who may have concerns or who have worked on this type of question, have reflected on it, and also to remind us that what we depend on, namely, language, lends itself to distributions that are not necessarily the same. The omnipotence accorded to the father by the party of those who have vowed their love to him, rules out there remaining on the surface of the globe an Other dimension. It rules it out. At the same time, bizarrely, it rules out doubt and can only reinforce what I was saying earlier, namely, the emphasis put on the imperious and imperative character of the signifier. Analytic practice — and I would not be capable of speaking about it, in the rustic, unfinished, rather massive way that I do — perfectly illustrates the way in which someone who begins to speak on the couch is going to find himself sucked in by this type of parameter and then starts oscillating most often between the two positions that I have just evoked. And the question of his cure, namely, the way in which he is going to get out of it, in which he will no longer need to live out his suffering, I think that this is a question that interests us a little.

There you are then for this evening. Have you any remarks to make?

H. Cesbron Lavau - As regards the son who suffers to save his father, you asked were there examples of it and I find that what is called the Passion of Christ is precisely something which ensures that priests can finally be inscribed there in this position. That depends on the epoch, there are centuries in past history when people insisted on this aspect.

Ch. Melman - Of course, of course. What is funny, is that we would have to develop a point which would be that of the suffering of the daughter; to make it begin from these considerations might be amusing!

B. Vandermersch - A little thing, I did not understand very well when you said, at the beginning of your lecture, that even if the real were empty of any signifier, it would all the same make sense.

Ch. Melman - Yes, yes.

B. Vandermersch - That surprised me a little because, in short I cannot see very clearly what sense it would have...

Ch. Melman - Is it obligatory, in a way, for the real to be a hiding place of signifiers for it to have meaning?

B. Vandermersch - Yes, that is to say that there must be a signifying substitution to produce an effective sense, there must be, I would say the

absence of signifier, if it is located, it is still a signifier, but that is not all that you meant, it is a locus, the real...

Ch. Melman - But it is not the same thing to bring about a signifying substitution, namely, to leave signifiers hanging on the chain, it is not the same thing as situating them in the real, namely, to subject them to an operation of repression or of foreclosure. In other words, if the real is empty, does it have less sense? No! You cannot say it like that! Does it make less sense, and in particular, sexual?

C. Emerich - If one says precisely that it is the originating repression and the repression of the imaginary phallus which ensures that there is, precisely a meaning; if there is no repression precisely of this imaginary phallus, if then the real is empty of this repression of the imaginary phallus, what would organise here a relation to language which would ensure that there would be precisely sense in the language?

Ch. Melman - That is not quite how it is, Choula. It is rather because there is repression that this is going to be invested by the imaginary agency of the phallus, it is not the same thing. It is not the same thing, originating repression is not the repression of the phallus. There is repression, is there not? It happens that it is going to be called originating because it is going to be held as the point that supposedly creates the origin, the point supposed to make a fixed point and it is also at the same time, to take on the costume of this imaginary agency. So then this imaginary agency only finds itself outside a field of consciousness not in a primal way but by a simple accident. There is no primary defence against sex but, because of the operation of language, there is simply repression. Not because of a sexual prohibition, because of the operation of language there is repression, and since there is repression, it is going to start functioning in this way for us.

C. Emerich - I think that it is precisely at this point that you are articulating there that we pass from the first Lacanian version with the Name of the Father, to the second with the Borromean knot. I think that it is to bring repression to bear there that...

Ch. Melman - I agree... Marielle?

M. David - Yes, oh! One might think also that there should be a third possibility and which would all the same take time into account. Is it from the moment when one reintroduces the real, namely, something which is knotted to language but which is not yet it, but does all that happen at the same time? This is what, fundamentally, is characteristic of Lacan's thinking, do we not also see that time is necessary.

Ch. Melman - That time is necessary?

M. David - Yes, time is missing, there is time... if only, for example,

when Lacan says that there is the moment when one has to be on the side of the small *a*, and a moment when one must be on the side of the big O...

Ch. Melman - But of course time is necessary, but of course!

M. David - One cannot be both at the same time! And they are two different operations.

Ch. Melman - I completely agree, absolutely.

Ch. Lacote - I have difficulties also with what you have just said about repression which seems important to me when you say that there is repression from the fact that there is language; does that involve something of the order of the signifier or of the letter?

Ch. Melman - So then, I will perhaps have to take it up again, or perhaps I expressed myself in too obscure a way. How can I put it? Language neither unveils nor hides, it creates meaning. The fact that this meaning escapes — it does not unveil itself, it does not hide itself either — allows it to be supposed that there was then an element which was repressed. That is why I evoked the question of the empty real, in my sense the real can remain perfectly empty and nevertheless be the support of this certainty that something has been repressed, something that makes me run, escapes me, something which creates meaning. This is why moreover Lacan says that the phallus is the signifier that cancels out all meaning, it does not function like the others.

So then this is the first moment. The second moment precisely is proper — and here this concerns the letter — to the operation of the signifying chain in so far as it is articulated by the letter, by implying — the seminar on *The purloined letter*, etc. — that there are scissions, moments where an element is put out of the chain, and the calculation of it is able to be done; so then, it would be part of the physiology of language, without any other intervention, without any other meaning; there we are no longer dealing with meaning in any way whatsoever. The first moment also happened without any intervention and any referent, as I might say, there is no referent, no author. That is how it is done. In the operation of the letter, this is also done by the simple operation of the letter. And I therefore evoked this combination as the source of what is going to be phantasised as originating oppression.

