THE SEMINAR OF JACQUES LACAN

BOOK XXII

R. S. I.

1974-1975

Translated by Cormac Gallagher from unedited French manuscripts

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Introduction

Preliminary to the Seminar of R.S.I.
19 November 1974

There is no mike. So you're going to have to tell me whether you can hear me.

There you are, there are people, I know because I was told so, who are living the strike like a celebration. I know it, of course, through analysis. One gets to know things by analysis! One gets to know even that there are people twisted enough for that. But anyway, why not? It's subjective, as they say. That means that there are people who can tackle a lot of things from the right angle. Nevertheless, I am not one of them; as analyst, I can only take the strike to be a symptom, in the sense that this year perhaps, I will manage to convince you of it, that the symptom, to refer to one of my three categories, belongs to the Real. The annoying thing – and this is why I have some reservations – is that it is an organised symptom; that is what is bad, at least from the point of view of the analyst.

So then, if all the same I am going to go on strike, it is not because for me it is a celebration, but it happens that this strike comes to me like a ring on my finger; I mean that it happens that today, namely, at the start of this year 74-75, I have not the slightest inclination to do a seminar for you, as is attested by the fact that you have not seen any

notice of it, announcing the title like every other year. I must say that nevertheless your number today does not fail to shake me. You know that every year I question myself about what it could be that motivates this crowd. It is not any more resolved now, it is not any more resolved for me, but all the same I consider it as an appeal, an appeal (10) linked to the fact that what I wrote, did nothing more than write, I mean what is written on the board with little signs, the **o**, the S_1, the S_2, the $ of the subject, the fact is that the analytic discourse is something that stirs you, I mean which stirs *you*. It is not a *you,* a *stirs you* in the neutral sense. It is true that to have written it, is an attempt, a tentative approximation. One could perhaps do better. I hope that one will do better.

But in short this year, I have to tell you that I have other concerns. That would, I hope, only give me greater merit in your eyes, if I pursue this seminar here. I have other concerns and I question myself as to whether I ought not let them take precedence. I mean that among you – I see numerous faces of them here – there are people who belong to my School. And perhaps after all my lassitude comes from something that is eating me, namely, that this seminar prevents me from paying more attention to this School.

This year to stimulate this School, I took a tack of which some among you have perhaps heard an echo. I am not going to put the concerns that this gives me into the public forum. Not, of course, that this is something private, quite the contrary, since what is at stake is that there is elsewhere, somewhere other than here, something that gives a place to other teachings than mine. It is strange, strange in the properly Freudian sense, *unheimlich*, it is strange that it is by some people who do not find themselves properly speaking yet authorised by analysis, but who are on the path, that there comes this resistance to the reason why I am stimulating them. I am stimulating them in short to make effective, to make effective what? In a testimony that they would contribute about the point where they are at, to make

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effective this *passe* which perhaps some of you know is what I am trying to introduce into my School, this *passe* by which in short what is at stake is that each one contributes his stone to the analytic discourse by bearing witness to how one enters into it.

It is strange that among them there are some who are fully formed analysts and who when literally – this is what I did in this place where I wanted certain teachings to take place – when literally I beg their help – this is what I did – refuse it in the most categorical way, and go as far as to answer me with the insult, the insult which can be found in the newspapers for example – these are not things that have an effect on me but which, all the same about this insult, which is already not (11) bad to find in the newspaper, in the newspaper *Le Monde* in particular, as it happens, inflate this insult, and add to it. Yeah.

If I speak this year, I will take things from the angle of the identity of self to self. The question is whether this applies to the analyst. Can the analyst be considered as an element? Does he make, in other words, a *set*? Making a set/doing it together (*faire ensemble*), this is something that I will try to explain to you, is not to form a trade union. They are two different terms. *Faire ensemble* might mean, that means being able to make a series. And what I am questioning myself about is where this series stops? Among other terms, can an analyst, like the example of what I have just alluded to about the insult, behave like an imbecile (*imbécile)*? This is a very important question. How judge what I am describing as imbecility? It surely has a meaning, even in the analytic discourse; elsewhere, of course, in every discourse no one has any doubt, one is an imbecile or not, I am saying with respect to this discourse specifically to the discourse of the master, the discourse of the university, the scientific discourse, there is no doubt about it. How define imbecility in the analytic discourse? Here is a question, a question that I introduced, faith, I would say, from the first year of my seminar in stating that analysis is certainly a remedy against ignorance, that it is without effect against being an asshole (*connerie*).

Hang on, pay attention! I already said that *connerie* is not imbecility.
How can you situate imbecility, specify it as being an asshole?

The annoying thing and what is difficult in the question that I evoke,
is something is perhaps something that you got wind of from me, I did
not heavily insist on it, but all the same it must be said there are
subjects for whom analysis, I mean the analytic experience, when they
present themselves to it, does not succeed. And I specify that this
makes them imbeciles. It must indeed be that there is something
flawed at the start. That means perhaps that they would be more
useful, I mean useable elsewhere. I mean that for something else they
have obvious gifts. This brings us back to the ethics of each discourse
and it is not for nothing that I put forward the term ethics of
psychoanalysis. Ethics is not the same in it and it is perhaps with those
whose ethics would have made them shine elsewhere that analysis
does not succeed. Simple hypothesis, but that perhaps – this cannot be
without twists and turns – perhaps if I decide, we will put here, finally
we will put, it is a manner of speaking, I will put to the test here,
(12) starting from the fact that I am indicating that there is no other
ethics than to play the game according to the structure of a discourse
and that we rediscover there my title of last year; it is the non-dupes,
those who do not play the game of a discourse, who find themselves
liable to err. It is not inevitably any worse for that. Only it is at their
own risk. Those who err, in each discourse, are not inevitably useless
in it. Far from it! Only it would be preferable in order to found a new
one of these discourses, that people should be a little bit more dupe.

There you are. So then since all the same it would be quite useless to
tell you that I am suspending myself, that I am questioning myself
about what I will do this year, it would be quite vain to do so, but to
do it for two hours which is what you were expecting, well then, I am
not going to do it. I am going to stop there while asking you simply to
trust, in order to know if you are to come back here on the 10th
December, the second Tuesday, to trust the little notices on which I

will inscribe the title that I will have chosen, if do this seminar this year. It is quite superfluous, and I would even say contra-indicated for you to bombard Gloria with telephone calls. The poor woman can't take any more! It will be one thing or another, either this notice will be put up there, let us say to leave the time to do it and then I must also think things out, the notice will be in the corridor two days before, or else it will not be. If it is not there, well then! You can tell yourselves that I am taking a year's sabbatical. If it is there, I am counting on seeing you as numerous as you are today.

Seminar 1:   Tuesday 10 December 1974

Voilà. So then you saw my notice, which is written like that, Rsi. It can be read like that. It can also be read, since it is in capital letters, it can be read R.S.I. Which perhaps suggested to those who are in the know the Real, the Symbolic and the Imaginary.

I would like this year to talk to you about the Real, and to begin by pointing out to you that these three words, Real, Symbolic and Imaginary have a meaning. They are three different meanings, but you can also note that I said three meanings, like that, because it seems to be self-evident. But if they are different, is that enough for them to make three, if they are as different as I say? Hence the notion of a common measure, which is difficult to grasp, except by defining the unit in it as a function of measure. There are so many, one, two, three. Again it must be, for it to be able to be said that there are so many, again this unit must be grounded on the sign, whether it is a sign or whether it is written equals, or indeed that you make two little strokes to signify equals, the equivalence of these units. But if by chance they were different, as I might say from one another, we would be very embarrassed and, after all, what would bear witness to it, would be the meaning itself of the word other. Again there must be distinguished, in this meaning of other, the other made up of a distinction defined by an external/internal relationship, for example, as Freud did, whether he wants to or not, in his second topography which is supported by a geometry of the sack where you see a thing,

somewhere in the *New introductory lectures,* a thing which is supposed to contain, contain what? It's a funny thing to say, the (14) drives. This is what he calls the Id. Naturally this forces him to add to it a certain number of tools, a sort of lunula which all of a sudden is transformed into a sort of vitellus on which there is supposed to be differentiated an embryo. This is obviously not what he means, but it is regrettable that it suggests it. Such are the disadvantages of imaged illustrations. I am not telling you everything else that he is forced to add, without counting the number of hatchings (*hachures*) that he entitles Superego. This geometry of the sack is indeed this thing that we have to deal with at the level of topology, except for the fact that, as perhaps the idea has come to you, this is drawn on a surface and that we are forced to put the sack onto it. On a surface this gives a ring (*rond*) and, with this ring, there is an inside and an outside.

It is with that that one is led to write inclusion, namely, that something, I for example is included in an E, a set. Inclusion you know perhaps how that is written, like that,   , whence people have deduced a little quickly that one could slip from inclusion which is there above to the lesser sign   , namely, that I is smaller that E, which is a manifest imbecility.

Here then is the first other, the other defined from the outside to the inside. Only there is another Other, the one that I marked with a capital O, which for its part is defined as not having the slightest relationship, however small you may imagine it…when you begin to convey yourself in words, you are immediately caught in a wolf trap. Because this however small you imagine it, brings the Imaginary into play, and when you bring the Imaginary into play, you have every chance of becoming entangled. This is even how people started out for the infinitesimal: people had all sorts of trouble getting out of the Imaginary.

That they should be three, this Real, this Symbolic and this Imaginary, what does that mean? There are two slopes. One slope, a very steep one, leads us to homogenise them; because what relationship have they among themselves? Well then! This is precisely where I want to open up the path for you this year. One could say that the Real is what is strictly unthinkable. That at least would be a start. That would make a hole in the affair and that would allow us to question what is involved in, do not forget, what I started from, namely, from three terms in so far as they convey a meaning. What is this business of meaning, especially if you introduce into it what I am striving to make you sense? The fact is that as regards what is involved in (15) analytic practice, this is where you operate from, but on the other hand, you only work to reduce this meaning; it is in the measure that the unconscious is supported by this something, it must be said, the most difficult thing that I had to introduce, this something defined by me, structured like the Symbolic. It is from the fundamental equivocation of this something that is at stake in the term Symbolic that you always operate - I am talking to those here who are worthy of the name analyst. Equivocation is not meaning. Meaning is that through which there responds something which is different to the Symbolic, and there is no means of supporting this something otherwise than by the Imaginary. But what is the Imaginary? Does it even ek-sist? Since you hint, simply by pronouncing the term Imaginary, that there is something which ensures that the speaking being shows that he is destined for mental defectiveness. And this results from the simple notion of the Imaginary, in so far as the starting point for it is the reference to the body and to the fact that its representation, I mean everything that for it is represented, is only the reflection of its organism. It is the least of the suppositions that the body implies.

Only here there is something that immediately makes us stumble, which is that in this notion of body, there must be immediately implied the following, which is its very definition: it is something

about which one presumes that there are specified functions in the organs, so that an automobile, even a computer according to the latest news, is also a body. It is not self-evident, we should say, that a body is living. So that what best attests to the fact that it is living, is precisely this *mens* in connection with which, more exactly that I introduced along the path, the journeying of mental defectiveness. It is not given to all bodies, in so far as they function, to suggest the dimension of imbecility. This dimension is introduced by this something that the tongue, and not just any one, Latin… – this to put in their place those who impute precisely this imbecility to Latin – is precisely the only one that instead of sticking on the soul an opaque term like *nous*, or another metaphor of something or other, of a knowledge, which we for sure do not know whether it exists, since it is the knowledge supposed by the Real. This knowledge of God, it is certain that it ek-sists. We have given ourselves enough trouble in spelling it out, it ek-sists, but only in the sense that I am writing this term ek-sistence, by (16) writing it differently than is usually done. It *sists* perhaps, but we do not know where. All one can say, is that what consists gives no testimony of it, so then, there is something a little bit striking in seeing that the tongue that is suspected of being the most stupid one is precisely the one that has forged this term *intelligere*, to read between the lines, namely, elsewhere than the way in which the Symbolic is written. It is from this effect of writing of the Symbolic that there stems this meaning-effect, in other words imbecility, to which there bear witness up to today all the systems described as natural. Without language, not the slightest suspicion could come to us of this imbecility, which is also that by which the support which is the body bears witness to us, I remind you that I said it earlier but this did not do anything for you, bears witness to us of being alive. In truth this *mens,* attested to by mental defectiveness, is something from which I do not hope to get out in any way.

I do not see why what I am contributing to you would be less defective than the rest. This might indeed be the meaning of this

banana skin that was slipped under my foot, by catching me like that on the telephone, to give a lecture in Nice. You'll never guess, they slipped this title under my foot, the Lacanian phenomenon! Ah yes! What I am in the process of telling you, is that precisely I do not expect it to be a phenomenon, namely, that what I am saying is any less stupid than all the rest. The only thing that makes me persevere, and you know that I do not persevere without looking twice at it, I told you the last time why I was hesitating to set about it again this year, it is because I believe that there is something I have grasped (*sais*), I cannot even say with my hands, with my feet, it is the coming into play of this trace that is outlined, which quite obviously is not easily tolerated, especially by analysts, by the analytic experience. So that if there is a phenomenon, it can only be the *Lacanalyste* phenomenon or indeed *lac-à-pas-d'analyste* [*être dans le lac*: to be in the soup?].

There is something which happened nevertheless, I am sharing it with you like that, because I am letting myself be drawn along; naturally, I could not explain anything about all of that to them, because for them, I was a phenomenon. What the organisers wanted in fact was to collect a mob. There is always a mob to look at a phenomenon. So, I was not going to tell them, listen I am not a phenomenon! That would (17) have been a *Verneinung*. Anyway, I let myself go for a good hour and a quarter. I cannot say that I am at all satisfied with what I told them, because what can you say in an hour and a quarter! For my part I imagine that with you of course I have a number of hours, since it is a little bit more than three, it is limitless. I am quite wrong, because in reality, there are no more than 50, including all that I will have between now and the end of the year. But that helps me to take to the road.

In short, at the end of an hour and a quarter of chat, I asked them questions, I mean, I asked them to ask me some. It was a demand. Well then! You can believe me if you wish, contrary to you, they asked me them for three quarters of an hour! And I will say more,

these questions were striking in that they were relevant questions, relevant of course like that, in a second zone. In short it was the testimony of the fact that in a certain context, the one in which I do not insist, questions could come to me, and questions that were not stupid, questions that in any case required me to respond. So that I found myself confronted with the situation, without having had to reject the Lacanian phenomenon, of having demonstrated it. That naturally, it was not even sure that they noticed themselves, that that was the Lacanian phenomenon. Namely, that I was an effect for a audience, which had only heard like that, on the rebound, from very far, what I may articulate in this place here, where I give my teaching, my teaching to open up for the analyst the very discourse that supports him. If indeed it is from a discourse, and always from a discourse, that this Thing that we are trying to manipulate in analysis suffers, from a discourse.

I am saying then that this is the phenomenon. It is, in short, part of the wave (*vague*), if you will allow me to employ a term that might have tempted me to write the letters in a different order. Instead of R.S.I., R.I.S., that would have given a laugh, this famous *ris de l'eau*, on which precisely, somewhere in my *Ecrits*, I equivocate. I was looking for the page earlier, there was someone here, a pal of the first order, who had the *Ecrits*; I found it, it is on page 166, that I play on the *ris d'eau* (*rideau*), indeed implicating there 'my dear friend Leiris dominating' something or other.

