

**Seminar 6: Wednesday 10 February 1976**

I repeat once again. Can you hear me?

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

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

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

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

The question, which is worth asking, is the following: from what point on – this is how I express myself – from what point on is one mad? And the question that I am asking myself, and that I am asking

Jacques Aubert, is the following, which I will not resolve today: was Joyce mad?

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

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

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

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

The question is in short the following: how to know, from his notes, and it is not by chance that he left so many, because anyway his notes, were drafts. *Scribbledehobble* is not random, it must well have been



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

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

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

There is something that you must read, if you manage to find this yoke, the French translation of *The Portrait of the Artist 'en tant que Jeune homme, en tant qu'Un jeune homme'* which was formerly



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

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

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



He wrote. And this is where the whole difference lies. The fact is that when one writes, one may well touch the Real, but not the true. So then, Jacques Aubert, what do you think? Did he believe himself yes or no....

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

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

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

- **J Aubert:** Yes, if I remember rightly, the passages where he evokes the demeanour of the false Christ, are also passages in which he speaks about *enigma of manner*, mannerism and enigma. And then, on the other hand, this seems also to correspond to the famous period when he was fascinated by the Franciscans, with in short two aspects of Franciscanism which are all the same perhaps interesting. One touching on the imitation of Christ, which forms part of the Franciscan ideology, does it not, when one is on the side of the Son, one imitates

the Son, and also poetry, is that not so, the Little Flowers. And one of the texts he looks for, in *Stephen Hero*, is precisely not a text of Franciscan theology, but a text of poetics, of poetry, by Jacopone da Todi.

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

What should we call that? There is a dynamic of knots. It has no use (*sert à rien*). But it squeezes (*serre*). Anyway, it can squeeze, if it doesn't serve. What can it be that it squeezes together? Something that is caught (*coincé*) in these knots.

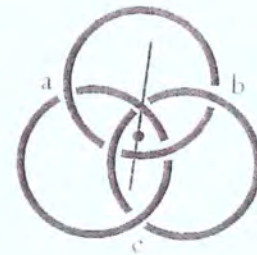


Fig. VI-1

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

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



Fig. VI-2



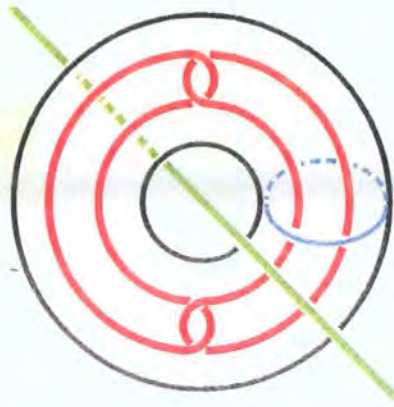


Fig. VI-3

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

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

And that is where we find the following, which is that only the body thinks/ bulges (*pense/ pan-se*).

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

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

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

I am not proceeding by chance along this laborious path. It is because from all time, with a woman, since make no mistake, for Joyce, there is only one woman. She is always based on the same model and he only puts her on like a glove with the most extreme reluctance. It is only, this is tangible, by the, the greatest disparagement that he makes Nora into a chosen woman. Not alone must she fit him like a glove but she must, she must squeeze him like a glove. She is absolutely



useless. It even gets to the point that this is quite clear in their relations, in short, when they are at Trieste every time a kid is born (*se raboule*), I am forced to talk like that, anyway, it creates a drama. It creates a drama, it was not foreseen in the programme. There is a real discontent set up with the one who is called, since they are friendly as pigs, who is called Jim and, since that is how he is written about, anyway, he is written about like that because his wife wrote to him using this name. Jim and Nora, things no longer work out between them when there is a kid. That always creates, always and in every case a drama. Yeah!

I spoke a little earlier about the button. This must surely have, like that, a little something, something to do with the way something is called, in short, an organ. Yes. The clitoris, to call it by its name, is something like a blackhead (*point noir*) in this affair. I say a blackhead, metaphorically or not. This has moreover some echoes in the behaviour, which is not sufficiently noted, of what is called *a* woman. It is very curious that *a* woman is precisely so interested in blackheads. It is the first thing that she does to her little boy. It is to squeeze out his blackheads. Because it is a metaphor for the fact that she would wish that her own blackhead would not take up so much space. It is still the earlier button, of the inside-out glove. Because after all there should be no confusion! It is obvious that from time to time there are, there are women that start delousing like female monkeys. But it is all the same not at all the same thing to crush vermin or to extract a blackhead! Yes.

We must continue with our round.

Imagination by being the redeemer, in our tradition at least, is the (103) prototype of what not unintentionally I write as per-version (*père-version*). It is in the measure that there is a relationship from son to father, and this for a very long time, that there arose this loony idea of the redeemer. Freud had all the same tried to extricate himself

from that, from this sadomasochism, the only point in which there is a supposed relationship between sadism and masochism. The sadism is for the father, the masochism is for the son. There is between them strictly no relationship. We must really believe that it happens like this (VI-4), namely, that there is an infinite straight line that penetrates into a torus. I think that I am giving enough of an image like that. One must really believe in the active and the passive to imagine that sadomasochism is something explained by a polarity.



Fig. VI-4

Freud very clearly saw something which is much older than this Christian mythology, which is castration. The fact is that the phallus, is transmitted from father to son. And that even this involves, this involves something which cancels out the phallus of the father before the son has the right to bear it. It is essentially in this way, which is manifestly a symbolic transition, that Freud refers, that Freud refers to this idea of castration.

This indeed is what led me, which led me to pose the question about the relationships of the Symbolic and the Real. They are very ambiguous; at least in Freud. It is indeed here that the question of the critique of the true arises. What is the true, if not the true Real? And how distinguish, except by using a metaphysical term, the *Echt* of Heidegger, how distinguish the true Real from the false? For *Echt* is all the same on the side, on the side of the Real. Here indeed is where the whole metaphysics of Heidegger is brought to a halt. In this little piece on *Echt*, he admits, as I might say, his failure. The Real is found (104) in the entanglements of the true. And this indeed is what led me



to the idea of knot which proceeds from the fact that the true is self-perforating due to the fact that its use creates meaning out of nothing (*de toute pièce*). This because it slides, because it is sucked in by the image of the corporal hole from which it is emitted, namely, the mouth in so far as it sucks.