Ch. Lacote - Ah yes! It would be an imaginary interpretation of this missing element?

Ch. Melman - That's it

Ch. Lacote - Because otherwise the originating repression is not originating.

Ch. Melman - No, it is not originating, except that from the moment

that it has taken on, assumed, been invested with this sexual sense, there is going to be exercised what Freud calls secondary repression, namely, that it is going to act like a point of appeal and I would say that from that moment the problematic of a subject becomes that of the part that he must yield up and of what he considers should belong to him. And neurosis obviously turns in great measure around this type of preoccupation: "Do I have the right?" or on the contrary: "What should I renounce?"

Ch. Lacote - You mean that this imaginary sexual costume make things turn towards an injunctive aspect?

Ch. Melman - Uh... makes things turn towards an injunctive aspect because, as I might say, I can only be recognised on condition of sacrificing, moreover I cannot be admitted into the game, into the circuit, be admitted into *hlangue* except on condition of sacrificing. If I do not sacrifice I cannot enter it I am put aside. So then if I want to be recognised, I must sacrifice. And there again, it is an extraordinary invention to substitute for all these sacrifices which were precisely those of Antiquity, to substitute this type of sacrifice, a sacrifice now brought to bear on enjoyment; I have to sacrifice enjoyment. But to what point? What part? It is a question that is posed in an outstanding way, for women, much more than for men for whom things in this quarter seem to be simpler because their functioning allows it to be supposed that they have to sacrifice, anyway, that the only thing that can be sacrificed is what permits the exercise of their virility, that this is the limit; while for a woman the question is not posed at all in that way.

Ch. Lacote - Yes, that also makes me reflect in the way in which Lacan, when he speaks about the Borromean knot, sometimes puts the phallus completely outside the Borromean knot, and that could...

Ch. Melman - The question is not to put it outside. I am still trying to understand what ancient subjectivity might have been and I regret not having the time that I would like to be more assured of it. There is precisely this book by Paul Veyne, *L'elegie romaine*, which seems to show that there could be a whole celebration of sadness linked to loss, whether it is the loss of the beloved object or whether it is exile or absence from the homeland. There was therefore a whole literary current organised around this exaltation, in other words, the possibility for a man of the ancient world to be at ease, to be comfortable in this way of rocking himself in: "There you are! I am far from my home, my country, its hills, its familiar vistas"... So then Paul Veyne's books protects itself above all from everything that is injected by all the presuppositions of modernism, namely, of the wish to be recognised in these ancient characters, to attribute to them

perhaps more than they had effectively experienced. Because, is it simple snobbery? Or was it really a way of being in the world? It is not quite the same thing. For my part, I think that it was rather of the order of snobbery. But it is interesting all the same and therefore there would be, in this respect, other studies to be made on the way in which a man of antiquity, for example a stoic, expressed himself. Precisely he expressed himself by not expressing himself, namely, by considering silence, indifference with regard to emotions, pleasures to be preferable.

Finally, a better clarification of these different attempts to give oneself ex-sistence would be instructive for us. Why would there be this will to give oneself an ex-sistence? An ex-sistence, namely, a statement separated from the one coming from the Other, which would not be confused with him. All of these questions have their place in our attempts to evaluate what we might call the psychoanalysts way of speaking: "This person precisely is good in so far as, as psy, not alone does he talk, but he experiences the world..."

L. Ben Mansour - Do you see snobbery in the fact that, for example, when an Algerian emigrant dies in a Sonacotra hostel, a collection is made to bring his body back to his native land, and that it was one of the recommendations he made to have himself buried in his country? Is that snobbery? It is absolutely not intellectualised.

Ch. Melman - Listen, what you are evoking is too much part of our common emotions for one to speak about snobbery which is always the type of attitude and emotion that one attributes to the other. What you are evoking forms too much part of our common emotions for this term to come to my mind on this subject. But the type of circumstances that you are evoking perfectly illustrates the degree to which we are living in pain. To the degree that what you are reporting does not give offence or create a stir in our world, this appears to me to be rather an element that is woven into our world, indeed which comes from the same texture.

This having been said, I would advise you to read the last declarations by the Pope, you are not interested in that? Yes? No I am sure that you have not read them! And also the declarations of the International Episcopal Conference. You will see the way these people read me, and the way in which they draw conclusions from it! You will see that the Pope, you will see he is extraordinary! I think that they are all basically becoming Melmanian!

Lecture XVI

15 June 1995

Since it is difficult for me to leave without some remarks, the evening we had recently here devoted to the question of the difference between the letter and the signifier, an evening which bore witness to our persistent difficulty in grasping this difference, I am going this evening, by way of closing the seminar for this year, but perhaps also as a preview for what will come next year, to propose to you to examine with me in a rapid way then, during the hour of this seminar, a text by Lacan, which I imagine is generally speaking almost incomprehensible or remains more or less misunderstood. This text of Lacan's is entitled *Postface* and figures as a conclusion to the seminar on *The four fundamental concepts*, the seminar of 1964, the first one of which a transcription was made and was published. So then I am proposing to you, while hoping that along the way you will express yourselves freely, to examine some assertions of this very singular, very strange and very difficult to penetrate *Postface*.