I must obviously cheer myself up by telling myself that this (18) phenomenon is not unique, it is only particular. I mean that it is distinguished from the universal. The annoying thing is that it is up to now unique at the level of the analyst. It is nevertheless indispensable that the analyst should be at least two, the analyst to produce effects, and the analyst who theorises these effects. That was why it was precious for me that I was accompanied by a person, who perhaps, I did not ask him, at this precise level of the phenomenon, of the

phenomenon described as Lacanian, was able to notice precisely there, at the level of what I had to say, about what I have just now stated, namely, that on that occasion I simply demonstrated this phenomenon by the fact that from that, from this mob, I received questions and that alone is where the phenomenon lies. If this person, and I have no doubt about it, is an analyst, she was able to notice that I had in the little I said - which was, I am repeating to you, execrable - demonstrated this phenomenon.

That closes the brackets. I would like now to come back to what I have to advance in today, namely, that I only found, in a word, a single way of giving these three terms, Real, Symbolic, Imaginary their common measure by knotting the, with this bo-bo…bo-bo…Borromean knot. In other words, that you must pay attention to what I drew there on the board, and you have been able to see, not without difficulty, because I made a mistake in the colour on several occasions. Because it is indeed here that we will find the whole time the question, what distinguishes the way in which each one consists, of those things which at one time, I designated as rings of string, what distinguishes each one from the others? Absolutely nothing but the meaning. And that is why we have the hope, a hope, good God, on which you can thoroughly depend, because hope, in short for me is only in this affair. And if I did not have the answer, as you know, I would not ask the question.

We have the hope, I am leaving you the hope in the short term, there is none other, that we will take this year a step together, a step which only consists in the fact that, if we have won something somewhere, it is inevitably, it is surely, at the expense of something else. That in other terms, if analytic discourse functions, it is sure that we lose something in it elsewhere. Moreover, what could we well lose, if truly what I have just said, namely, that all the systems of nature that have emerged up to now are marked by mental deficiency, why should we hold on to them so much! There remain to us all the same these

(19) pivotal systems whose manipulation may allow us, I mean us
analysts, to account for our own operation.

I would like to keep you for an instant on the Borromean knot. The
Borromean knot consists strictly in the fact that 3 is the minimum for
it. If you make a chain, with what this word has for you, in terms of
ordinary meaning… If you unknot two rings of a chain, the others will
remain knotted (I-1).

Fig. I-1

The definition of the Borromean knot starts from 3. Namely, that if
[I-2] you break one of the rings of the 3, all 3 are freed, namely, the
two other rings are freed.
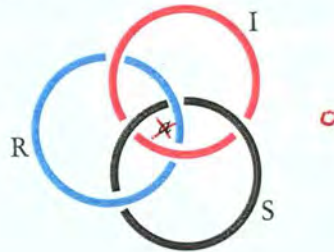
Fig. I-2

The remarkable thing in this, which is a matter of consistency, is that
starting from there you can put an indefinite number of rings. It will
always be true that if you break one of these rings, all the others,
however numerous they are, will be freed. I already, I think,
sufficiently made you sense, at a time that has already gone, that to
take the example of a ring thus fabricated [I-3], it is quite conceivable
that another comes to pass into the buckle which consists, which is
realised by the bending of this little circle, and that you grasp, in short,
immediately, that simply here by breaking the circle which, here,
(20) prevents the third from being liberated, the bent buckle is going
to slip from this, and that, in putting an indefinite number of these

bent circles, you will see through what really tangible, immediately imaginable mechanism, all the rings are freed, whatever may be their number.
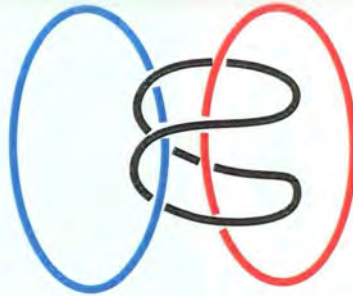
Fig. I-3

This property is all by itself what homogenises everything in terms of number starting from 3; which means that, in the sequence of numbers, of whole numbers, 1 and 2 are detached; something begins at 3, which includes all the numbers, however far they are denumerated, and it is indeed on this that I intended to put the emphasis, in my seminar, particularly last year. That is not all. There is much more than a single way of Borromeanising a certain number of consistent toruses, there is much more than a single way. I already indicated it at the appropriate time, there are very probably a quantity that there is no reason not to qualify as infinite, infinite in the sense of numerable, because you have only to suppose for an instant the following way of making a buckle [I-4] for you to perceive that you can multiply it indefinitely. Have you got that? Namely, to make of

Fig. I-4

(21) these buckles, as many turns as you wish to knot the two toruses together. There is no plausible limit to this arrangement, and consequently, already simply in this dimension, there is a way of tying together, one to the other, as many ways as it is possible to dream of on this occasion. You can even find others, it will be no less true that the Borromean knot whatever it may be has as a lower limit the number 3, that Borromean knot will always bear the mark of three,

(22) cords supposed, why not, nothing prevents us from positing it as a postulate, to join up at infinity.

There is nevertheless a means of defining what is called a point, namely, this something strange that Euclidean geometry does not define, and of which it nevertheless makes use as a support because on occasion, it punctuates the individual there. Namely, that the point, in Euclidean geometry, has no dimension at all, that it has zero dimensions, contrary to the line, to the surface, indeed to volume which respectively have one, two, three of them. Is there not, in the definition that Euclidean geometry gives of the point – as the intersection of two straight lines – something, I will allow myself to say, something that falls short? Namely, what would prevent two straight lines from sliding onto one another?
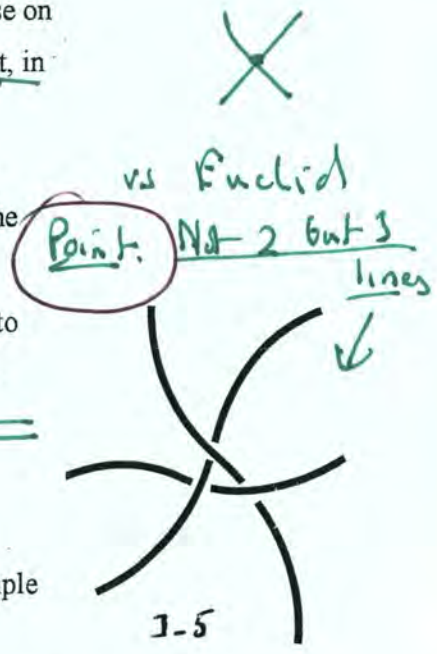
The only thing that would allow a point to be defined as such is presented like this [I-5], three straight lines which are not here simple lines, marks of a saw, shadows, but effectively three consistent straight lines which, at the central point here, produce what constitutes the essence of the Borromean knot, namely, which determine a point as such, something for which then, we must invent something other than simply the indication of a dimension which is supposed to be zero, which for its part has no dimension (*ne dimense pas*).

I am suggesting to you to try this out, that there is not simply here a banal stroke, namely, that this is also supported by three surfaces, I mean that with three surfaces you will obtain the effect described as a point in just as valid a way as the one depicted here, let us say, with three cords. That on the other hand, you can render tangible that you will obtain here these straight lines here, these cords from free (23) interplay, namely, on three surfaces that are not being squeezed, if you start not from the chain such as it is constituted in the Borromean knot, but in this chain two by two whose ghost I evoked earlier in passing, that in untying buckles knotted two by two, what

you get are three straight lines, free one on the other, namely, not
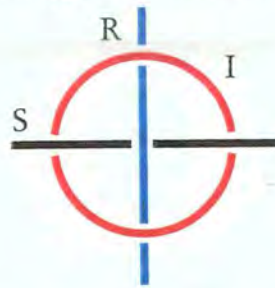being squeezed, not defining the point as such.

Fig. I-6

What I want to announce to you before leaving you, is then the
following. It is clear [I-6], here, from the fact that we can see that
with two infinite straight lines, we can, by knotting a single ring of
string, maintain the property of the Borromean knot, on this single
condition that the two straight lines are not able to cut themselves
somewhere between this knot and infinity except in a single way. To
take the straight line, R, it must be pulled forward, as I might say,
while the line S of the figure on the right can only be pulled
backwards. They must not, in a way, be brought to buckle with one
another two by two, which, in any case excludes the central figure,
which, having already made one of the buckles, that one of the rings,
let's say the white ring on the red ring, defines by that simple fact,
whatever may be its future fate, the strict position of the blue infinite
straight line which must pass under what is below and over what is
above, to express myself in a simple way. On this condition the
Borromean knot functions.

I would like to indicate to you the fact that if we situate this blue ring
of the Real, if we situate this ring of the Symbolic, and that of the
Imaginary, I am allowing myself to indicate to you that here there is
situated a flattening out, in other words a reduction of the Imaginary.
For it is clear that the Imaginary always tends to be reduced to a
(24) flattening out. It is on this that there is founded all depiction, it
being well understood that it is not because we may have crumpled
these three rings of string that they are any the less knotted in a
Borromean way in the real, namely, with regard to the fact that each

one of them, unknotted, frees the two others. This thing will always
be true. How does it happen that we must have this flattening out in
order to be able to depict any topology whatsoever? It is very
certainly a question which reaches out towards that of the
defectiveness that I qualified as mental, in so far as it is rooted in the
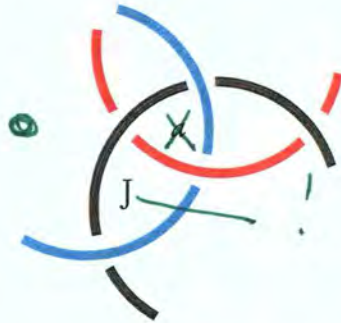body itself.

Fig. I-7

$$J(\Phi) - Man$$
$$J(O) - Woman$$

- Small **o,** I have written here; in the Imaginary but just as well in
  the Symbolic, I am write the function described as meaning.
- The two other functions, those that stem from what is to be
  defined with respect to the central point allowing there to be added
  three other points, this is something to be defined. We have
  enjoyment...

It is a matter of knowing that there are two enjoyments:

- for example, one we could define, but which one? As enjoying
  life, if the Real is life, we are led to refer to it, but is it sure?
  Enjoyment, in so far as it participates in the Imaginary of meaning,
  the enjoying of life in a word, is something that we can situate in
  the fact that, let us note it, is no less a point than the central point,
  the point described as that of the **o**-object, because it links
  together, on this occasion, three surfaces which also are squeezed.

- And on the other hand what about this other mode of enjoyment,
  the one depicted by an overlapping, a squeezing where the Real
  comes here to squeeze it at the periphery of the two other rings of
  string? What about that enjoyment?

These are, close up, the points that we will have to elaborate, since moreover they are the ones that question us.

One point that I am suggesting here and now is this, to return to Freud, namely, to something triadic, he stated it as *Inhibition, Symptom, Anxiety.*

Fig. I-8
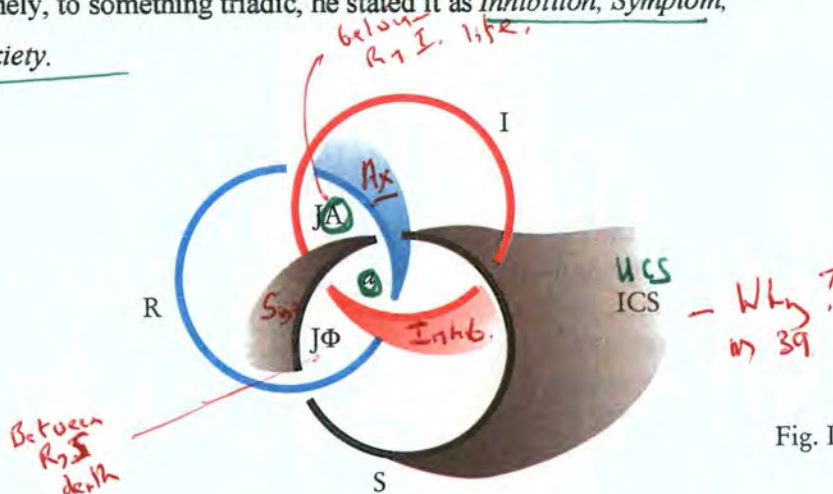
I would say that inhibition, as Freud himself articulates it, is always a matter of the body, or of functioning. And to indicate it already on this schema [I-8] I would say that inhibition is what somewhere stops interfering, as I might say, in a figure which is the figure of a hole, the hole of the Symbolic. We will have to discuss this inhibition in order to know if what is encountered in the animal, where there is in the nervous system these inhibiting centres, is something of the same order as this arrest of functioning *qua* Imaginary, *qua* specified in the speaking being, whether it is conceivable that something should be of the same order, namely, the bringing into function in the *nevrax*, in the central nervous system, of an activity that is positive *qua* inhibiting. How is it conceivable that the being presumed not to have language finds itself joining in the term inhibition something of the same order as what we grasp there, at the level of the exteriority of meaning, that what we grasp there as stemming from what is found in short outside the body, namely, as a surface to topologise it in the way in which I told you that it is assuredly only on two dimensions that this is depicted, how inhibition can have to deal with what is a type of arrest which results from its intrusion into the field of the Symbolic.

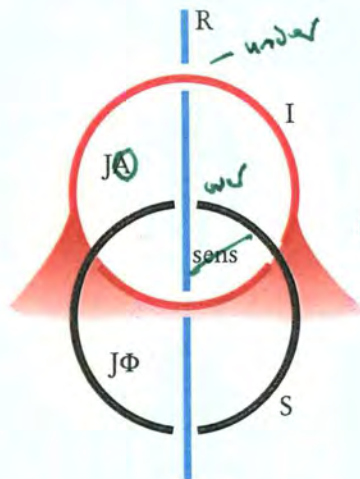to me that there are remarks, preliminary remarks in short, that may

(30) well be of use to you in responding, in justifying, as questions,

questions that I suppose you must have asked.

So then I am not going to make these preliminary remarks numerous, I

am going to make three of them. [On the board].

Is BK a model?

Many events
R S I
J(0)
J(Φ)

M. 52
cf I. 14.

Fig. II-1

This may come to mind, in short, for some people who open books,

they do not even need to open them. It's there on the covers! They

may ask themselves…

[On the board] This knot that I put forward by way of uniting in it the

R.S.I. in the most certain way, namely, when the S, this is the white *– Black*

ring that you see there, and the Imaginary, that's the red ring, this knot

is held to be sufficiently defined, by not presenting an ambiguity,

when the two rings are crossed by the Real, in a way, as I stated the

last time, that the Real crosses them by being underneath the one of

the two rings that is underneath and being above the one that is above.