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

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

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

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

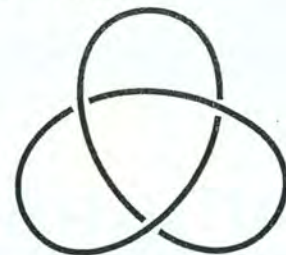


Fig. VI-5

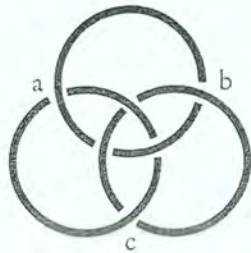


Fig. VI-6

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

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



Fig. VI-7





Fig. VI-8

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

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



Fig. VI-9



Fig. VI-10

Can we not conceive of the case of Joyce like this? Namely, that his desire to be an artist who would have a hold on (107) everyone, in any

case as many people as possible, is this not exactly the compensator for this fact that, let us say, that his father had never been for him a father.

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

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

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

$$S_1 \rightarrow S_2$$



It is very clear that from all time, this was an invention, an invention which was diffused throughout the story, that there should be two names that are proper to this subject. That Joyce was also called James, is something that only follows on in the use of the nickname, James Joyce nicknamed Dedalus. The fact that we can give, like that, a lot of them only leads to one thing, which is to make the proper name re-enter into what is involved in the common noun (*nom commun*).

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

**Seminar 7: Wednesday 17 February 1976**

I had a hope. And don't get the idea that this is a matter of coquetry, of titillation, like that. I had a hope, I had put some hope in the vacation. A lot of people go away. It's true. In my clientele, it's striking, but not so here. I mean I see the doors are still as crowded as ever, and in a word, I was hoping that my audience would be thinned out. In return for which, in return for which I, and then what's more, all of that, all of that exasperates me, because it doesn't strike the right note. Anyway, in return for which I hoped we would be able to speak in a more confidential way. To set up myself up in the middle of, I don't know, if there were only half this audience, it would be better. I am going to have to return to an amphitheatre, amphitheatre III if I remember correctly, like that. That way, I will be able, I will be able to speak in a slightly more intimate way.

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



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

Here is a knot.

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

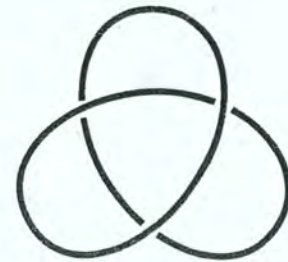


Fig. VII-1

It is certain that, that if this, (VII-2) we call this element of the chain the Imaginary and this other the Real and this one here the Symbolic the meaning will be there. We cannot hope for anything better, hope to place it elsewhere, because we are reduced to imagining everything that we think. Only we do not think without words, contrary to what some psychologists, those of the Würzburg, have put forward.

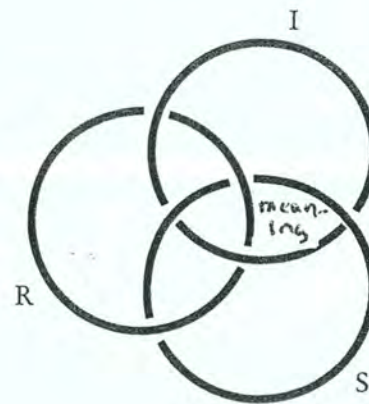


Fig. VII-2

Good, as you see, I am a little disappointed, and I have some trouble getting started. So then I am going to get to the heart of things, and say what can happen, what can happen to a knot. As regards what makes up a knot, namely, at the minimum, the knot of three, the one that I content myself with since it is the knot which is deduced from the fact that the three rings, the rings of string, as I formerly put forward this image, the rings of string of the Imaginary and of the Real and of the Symbolic, well it is clear that, that they make a knot. That they make a knot, namely, that

they do not content themselves with being able to isolate, to determine a certain number of fields of squeezing (*coincement*), places where if one puts ones finger, one is pinched. One is pinched also in a knot. Only the knot is of a different nature.

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

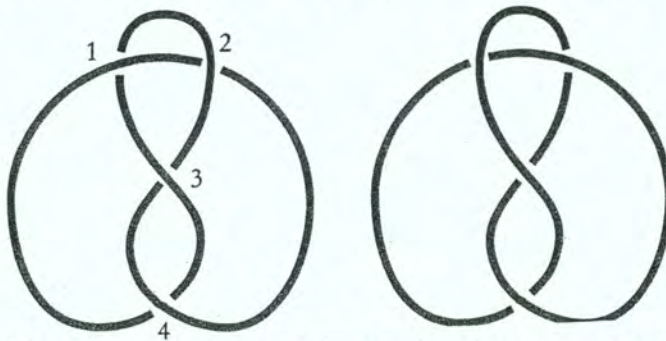


Fig. VII-3

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

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

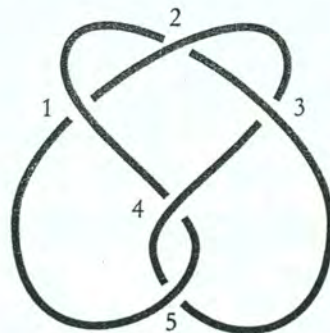


Fig. VII-4

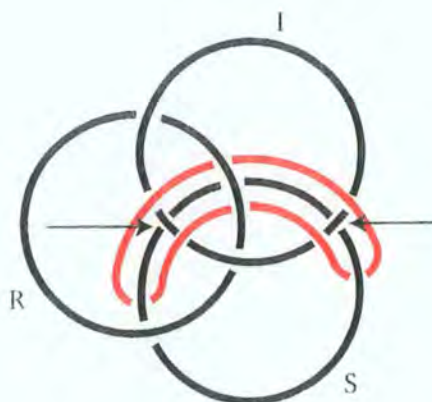


is in effect the one that is most appropriate. Yeah! It is absolutely sublime. Since every time one draws a knot, one runs the risk of (112) making a mistake, just now, just now when I was drawing these things to present them to you I had to deal with something analogous, which forced Gloria to put a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

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

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

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



*Fig. VII-5*

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

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

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

It so happens that last Friday, at my presentation of something that is generally considered as a case, a case of madness assuredly. A case of madness which, which had begun with the *sinthome*: imposed words (*paroles imposées*). This at least was how the patient himself articulated this something which is the most sensible of things in the order, in the order of an articulation that I can describe as Lacanian. How can we not all sense that the words on which we depend, are in a way imposed on us? This indeed is why what is called a sick person sometimes goes further



than what is called a healthy man. The question is rather one of knowing why a normal man, one described as normal, is not aware that the word is a parasite? That the word is something applied. That the word is a form of cancer with which the human being is afflicted. How is it that there are some who go as far as feeling it?