It begins in the following way:

"Thus there will be read — this bouquin I wager."

So then here is a first sentence that is very strange! I invite you to understand the dash as posing the enigmatic question of what is effectively read when one sets about the reading of a text:

"Thus will be read —... "

dash — what will be read? Lacan answers

"... this bouquin I wager",

and he immediately adds

*"It will not be like my *Ecrits* the book of which is bought".*

The *Ecrits*, is a book (*livre*), this here is a *bouquin*. You are going to see that it is not at all the same thing. What is at stake is not the generalisation of the concept of *bouquin*, but it is that here on this occasion, what you have before your eyes, you might think that it is a book; it appears to be, well then, says Lacan,

*"It is 'not like my *Ecrits* the book of which is bought", it is a bouquin; my *Ecrits* is a book 'but not to be read'. And this is not, he adds, because they are difficult. "A writing in my sense is made not to be read."*

So then this does not go altogether along the line of our tradition and of our education. A writing... is made not to be read? Why? Why is a writing not made to be read? Because it says something else. In what register are we here? That of the statement? That of stating? In any case a writing *"says something else"*. *"What? Since it is where I am at, he says, in what I am saying at present, I am going to illustrate it here"*. There you are!

What one has just read, is therefore not a writing. *"A transcription, this is a word that I discover thanks to the modesty of J. A.M."* It's strange, J.A.M.... I do not think that what is being evoked here refers to the English, I do not know whether it was its jam or its traffic jams. It is also jamming, I believe, on the radio. So then I do not know in what order this J.A.M. functions. But he explains it to us, because one might have forgotten it, *"Jacques-ALin, comma, Miller by name."* Let us remember all the same this invocation addressed strictly to the letter, J.A.M., to subsequently develop it; and in saying that, thanks to this transcription — it is not a writing, it is a transcription —

"What is read passes through the writing while remaining unscathed by it."

Wait a minute... *"What is read"*, but he as just told us that it was not to be read, that it was not a writing, *"what is read passes through the writing while remaining unscathed by it"*. What is this, this 'what is read', here? Do you know 'what this is read' here is?

"Now what is read, it is about this that I am speaking."

This is also a curious sentence. 'It is about this (*de ca*) that I am speaking', does he mean that he is speaking about this, or that it is starting from this that he speaks?

"It is about this that I am speaking, since what I say is directed at the unconscious, or to what above all is read."

The unconscious, what is above all read, here then is the reminder, no doubt a favourable one, which obviously here goes against any phenomenological approach. The analytic session, is not a listening, it is a reading. Here is something in any case that considerably modifies the perspective and has many consequences. If as an analyst, I set about a certain activity, if I do not doze too much during the session, I am in the process of reading what is said to me and my interpretation will consist in eventually proposing a different reading to the one that is enounced there. Which means that the analysand is himself in the process of setting about a reading since it is the unconscious, his unconscious that is in question. That is what he is speaking about, his unconscious. How is that verifiable? Well then, if it is true that what makes itself understood is presented as a text which calls for a corrective punctuation, the correct punctuation, what is spoken, what is said here, the spoken word, can only come itself in a way to articulate a text; a text which is a writing. A conception then of the unconscious as that which would be in each one of us the type of writing which leads us and from which each one of us speaks.

Here, I am proposing a short digression to come back to the question of the nature of the letter, because we have this shameful familiarity which makes us imagine that letters constitute elements of meccano that it is enough for us to combine skilfully in order to manage to reconstruct the world of phonemes. If we start from the fact that the sound chain is only made up of pure difference, from where does there arise this sudden positiveness which would give body to the letter? If it is true that we are dealing with a system which only acts because it is made up of pure differences, namely, of single features, of unary traits, once again from where is this positiveness of the letter to take on a body? I heard the other evening a confusion between the unary trait and the letter which appeared regrettable to me. That is why I formulated this proposition, that I hope to be able to verify in Lacan himself, concerning what constitutes the letter. He says here that the G is only embodied from the fact that it illus-

trates a giraffe or a monkey. Let us take for example B. It does not exist in signifying articulation. It does not exist! There are only a series of oppositions among which figures something which is pronounced not B, but which is pronounced "*bouche*", which is pronounced "bib", which is pronounced "*brothel*", whatever you want. But the letter B has here no other existence than being simply a differential feature it has no physical characteristic.

On the other hand, I formulate the proposition that, if a system of censorship, otherwise called a slip, manages, by isolating one or other sound element, to give a different sense to what, for example, I could not express, I invite to extend the formation of the letter by this type of caesura which detaches from the sound chain elements which, henceforth by coming into the real, are embodied, become real — no longer elements which were only valid by the fact of being articulated by pure difference — and at the same time identical to themselves, while at the same time commemorating in the unconscious the chain whose letter has fallen and whose memory it constitutes in the unconscious. And you can, if you like, read the J.A.M. that I evoked earlier as the evocation of the fact that each element thus fallen into the unconscious preserves the memory of the chain from which it has been set aside. And positing it in this way, we can perhaps better grasp that the unconscious is certainly structured like a language, but be more precise and say that it has the structure of a writing, and that the subject, that each one does not need either to know how to read or to have an alphabet as his disposition to be thus spontaneously introduced to writing. It is in any case in this way that Lacan envisages, not in this text but in the seminar on *Identification*, that what is thus inscribed in the unconscious is going to be able to take up a typographical form, whatever may be the alphabetic support which here is going to lend itself to a writing that is presented, to a writing that has passed into reality. It is here that this pressure stops, except that the consideration of the type of writing, of the type of alphabet will only be taken up again with Japanese writing which must be mentioned here moreover in passing; but other types of writing, other types of alphabet are not evoked by him and perhaps we could interest ourselves one day in them, the incidences of the choice of writing, of the type of alphabet on the becoming of the subject. In any case, as regards Japanese, there seems to be no doubt about it for him.