That is enough for the squeezing, whether you make it on the left or   *To define the O*

on the right. I point out to you in passing that it is impossible from

this single knot to give the characterisation of this left or of this right;

otherwise we would have the expected miracle that would allow us to

make a message of the difference between the left and the right for the

remark is the following. It is that enjoyment, with regard to this Imaginary consistency, can do nothing but ek-sist, or parody it, it is with regard to the Real, it is something other than meaning that is at stake in enjoyment. With that the signifier is what remains. For if the signifier, by this fact, is deprived of meaning, it is because the signifier, all that remains, proposes itself as intervening in this enjoyment. Not of course that the 'I think' is enough to assure ek-sistence – it is not for nothing that Descartes stumbled there – but up to a certain point, it is all the same true that it is only by effacing all meaning that ek-sistence is defined. And indeed, moreover, he himself floated between the *sum, ergo* and the *exsisto*. Assuredly the notion of ek-sistence, was not then assured. For something to ek-sist, there must be a hole somewhere. It is around this hole simulated by Descartes' *I think*, since this *I think*, is empty, it is around this hole that the ek-sistence is suggested. Assuredly we have these holes here at the heart of each of these rings, since without this hole it would not even be thinkable that something can be knotted.

It is a matter of situating, not what Descartes thought, but what Freud touched, and for that, I propose that what ek-sists to the Real, to the Real of the hole, should be symbolised in writing by an intermediary field, intermediary like flattened out, because this is all that writing permits us. It is quite striking in effect that writing requires, as such, this flattening out. And if here I suggest that something supposes, incarnates I would say, that the Symbolic, for example, shows in two-dimensional space [II-2] defined by the fact that something ek-sists by
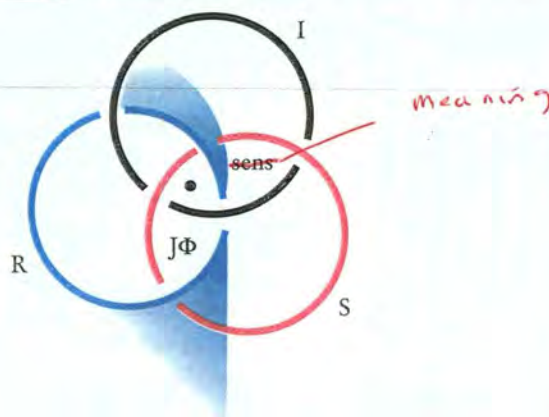
Cogito esse
existo
sum

Fig. II-2

http://www.lacaninireland.com

might say, homogeneous. As you can see, simply by looking at this schema, there is what you might call a first and a last. The way it is done like that, there cannot be more than four and if I proceed in the same way for there to be five of them, I would have in a way to give to the one that – if you wish, the one on the extreme right – [here on the bottom figure] we will call the last, a different way of being knotted.
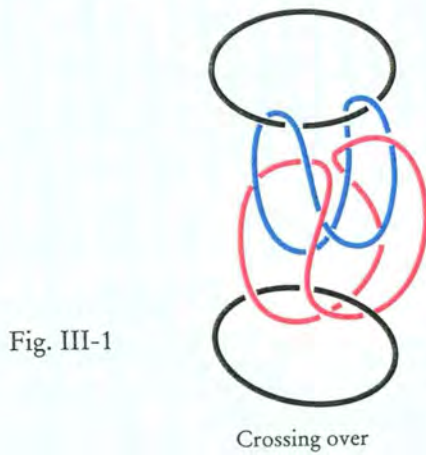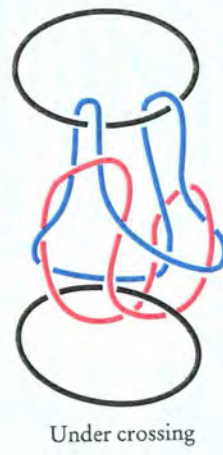

Fig. III-1   Fig. III-2

Crossing over   Under crossing   – In English

M. 68

Because when all is said and done, it is the last that holds the whole chain, which ensures that there are four of them there, and if I go a little further, there will be five, on condition that I do not give to the last the same role, because it will be holding five instead of four.

You know this by, I must have made an allusion in passing to it, the way of articulating the essence of number that Peano produced by means of a certain number of axioms, it seems that here the n+1, the successor that Peano highlights as structuring the whole number, this on a single condition, which is that there should be one at the start which is not the 'successor' of anyone, namely, what this ring of string imitates very well, what he designates by zero. It is in an axiomatic fashion that Peano expresses himself, that Peano makes his statement, namely, that he posits a certain number of axioms and that it is from there, in conformity with mathematical requirements, arithmetical on this occasion, that he constructs something that gives us the definition of a series which will be in numbers, in homological

cf Devlin 49.

M 66

Means He's not in mathematics like 'Nature' 'I is a S a' ! ?

fields, precisely what could not be measured without stretching out cords. Never has anyone seemed to have reserved for these cords the slightest attention up to very recent times.

(49) In a certain sense, I would say that there is something new, in the fact that people have been interested in words, in terms like that for example of mesology; what is there between, between what and what? It is a matter of defining what does between mean. Yeah! I between you (*je t'entre*), it is my own *tentrisme*. Between, is a category that made its appearance, in short, quite recently in mathematics and, that indeed is why, in short, that from time to time I consult a mathematician so that he can tell me where they have got to in this respect.

Yes! There is something that to take… [*on the board*].

You see, I am making progress. I have almost managed to draw a Borromean knot without being forced to rub bits out. I would like today, since already time is passing, to announce what I have to say, and what will occupy our year.

Here [III-3] at the joint of the Imaginary and of the Symbolic, and not just in any joint, in this joint here, where you may confuse these two points – even though they still do not come from the same movement, from the same relative movement of the Imaginary and the Symbolic – here, in these two points which moreover are confused, when the squeezing between the Imaginary and the Symbolic occurs, in these

or around mean:
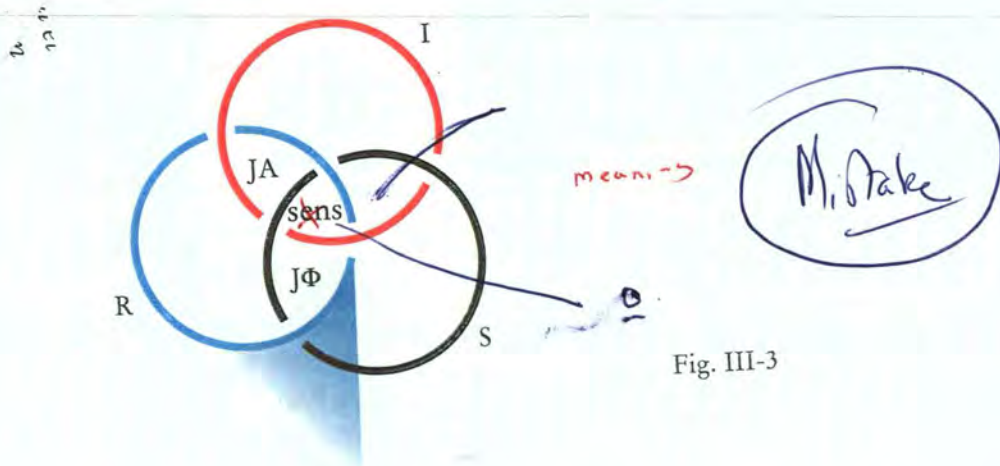*nomal dislub?*

meaning   *Mistake*

Fig. III-3

me, and then, this famous Real that I end up by presenting to you in
the very form of the knot.

There is in Freud a reference to something that he considers to be
Real. It is not what people believe. It is not the *Realitätsprinzip*,
because it is too obvious that this *Realitätsprinzip* is a matter of
saying, namely, social. But let us suppose that he had the suspicion
simply, that he did not say to himself that this could make a knot. In
short, Freud, contrary to a prodigious number of people, from Plato to
Tolstoi, Freud was not a Lacanian. I have to say it, but to slip this
banana skin under his foot, in short, is that not so, of the R.S.I., of the
Real, the Symbolic and the Imaginary, let us try to see how he
effectively disentangled himself from it.

*FREUD not
a
Lacanian !
Safouan 346*
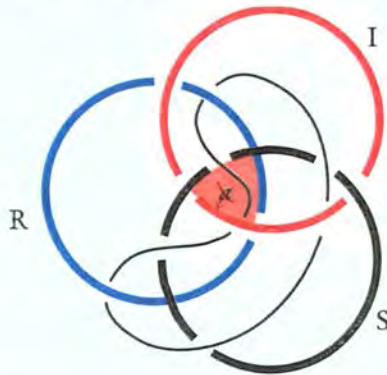
Fig. III-4

(52) These here [on the board] do not hold up, huh! [III-4] I am
pointing out to you, they are placed on top of one another, the Real is
there, the Imaginary there and the Symbolic is there, just like in the
earlier schema. Ah! What did Freud do? Ah! I am going to tell you.
He made the knot of four with these three, these three which I suppose
to be a banana skin under his feet. But then, here is how he
proceeded; he invented something that he calls psychical reality. I
should have put the third knot here, the third field of ek-sistence,
namely, the enjoyment of the Other. Since these two figures, since
they are figures, are the same, you see that it is from a line that is
found to cross, to cross these fields which are designated as ek-

*In Freud
R S) exist
but ⊗ not
Knotted
Is on top
of one anoll
⇒ Lacanian
p. 847*

sistence of something around consistency, to cross these fields, namely, here to be in the enjoyment of the Other, then in the Imaginary, then in meaning, then from the hole of the Symbolic and by breaking through it, to be somewhere in an existence which is outside the Symbolic and the Real, that it returns towards this point which is none other than the one that I designate as the o-object. This is what can knot/with a fourth term, the Symbolic, the Imaginary and the Real, in so far as Symbolic, Imaginary and Real are left independent, go with the drift in Freud. It is as such that he requires a psychical reality that knots these three consistencies.

I said, I said here or if it was not here it was elsewhere, it is in my Rome discourse, the last one that I gave, the one called *La troisième*, I said that if I had not done the Names-of-the-father written this time correctly, I would have stated a consistency such that it would have (53) explained for us a certain number of slippages in Freud. Freud needed not three, the minimum, but four consistencies for it to hold together, to suppose it being initiated into the consistency of the Symbolic, the Imaginary and the Real. What he calls psychical reality has perfectly well a name, it is what he calls the Oedipus complex. Without the Oedipus complex, nothing holds together, nothing of the idea that he has holds together, about the way in which the Symbolic, the Imaginary and the Real hold onto the cord. That by which, with time, I was determined to proceed, comes from the fact that I believe that, what Freud stated not, not I am saying about the Oedipus complex, is to be rejected, it is implicit.

And this is demonstrated and each one of the points can in itself be specified, it is implicit in that while having the same effect, but this time at a minimum, it is enough to make what was below pass above

Fig. III-5

v. difficult -
10 Forler

71
M. 76: Written
77. Situating deltront
existences : Affect ⊃ existen
(∪ 9)

Seminar 4: Tuesday 21 January 1975

Precisely because – can you hear or not? – of what I am talking to you about, the knot, I cannot have, I cannot be sure of having a plan, because the knot, if you see the way I draw it there, on the extreme right [IV-1], I will explain to you afterwards why it takes that form, let us say, of three pages. Let us imagine then stitched, [on the board] tied together here. Here then is the first, which is a piece of page, this to make myself understood, it seems to be self-evident, the second, is S which is just below and you see here the third that it is easy for you to imagine starting from this stitching on the left, it is necessary for the third to be palmed off (*refile*) on the first.

m
① ②
③ ?
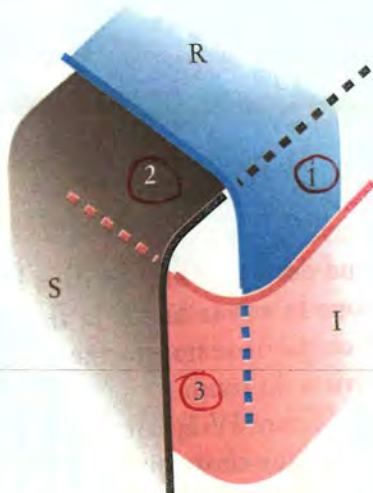
Fig. IV-1

(56) Nevertheless, there are places [on the board] where by perforating these pages, you will only find one of them. [Here] there are three of them. Here, you only find page 2, here only page 1, and here, only

page 3. But everywhere else you will find the three, which prevents
me from having a plan, since there are three of them.

There are several modes of stating the meaning, that all refer back to
the Real that they correspond to. So that you will not get entangled all
the same, I am marking the Real for you here [IV-2]. It is marked by
the edge of a hole, the Imaginary, here and there the Symbolic, that is
so that you can follow. All these meanings refer back to the Real, to
the Real that each corresponds to. It is here that there is confirmed the
suppleness of the knot, which also creates its necessity. The principle
of the knot is that it does not come undone, unless it is broken. What
is this unknotting of the knot, which is impossible? It is the return to a
form described as trivial, and which is precisely that of the ring of
string! So that it is a knot, it is a second degree knot, it is a knot that
holds together, as you have already several times heard from my
voice, it is a knot that holds together because it has three rings.
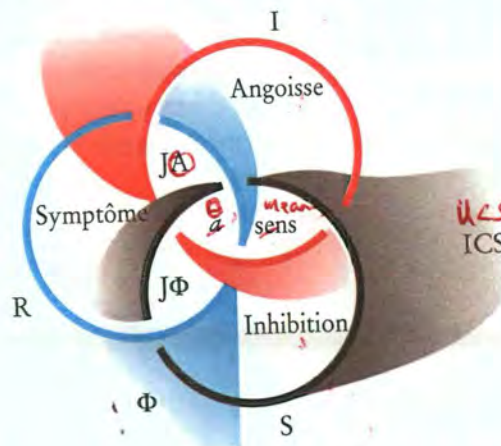
Fig. IV-2

The true knot, the knot with which we busy ourselves in the theory of
knots, is that which, as you see here on figure IV-3, I have just added,
is precisely what is not transformed by a continuous distortion into the
trivial figure of the ring.

If one starts from a knot [IV-3] made with three trivial figures,
namely, three rings, it is something that is designated or rather is
(57) drawn from the following, it is that by cutting in this way

something which is, as one might say, the Borromean knot itself, you will obtain by joining together what you have cut every time, you will obtain the proper figure of a knot in the proper sense of the word [IV-4].
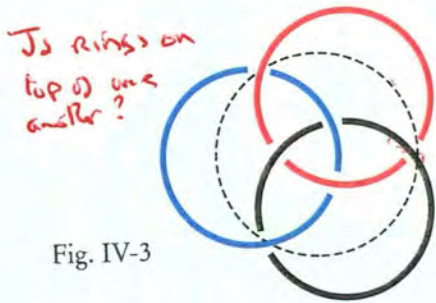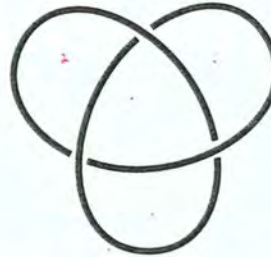
[handwritten: Js Rings on top of one another?]