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

But the matter was recalled to me during my last case presentation, by the fact that the case that I was presenting had undergone a deterioration. After having had the feeling, a feeling (114) that I consider, for my part, as sensible, the feeling that words were imposed on him, things deteriorated. He had the feeling, not simply that words were imposed on him, but that he was affected by what he himself called telepathy. Which was not what is usually meant by this word, namely, being made aware of things that happen to others, but that on the contrary everyone was aware of what he was formulating himself, in his own heart. Namely, his most intimate reflections, and quite especially the reflections which came to him in the margin of these famous imposed words. For he heard something: 'dirty political assassination' (*sale assassinat politique*). Which he made equivalent to 'dirty political assistantship' (*sale assistanat politique*). One can clearly see here that the signifier is reduced to what it is, to equivocation, to a torsion of the voice. But to 'dirty assassination' or to 'dirty assistantship' described as political, he said something to himself, in reply. Namely, something which began with a *but*, and which was his reflection on the subject. And



what really terrified him, was the thought that in addition, the reflection he was making, in addition to what he considered as these words that were imposed on him, was also known by all the others. He was then, as he expressed it, a telepathic broadcaster. In other words, he no longer had any secrets. And this very thing, it was this that made him to attempt to end it all; life having become for him by this fact, by this fact of no longer having any secrets, by no longer having anything in reserve, led him to make what is called a suicide attempt. Which was moreover the reason why he was there and why I in short had to be concerned with him.

What pushed me today to speak to you about the daughter Lucia, is very exactly the fact, I was really careful about it the last time, in order not to get involved in gossip, is that Joyce, Joyce fiercely defended his daughter, his daughter the schizophrenic, what is called a schizophrenic, from being taken over by doctors. Joyce only articulated a single thing, which was that his daughter was a telepath. I mean that, in the letters that he wrote about her, he formulated that she is much more intelligent than anybody else, that she informs him, miraculously is the word to be understood, about everything that is happening to a certain number of people, that for her these people have no secrets.

Is there not here something striking? Not at all that I think that Lucia was effectively a telepath, that she knew what was happening to people about whom she did not have, about whom she did not have any more information than anyone else. But that (115) Joyce for his part attributes this virtue from a certain number of signs, of declarations that he, he understood in a certain way. This is really something where I see that in order to defend, as one might say, his daughter, he attributes to her something, an extension of what I will momentarily call his own symptom. Namely - it is difficult in his case not to evoke, not to evoke my



own patient and how this had begun with him – namely, that with respect to the word, one cannot say that something was not imposed on Joyce. I mean that in the more or less continuous progress that his art constituted, namely, this word, the word that had been written, to break it to dislocate it, to ensure that at the end what seems in reading him to be a continual progress – from the effort that he made in his first critical essays, then subsequently, in the *Portrait of the Artist*, and finally in *Ulysses* and ending up with *Finnegans Wake* – it is difficult not to see that a certain relationship to the word is more and more imposed on him. Imposed to the point that he finishes by, by dissolving language itself, as Philippe Sollers has very well noted, I told you that at the beginning of the year, to impose on language itself a sort of breaking, of decomposition which means that there is no longer any phonological identity.

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

In any case the fact that Joyce articulates in connection with Lucia, in order to defend her, that she is a telepath, seems to me – by reason of this patient whose case I was considering the last time when I made what is called my presentation at Ste. Anne – seems to me certainly indicative. Indicative of something as regards to which I will say that Joyce, that Joyce bears witness at this very point (VII-6),

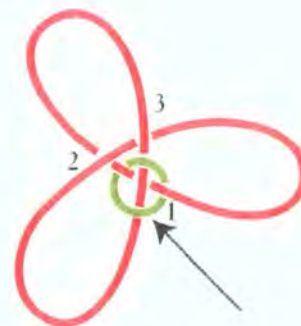


Fig. VII-6

(116) which is the point that I designated as being that of the paternal lack. What I would like to mark, is that what I am calling, what I designated, what I am supporting by this sinthome which is marked here by a ring, by a ring of string, which is supposed, by me, to be produced at the very place where, let us say, there is an error in the layout of the knot.

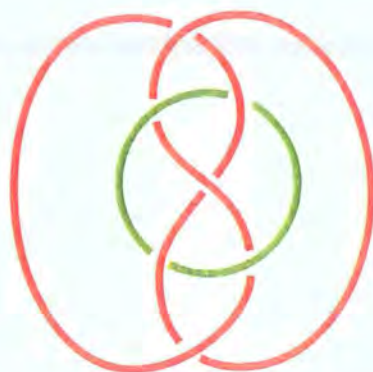
It is difficult for us not to see that the slip is what, in part, the notion of the unconscious is grounded on. That the witticism should also be so, is not, it is to be paid to the same account as I might say. For, after all, it is not unthinkable that the witticism should result from a slip. This at least is how Freud himself articulates it, namely, that it is a short circuit; that, as he puts forward, it is an economy with a pleasure, a satisfaction in view. That it should be at the place where the knot fails, where there is a sort of slip of the knot itself, is something that we should clearly retain, that I for my part, as I showed here, happen to fail on occasion. This indeed is what, in a way, confirms that a knot can fail. A knot can fail, just as much as the Unconscious is there to show us that it is starting from, that it is starting from its own consistency, that of the Unconscious, that there are a whole lot of failures.

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



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

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



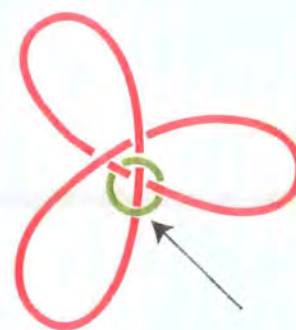
*Fig. VII-7*

A striking thing, is that there is something in common in the way in which there are knotted, things are knotted. There is something which is marked by a certain direction, by a certain orientation, by a certain, let us say, dextrogyratoriness of the compensation. But it remains no less clear that here (VII-7), what results from the

knotted compensation, from the compensation by the sinthome, is different to what happens here and there. The nature of this difference is the following. It is that between this and this, namely, the sinthome and the loop which is made here, as I might say, spontaneously, can be inverted from this to that, namely, let us say the red eight and the green ring, is strictly equivalent.