I return to this *Postface* and to what Lacan says in this *bouquin*:

"What is read, passes through the writing and while remaining unscathed by it", and "Now what is read, is what I speak about, since what

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I am saying is dedicated to the unconscious, namely, to what is read above all. " "Must I insist? he asks — naturally: because here I am not writing. "

I refer you here to the text on the agency of the letter. If what he was saying here was a writing, there would be no need to insist, the letter insists of itself. And, he adds,

if I wrote, "I would be posteffacing my seminar, not postfacing it. "

What does that mean? I am proposing that you should understand it like this. If it were a writing, what is spoken in his seminar would be effaced, it would no longer be anything but a writing, a writing as regards which the question of knowing from where it is said and who says it becomes insoluble. It is written.

In this respect I could again propose an incident to you. There has appeared, as you have received it with the *Bulletin*, the *Journée sur l'enseignement* that we had here, and I very, very gently expressed my regret that the text was — not a transcription — but a re-transcription that was absolutely faithful to what was recorded on the tape. I find that this absolutely faithful re-transcription prejudices the understanding of the writing. You experience a feeling of malaise; contemporary speech likes to be relaxed, wants to be precisely open to the unconscious, anything you wish and therefore is easily ungrammatical. I regretted that this *Journée* was not, effectively not re-transcribed but transcribed. In other words, since one was going over to a writing, that it should be written in French! And then perhaps it would try to be a transcription, namely, precisely to respect what is, in the writing that is thus produced, what each one said which is very tangible in the different interventions presented. But this speech itself becomes weak if the writing does not arrange it, if the consistency of the writing does not arrange a place for it. This is an incidental remark.

Let us come back to our clinic, to free association. What is curious is that at the same time, the unconscious is a writing, but free association is not at all free writing. Naturally people tried out automatic writing, we know about that, the question remaining whether the attempt is possible. Because a writing has its logic, which can perfectly well play with the speech of the subject. It can happen that during an analysis you need when you go home, for example, to start writing and you are surprised, at that moment, to note that what is going to be written here from your pen proceeds from a com-

pletely different arrangement than that proper to free association. Because free association, it is called free, refers ceaselessly to the speech of the analysand, while if you write what may have been your session, you note that writing introduces a consistency, a logic which may rather rapidly foreclose the subject of speech. Writing is arranged in this way and finally the one who sustained it by his speech finds himself swept aside from what is being set up there.

The unconscious has obviously a consistency that depends on the writing that constitutes it. This famous logic of the unconscious has only a single means, a single operator to express both affirmation and negation, contradiction and all the logical operators, it is consecutiveness. It is because two propositions follow one another that there is a logical bond between them, even if it sometimes entails distinguishing punctuations, the passage to something else, but it is because they follow one another that there is then a bond between them. Read the *Traumdeutung* on this and you will begin to amuse yourself after a while. Freud tries to explain the way in which different logical operators are expressed in dreams, exclusion, alternatives, negation and you will note very quickly that there is only a single means of accounting for these different values, which is that the two propositions follow one another. They follow one another without a caesura, in this case there is not the cut of speech. It is a remark that one could take very far as regards what is involved in science. One would be inclined to say that science, in its organisation, in so far as it is referred in every case to a formalism made up of propositions logically consecutive to one another, that science has the structure of the unconscious. Science, as such, forecloses the subject of speech; it aims at the radical anonymity of the propositions in which it consists. The subject finds himself foreclosed from it and that is why Lacan can say that the subject of the unconscious is the very same as that of science, namely, that it is no less foreclosed by the arrangement, by the writing of the unconscious. And you have a testimony of this in that the search for enjoyment can be carried out by radically sweeping aside everything that may be the stops, the arrests, the tempering that the subject might want to introduce into it. The chain may want to unwind in a way that is radically independent of the caesura that the subject might want to introduce into it. Because the unconscious — must this remark be made? — does not know the impossible, there is no stopping it. Metaphorically, what is called a dream is a situation where the access to the object seems particularly easy, where the object offers itself as realised without the ordinary complications that accompany the procedure. To say "No, I'm dreaming..." leaves unders-

tood the feeling of being in a dream because reaching the object or the path towards the object is carried out with this kind of facility, of immediacy, of ease, of dreaming. And you wake up because the fact of there being no longer anything impossible can be a source of anxiety.