Fig. IV-3

[handwritten: Simplest]

Fig. IV-4

What is the most convenient way of showing that a knot is a knot? For this knot there, the one on the right, is the simplest knot that exists. You get it by simply making a ring of a cord and passing it for example over the right of the piece that you are holding. It is by making the cord re-enter by the left on the inside of the ring that you have thus formed, that you see there being made what is called a knot in a cord, a knot that you can unknot; but which can no longer be unknotted from when on? From the moment that you suppose that the two ends of the cord are rejoined by a splice or indeed that you suppose that this cord has no end, stretches to the thinkable limits or more exactly goes beyond even these limits. In which case, you will properly speaking be dealing with the most simple knot, this knot which, when you close it, has the form that you see there on the right, namely, what is called *un noeud-trèfle*, 'clover-leaf' in English.   *[handwritten: Sha-rock !]*

It is clover in that it is three. It outlines, flattened out it allows there to be drawn, not three fields, but four fields. These are fields that you rediscover in the form, the form of the Borromean knot, the one that is only made up of this: one of each figure that I called trivial, the ring of string, one of each of these figure makes from two others a knot, namely, that it is by being three that there is a link, knot-link that is constituted for the two others.

they mouth on about the woman all the time, is that not so! The
woman, is obviously something who can be perfectly, perfectly well
outlined. *All women,* as they say, but I, I also say that women are not-
all so then that creates a little objection, does it not! But *The* woman
is, let us say that it is *all the women,* but then it is an empty set,
because this set theory, is all the same something that allows a little bit
of seriousness to be put into the use of this term *all.*

Yeah! A woman first of all, the question is only posed for the other,
namely, of the one for whom there is a set definable by this thing that
is written on the board. It is not J(φ), it is not phallic enjoyment, it is
that, $\overline{\phi}$; $\overline{\phi}$ ek-sists, ϕ is the phallus. What is the phallus? Well
then, since of course people drag out...hum! anyway I am the one
who drags things out...who drags along the whole convoy. So then I
will not tell you today what the phallus is.

In short, all the same, you can have all the same a little suspicion
about it. If phallic enjoyment is there, it must be that the phallus must
be something else, huh? So then, the phallus, what is it? In short, I
am asking you the question because I cannot go into it today for very
(65) long. It is enjoyment without the organ, or the organ without
enjoyment? In short, it is in this form that I am asking you to give
meaning, alas, to this figure.

Anyway! I am going to skip this step. For the one encumbered with a   Penis / Φ
phallus, what is a woman? It is a symptom. It is a symptom and that   *She*
can be seen, that can be seen from the structure there that I am in the
process of explaining to you. It is clear that if there is no enjoyment
of the Other as such, namely, if there is no guarantee that can be met
in the enjoyment of the body of the Other which ensures that to enjoy
the Other as such exists, here is the most manifest example of the
hole, of what is only supported from the small o-object itself, but by
misunderstanding, by confusion. A woman, no more than a man, is
not an o-object. She has her own, that I mentioned earlier, that she

The meaning effect required of analytic discourse is not Imaginary, it is not Symbolic either, it must be Real. And what I am occupied with (77) this year, is in trying to closely squeeze what the Real of a meaning effect may be. Because on the one hand, it is clear that we, are used to this meaning effect being conveyed by words and not being without reflection, without Imaginary undulation. One could even say that even on my little schema [on the board] as I reproduced it for you the last time, as I am going to redo it no< get into the habit, is that not so, of drawing it like that, namely, not to do what is done, what is regularly done, in short the junction once one has started with this élan – the meaning effect is that, it is at the connection of the Symbolic and the Imaginary that I situated it. It does not in appearance have a relationship with this, namely, the circle consisting of the Real, in principle it only has a relationship of exteriority. I say in principle, because that is why it is there, flattened out. It is flattened out from this fact that we cannot think otherwise. We only think on the flat.

It is enough to depict this Borromean knot [on the board] differently. You are going to see the trouble of course that this is going to give us, is that not so. You see already... Ah! That is what is marvellous, it's that... [he draws on the board] [V-1]. Let us take it like that. I could of course have taken it in any way whatsoever.
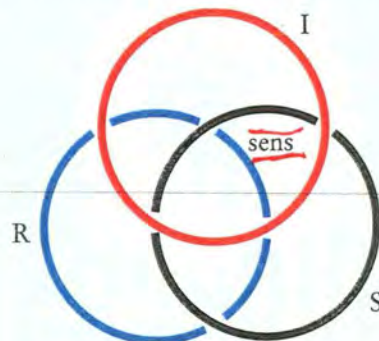

Fig. V-1

You clearly see that what is at stake is to make this knot Borromean, namely, that you clearly see the two that are depicted here being separated easily from one another. There is only one way and only

single way, because there is more than one to make this knot
Borromean. This is what I am depicting to you with all the
awkwardness which, I hope, will also be yours on this occasion.
Because I want to show you that the difficulty is this. You see that by
(78) the fact that the third buckle that I added passes, as I might say,
across the two ears that allow to be distinguished the passage of this
element of the knot to the inside of what I would call the hole of the
third knot, it is in this measure that the knot holds together.

Do we have to stop there? Namely, to think that three consistent
elements are enough, one of which makes a knot of the two others.
There is already something that we posit with this knot, something
which goes against the image described as concatenation. It is in so
far as the discourse at stake does not constitute a chain, namely, that
there is no reciprocity of the passage of one of these consistencies into
the hole that the other offers it, namely, that one of the consistencies,
in the common sense of the term, is not knotted to the other, I mean,
does not make a chain, it is in this that there is specified the
relationship of the Symbolic, the Imaginary and the Real. This is how
the question is put first of knowing whether the meaning effect in its
Real stems from the use of words, I am saying use in the usual sense
of the term, or simply by there being uttered (*leur jaculation*), as I
might say, it is the term that is used for what concerns words. From all
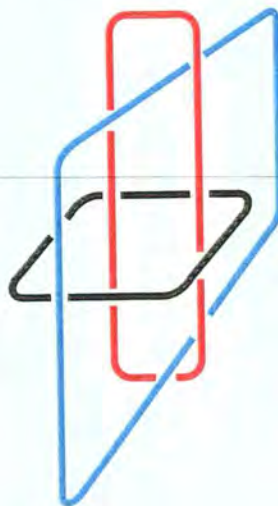time many things have made people think, but the distinction was not

Fig. V-2

mathematical theory, gives me so much trouble and will give you just
as much, I must say, because I do not see how a theory of knots needs
to pass through the function described as filters, for example, or to
require the consideration of sets, the ones open, the others closed,
when these terms of open and of closed take on an imaginary
consistency no doubt, but a consistency quite different from the
practice of knots.

The hole of which I speak, which seems to me ought to be put in the
centre of this, which seems to me the point from which we can take
off from this circular thinking, from this thinking that obligatorily
flattens out, and which by that fact, simply by that fact, says that what
is within it [V-3], is something other than what is outside, while it is

consistency

ex-sistence

Fig. V-3

(82) enough to imagine it, to imagine it as consistent cord to clearly
see that the inside that is at stake here and the outside, are exactly the
same thing. There is only one inside, the one that we imagine as being
the interior of the torus. But precisely, the introduction of the figure
of the torus consists, in not taking account of this inside of the torus.
This indeed is the relief and the importance of what is provided to us.

The last time, in connection with my knot, I made the remark and I
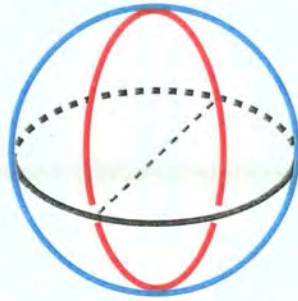even drew the figure of the fact that if we start from the requirement

Fig. V-4

Fig. V-5

I am going to present it to you in another way which is this one [V-5].
It is very easy to conceive of it, in the form that was materialised in a
thousand and one ways throughout the ages, namely, astrolabes. It is
very easy to conceive of three metallic circles here where we find our
bearings much more easily, of course, since we are only able to make
a geometry of solids. [On the board] Here is how I am going to
represent them; suppose something which was very frequently
produced throughout the ages, in naval instruments. I am going to
draw it for you simply. Here is a circle seen head on. The equatorial
circle that I am drawing for you now is seen flattened out, and that is
why I pretended to draw it for you in perspective. Let us now make a
third vertical circle and let us trace out this little dotted line to give
you the notion of the way in which you ought to see it in perspective.
It is a distinct way because it appeals, it appeals, without any hope
moreover, to your sense of space, you who do not have one anymore
than anybody else! You think you are seeing things in relief, but you
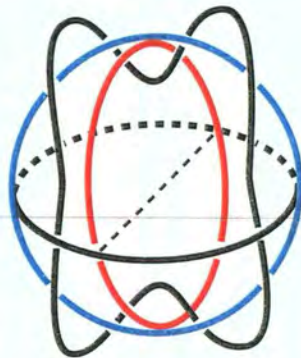do not even imagine in relief.

Fig. V-6

up? But on the other hand, it is not by chance either that things happen like that. No doubt there is here a necessity which is, let us say, my God, because I do not find any better, which is the weakness of a manual being, *homo faber* as he was described. But why should this manual being, the *homo faber* who for that matter, if only, as I remarked, for carrying around what he attacks, what he manipulates, starts from something that has consistency, starts from the cord? What necessity requires that this cord, this cord – which in the tenth rule, that of Descartes, that I recalled – Descartes evokes that moreover, after all, the art of the weaver, the art of the plait, the art of the sewer could give the model, how does it happen that these things (89) become so exhausted, become exhausted to this point that their thread becomes inconsistent?

Perhaps there is here this something which is related to a repression? Before going as far as to say that this repression, is the primordial one, is the *Urverdrängt*, is what Freud designated as inaccessible in the unconscious… [*Uproar at the back of the hall*]. It would perhaps be no bad thing if someone at the back should take the floor and ask me a question, that would show me how loudly I must raise my voice for people to hear me, since these things seem to work badly. Could someone at the back open up this path that I wished for earlier?

We must start from the fact, is that not so, of how easy it is to make a mistake in the depiction of this knot, of this special knot that I designate as being Borromean and which has this singular property that it is enough to break something which nevertheless is simply depicted in it, namely, a torus, namely, a torus which precisely it is enough to cut to have in one's hand this thickness, this consistency, namely, what makes a cord.

Fig. VI-1   Fig. VI-2

like that that one could moreover define this surface, this cut of a saw
on a solid, the fact is that it presents something, something to draw.

It is singular that the only way people have managed in short to
reproduce this ideal surface, is precisely something that people back
away from, namely, the plait of a canvas. And that it should be on a
canvas that the painter has in short to draw, because it is all that he
finds himself able to do to tame the look, as I expressed it at one time,
what is involved in this function of the painter. And that here also it is
on something specified, the blackboard, that I find myself inevitably
flattening out, flattening out what I have to communicate to you about
the knot. It is indeed here that in effect there is sensed in a particular
way, there is sensed the fact that, the knot that I have on the other
hand depicted thanks to your perspective imagination, namely, how
the Borromean knot of three holds up, how it is made. It is made of
two knots which are independent of one another, and it is a matter of
knowing where the third passes for this to make a knot. X

I asked you the same question concerning what was required for it to
(91) be a knot, even if at the start we leave the three rings of string of
the first problem, we leave them independent, and I depicted for you
by also flattening it out, even though in a way which bore its
perspective, by depicting for you what is involved in what happens for
these three rings that I drew independent, contenting myself, to
simplify things for you, to show how they must be traced out in order
that the fourth, the fourth that I represented a bit differently from the
way in which I am now doing, highlighting for you the quadruple
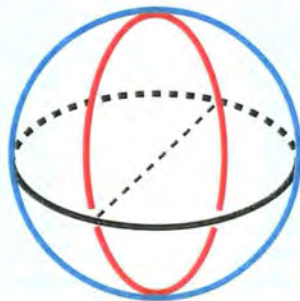function of the fourth ring of string [VI-3].

Fig. VI-3

But when I wanted to flatten it out in a way that reproduces in modifying it, namely, in making the three knots, the three rings of string independent from the start, I found that I had made an error. And I can say that this error was a matter rather of a mistake linked to the fact that being weary of it, weary of remembering these things that I had seen myself as correctly depicting what results from the flattening out, from a flattening out modelled on that of the knot of three, I omitted, I missed as I might say, I explicitly missed, through weariness, and moreover to give you, good God, an example of how little naturalness there is in the way these things work, namely, the representation of the knot. [On the board]. Here then, to take up the mental thing, the way in which first of all this operates. If from the upper to the lower, you note by 1, 2, 3 [VI-4] that which, of course, has nothing to do with an upper and a lower, since moreover it would be enough to turn them upside down for the problem to be renewed, here is how one should proceed. That I knew, but precisely it was by neglecting the fact that I found myself operating in the way that you have seen, and which left circle 1 outside the knot, but at the same time moreover all the others. It would be well to start from the fact (92) that the three circles flattened out in this way, and the 3 outside the 1, and to finish by the 3 in the 2. When one operates in this way, things work.
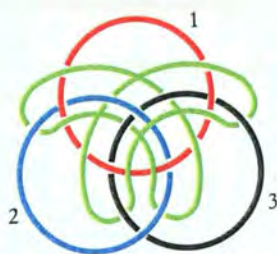

Fig. VI-4

It is no less true that it is easy to see that they can also function in a different way, but that there is a third one, precisely the one that I took the last time and which leaves one of these knots free and specifically the 1, by which at the same time, it leaves the others free.

there was not a correspondence, a correspondence between consistency, ek-sistence and the hole and each one of the terms that I am putting forward as Imaginary, Symbolic and Real. If consistency is indeed as I stated the last time of the order of the Imaginary, since moreover the cord goes towards this vanishing point of the mathematical line, we have to question ourselves about what is involved in making the ring of string as such, and that if we say it is the hole, it is a fact that we are not satisfied with it: what is a hole, if nothing circumscribes it? ✗

Now, the last time, I had clearly marked that ek-sistence [on the board] namely, this something which, with regard to the opening and of what makes a hole, that the ek-sistence, namely, to flatten out things, this something that we ought, in the flattening out, to depict [VI-5] that ek-sistence belongs to this field, which is, as I might say, supposed by the rupture itself and that it is through it, through this in, in the a – write that 1 apostrophe a – that there is played out as one might say the fate of the knot, that if the knot has an ek-sistence, it is by belonging to this field and this indeed is why I stated that ek-sistence is with regard to this correspondence of the order of the Real, that the ek-sistence of the knot is Real to such a degree that I was able to say, I was able to put forward that the mental knot ek-sists, that the *mens* depicts it or not to itself, since what we see is that this ek-sistence of the knot is still to be explored, to be explored not without trouble, since there is not, to the best of my knowledge, anything at all, except to learn to constitute it and to learn it by the plait, which assuredly is not properly speaking a mental way of resolving the question, while it seems, it seems that there is properly speaking a resistance of the *mens* to 'mentaling' this knot. I gave you an example of it earlier.
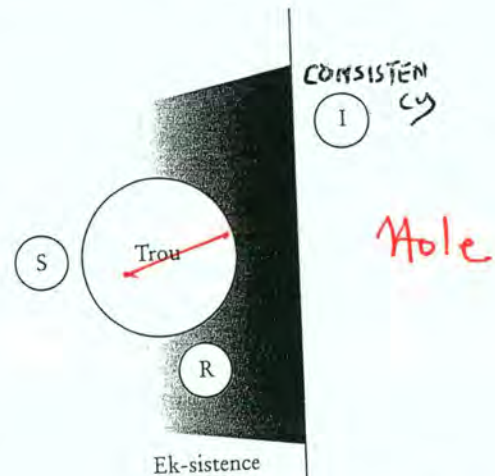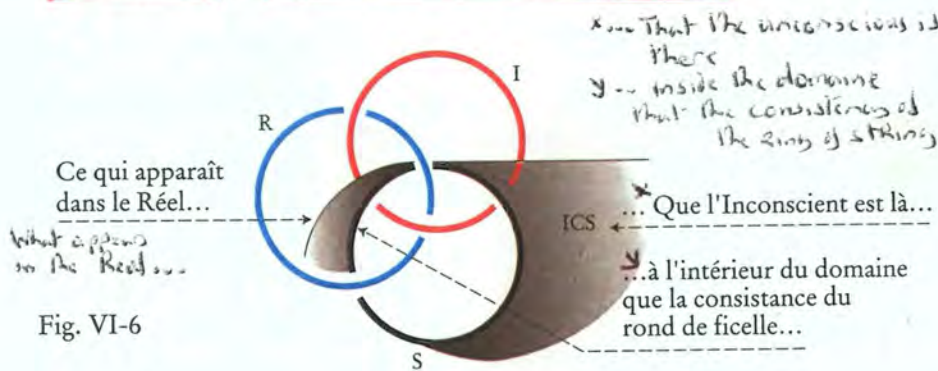

Fig. VI-5

hole of the Real, behind on this figure, because if you turn it over, it is in front, that there is coherence, that there is consistency between the symptom and the unconscious. Except for the fact that the symptom cannot be defined otherwise than by the way in which each one enjoys the unconscious in so far as the unconscious determines it.