Inversely, you only have to take a knot of eight, made thus, you will obtain very easily the other shape. There is nothing simpler. It is even imaginable. It is enough for you to imagine that you pull things in such a way, I mean on the red, in such a way as to ensure that the red here makes a ring. Nothing easier than to see, to sense that there is every chance that what is then at first a green ring will become a green eight. And with use, you will see that it is an eight exactly of the same shape, of the same dextrogyratoriness. There is then strict equivalence and it is not, after what I have (118) opened up about the sexual relationship, it is not difficult to suggest that, when there is equivalence, it is indeed in that there is no relationship.

If, for a moment, we suppose that what is involved in what henceforth is a failure of the knot, of the knot of three, this failure is strictly equivalent, there is no need to say it, in the two sexes. And if what we see here as equivalent is supported by the fact that, just as much in one sex as in the other,



*Fig. VII-8*

there was a failure, a failure of the knot, it is clear that the result is that the two sexes are equivalent. Except for this nevertheless, that if the fault is repaired at the very place (VII-8) two sexes, here symbolised by the two colours, the two sexes are no longer equivalent. For you see here what corresponds to what I earlier called equivalence (VII-9), what corresponds to it is this which is far from being equivalent (VII-7). If here, one colour can be replaced by the other, inversely here (VII-7) you see that the green



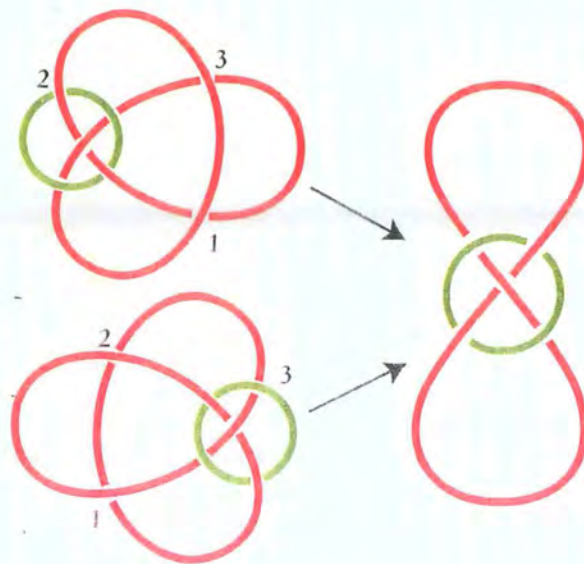


Fig. VII-9

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

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

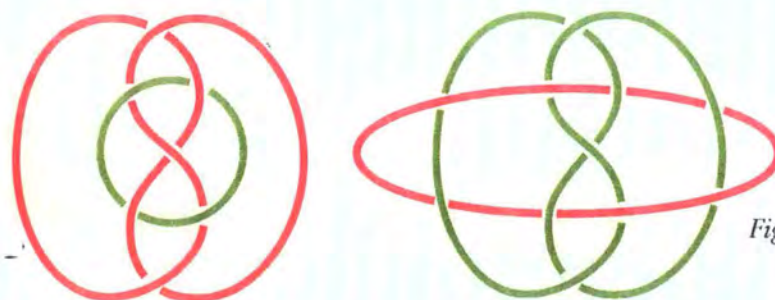


Fig. VII-10

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

I allowed myself to say that the *sinthome*, is very precisely the sex to which I do not belong, namely, a woman. If *a* woman is a *sinthome* for every man, it is quite clear that there is a need to find (120) another name for what is involved in the case of a man for *a* woman; since precisely the *sinthome* is characterised by non-equivalence. One may say that man is for a woman anything you please, namely an affliction, worse than a *sinthome*, you may well articulate it as you please, a devastation even, but, if there is no equivalence, you are forced to specify what is involved in the *sinthome*.

There is no equivalence, it is the only thing, it is the only *redoute* where there is supported what is called in the speaking being, in the human being, the sexual relationship. Is this not what is demonstrated by what is called, it is a different use of the term, the clinic, make no mistake, the bed (*lit*)? When we see people in bed, it is there all the same, not simply in hospital beds, it is all the same there that we can form an idea for ourselves of what is involved in this famous relationship. This relationship is linked (*se lie*), make no mistake, *l-i-e* this time, this relationship is linked to something about which I could not put forward, and this indeed is what results, good God, from everything that I hear on another



bed, on the famous couch where I am told things at length. The fact is that the link, the close link of the sinthome, is this something that it is a matter of situating in terms of what it has to do with the Real, with the Real of the Unconscious, if it is indeed the case that the Unconscious is real.

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

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

**Seminar 8: Wednesday 9 March 1976**

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

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



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

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

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

So then, there results, on the whole, in short, something which, which is quite curious when all is said and done. One has there

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

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

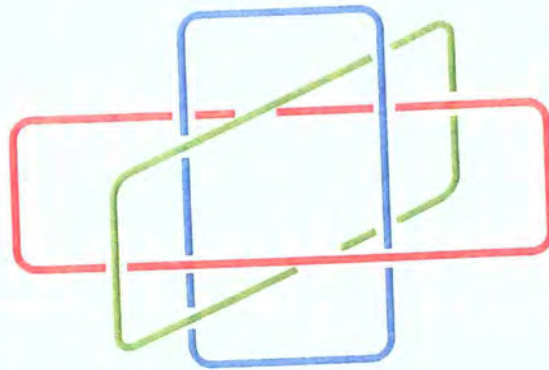
Anyway, I will not tell you any more, then, about the *Portrait of Dora*. I hope, I hope what? To have some echo of it from people who, for example, come to see me. That happens.

Good, so then, let us talk about what is at stake: the chain, and the chain that I was led to articulate, indeed to describe, by joining to it as I was led to do, the Symbolic the Imaginary and the Real. What is important, is the Real.



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

Here in short is what this is like (VIII-1), something that would be



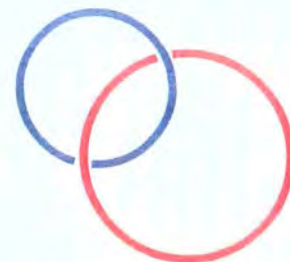
*Fig. VIII-1*

(124) a little like that. I was not inclined to complete it. But it is obvious that it must be completed to sense what is at stake. Here is the typical chain.