I come now to the disclaiming of the concept. Among the Ancients, in Plato, the concept is isolated. Once you know what the concept man is, all you have to do is fulfil it, it is like a horse, once it has been taught what it meant to be a gee-gee, he cannot avoid it, even if he wants to be a little bird, for man it is the same, once he knows what it is to be a man, once people were able to define it for him philosophically, all he can do is fulfil it. One may think that one of the forms of antipathy that we know, in our milieu, for the concept, namely, the master signifier — a highly hysterical antipathy obviously - turns around the transgression of the master signifier and of the caesura then that it provokes with S_2 . Because if there were only, imagine such happiness, S_2 's it would be so much easier, but from the moment that there is one which intimates to the other that he has to conform himself to his requirement for being, to the requirement that the concept calls for, we introduce into this chain which otherwise does not know the impossible, the misfortune of the caesura, namely, at the same time the misfortune of the word.

So then, I would like all the same to pursue a little for you this quite astonishing *Postface*.

"I again owe it to the author of this work [...] that he convinced me that what is read of what I say..."

You see this opposition between the written part and the spoken part of the seminar,

"What is read of what I say... is not read any the less because I say it."

Namely, that there is here an effect in this transcription, in this bouquin, a quite original reading-effect because the fact that Lacan says it, does not prevent what has by being taken as a writing and therefore is proposed for reading, will be read, he says.

"I again owe it to the author of this work [...] that he convinced me that what is read of what I say is no less read because of the fact that I say it. The accent to be put on the saying, because the I can go its own way."

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In other words, the problem here is not to determine the I which is the author of this saying, the question can be let run, and perhaps Lacan himself, after all, is not able to answer it, but the fact that there is a saying of this writing. And I have often reminded you that Lacan's seminars were usually made up of written notes so that while improvising, while speaking, it was perfectly normal at certain moments for Lacan to change to reading what he had written. And one day, perhaps next year, I will amuse myself with you, if I am up to it, in evoking the written passages that he had prepared. I am convinced that they could be verified because the archives exist and of course they will be at our disposition when we ask for them. Because the dossier of his seminars was made like that; there were some notes on the plan that he was going to follow and then two or three written pages that he read, he did not improvise the written pages, he read them.

Listen again:

"In short there could be some advantage as regards making the analytic discourse consistent, that I should trust the fact that people re-read me".

In other words, that thanks to this transcription, that there is not simply reading by the ear of what he read for us during the seminar but it should be re-read. And this could, he says, be of advantage as regards the consistency of the analytic discourse — at which point I remind you of the formula of the phantasy, which is in a superior position in the analytic discourse and where you have what, the \$ a support of speech and on the other side the *a* as representative of writing. So then,

"One cannot doubt from the time I put into it, namely, making this transcription, that the outcome displeases me and that I described it as poubellication. But that people publish/forget (p'oublie) what I say to the point of giving a university twist to it makes it worth my while to mark here its incompatibility."

He has passed from the psychoanalytic discourse that he evoked just now to the university discourse which, for its part, is organised precisely, like the scientific discourse, on the eliding of speech. The university discourse ranges itself rather with what could be the catalogue of statements and when someone starts stating things, he obviously must pay careful attention to it; it is better, it is preferable that what he advances as a stating should hold up. In any case it is not easy, I believe, I am not going too far,

to say that inside the university, it is much wiser to limit oneself to a census of statements.

"To posit writing as I do, let it be noted that at the point, it is established, indeed that this will be its status. If I am a little responsible for it this does not prevent that it having been established well before my discoveries, since after all, writing as not-too-be-read..."

so then we are going to see why it is not-to-be-read,

... was introduced by Joyce, I would do better to say: intraduced because by making of the word a trade beyond different tongues, it can scarcely be translated, since everywhere it is equally little to be read".

Now there is here, on the part of J.A.M., an error in the word he uses: he put *traite* instead of *trade*, but in any case, this is of no particular importance, I am not going to give a gloss on it, it is not worth the trouble, but you will see in reading it that it is the English word *trade*, nothing else but that can be at stake. It is not important.

"I however, given the people I am talking to, I have to remove from those heads what they think they retain from their time in the school described as maternelle, no doubt, from the fact that one procède there
»

He writes possesses (*possède*), it is obviously procède (*procède*), we may suppose that it is a typographical slip, that it is not possession that is at stake, but procession,

"to a dematernalising: in other words what is learned by learning the alphabet".

Learning the alphabet, because the child is taught that the G, is given to beasts like the giraffe and the monkey (*guenon*), so you see, people learn the alphabet in the way they should. Since,

"The G with which the two are written, the giraffe and the monkey, have nothing to do with being read because it does not correspond to it!".

I should tell you, at this place, I do not know whether this is the text.

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Because this "does not correspond to it" appears strange to me. But anyway! You will see it, you will take it up again, I suppose that you will amuse yourselves by taking up this text again yourselves and finishing it at home, which I will not be able to do this evening, I hope that this will give you a taste for it. But I am not sure of this "it does not correspond to it".

"That what is then produced in terms of anorthographie can only be judged by taking the function of writing as a different style of the one who speaks in language, this is won little by little, or in bits and pieces but it will happen more quickly if one knows what is involved in it."

In other words, the function of writing, Lacan tells us, is not a different style from speaking in language, the function of writing is the natural style proper to the one who is speaking in language.

"It would already be something if to be read was understood as it should be when one has the duty of interpreting."