[margin note: Coherence = Consistency]

Ce qui apparaît dans le Réel…

[handwritten: What appears in the Real…]

Fig. VI-6

… Que l'Inconscient est là…

…à l'intérieur du domaine que la consistance du rond de ficelle…

[handwritten notes near diagram: x — That the unconscious is there; y — inside the domain that the consistency of the ring of string]

[margin note: These overlapping horns :]

To look for the origin of the notion of symptom, which is not at all to be looked for in Hippocrates, which is to be looked for in Marx, who was the first in the link that he made between capitalism, and what? The good old times, what people call them when they want, in short, (99) to try to call them something else, feudal times. Read all the literature on this. Capitalism is considered as having certain effects, and why in effect would it not have some! These effects are on the whole beneficial, since it has the advantage of reducing to nothing the proletarian man, thanks to which the proletarian man realises the essence of man, and by being stripped of everything is charged with being the Messiah of the future. Such is the way in which Marx analyses the notion of symptom. He gives of course crowds of other symptoms, but the relation of this with a faith in man is quite indisputable.

[margin note: Symptom: Link of Capitalism to Feudalism]

[margin note: Cap. has effects]

If we make of man, no longer anything whatsoever who conveys a future ideal, but if we determine him from the particularity, in every case, of his unconscious and the way in which he enjoys it, the symptom remains at the same place that Marx put it, but it takes on a different meaning. It is not a social symptom, it is a particular

So then, R.S.I., I write this year as a title. They are only letters, and as such presuppose an equivalence. What results from the fact that I speak these letters, by using them as initials, and that I speak them as Real, Symbolic and Imaginary? That takes on a meaning, and this (102) question of meaning is indeed what, nothing less, I am trying to situate this year. It takes on a meaning, but what is proper to meaning, is that one names something in it. And this gives rise to the *dit-mansion*, the *dit-mansion* precisely of this vague thing that are called things, and that only take on their foundation from the Real, namely, from one of the three terms from which I made something that could be called the emergence of meaning.

Names them, I said. What I did in, I am not saying yet in demonstrating (*démontrant*), because this amounts to something that is no more demonstrable than the Borromean knot, this amounts to a showing (*monstration*). If I have been led to the showing of this knot, while what I was looking for was a demonstration of a doing, the doing of analytic discourse, that is already enough, I would say, whether it is a showing or a demonstrating. In any case what I would like to advance today, is something about which I – it is not without guile, because I always slip in things like that, quite gently, there is something of a ruse in it and it is not nothing either to recognise it – the fact is that I indicated to you one day that Freud's work revolves around the Name-of-the-Father. It makes no use at all of the Symbolic, the Imaginary nor of the Real, but it nevertheless implies them. And what I want to tell you, is that it is not for nothing that I did not speak about *the* Name-of-the-Father, when I began, as I imagine some know because I go over it enough, I spoke about *the* Names-of- the-Father. Well then, the Names-of-the-father is this:

Fig. VII-1

into account what is at stake, namely, the filth from which the world cleanses itself, in principle, if in fact there is a world. That does not mean that it manages to do it! Man is still there. The ek-sistence of the filthy (*immonde*), namely, of what is not world (*monde*), this is the Real full stop! But it is worthwhile pushing this as far as the elaboration of the quantifier $\exists_x$, there ek-sists an *x* such, which rather than an *x*, it would be better to say, yes one (*une*) *x* in order that she henceforth ek-sists, this one, the ek-sistence as one. This is what (108) we must ask ourselves, it is to what does she ek-sist? She ek-sists with respect to the ideic consistency of the body, that which, reproduces this body, just as Plato situates it very well, according to the formula, now that we are contaminating the idea with the supposed message of genes. It ek-sists with regard to the Symbolic in so far as the Symbolic turn in circles around an inviolable hole, otherwise the knot of three would not be Borromean. Because that is what it means, the Borromean knot, it is that the hole, the hole of the Symbolic is inviolable.
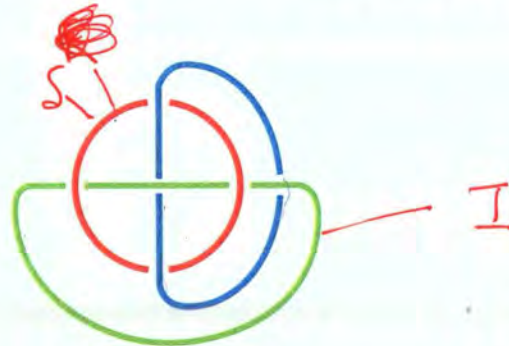
Fig. VII-1

There you are. So then why not write it like this, in the order where it is simplest to write it, the Symbolic, here [VII-1] this is what I make into a ring, there, this Symbolic imposing itself on the Imaginary that I put in green, the colour of hope, huh!

We see how the Real ek-sists there, by no longer being compromised by being knotted with the said Symbolic in particular, any more than the Imaginary does. So there, I showed you while I was at it that whatever may be the meaning, is that not so, into which one turns this Imaginary and this Real, they will cross one another, as it is here

flattened out, in a way in any case that will not make a chain. For the indication here, in this form of crossing, is moreover that these two consistencies may be straight lines at infinity; but that what must be specified, is that however one conceives of this point at infinity, which was dreamt up by Desargues as being specific to the straight line, a straight line that returns from one of its ends to the other, this must be carefully pointed out, that there is in no way a question that it is imagined as folding back on itself, without that which, first passed over, still passing over the other.

So then what we come to is that to demonstrate that the Name-of-the-Father is nothing other than this knot, there is no other way of managing than to suppose them unknotted [on the board]. let us no longer pass the Symbolic in front of the Imaginary. Let us do it like that. Here is what you have then. And then, how knot them? By a ring which knots these three independent consistencies. There is a way which is the one that I call the Name-of-the-Father which is what Freud did. And at the same time I reduce the Name-of-the-Father to

Fig. VII-2

its radical function which is to give a name to things, with all the consequences that this involves, because it does not fail to have consequences! And, up to the day in particular, which I indicated to you earlier.

I already made a drawing for you, a drawing of these four knotted, as such. I even made one that failed. But the big one, the right one, is that one here that I am reproducing for you today but in profile, namely, that instead of seeing it vertically, I see it transversely. It is

this one, the big circle about which I showed you that by
distinguishing these three circles as they are in an armillary sphere,
namely, containing one another, one must hook the innermost circle,
pass over the outermost circle, by putting oneself before returning
(110) onto the outermost circle within the middle circle. This is what
was expressed by the first schema that I gave you.

Fig. VII-3

Who can fail to see that this business leaves us in the three, namely, as
one might expect, what is involved in the distinction in the Symbolic
of *name-giving* forms part of this Symbolic, as is demonstrated by the
fact that the addition of this four is in a way superfluous. Namely, that
what you see here in a particularly clear way, I repeated it because
here perhaps this does not stand out clearly, is that the Borromean
knot is that.
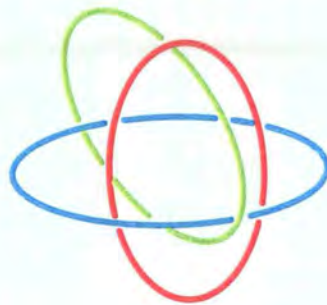
Fig. VII-4

It is that before being flattened out in any way whatsoever. The
Borromean knot is what, for two circles that circumscribe one another,
introduces this third to penetrate into one of these circles in such a
way that the other, as I might say, should with respect to the third be
brought into the same relationship as it is with the first circle.

easy to see, this figure here first, indeed those at the extreme end, where one clearly sees that these knots are intertwined.
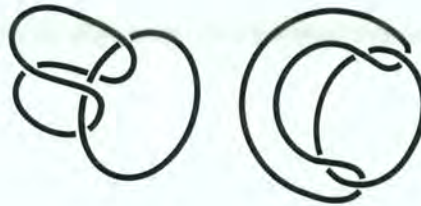
Fig. VII-5

But that is not all. This is not all for, as Michel Thomé had very well deduced right away, is that there will result a Borromean knot of a special type, which will be such that to limit ourselves here, for example, to four, but you can see that it works just as well with three, since I have pointed it out to you, these two here remain knotted, either this one, or that one, remain knotted; if one sections the third, no need then to put four of them.

... These two remain
knotted if you
... Ces deux-là
restent noués,
si l'on sectionne
le troisième
cut the third.

Fig. VII-6

(112) To see this, that only the four highlight, the fact is that there is no means of manifesting the Borromean quality of this knot of four for example, except by cutting a single one of them, namely, the one that we can call here the last, as a result of which each of the others will be freed from its follower up to the first. But as one might say, a distinction must be made here, they will not be freed together, they will be freed one after the other. While on the contrary, if you begin to cut the one that I have called the first, all the others up to the last will remain knotted. There is something here that is very interesting to demonstrate something particular about certain knots, that one can call Borromean in one sense but not in the other. Which evokes already the idea of the cycle and of orientation.

... Un nœud borroméen d'un type spécial, à nous limiter à quatre.

[handwritten] A Borromean knot of a special type, if we limit ourselves to four.

[handwritten left margin] ... If you begin to cut the first-all the others up to the last will remain knotted.

... Si vous commencez de couper le premier, → tous les autres jusqu'au dernier resteront noués.

... C'est qu'il n'y a moyen de manifester le borroméanisme de ce nœud par exemple à quatre, qu'à trancher un seul d'entre eux, ici ← le dernier, moyennant quoi chacun des autres se libérera de son suivant jusqu'au premier.

[handwritten right margin] ... The fact is there is no way of showing it Borromean of this knot of four for example except by cutting a single one is then, here the last one, as a result – which each of the others will be freed from its follower up to the first.

Fig. VII-7

I am not insisting because I think that it is really only those who devote themselves to a searching study of this knot, that are likely to take a veritable interest in it.

[On the board] Here I had myself drawn a knot whose only interest is that it cannot be produced from this error of perspective to which Michel Thomé has given its fruitfulness. It is only strictly producible (113) by having been explicitly made, as I might say, by confusing the two buckles which hold on each side the forms of the ears which are the ones that I proposed as the simplest form to generate the Borromean knot. You see it here. Here there could be an external knot, an external ring that would hold these two buckles, these two buckles of ears, why not say it, and so on if you reunite these two knots, these two rings, I already alluded to it at one time, you obtain the following form which is a buckle that is quite distinct from the forms that I will call on this occasion, as I might say *thoméenes*, namely, those that are produced from an error of perspective such as

[handwritten] Outside ring

rond extérieur
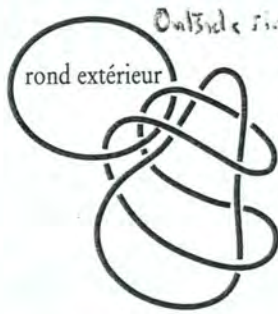
[handwritten] ... Here an outside ring which would hold these two buckles

... Ici, un rond externe qui tiendrait ces deux boucles, si vous réunissez ces deux nœuds, ces deux ronds, vous obtenez la forme suivante... → distincte... celle-ci (fig. a), celle-là (fig. b).
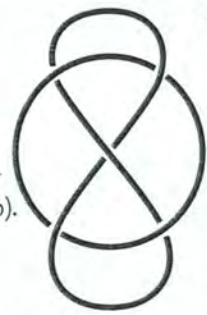
[handwritten right] if you join up these two knots, these two rings you get the following form ... this one (a) distinct from that one (b)

Fig. VII-8

this one, indeed an error of perspective such as this one which is not the same.

I will not insist and I will pursue what is involved in the Name-of-the-Father to bring it back to its prototype and to say that God, God in the elaboration that we give to this Symbolic, to this Imaginary and to this Real, God is *The* woman made all. I told you, she is not-all. In the case in which she might ek-sist from a discourse which might not be a semblance, we would have this $\exists x$ that I formerly noted for you, $\overline{\exists x}$ such that $\overline{\Phi x}$, the God of castration. This is a wish that comes from the man with a capital M, a wish that there might exist women who would order castration. The trouble is that there are none, that in conformity with what I wrote in a first formulation $\overline{x \Phi x}$ which was correlative to the not-all, $\overline{\forall x}.\overline{\Phi x}$, there does not exist *The* woman, as I said. But the fact that *The* woman does not exist, *The* all-woman does not imply, contrary to Aristotelian logic that there are some who order castration. 'Protect what is the most loved', they say, in Rabelais. Naturally, that belongs to the comic, as I told you earlier.

(114) This nevertheless not-all, does not mean that any one of them say the contrary, that there exists an *x* of the woman who formulates the 'do not protect it'; very little for them, the nay-saying. They simply say nothing. They say nothing, except as *The-all* (*La-toute*) which I said earlier was God, *The-all*, if she existed. There are none to carry castration for the Other and this has got to the point that it does not prevent her, as they say, wanting the phallus for herself as I indicated earlier. There is nothing more phallogocentric, as was written somewhere about me, there is nothing more phallogocentric than a woman, except for the fact none *ne-toute* wants the aforesaid phallus. Each of them of course want it, except for the fact that this does not weigh too heavily on them. It is just like what I highlighted in the dream described as that of the butcher's beautiful wife. She indeed does want some of the smoked salmon as you know on condition of not making use of it. She only gives it in the measure that she does not have it. This is what is called love. It is even the definition that I gave of it, to give what one does not have, is love. It is the love of women, in so far, namely, that it is true that one by one,

hand and catch what is at the centre, the centre of the torus. That leaves like that a feeling of which the least that can be said is that there is a discordance between this hand and what it squeezes.
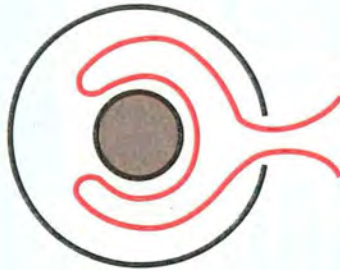

Fig. VIII-1

(127) There is a way other than that to show it, which would be to suppose another torus inside the torus [VIII-2]. How far can one go like that? You must not believe that it is enough here to place another inside the second torus, because this would not at all be something homogenous despite the appearance given by the cup (*coupe*), that would not be something homogenous to what is depicted here.