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



*Fig. VIII-2*



*Fig. VIII-3*

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

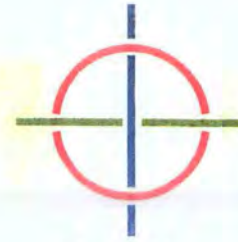


Fig. VIII-4

Which has the advantage, finally, of representing it like that (VIII-4), normally representing the three rings in a way, in short, that must be called *projective*. This moreover is valid. It nevertheless remains that, that what is presented thus (VIII-5), will be, careful here, you see clearly that we are forced to place the three rings in a way that respects the arrangement of what I first drew. As can be seen, the advantage which results from the way that I am thus presenting it, is that it (125) simulates a sphere, as I pointed out to Dali with whom I

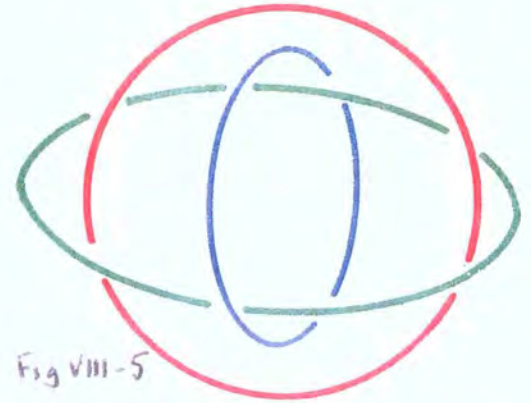


Fig VIII-5



Fig. VIII-6

talked to about that sometime or other. The difference there is between this Borromean chain and what is always drawn in an armillary sphere when one has it, when one tries to make it travel on three levels, what can be called respectively transversal, vertical (*sagittal*), horizontal. We have never seen an armillary sphere being represented in the way in which this knot, this Borromean knot, is presented.

So then, this false sphere, this false sphere that I drew there on the extreme right, there is a way to manipulate it. To manipulate it as



taken at the level of what constitutes an eighth of it, that consists there, this, because this sphere is supported by circles, there is a way to turn it inside out, to turn it back on itself.

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

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

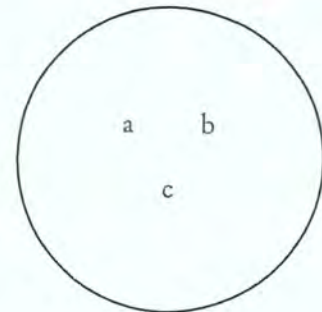


Fig. VIII-7

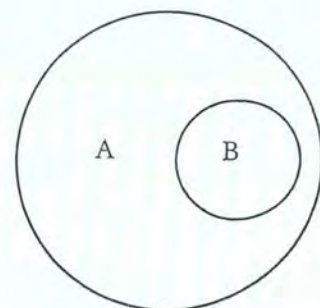


Fig. VIII-8

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

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

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

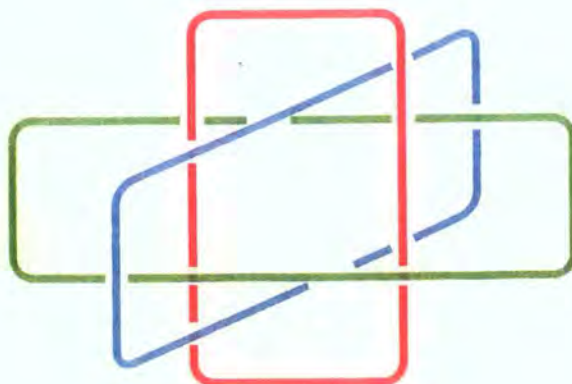
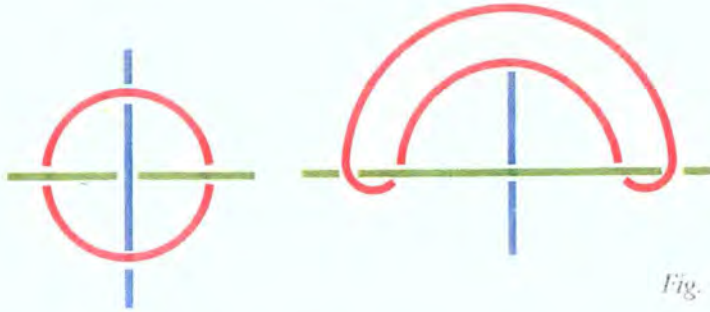


Fig. VIII-9



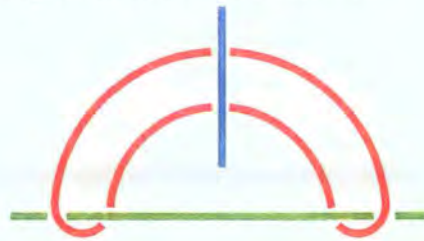
It is nevertheless the same object if we turn the sphere inside out.

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



*Fig. VIII-10*

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



*Fig. VIII-11*

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



*Fig. VIII-12*

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

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

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

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

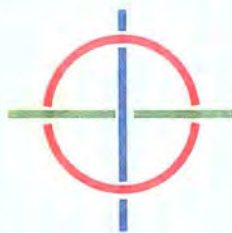
The *more geometrico* which was for a long time the ideal support of proof, is based on the fallacy of a formal obviousness. And this



is altogether of a kind to remind us that geometrically a line is only the intersection of two surfaces, two surfaces which are themselves cut out of a solid. But a different kind of support is provided by the ring (*anneau*), the circle, whatever it may be, on condition that it is supple. It is a different geometry which is founded on the chain.

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

Soury and Thomé proceeded by way of a combinatorial exhaustion of three colourings and three collocated orientations on each of the circles; they believed they should carry out this exhaustion to demonstrate that there are two different Borromean chains. I believe that I can oppose this here. Oppose it by something that emerges from the way, from the way in (130) which precisely I represent this chain. The way in which I represent the Borromean chain (VIII-13), to maintain the same colours which are



*Fig. VIII-13*

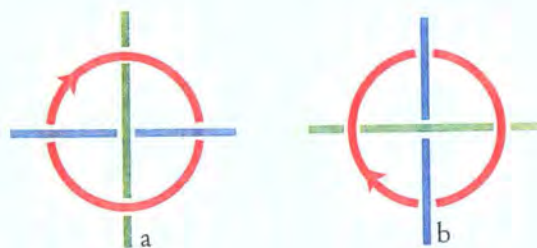
those I have made use of, here is how I represent, here is how I usually represent what you have seen there. I represent it by this differently to the way in which I made operate there two infinite straight lines. There, the

use of these two infinite straight lines as against the circle that conjoins them, is enough to allow us to prove that there are two different objects in the chain. That there are two different objects in the chain on this condition that a couple is coloured and a third orientated (VIII-14).