This is what I was saying to you earlier. I could make some remarks on this, but it is clear, we will tackle it when we have these study days on *Lacan son of Freud*, that Lacanian interpretation is not Freudian interpretation. And we would really have to explain this. In any case, Lacan would never have given an analysis and explanations about physiopathology or the physiopathology of the psyche, as Freud did. Never, naturally! He never even got involved in causal explanations. Or even simply in pointing out to someone that this character that appeared in the dream, seemed indeed to be perhaps his mother, for example, or something of this kind. Never! Lacan's style of interpretation, which was not frequent, was absolutely rigorous, it was very simply a displacing of punctuation, in other words the analysis and could certainly not complain about something heterogeneous being introduced into the psyche or into his unconscious, he could never do like the *Wolfman*, complaining throughout his whole life of everything that Freud had injected into his head, because it was the very stuff of the reading that the patient gave of his unconscious that was simply corrected or rectified by Lacan. That's all!

So then he tells us,

"It would already be something if to be read was understood as it should be when one has the duty of interpreting. That it should be the word in which there is not read what it says, is nevertheless what the

analyst skips over, when the time has gone when he pushed himself into listening until he could no longer stand up."

You see his criticism of this sort of dominance accorded to what is supposed to be the magic of listening. And then, he is going to tell us here why a writing is not to be read and why it is a matter of something else. He recalls the Jewish story: "Why are you telling me that you are going to Lemberg when you are going to Cracow, etc.,":

"...from the story that is called Jewish because of the fact that here the least stupid people are talking — there you are, that's nice, what a compliment for the Jews! — no less says that it is because it is not a book to be read that the train timetable is here the recourse by which Lemberg is read instead of Cracow."

In other words, the train timetable, for its part precisely, is not a book to be read, because it says Lemberg when it means Lemberg,

"Or still more what settles the question in any case, it is the ticket which gives the station. But the function of the writing does not act here as a timetable, but the railway track itself? And the a-object as I write it is the rail by which one gets to the plus-de-jour, with which there is possessed, or indeed in which there is protected the demand for interpretation. "

So then there is always indeed in writing something else to be read, namely, what constitutes the rail of this writing, the rail that is supposed to lead to the *plus-de-jour*, with which there is possessed, indeed by which there is protected the demand for interpretation. If you wish something of the kind: "But what do I want? What am I looking for? What is it?"

As regards the next paragraph just a word. It concerns Japanese writing, and to speak about it, he starts from this:

"If from the honey gathering of the bee I read its share in the fertilisation of phanerogamic pUnts, if I make an augury from a more low-flying group of swallows about whether there is going to be a storm, it is indeed because I raise them to the level of signifier by the fact that I speak, that I have to give an account."

In other words, what can present itself to me in the field of perception as

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being of the order of sign, the honey gathering of bees, the flight of swallows which announces a storm,

"It is indeed because I raise them to the status of signifier by the fact that I speak, that I have to give an account. A memory here of the impudence imputed to me for these Ecrits to have taken my measure from the word" — the Fxrits". In other words, what cheek to call something Fxrits!

*"A Japanese woman was beside herself, which surprised me. The fact is that I did not know, even though propelled, precisely due to her, to the place where her tongue dwelt, that nevertheless I only dipped my toe into this place. I did not understand that from what the tangible receives therefrom this writing which from On-yomi to Kun-yomi the signifier reverberates to the point that it is torn apart by so many refractions which the least newspaper, the signs at the crossroads satisfy and support. Nothing helps so much to refresh the drills that trickle into so many sluices, which from the spring come to birth through Amaterasu. **

So then I would like one of you to tell me who Amaterasu is.

S. Thibierge - It is the goddess of the sun in Japanese mythology.

Ch. Melman - Thank you very much!

"To the point that I said to myself that through this the speaking being can withdraw himself from the artifices of the unconscious which do not touch him because they close there. A borderline case to confirm me."

And you will find in *Lituraterre*, the following thing:

*"/ would like to testify about what is produced from a fact already noted, namely, that of a tongue, the Japanese, in so far as writing works on it. That there is included in the Japanese tongue a writing effect, the important thing is that it remains attached to writing and what carries the writing effect in it is a writing that is specialised, in that in Japanese, it can be read with two different pronunciations, in On-yomi, its pronunciation in characters, the character is pronounced as such distinctly, and in Kun-yomi, the way in which there is said in Japanese what it means. **

So then the possibility of a reading that is let us say, broadly speaking alphabetic — the characters are not an alphabetic writing, but I am saying that to give an image of it — or else to read it by saying what it means, by going to the signified.

"It would be comical to see there being designated in it, on the pretext that the character is the letter, the wrecks of the signifier going with the flow of the signified. It is the letter as such which gives support to the signifier according to its hw of metaphor, it is moreover: from the discourse that it catches it in the net of one's fellow (semblant)."

Have you all understood...Yes? No, not at all! I am continuing to facilitate the task for you. You must admit all the same that it is amusing!

"The letter is all the same promoted from there, as a referent that is just as essential as anything else and this changes the status of the subject. That he takes his support on a constellated sky and not simply on the unary trait for his fundamental identification explains that he cannot take support on the thou, namely, in all the grammatical forms with which the least statement is varied by the relations of politeness that are implied in its signified."

Now then in our group, all of that ought to be now... perfectly well established! I will begin my seminar next year by this reading of Lacan; I will do it in a thematic way and not in a chronological way and I will begin with *Lituraterre* then, I will not draw back from little things like that. I just simply want to make you understand this evening before we separate that for Japanese, Japanese writing, there exist two ways of reading it, either by pronouncing the characters, or by articulating the signified.