Fig. VIII-2

[On the board] As is clearly demonstrated by the correct way of drawing a torus, when one does it in a mathematical way [VIII-3] it would have to be another ring placed here [VIII-2] in order for this one to be, equivalent to the one that I first cut to give here the figure of the torus.
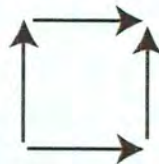
Fig. VIII-3

In short, if these cords supposed to consist give some support to the metaphor of the hole, it is only starting from the topology of the torus in so far as it elaborates mathematically the difference between an implicit… topology and a topology which, by being distinguished from it, becomes explicit, namely, the sphere, in so far as every supposition

precisely why? Because there is an effective knot, namely, that the cords are squeezed, that there are these cases where the ek-sistence, the turning around, no longer happens because of these triple points whose ek-sistence is suppressed. This is what I indicated in telling (1 29) you that the Real is demonstrated as having no meaning, having no meaning because it begins. Because it begins with what?
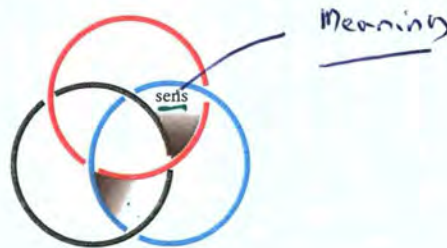
Meaning

sens

Fig. VIII-4

[On the board] With the fact that here, if this Real, to indicate it, if this Symbolic to indicate it by a different colour, I make in this way, reducing the place, the one that I indicated as being that of small **o**, I reduce meaning to this triple point that is here. Only this meaning, *qua* vanishing gives meaning to the term of Real. In the same way, here, at this other triple point which is defined by this corner, it is enjoyment *qua* phallic that implies its liaison to the Imaginary as ek-sistence, the Imaginary is the *pas-de-jouissance* (the step/not of enjoyment). Just as for the Symbolic, it is very specifically that there is no Other of the Other which gives it its consistency.

Does that mean that all of these are only models? I already said and put forward, which is no reason for me not to repeat it, that models have recourse as such to the pure Imaginary, the knots have recourse to the Real and take their value from the fact that they have no less bearing in the mental than the Real, even if the mental is Imaginary for the good reason that they have their bearing on the two. Any couple, anything involved in the couple is reduced to the Imaginary. Negation is also a way of acknowledging, *Verneinung*, Freud insists on it from the start, a way of acknowledging where alone, the acknowledgement is possible because the Imaginary is the place

Models – I
Knots – R

Couple – I

 taught in the Jesuits where he
received his formation. But it is not only
due to that, you are just as limed in the
sphere and in the cross. It is there on the
little page [IX-1] a circle, a section of a
sphere, and then inside the cross. What's
more that makes the + sign. You cannot
imagine how much you are retained in
this circle and in this + sign.

Fig. IX-1

It can happen, is that not so, that by chance
an artist, who sticks something in plaster on
a wall, makes something that by chance is
like that [IX-2]. But nobody notices that
this is already the Borromean knot.

Fig. IX-2

Try, like that to tackle it for yourselves.
When you see it like that, what do you
make of it imaginarily? You make of it
two things that hook onto one another and
which come back to fold over, this A and
this B [IX-3], to fold them over in this way.
As a result of which, the circle, the ring,
the cycle, I will come back later to what that
means, has only to slip over what is thus knotted.

Fig. IX-3

It is not, as I might say, natural, what does
natural mean? Once one approaches it, in short,
it disappears, but in short, natural to your imagination, it is not natural
to do exactly the opposite, namely to distort the circle, the cycle like
that [IX-4], which seems to be dictated for all that, in short, if one
makes a simply different use of A and B.. That is a fact, it is a fact of
which the least that can be said is that it is curious that I should be
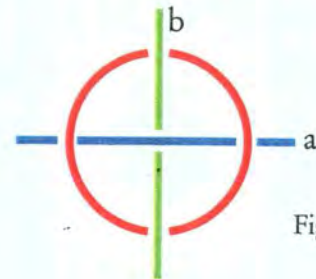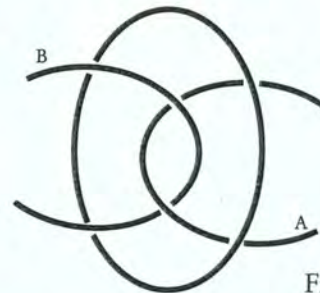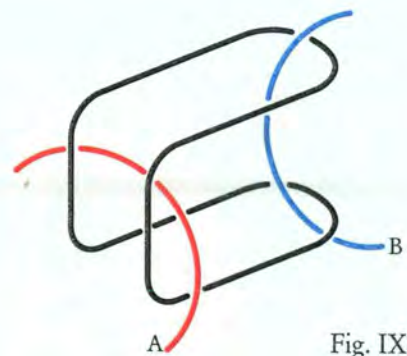interested in the Borromean knot because you can be sure that the

Fig. IX-4

Borromean knot is not obligatorily what I have drawn for you a hundred times. Is that not so in fact! That is also a Borromean knot [IX-5], just as valid as that in the form in which I usually flatten it out. It is a true Borromean knot, I mean this one.
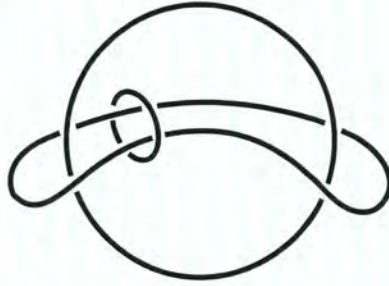

Fig. IX-5

Flattening → I vs. S_JR

Look at it closely, I already said that if I was, like that, gripped one day by the Borromean knot, it is altogether linked to this order of event or advent, as you wish, that is called the analytic discourse, and in so far as I defined it as a social bond emerging in our day. This discourse has a historic value that has to be mapped out. It is true that mine is a weak voice to sustain it, but it is perhaps so much the better because if it were stronger, well then I would perhaps in short have less chance of subsisting. I mean that it seems difficult to me, throughout all history, like that, for the social bonds prevalent up to now not to silence any voice that is designed to sustain a different emerging discourse. This is what has always been seen up to now and it is not because there is no longer the Inquisition that it should be believed that the social links that I defined, the discourse of the master the discourse of the university, indeed the hysterico-diabolic discourse should not stifle, as I might say, whatever voice I may have. This having been said in short, I within this, I am a subject. I am caught up in this business, like that, because I set about existing as an analyst. That does not mean that I believe that I have a mission of truth. There were people like that, in short, in the past, who were crackers. No mission of the truth because the truth, I insist, cannot be said, it can only be half-said. So then let us rejoice that my voice is low....

BK ~ ⓐ
Quote

4 D's

No need for inquisition b/ ⓐ to be stifled – ⓜ,ⓤ,ⓗ!

Not Truth!
ⓠ

that Freud suggested that this universe had a hole. And what is more,
a hole that there is no way of knowing. So then I follow the track of
this hole, as I might say, and I encounter, it is not I who invented it, I
encounter the Borromean knot which, as they always say, fits me like
a ring on my finger… here we again have the hole! Only there is all
the same something, when one goes ahead like that in following the
track of things, which is that one notices that there is not only one
thing to make a cycle. It is not obligatorily and only the hole. Yes, if
you take two of them, from that, from these cycles, from these things
that turn, from this circle in question [IX-2], and if you knot both of
them, in the right way… you must not make a mistake of course – and
I must say that I make mistakes all the time, it is not only Jacques-
Alain Miller! The proof that… look at that! When I wanted earlier to
make the Borromean knot for you, that one there is shocking, I put my
foot in it! Because made like that, it is not a Borromean knot.
Namely, that you can always cut one of them, the two others will
remain knotted. It's not the right yoke! But in short, provided you
fold them in the right way, you notice that if you add this straight line
to it [IX-6] nothing more than this straight line, well then! It is a
Borromean knot. The straight line, infinite of course as I said, stated


Fig. IX - 6

at the beginning of this seminar. That makes a Borromean knot that is
just as valid as the one that I usually draw and that I am not going to
start on again. If the straight line is an infinite straight line, and how
not refer to it as the string in itself, the consistency reduced to the last
it has, well then, it makes a knot! Naturally, it is much more
convenient for us to close this consistency. I mean to notice that it is
enough here to make a buckle to rediscover the familiar knot, the knot

in the way in which I usually draw it [IX-6]. What is interesting, is
that not so, in representing it in this way, is to notice that starting from
there [IX-7], the way, the first, of writing the Borromean knot
rebounds on this cycle [IX-6] and that it is one of the ways of showing
how the knot can be, as I might say, doubly Borromean, namely, that
we pass to the bo-bo knot of four.
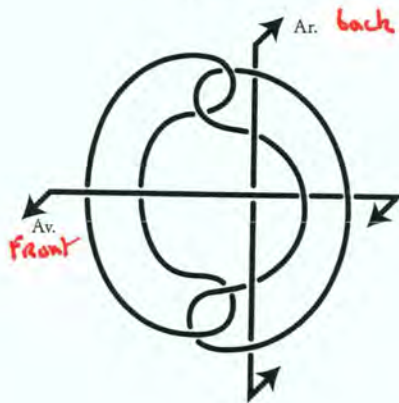
IX.7
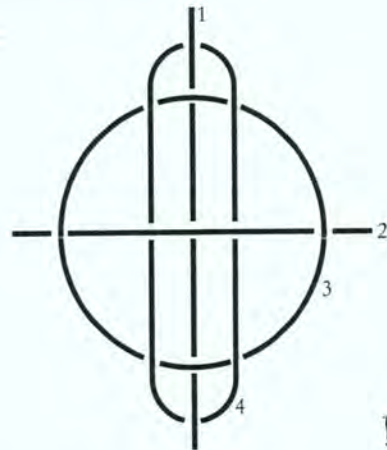
IX.8

(138) There you are! I showed you here [IX-8] another illustration of
this knot of four. But the question that this poses is what is the order
of equivalence of the straight line [IX-6], of the infinite straight line,
as it is there, of the straight line to the cycle? There is someone, a
man of genius called Desargues, to whom I made an allusion at one
time – in short 'at one time', at the time when I made an allusion to
him… – to whom the idea came that every straight line, every infinite
straight line achieved closure, created a buckle at a point at infinity.
How could this idea have come to him? It is an absolutely sublime
idea around which I constructed my whole commentary on *las
Meninas*, the one about which people say, in short, if we are to believe
the hacks, was completely incomprehensible. I do not know. It did
not seem to be so to me, at least! What is the equivalence of the
straight line to the circle? It is obviously to make a knot. It is a
consequence, is it not, of the Borromean knot. It is a recourse to
efficiency, to effectiveness, to *Wirklichkeit*.

That is not, that is not the important thing! For if we find them
equivalent in efficiency, in the efficiency of the knot, what is the

circle [IX-9] there is an orientation, namely, what we will designate

by the word gyre (*gyrie*). Not of course

that we can say that it is dextro-gyratory

or laevo-gyratory, everyone knows that

now. For with all the time that people

have been racking their brains to do so,

it seems all the same, not that it is

demonstrated, but that one could consider

that, in short, there were enough clever

Ghi gnros – Ring
gyrate; whirl

X

Fig. IX-9

people racking their brains, to do something about which it would be

conceivable that we should send it as a message to someone who

is supposed to be on another planet, and who would know the

distinction between right and left. As regards that, we can admit it, as

we have ended up by admitting it for the squaring of the circle, even

though there it has been demonstrated, we can admit that nothing can

be done. But to distinguish the gyres as being two, that we can do.

We could do it with words in a message for the inhabitants of another

planet.
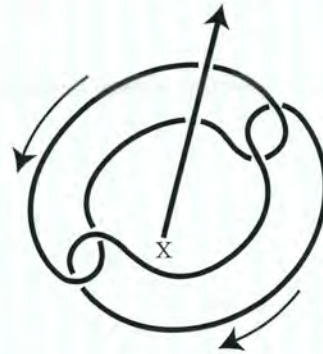
[on the board] It is enough for them to have the notion of a horizon,

which gives at the same time that of a plain. If we put just these two

circles [IX-10] flattened out, this is what is supposed by the notion of

horizon. We can say for example that we define one of them as being

further from the point from which we will start on the straight line as a

point of view, and that there is something external, which, as you see,

because of the straight line highlighted by Soury and Thomé,

concerning the knot of these two circles

is, from a dextro-gyratory side, if we

define dextro-gyratory by the fact that

the most external one goes underneath,

goes above the band of the circle, of the

ring of string, and that there is another

which, by this fact, also goes over, because

Fig. IX-10

Ring

this is how we define the gyre, but it is found to be in a different direction with regard to the circle. This circle [IX-9] has then two orientations, this one and that one, this one dextro-gyratory, that one laevo-gyratory; we are incapable of saying which is dextro, which is (145) laevo, we are incapable of transmitting it in a message. No manipulation of the knot of three – I tried it because I had hoped that the Borromean knot would perhaps give it to us – gives unambiguously the definition of laevo or of dextro. We always find ourselves confronted with the situation of having two gyres, but that to define them by the fact that the most external strip passes over the other strip, and that this is what ought to give the orientation, always fails. Since, as you see there, if we define the fact that the most external strip passes over the other, we find ourselves before an ambiguity, is it this one or that one? On the contrary, the ek-sistence of two gyres is made manifest by that. There are two gyres, two orientated Borromean knots, not just one, starting from the moment when we made an infinite straight line from one of the three, in so far as the infinite straight line is defined as non-orientatable. Namely, if you want it again, that we have the difference with what quite properly Soury and Thomé reasoned, namely, that there are three centrifugal, we are going to put a little e to say centrifugal, going towards the outside, there are there centripetal, three i's, there can be one i and two e's, one e and two i's.
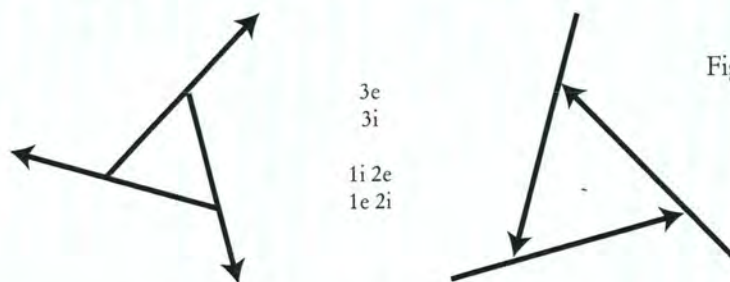

3e
3i

1i 2e
1e 2i

Fig. IX-11

These diverse specifications are those on which Soury and Thomé depend to demonstrate that there is only a single orientated knot.