*Fig. VIII-14*

If I spoke about infinite straight lines, the fact is that the infinite straight line which, prudently, Soury and Thomé do not use, the infinite straight line is an equivalent of the circle. It is an equivalent of the circle, at least as regards the chain. It is an equivalent whose point, one point of which is at infinity. What is required from two infinite straight lines, is that they should be concentric. I mean that between themselves, they should not make a chain. This is the point that Desargues had highlighted a long time ago, but without specifying this last point, namely, that the straight lines which are at stake, straight lines described as infinite, must not be linked together. Because nothing is specified in what Desargues formulated, and which I evoked at one time in my seminar, nothing is specified about what is involved about this point said to be at infinity.



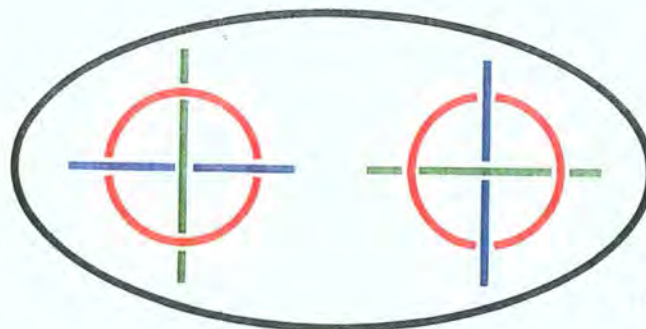
*Fig. VIII-15*

We see then the following point: let us orient the ring that we say has no need to be of one colour. This obviously already isolates it. And because of the fact that it is not said to be of one colour, this is already to make something different. Nevertheless, it is not indifferent to say that the three



must be oriented. If you proceed starting from this orientation, this orientation which, from where we see it is dextrogyratory. It must not be believed that an orientation is something that is maintained in every case. The proof, the proof is easy to give. It is, namely, that by turning inside out, and turning inside out will imply the inversion of straight lines, by turning the ring inside out the red ring will have, after being turned inside out, an exactly inverse orientation. I said that a single one is enough to be oriented. This is all the more conceivable that by making infinite straight lines, starting from where will we give an orientation to the aforesaid straight lines?

It is altogether possible to display the second object starting from what I, which was at the principle of my illusion about colouring starting from here (VIII-14a), that by taking the first, while inverting the colours, by taking the first of what I drew there, namely, by putting here the green colour and here the blue colour you get an undoubtedly different object (VIII-15a) on condition of leaving the orientation of this one which is oriented, of leaving it the same. Why in effect would I change the orientation? The orientation has no reason to be changed if I change the couple of colours. How will I recognise non-identity, the non-identity of the total object, if I change the orientation? And even if you turn it inside out, you will notice that this object is well and truly different. Because what it is a matter of comparing, is the object constituted by this, namely, by making it turn through here (VIII-15b). Compare it with this object with is there (VIII-14b) and, in short, we notice that here, is the orientation, the maintained orientation of this object, the maintained orientation which is opposed, which differentiates this triple from this in (132) which it could be said to have the same presentation.



*Fig. VIII-16*



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

What is the relation of the Real to the true?

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

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

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

(133) Man is the bearer of the idea of the signifier. And the idea of signifier is supported in *lalangue* from syntax, essentially. It nevertheless remains that if something, in History, can be supposed, it is that the totality



of women who, before a tongue that is decomposing, Latin on this occasion, since it is what is at stake at the origin of our tongues – that it is the totality of women who engender what I have called *lalangue*.

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

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



Fig. VIII-17

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

But there is something on which there is based the whole essence of the Borromean chain, which is that infinite straight line or circle, if there is something that traverses what I called just now the false hole, if there is (134) something, I repeat, straight line or circle, this false hole is, as one

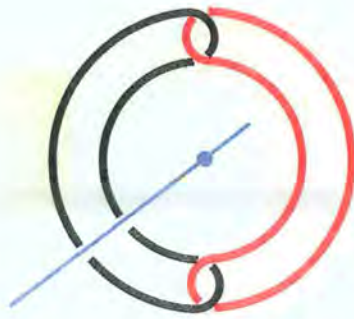


Fig. VIII-18

might say, verified (VIII-18). The function of this, the verification of the false hole, the fact that this verification transforms it into the Real, is what ... and I will allow myself on this occasion to recall that I had occasion to reread my *Meaning of the phallus*. I had the pleasant surprise of finding from the first line the evocation of the knot. This at a date when I was very far from having, from having interested myself in what is called the Borromean knot. The first lines of the *Meaning of the phallus* indicate the knot as being what is the mainspring on that occasion, it is this phallus which has the role of verifying, of the false hole, which is the Real.

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

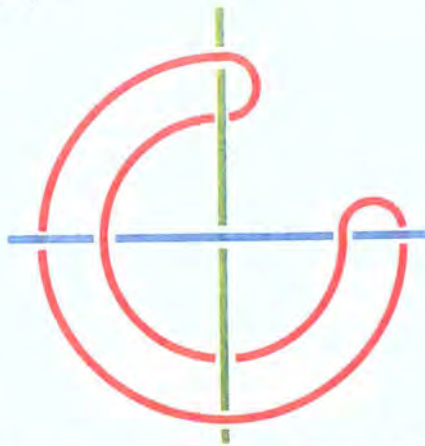
Joyce, to end, did not know that he was making the sinthome. I mean that he simulated it. He was unconscious of it. And it is by this fact that he is a pure artificer, that he is a man of know-how. Namely, what is called moreover an artist.