"It would be comical to see there being designated in it, under the pretext that the character is the letter, the wrecks of the signifier going with the flow of the signified."

I ask you, I am proposing you to see in these wrecks of the signifier going with the flow of the signified what I was saying earlier about the fact that the little letters may find a landing place, coming into the real, and participate in the flow of the signified. The signified which we know is one. And we know that it is the representative of what is signified. We have here then the evocation described as comical — in Lacan he never uses a term by

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chance — it would be comical to see there being designated in it, under the pretext that the character is the letter, in this reading, the fact of reading them not as characters but to say what is signified.

*"It would be comical to see there being designated in it, under the pretext that the character is the letter, the wreck of the signifier going with the flow of the signified. It is the letter as such which acts as a support to the signifier according to its Uw of metaphor, it is moreover: from discourse, that it catches in the net of the seeming 'it' the signifier. It is nevertheless promoted from this as a referent just as essential as anything else, and this changes the status of the subject. **

The referent which is therefore no longer simply the representative of the signified, the big One, but the letter promoted as referent as essential as anything else, and this changes the status of the subject,

"Whether he takes his support on a constellated sky and not simply on the unary trait for his fundamental identification...

a constellated sky, you should see in it the field of all objects, of all these letters which have gone with the flow of the signified.

... explains that he can only take his stand on the thou, namely, without all the grammatical forms the slightest statement of which is varied by the relations of politeness that it implies in its signified."

That's OK? No? It's completely wrong! It is completely incomprehensible? Do you agree?

B. Vandermersch - This makes an allusion to the Japanese practice of interlocution, doesn't it?

Mme A - In Japanese, in the second person, there are several persons to designate someone close, someone... Stephane could talk to us about it since he is here.

Ch. Melman - Yes we will refer to Stephane!

S. Thibierge - I am happy to be able to try to disentangle that a little because on several occasions, — with some other people — I attempted it. But I think here that in effect, it is referring to the fact that in Japanese the modulation of the enunciating for the subject, finds its orientation effectively in what constitutes the thou of the interlocutor, namely, that one does

not speak in the same forms depending on whether one is speaking to one's father, to one's mother, to one's little sister.

Ch. Melman - That means that one goes to the signified, is that not so?

C. Veken - One could say exactly the opposite.

Ch. Melman - Ah I hope so! If one could not say the opposite Cyril.

C. Veken - You see the signified because we, we have the thou, therefore you see an identity of the signified but it is interlocution that is in question and it is denominated by different letters.

Ch. Melman - But we do not have any variations in handling the thou, which in a way specifies, which signifies the person I am in the process of addressing myself to.

S. Thibierge - A little bit all the same! With the *tu* (thou) and *vous* (you) we have it.

Ch. Melman - I beg your pardon! The *vous* seems to me of an essentially different order, because the *vous* respects the plural character of the subject whatever it may be, refuses in a way to grant him a sort of absolute identity that I might claim to grasp by the *tu*. When I *tutoie* him I do not leave him any access to division. While the *vous*, on the contrary, bears witness to the fact that I perfectly well respect that eventually, with respect to the way I address him, to what I am saying to him, he is on his *quant-a-soi* and that with respect to his own statement, he can himself be divided. Therefore the subtle handling in French of the *tu* and the *vous*, I think that family existence would be very different, if *voussoiement* was the rule there, we would be much more policed in our families if with no other pretension, one favoured, one respected the *voussoiement*, if one addressed one's child by *vouvoyant* him it would be a relief to him, yes! And then it is less stupid making than the requirement of the *tu* which Lacan says is so *tuant* (killing).

C. Hopen - In certain countries that is how it is done, for example in Colombia; I learnt that the family *vouvoie's*, the mother and the daughter, the daughter and the mother...

Ch. Melman - In any case I am going to stop on that, I am going to draw your attention one last time to the comic evoked here in this sentence on this occasion, in the measure that the comic for Lacan very precisely represents the fall of the phallus, a type of detumescence that relieves everyone and means that one can for a moment relax a little in oneself. I suggest that in order to read this sentence, you see the way the comic intervenes here, when it becomes "*a referent that is just as essential as anything else and this changes the status of the subject*". I would like to conclude...

S. Thibierge - Excuse me! *It*, here is it the letter?

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Ch. Melman - It is the letter, yes.

C. Veken - It is sure that when the letter becomes a referent, it changes the status of the subject because then the letter can be designated.

Ch. Melman - Yes that changes the status of the subject, because that gives the phantasy.

C. Veken - Among other things.....

Ch. Melman - Among other things... That effectively changes the status of the subject but we would have to appreciate it better. I want to simply ginger you up a little by reminding you of the end of *Lituraterre* where Lacan evokes what would be involved in a signifier which would no longer be of the order of appearance and where he says the following — and this, this would be marvellous homework for the holidays, you can do a tutorial by searching for it yourselves — "*the asceticism of writing cannot it seems to me succeed except by connecting up with an 'it is written' by which the sexual relation is installed.*" I believe that when we have understood that, we will have advanced in our relation to writing. Good! Do you have any remarks? I remind you only that we have "*still a little effort to make if we want to be republicans*".