If we have one straight line, one bar without orientation, we have then one-zero, one-i, one-e, and it is starting from that that there does not

come a similar order, namely, that there is one-without-orientation, one-with-a centrifugal-direction, towards the outside, one-with-a-centripetal-direction, towards the inside.

lo	li	le
lo	le	li

(146) This is of interest, since for their demonstration, they started from the notion of the same, namely, that in all, reducing all the projections, all the flattening-outs that they made, they demonstrated that from these different flattening-outs there resulted the fact that it was the same, it was the same, as I might say, from all the flattened-out points of view. But it is sufficient that one, taken moreover from the knot point of view, should ek-sist, for it to demonstrate the orientations, namely, the Borromean knot *qua* orientated as being two. The knot is certainly not orientated, this from the fact that the three are so. If one of the three is not so, and it is sufficient for that that it should be coloured which means identical to itself, this makes it comprehensible that there are two of them. Once it is, either coloured or disorientated, what distinguishes it, there were already two provided one is specified. This remark consists in saying that a single coloured knot is sufficient, is sufficient by being equivalent to the fact that one of the knots is not orientated. The word orientatable which is in the dictionary of what was distributed to you is striking. The word orientatable already means that there are two orientations. The knot, certainly, can reabsorb these orientations among themselves, but it does not reabsorb them, once there is carried out on one of the elements of the knot this thing of distinguishing it by the fact that it is not orientatable, namely, that it is transformed into a straight line.
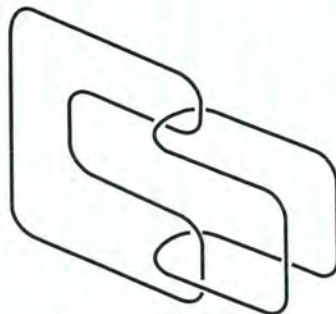

Fig. IX-12

I do not propose, but I think I have sufficiently indicated what is
involved in this knot as doubly orientated, and that it alone is what
explains by the rapprochement that I made with the coloured one, that
one of these knots should be by the fact of not being orientatable, by
this very fact coloured, requires that there are two knots, and that is
why the coloured one and the orientated one at the same time, makes
(147) two. No doubt Thomé and Soury will think, no doubt it will
come to them that the flattening-out here introduces a suspect element.
Nevertheless, I point out the following to them, that the same
articulations concerning orientation are valid, if we draw these two
knots these two circles in the following way, that I believe, that
perspective sufficiently indicates and that makes no reference to
exteriority of one of the curves, of the one with respect to the curve of
the other. There is neither external nor internal with the simple
reference to these spatial way of saying, put into three dimensions, by
representing the two circles, the circles that become cycles, already
with this way, there is a way to demonstrate that there are two knots,
and not a single one orientated, two Borromean knots of three
orientated.

There you are, I will stick with that for today.

- Two different representations of IX
  - 10
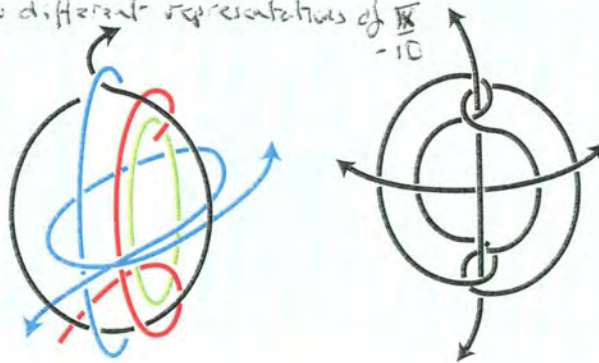
Seminar 10:   Tuesday 15 April 1975

Just like that, I imagined this morning, as I awoke, two little drawings,
the two on top [on the board], on the extreme right. I imagined then two
little nondescript drawings – you were able to see the difficulty I had
in simply reproducing them. It is a matter in these two drawings: [X-1
and 2] those on top, of two triangles, and in addition, two triangles of
the most ordinary type, in short, they do not even have curved sides;
two triangles that cross over one another.

Fig. X-1   Fig. X-2

There is all the same, I think that it will be tangible for you who look
at that, as I fabricated it, that there are in twos, those of the left, the
red, that is why I put the others in black, which are knotted in a chain,
which make just by those two, a chain, which are by this fact,
comparable in every way to what I will talk about later, two toruses,
one of which would pass through the hole of the other. The two
others are not knotted. They can be pulled apart from one another. It
(150) is like a torus that would be flattened out to operate, not at all to
be knotted, but to operate in the hole of the other.

The case is the same, that is also why I put them in black, for these
two triangles that are drawn underneath, except for the fact that one of

these triangles is in sum bent around what is presented as – but of course that means nothing at this level – one of the sides of the other, I am saying side because people imagine that a triangle has three sides.

Fig. X-3

It is simply to get you into the swing of a geometry, to put you into the dimensions of a geometry that is repugnant for the word geometry; not without reason, because it is not a geometry, it is radically distinct from it. A topology is what, at the start, indicates how what is not knotted two by two can nevertheless make a knot.

topology repugnant to geometry

We call a Borromean knot what is constituted in such a way that by subtracting one of these elements that I depicted, I say depicted, because it is only a figure, it is not its consistency, for each one of these couples of two that I made, it is enough to break – what is meant by break we will try to say later – that it is enough to break one of these elements in order that all the others should be also unknotted from each of them; and this can be done for as great a number of them as one wishes to state. You know that there is no limit to this stating. It is in that that it seems to me that there can be supported in a sayable (*dicible*) way, a term that I will comment on later, it is in it that there can be supported the term of sexual non-relationship, sexual in so far, I can only repeat, as it is supported essentially by a non-relationship of the couple.   Does the knot as a chain suffice to represent the couple relationship?

(151) At a time when most of you were not at my seminar, since it was a time when I brought out what was involved in demand and desire, I illustrated with two toruses the link to be made between

demand and desire, two toruses, namely, two orientatable cycles. I am
going all the same to make the two toruses for you or at least to
indicate them to you. It is something that begins to be drawn like that.
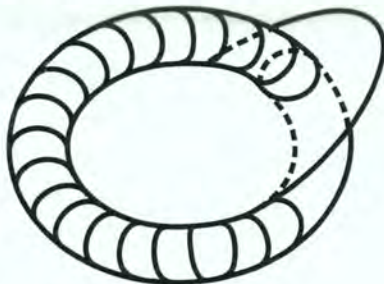

Fig. X-4

[On the board] You see, what is more, one gets entangled in it.
Obviously, I am not very gifted, but you are no more so than I. Here's
how this is drawn, if you want to make something complete. Since I
put a wrong line there, I am going to indicate that there is on this
torus, this particular torus, something which on its circuit comes to
enter into the hole of the other torus. It is by depicting in each one of
these toruses something that turns around that I showed what winds
around this one, is shifted onto the other by a series of windings
around the central hole of the torus. What does that mean if not that
demand and desire, for their part, are knotted. They are knotted in the
measure that a torus represents a cycle and is therefore orientatable.

You know, because all the same you have heard talk of that, of what
constitutes the difference between the sexes, that this is situated at the
level of the cell and especially at the level of the cellular nucleus or in
the chromosomes which, since they are microscopic, seem to
guarantee for us a defined level of the Real. But why the devil should
people want what is microscopic to be more real that what is
macroscopic! Something usually differentiates the sex which in each
species is situated as male from that which is female, the fact is that in
one case, there is a homozygotism, namely, a certain gene which is
paired with another gene, without one ever knowing in advance how
(152) in each species it is divided up, I mean, whether it is the male or
the female that is homozygotic. The difference to the other sex, is that
in the other sex, there is a heterozygotism somewhere, namely, that

This notion of limit implies then an oscillation, a yes or a no, it is to wish the good of someone or to wish strictly the contrary, it is all the same something which suggests to us the idea of a sinusoid. So then, (153) what is this sinusoid like? If there is a limit, it is a circle. The sinusoid is like this [X-5].
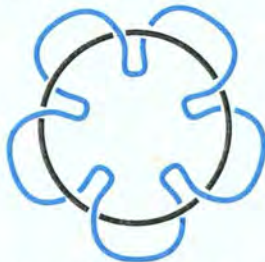

Fig. X-5

Does this sinusoid wind around? Does it make a knot or not by being wound around or not? This is the question that is posed by the notion of consistency, more nodal, as I might say than that of line, since the knot underlies it. There is no consistency that is not supported by the knot. That is why from the knot the very idea of the Real is dictated. The Real is characterised by being knotted. But still this knot must be made.

The notion of the unconscious is supported by the fact that not only is this knot found to be already made, but it is found made in a different emphasis of the term 'One is made (*on est fait!*)'. One is made by this act X by which the knot is already made. To my mind there is no other possible definition of the unconscious. The unconscious is the Real, I am measuring my terms. If I say it is the Real in so far as it is holed, I advance. I advance a little more than I have the right to, because I am not the only one who says it, who still says it, soon everyone will repeat it and, by being rained on, it will finish up by becoming a very pretty fossil. But meanwhile it's new! But up to the present, I am the only one who has said that there was no sexual relationship, and that this made a hole at a point of being, of the speaking being. The speaking being is not very widespread, huh! But all the same, it is like mould, it has a tendency to expand. So then, will we content ourselves with saying that the unconscious is the Real in so far as it is afflicted...- You're leaving, you're quite right. How

linear – for it is clear that here I can reduce this buckle to be parallel to the one that is here, which on this occasion I designated by a small b.

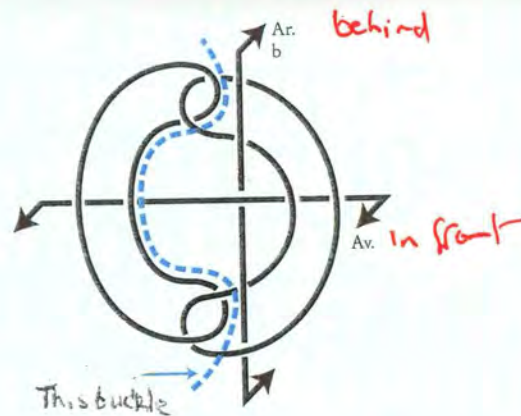
behind

In front

This buckle

boucle

Fig. X-6

Why would I give a hole, a hole circumscribed by a consistency this privilege, this privilege of highlighting the first time that the fact that the hole makes a knot is not limited to two. The fact is that the couple, all by itself, is always unknottable, unless it is knotted by the Symbolic.

I had put that forward as I could at one time, I was recently reminded, in what is called my Rome Discourse, the one for which finally I am delaying a repetition of, I spoke about the full word. Obviously, it was not bad, even though what the words were worth does not amount to much namely, as I told the person who was talking to me about it, the full word, if indeed it supports what creates a knot in the *you are my wife*, I all the same showed a little bit, because I said it since, of course, I did not say it right away like that because I had Lagache and Favez-Boutonnier on my back. In short, anyway, you can imagine if I had said *tuer ma femme* huh, like that, yeah! To kill her, yes, good. That would have made a bad impression (*mauvais effet*), and I am all the same... I look twice at it, I do not lack all common sense, I look twice at it before creating a bad impression. Someone asked me recently in the name of what did the *Jury d'Accueil* (Reception Committee) proceeded in order to stretch its benevolent hand over a certain number of people in the School. It is simply that, they will not

The Full Word ; creates a knot as its
— you are my wife

A F

Imaginary, that is not enough, it only gives the tone. And when all is said and done, it is not tone that one must trust but number. This is what I am trying to put to the test. But is a knotted number still a number? Or indeed is it something else?

Feeling in Sessions

(flash)

(166) That is where we have got to. I have kept you throughout this year around a certain number of news flashes. For my part, I am not all that important in it, being determined as subject by the unconscious, or indeed by the practice, a practice that implies the unconscious as presupposed. Does that mean, that like every sub-posed, it is imaginary? It is the very meaning of the word *subject*, sup-posed as imaginary.

What is there in the Symbolic that is not imagined? What I want to tell you is that there is the hole. Someone who saw me preyed on, make no mistake, by this knot, that here [XI-1] I am drawing for you in its simplest form, someone who saw me preyed on by it, in more complicated forms, told me that I was contradicting myself in a way by having put forward at one time, in terms that are not even my own, which are from Picasso as everyone knows, 'I do not seek, I find', someone said to me: 'Well then there, I see you really searching.'
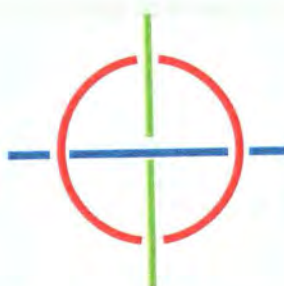

Fig. XI-1

To search (*chercher*), is a term that comes from *circare*, as you can find in any etymological dictionary. I find all the same, because that *is* not in the etymological dictionary, *that* I found the hole, Soury's hole, if I dare to express myself in this way, through which I am reduced to pass. Does it have to do with what people imagine determines it,

namely, the circle? A circle may be a hole, but it is not always so…
While I am at it, at this subject, I would say – I recall what can already
be found in the last lines of my *Remarks on psychical causality* – an   1945
Arabic proverb which states that there are a certain number of things,
he also names three of them, on which nothing leaves a trace, the man
in the woman, he says first, indeed the step of the gazelle on a rock. I
anticipated it, recalling the third term of this ending with a comma,
'more inaccessible to our eyes, this trace, made for the signs of the
(167) moneychanger.' That is the third term. There is no trace on the
coin that has been touched, only wear.

Yes! It is indeed here that there comes to be settled, make no mistake,
this knotted thing that is at stake, I find, enough to have to foment the
circle which is only the consequence of the hole, I find, enough to be
able to move around (*circuler*). I do not know if you have noticed that
the police whom Hegel posits very well are at the root of everything
political and that there is nothing in politics that is not, when
everything has been boiled down, purely and simply police, that
policemen have only one word to say: keep moving (*Circulez!*). The
gyre that I spoke to you about the last time does not matter to them,
whether it is gyring to the right or to the left, they don't give a damn,
make no mistake, what is at stake is to keep moving! That becomes,
that only becomes serious if one starts from the hole through which
one must pass. What is remarkable in the knot called 'bo', I am not
saying beautiful (*beau*), in the beau knot, as I will call it on this
occasion, is exactly the fact that it forms a knot, while not moving
around in a way that uses the hole as such. There is a difference
between this knot and that one [XI-2] that the hole uses. This is what
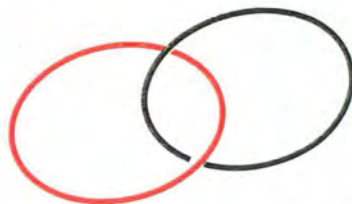makes a chain.

Fig. XI-2

It is striking ever since chains have been made that the thing that has
not been noted, is that in the 'bo' knot, there is no need to use the hole
because it makes a knot without making a chain. How does it make a
knot? In such a way that, to redo it in the way the rings do [XI-3]
which is exactly the same thing as that [XI-4], despite the appearance

Fig. XI-3

as you see it in this form, this form of pure appearance, it is in the
measure that these two rings are not knotted [XI-4] that the third, in
this very measure, bends one of the two, that are free among
themselves, bends it in such a way that necessarily when it gets to the
other end of one of these circles, it will bend the other in its turn, and
thus, it will turn around, if this ring, the small one there, we suppose it
to be the Symbolic, it will indefinitely make a circuit of the – in
inverted commas since it is not a true chain – of the 'false chain' of
the Imaginary and the Symbolic. This indeed is what is at stake.