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



**Seminar 9: Wednesday 16 March 1976**

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



*Fig. IX-1*

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

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

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

Naturally I also, I dreamt, and this is to be taken in the literal sense, of this easy way to present him. I dreamt about it last night. You obviously, obviously as they say, you obviously were my public, but I was not there, I was not an actor. I was even not the slightest bit an actor. What I was telling you about was the way in which I, not at all an actor, a scribbler, I would rather call it, the way in which I judged characters other than my own. In this way, obviously, I got out of my own, or rather, I had no role. It was something along the lines of a psychodrama; which is an interpretation.

That Joyce made me dream of, of functioning like that must have a value; an easier value to extract moreover. Since, as I said, he suggests that to anyone at all. That there must be an easy to handle Joyce. He suggests that because of the fact that there is



psychoanalysis. And it is indeed onto this track that a whole lot of people precipitate themselves. But it is not because I am a psychoanalyst and, at the same time, too involved, that I must refuse to envisage him from this angle. There is here, all the same, something objective.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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



Fig. IX-2



Fig. IX-3

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

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



Fig. IX-4



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

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

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

This at least is how I conceive of the Real. And these little historical emergences – one day there was someone called Newton who found a bit of Real, that gave the heebie-jeebies to all of those who, to all of those who thought, specifically a certain Kant, of whom one can say that Newton made him ill. And moreover everyone, all the thinking beings of the epoch all succumbed, each in their own way. It rained down not only on men but also on women. Madame du Châtelet wrote a whole book on the *Newtonian System*, which pours out stupidities a go-go. It is all the same extraordinary that when one reaches a bit of Real, it has this effect. But this is where one must start. It is the very sign that one has, that one has reached the stump.

I am trying to give you a bit of Real, in connection with, in the skin of which we are, namely, the skin of this unbelievable business, in short, of the human spirit, of the human species. And I tell you that there is no sexual relationship, but that is embroidery. It is embroidery because that is a matter of yes or no. From the moment that I say *there is no*, it is already very suspect. It is suspect by not truly being a bit of Real. The stigmata of the Real, is to be bound to nothing, as I already said earlier.

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

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

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



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

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

What Freud underlines about this death, if I may express myself thus, is to *trieb* it, to make a *Trieb* of it. This has been translated into French by, I do not know why, the *pulsion* or the *pulsion de mort*. A better translation was not found even though there was the word *dérive*, the death drive is the Real inasmuch as it can only be thought

of as impossible. Namely, that every time it shows the tip of its nose, it is unthinkable. To tackle this impossible does not constitute a hope. Since this unthinkable is death, and the foundation of the Real is that it cannot be thought.

The unbelievable thing is that Joyce, who had the greatest contempt for history, futile in effect, that he qualifies as a nightmare, a nightmare whose characteristic is to unleash on us big words which cause us so much harm, could finally only find this solution: to write *Finnegans Wake*. In other words a dream which, like every dream, is a nightmare, even if it is a tempered nightmare. Except for the fact, he says, and this is how this *Finnegans Wake* is constructed, that the dreamer in it is not any particular character, it is the dream itself. It is here, it is in this way that Joyce slides, slides, slides towards Jung. Slides towards the collective unconscious of which there is no better proof, there is no better proof than Joyce, that the collective unconscious is a sinthome. For one cannot say that *Finnegans Wake*, in his imagination, is not part of this sinthome.

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

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



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

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



the film. I am willing to accept that the erectile tissue may be blocked, but after all, I do not know anything about it.

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

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

But  $S(\emptyset)$ , what does that mean? That means that if the device, in other words the instrument with which one operates – one operates with this instrument, for copulation – if this instrument is indeed, as is evident, is to be cast aside [*rancard?*], it is not of the same order as what is involved in my  $S(\emptyset)$ . It is because there is no Other. Not there where there is a supplying, namely, the Other as locus of the unconscious, of which I have said that it is with it that man makes love, in another sense of the word *with*, that is the partner. But what is meant by this  $S$  of  $O$  as barred, and I apologise for not having



anything other than the bar to make use of. There is a bar that, that any woman whatsoever knows how to jump, it is the bar between the signifier and the signified, as I hope has been proved to you by this film, to which I have just now alluded.

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

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

There you are, everything that I am telling you there is only good sense. And in this respect it is full of risks of making mistaken as the whole of History proves. We have never done anything but that. If I take the same risks, it is much more rather to prepare you for the other things I may have to say to you. By trying, by trying to make a *foliesophie*, as I might say, that is less sinister. Less sinister than the *Book* described as that of *Wisdom*, in the Bible. Even though after all,

it is the best thing one can do, to found – I recommend you to read it, it is sober and of an excellent tone; Catholics read it less often, it must said; one can even say that Catholicism consisted throughout the centuries in preventing its adherents from reading the Bible – but to found *Wisdom* on lack, which is the only foundation that it can have, it is really not too bad at all, it is top drawer.

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

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

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



**Seminar 10: Wednesday 13 April 1976**

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

As usual I have something to tell you. But I would like, like that, today, I would like because, like that, I have an opportunity - its my birthday [*applause*] - I would like to be able to verify whether, whether I know, whether I know what I am saying.

After all, saying aims at being understood.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



example, between, linking the stimulus to what he called the response, is something completely unsustainable.

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

Is this idea of the Real an idea? I mean, as it is, as it is inscribed in what is called the Borromean knot. Which, I underline, is a chain. It is not an idea. It is not an idea that can be sustained (149) because it is here in short that one can touch that the idea, the idea that comes like that, the idea that comes when, when one is lying down, because when all is said and done, it is that, the idea at least reduced to its analytic value, is an idea that comes to you when you are lying down. Whether one is lying down or standing up, the chain effect that one gets by writing is not easy to think about.

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

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

Nor is it the case either that it is something altogether foreign. I would even say more, it is what, what allows, what renders tangible, what allows us to put a finger on, but in a quite illusory way, what may be, what may be what is called reminiscence (*réminiscence*). Reminiscence consists in, in imagining in connection with, with something which plays the function of idea, but which is not one, one imagines that one reminisces it, if I can express myself thus. This is how the two functions are distinguished in Freud, because he had a feeling for distinctions; it is in this that reminiscence is distinguished from remembering (*remémoration*).

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



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

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

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

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

The True is saying in conformity with reality. Reality which is on this occasion what functions; what truly functions. But what truly

functions has nothing to do with what I am designating as the Real. It is an altogether precarious supposition that *my* Real - I must indeed accept my part in it - that my Real conditions reality; the reality of your hearing, for example.