C. Veken - As regards what is written and what is read, all the same, I have the impression in listening to you that what you have done is to say that if it can be read, it is because it is a writing. Now I am not at all convinced of it. I think that if the analysand offers what he is saying to be read, this in no way signifies that it is written; unless one specifies what a writing is, what is read and what is written, because, for a seminar, for example, to be transcribed and the difference there is between *bouquin* and book shows clearly enough that it is not because there are characters on a page that this has the status of writing, is that not so? Just as, if someone reads a written text aloud, it is not oral or speech, or the word, it is all the same a writing. So then if one manages to unstick the phonic form from the graphic form, from the status of the writing or of speech, I think that one manages, and I have the impression that this was what Lacan did in a very solitary way because it was difficult to conceive of, it is the fact that one can read something other than what is written and because one can...

Ch. Melman - To which, Cyril, I would just allow myself to object, when you draw an opposition between the phonic form and the written form, precisely, all that is said in that, is that the phonic form in no way prevents what I am saying from being a writing.

C. Veken - I think that it is precisely what I have just said.

Ch. Melman - So then, we have completely not understood one another.

G Veken - The phonic form does not prejudge either of the two statuses,

any more than the graphic form. If it is the word or writing, this is independent of the graphic or the phonic form, this is what I was trying...

Ch. Melman - Exactly! I beg your pardon, I am completely in agreement.

M. Hammad - In saying written or writing, can one not make a little differentiation between what is written and the reading of a writing, the unconscious? When it is spoken, what is read is a writing....something written?

Ch. Melman - It is written, yes! Not a writing! One could understand a writing as what one is in the process of writing, is that not so? One could understand the unconscious as what is written, yes! But anyway, perhaps I should reflect on it but for the moment, I cannot answer your question any better.

M. Hammad - What I mean is when you say "how do you write that?" or "write it however you like", when one speaks, one can say "I would write it like that if I had to write it."

Ch. Melman - Yes, and it is precisely the writing that makes sense, and a sense which is eventually unveiled to me. Lacan describes one of his slips, when he wrote *la femme que j'ai aime* when he wrote *aime*, e with an acute accent. This kind of slip which is nevertheless not without interest, depends on writing. Now, if it depends on writing, it is because in the unconscious, it was already written, is that not so? The unconscious did not have it as a sort of reserve faculty, a grammatical trick which is proper to it and that it used at a given moment, that the unconscious might have a sort of dictionary, and that to express here a kind of traditional questioning about homosexuality, and all the rest, etc. So then does the unconscious have its own rhetoric? No, the unconscious has a logic, precisely, it has no rhetoric, there is no key to dreams. So then there is in the unconscious what is written there and is effectively going to be found.

L. Ben Mansour - The only slip is a *lapsus calami*. Lacan said it himself.

Ch. Melman - So then we should say that there is no slip except a *lapsus calami*. He says that, huh?

L. Ben Mansour - About writing he says "it is because it was written like that, because I wrote it to the other [?], that is why you did not understand me. It is in this that the writing is differentiated from speech and speech has to be put back into it and copiously buttered it for it to be understood. One can write a whole lot of things without them reaching any ear".

Ch. Melman - Thank you! But there you are! And what makes it still more dramatic, is that...

C. Emerich - It is in *D'un discours qui ne serait pas du semblant*.

Ch. Melman - Oh... This evening you are superb! Now that is something!

C. Emerich - It is "the buttering" that makes it memorable.

Ch. Melman - Choula, bravo! You see why he wrote "to butter it", that is what one makes one's butter with. Good! Which means also that when you write you do not know what you are writing, and you do not know what is done with what you are writing, and you will find in the introduction to the *Ecrits*, namely, in the seminar on *The purloined letter*, what he calls in connection with his writings "the milking of a mad cavalry", something like that.

C. Veken - All the same, the *lapsus caUmi* remains of the order of speech and not of writing. Since if there is a slip, a spelling mistake or something like that, this is a property of writing, I would say in its dimension of gesture. What is proper to a writing is to be published, printed, therefore to be normalised from the point of view of spelling; the spelling is conventional and standardised, it has been a convention in publishing from the beginning, not to take into account the particular spelling of the writer. So that anyone who wrote *aime* without e, would have to indicate sic and underline it several times in order that, when it has the status of a writing that is to be circulated, it would be maintained as such. It is in this sense that I think that it is the piece written by the person in question which needs to be examined, but not what he wrote. Because what he wrote as writing, just as it escapes from speech, it seems to me that it escapes the gesture of writing, from individual calligraphy and from all these things, in order to become something that is... If there is a calligraphy, it is that of the copyist, in other words, it is no longer individual, the copy escapes from its announcer or its writer. That is why the *lapsus caUmi* does not seem to me to be attributable to the writing or only in an illusory fashion, but when all is said and done remains a property I would say of the word.

Ch. Melman - No, my dear Cyril, not of the word, of the statement (du dire). This opposition should be dropped, should it not, but it is certain that the little e that was missing, this slip about the e was the index of a statement by Lacan.

C. Veken - To appreciate it, you would need to know about the spelling of this person, there are people who do not make the past participle agree when you use avoir.

Ch. Melman - Yes. That's something different.

C. Veken - The law allows it since 1901.

Ch. Melman - Good.

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