Infléchir

How recognise oneself in this coupled double circle and precisely, by
not being knotted? In order for a knot to be Borromean, for a knot to
be 'bo', it is not enough that it should be a knot, it is necessary that
each of the elements, this term it is necessary and it is sufficient, is not

... Le Réel
... the Real

... ou l'Imaginaire
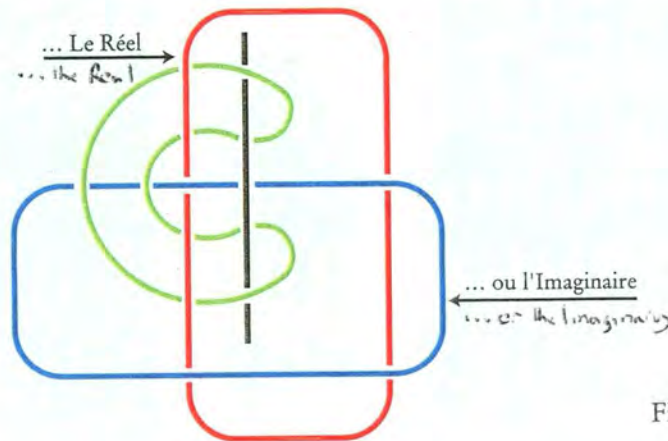... or the Imaginary

Fig. XI-4

given its full meaning unless it is referred to the knot; to say it is
necessary, is something, but to say it is sufficient implies, which is
always forgotten because people do not make the hole (*trou)*, the only
hole that is worthwhile, the discovery (*trouvaille*)! Because one does
not make the hole, one does not see that if the condition is lacking,
nothing is going to work out! Which is the opposite of the 'it is
necessary', the always eluded opposite. I am going to show it to you
right away.

You knot two circles [XI-5] you knot them in a way which implies,
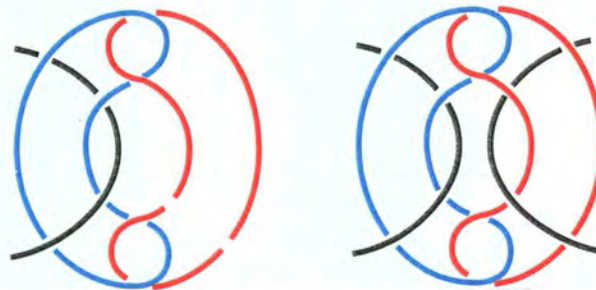since here it is not demonstrated but simply shown, you knot them in

Fig. XI-5

(169) such a way that they are not knotted; that they make here
something which is just as much the consistency of a circle as an
infinite straight line. This is sufficient because it is identifiable to this
figure [XI-1], the 'bo' knot. This is enough to make a Borromean
knot. Nothing is going to be easier for you to imagine than the fact
that if you make another one pass here like that, you have a figure
which will have the air – how can you not believe it? – of being a
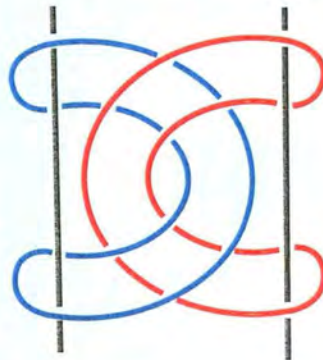

Fig. XI-6

its way of turning around as sex, is that not so, is not knotted to the
other.   This is what my non-relationship means.

It is quite striking that language has for a long time anticipated the
figure of the knot, about which mathematicians have begun to spar
only in our own day, to call a knot what unites the man and a woman,
without naturally knowing what is at stake, in speaking metaphorically
about the knots that unite them.   It is these knots that it would no
doubt be worth referring to in showing that they imply as necessary
this elementary 3 by which as it happens I support them by this three
indications of meaning, of materialised meaning, that are depicted in
the nominations of the Symbolic the Imaginary and the Real.

tying the knot

I have just introduced the term nomination.   I had to answer for it
recently in connection with what was collected in a little work by
logicians on the subject of what the logicians have managed to state
(171) up to now, concerning what is called the referent.   I fell there
from the heights of my knot, and this did not facilitate things for me at
all because that is the whole question: does nomination stem, as it
apparently seems, from the Symbolic?   You know, in short, perhaps
you remember it!   I made for you one day the figure that is required
when one wishes to foment a knot of four.   The least that can be said
is that if we introduce nomination at this level, it is a fourth element.
This figure, I made it for you in this way [XI-7]: one must start from
the unknotted circles, and I even have no repugnance in evoking the
case where I was found lacking with regard to this figure.   Here is
what is appropriate for a fourth circle to knot the three that first of all
were posited as unknotted.   This figure, contrary to the one in which
one day I was just as entangled as you may be on occasion, for want

×

Σ Joyce
Sinthome

cf 7. 10

Fig. XI-7

one that I define from the fact that the infinite straight lines at their supposed point at infinity, are not knotted in a chain.

Here indeed is where the question begins for us. It does not seem that Desargues ever asked himself about the form in which he supposed these infinite straight lines, in posing the question of whether they *are* knotted or not. It is quite striking that Riemann, for his part, should have settled the question in a way that gives little satisfaction by making of all the points at infinity, whatever straight line they belong to, a single and unique point which is at the principle of Riemann's geometry.
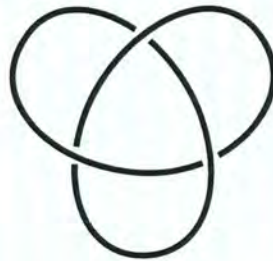
1826-66 !

Fig. XI-8

By raising the question of the knot, we are going to see, I am going to depict something for you here [XI-8], ah!, that I hope to get to the end of, in the form of a knot, a true one, which, a curious thing, presents a sort of analogy with this form [XI-3]. If we study this knot as the mathematicians do, what we, all that we can do, is to initiate the notion described as that of the fundamental group, namely, define the structure of this knot by a series of journeys (*trajets*) that will be made from any point whatsoever, this one, for example. We define the knot by something called the fundamental group which involves a number that differs according to the knots, a number of journeys that are necessary to indicate its structure. These journeys, even if they make several buckles in each one, but here I am asking the question, I am putting the hole in quotation marks, in each one of the holes which, apparently, make this knot, will be a certain number of them, and (174) contrary to what you may imagine, this number, in this case, in this case where the flattened-out figure seems to involve four, four distinct fields, that will not make for all that four individualised circles

Paths

of the journey, but contrary to what one may imagine, this is not the _____

number which will be characteristic of this fundamental group, it will

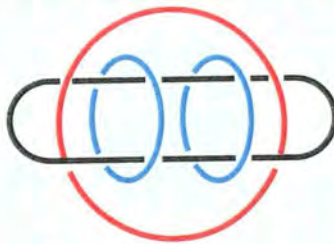be the relation between a certain number of journeys.

pathways

Fig. XI-9

We are supporting here, in a pure state, the notion of relationship, in
so far as, precisely, it brings us back to the knot, to the Borromean
knot, since this very relationship makes a knot, except for the fact that
the knot lacks numbers. In taking this stage of the Borromean knot,
we support by the very number the circles or the journeys that are at
stake for any knot whatsoever, even if this knot, the one that I have
just drawn, as you see, only has a unique consistency. We take the
number as a go-between, as an intermediary, as itself an element to
introduce us into the dialectic of the knot. What I will come to this
time is the following, it is that namely, nothing is less, as I might say,
natural than to think this knot. That there is something of the one,
which I put forward at one time to support it by the circle is something
to which, precisely, the movement of thought is limited, to make a
circle, and that is why there is nothing more natural, make no mistake,
than to reproach its circle as vicious. That if, to depict the relationship
of the sexes without otherwise specifying any more, I find the figure
of two one (*sic*), in the form of two circles, that a third knots precisely
by the fact that they are not knotted with one another, for what is at
stake is not simply that they are not so, that they are free when this
third is broken, it is that this third, as I showed you in the figure [XI-
9], this one, what is at stake is that it is because this third explicitly
knots them by the fact that they are not knotted and if all I had done
was to get this function into your heads, I would consider that today I
(175) had not spoken in vain. This is the very thing that is at stake, it
is from the fact that they are not knotted that they knot. And the

Two ones ?

necessity of a fourth term should come here to dictate its first truths is
precisely what I want end on. Namely, that without the fourth,
nothing is properly speaking highlighted – I was not able to do it
today – highlighted about what the Borromean knot truly is.
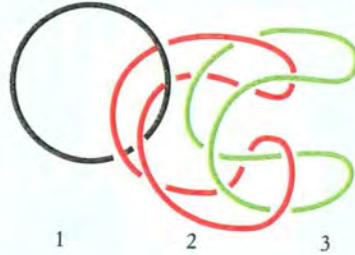

Fig. XI-10

In any chain, to imagine the simplest one for you, in every Borromean
chain, there is a one then a two [XI-10] according to the form that I
drew for you earlier, you will find here the one and the two, which is
the beginning of the chain after which, here, there will be a third circle
that act as a buckle. What is implied by the fact that in any chain
whatsoever, since it makes a chain, it always makes a chain, we place
any one whatsoever of the first two in the third rank? Whatever may
be the chain, the operation that is at stake will imply for us limiting
the chain 1-2-3-4, [XI-11] will imply that if we wish to put any one
whatsoever of these two in the third rank, the one will be then knotted
to the two, both by the three and the four. Try it out, for moreover
there is nothing like it to try to think out this knot than to manipulate

XI . 11
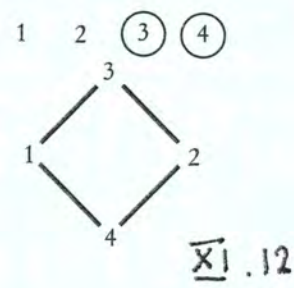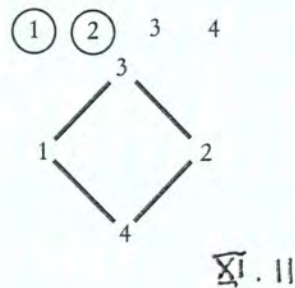
XI .12

(176) rings of string. I repeat, although already having no more space
on the board, 1-2-3-4, [XI-12] to limit ourselves to that, in any chain
whatsoever, from whatever end we take it, will imply that by putting

Ingrat
Quote

either the 1, or the 2 in the place described as the third, by making the effort, we will obtain the following. The fact is that by choosing one of the two, since here it is the 2 that we choose, to put the 2 here in the third row, the 3 and the 4 will necessarily knot this 1 to the 2 that is shifted in this way. It is quite clear that the 1 and the 2 are interchangeable, namely, that at the start of a chain, the first and the second are indefinitely interchangeable [XI-13]. It is by placing the one of these two there in the third rank, by striving to aim at placing it in row three that we will see not simply the three involved and passing to the place of the 2, but with the 3, the fourth. And this is why the interest that I have in the knot of four is justified on this occasion and that I will develop it next year.
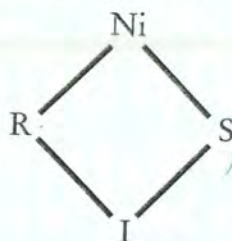

Fig. XI-13

From then on, since we do not know what to couple nomination with, the nomination which here constitutes the fourth term, are we going to couple it to the Imaginary, namely, that coming from the Symbolic, nomination is there to have a certain effect in the Imaginary? This indeed in effect is what seems to be at stake among logicians when they talk about the referent. The descriptions of Russell, those that question themselves about the author, those that ask why it is legitimate and logically fragile to question the fact of whether or not (177) Walter Scott is the author of *Waverley*, it seems that this reference explicitly concerns what is individualised by the thought-out support of bodies. It is certainly in fact nothing of the kind. The notion of referent aims at the Real. It is as Real, that what the logicians imagine as Real, gives its support to the referent. For this imaginary nomination, the one that is written by this for example, that from the relation between R and S, we have a nomination index i, and

[handwritten top right: Ouote]

then the I to stick with the knot of four, as constituting the link
between the Real and the Symbolic.

[handwritten: Imag Nomin-L]

Fig. XI-14

I would propose the following, which is that Imaginary nomination is
very precisely what I have supported today by the infinite straight line,
and that this straight line, in this circle that we compose of a circle and
a straight line, that this straight line is very precisely not what names
anything whatsoever of the Imaginary but what, precisely, creates a
bar, inhibits the handling of everything that is demonstrative, of
everything that, articulated as Symbolic, creates a bar at the level of
the Imagination itself and renders what is at stake in the body as
regards which everyone knows that what interests the body, at least in
the analytic perspective, is the body in so far as it creates an orifice,
that that by which it is knotted to some Symbolic or Real that is
involved, is precisely from this knot, the highlighting of a circle, of an
orifice that the Imaginary is constituted.

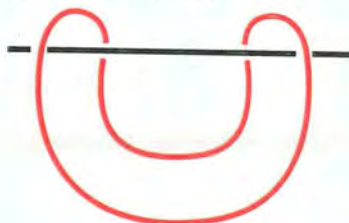*[handwritten right margin: Body not Scientific but Orifices Enjoying]*

Fig. XI-15

(178) This infinite straight line which here completes the false hole
[XI-15] that is at stake, since an orifice is not enough to make a hole,
each one of them being independent of the other, is very precisely the
inhibition that thought has with respect to the knot. We can question
in the same way, whether between the Real and the Imaginary, it is the
nomination index of the Symbolic, namely, in so far as in the
Symbolic there arises something that names, we see that at the
beginning of the Bible, except for the fact that what is not noticed is
that the creationist idea, the inaugural *Fiat lux*, is not a nomination.

That it is from the Symbolic that the Real arises – that is the idea of creation – has nothing to do with the fact that in a second phase, the same God gives their name to each of the animals that inhabit Paradise.

Ns   — Symbolic Nomination.
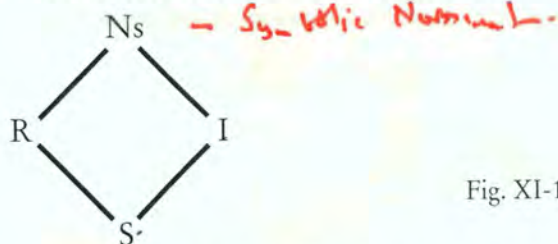
R   I

S·

Fig. XI-16

What nomination is at stake, in what I am calling here to indicate it by a Ns, what nomination is involved, in this, in one of the two of those we are mythically told about? This indeed in effect is a question that is worth dwelling on a little, because this stems from the meaning which, in each case, is a different meaning. The nomination of each one, which moreover is a common name, not a proper name in Russell's sense, what does the nomination of each one of the species represent? Assuredly a narrowly Symbolic nomination, a nomination limited to the Symbolic. Is this sufficient for us to support what happens at a point that is certainly not indifferent in this elementing of four of the knot that is supported by the name of the Father. Is the Father the one who has given their name to things? Or indeed should this Father be questioned *qua* Father, at the level of the Real? In a word is the eternal Father, in whom of course nothing would prevent us from believing if it was even thinkable that he himself believes in himself, while it is quite clearly unthinkable, should we put the term (179) nomination as knotted at the level of this circle by which we support the function of the Real? It is between these three terms, nomination from the Imaginary as inhibition, nomination from the Real as what is found to happen in fact, namely, anxiety, or nomination from the Symbolic, I mean implicated, flower of the Symbolic itself, namely, as it happens in fact in the form of the symptom, it is between these three terms that I will try next year, it is not a reason because I have the answer that I do not leave it to you as a question, that I will question myself next year about what substance should be given to the name of father.

Nomination R / S / I.

Reread 11. 10. 06