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

I conveyed a lot of what is called the Freudian thing. I even entitled something that I wrote *The Freudian thing*. But in what I call the Real, I invented. I invented something, not at all because this imposed itself on me, perhaps there are some who remember how, in short. And at what moment there arose this famous knot which is the most figurative of things. The maximum that one can depict of it is to say that to the Imaginary and to the Symbolic, namely, to things which are very foreign, the Real, for its part, contributes the element that can make them hold together. This is something of which I can say that I consider it as being nothing more than my symptom.

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



Let us change our seat.

From the moment that one has a memory, does one have a memory? Can one say that, that one is doing any more in saying that one has it than in imagining that one has it? Imagining that it is at one's disposal (*on en dispose*)? I should say that one *dire-  
spose's* of it, that one has it to say. And this is why the tongue, the tongue, the *lalangue* that I called *lalanglaise* has, has all kinds of resources: 'I have to say.' *J'ai à dire*. That is how it is translated. Moreover it is an Anglicism. But that one can say not simply 'have', but ought, 'I ought to say' gives the slippage, 'I have to say' becomes 'I ought to say'. And that one can, in this tongue, (152) put the accent on the verb in such a way that one can say: 'I do make', I insist in short on the fact that, by this *making*, there is only fabrication. That one can also separate negation in this form that one says 'I don't', which means that *je m'abstiens* doing something 'I don't talk'. 'I do not choose to talk', to talk what? In the case of Joyce, it is Gaelic. This supposes, implies that one chooses to speak the tongue that one effectively speaks. In fact, one only imagines that one is choosing it. And what resolves the matter, is that when all is said and done one creates this tongue, one creates a tongue in as much, in as much as at every instant one gives it a meaning. It is not reserved to the sentences in which the tongue is created. At every instant one gives a little prod, otherwise the tongue would not be living. It is living in as much as at every instant it is created. And that is why there is no collective unconscious, that there are only particular unconsciousness', in so far as everyone, at every instant, gives a little prod to the tongue he speaks.

So then for me it is a matter of knowing whether I do not know what I am saying as true. It is to each of those who are here to tell me how you understand it. And especially about the fact that, when I speak - because after all it is not sure that what I say about

the Real is anything more than speaking without rhyme or reason. To say that the Real is a *sinthome*, my own, does not prevent the energetics, that I spoke about earlier, being any the less so. What is supposed to be the privilege of energetics? If not that, if not that one has - on condition of making the proper manipulations, manipulations in conformity with a certain mathematical teaching - one always finds a constant number. But one clearly feels at every instant what it can, that it is, as one might say a preestablished requirement. Namely, that *one must* get the constant. And that this is what constitutes energetics in itself. It is that some knack must be found to find the constant. The appropriate knack, the one that succeeds is supposed to be in conformity with what is called reality. But I make a distinction between this organ, as I might say, between this organ which has absolutely nothing to do with the fleshly organ, I draw a complete distinction between this organ by which the Imaginary and the Symbolic are, as they say, knotted, I draw a complete distinction between this supposed Real as compared to what serves to ground the science, of reality.

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

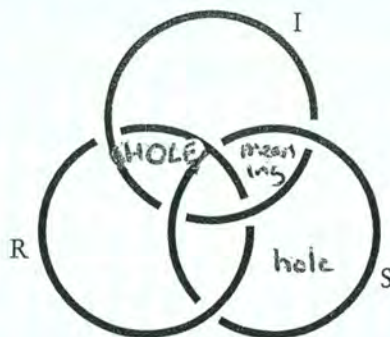


Fig. X-1



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

#### QUESTIONS

**-J. Lacan:** *If psychoanalysis, this is put to me as a question, is a sinthome* - I did not say that psychoanalysis was a sinthome - is not what you were doing with your knot and your mathemes, deciphering, with as consequence the dissipating of its signification?

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

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

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

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

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

-*J. Lacan:* I think that effectively the psychoanalyst cannot conceive of himself otherwise than as a *sinthome*. It is not psychoanalysis that is a *sinthome*, it is the psychoanalyst. That is how I will reply to what was put to me as a question earlier. The fact is that it is the psychoanalyst who is, when all is said and done, a help of whom, in the terms of *Genesis*, one can say that, that he is in short a reversal (*retournement*). Since moreover the Other of the Other, is what I have just defined now as the little hole there. That the little hole might be able to provide a help all



by itself, it is precisely in this that the hypothesis of the Unconscious has its support. The hypothesis of the Unconscious, (155) as Freud underlines, is something which, which cannot hold up except by supposing the Name-of-the-Father. Supposing the Name-of-the-Father, certainly, is God. It is in this that, that psychoanalysis, by succeeding, proves that one can moreover do without the Name-of-the-Father. One can moreover do without it provided one makes use of it.

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

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

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

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

**-J. Lacan:** That is a very good question. It is not because the straight line is infinite that it does not have a limit (X-2), for the

question continues with: *are the fields of metaphor infinite, are they infinite like the straight line, for example?*



D = droite : straight  
Line -

Fig. X-2

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

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

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



by the simple fact of being a baton, twisted and at the same time, in a position of being able to be straightened out (*redressé*).

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

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

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

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

The true Real implies, implies the absence of law.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

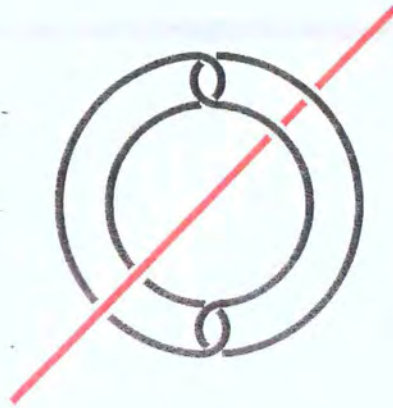
**Question:** *Are you an anarchist?*

**-J. Lacan:** Surely not.

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

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

rings (*ronds*) to call them by their name, the rings of string, keep (159) them separated.



*Fig. X-3*

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

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

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

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



**Seminar 11: Wednesday 11 May 1976**

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

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

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

It is not self-evident that I found what is called, in short, the so-called Borromean knot. And that I am trying to force things, in short. Because Joyce had no idea of any kind about the

Borromean knot. Not that he did not make use of the circle and of the cross. People talk about nothing but that, even. And someone called Clive Hart who is an outstanding mind who has devoted (162) himself to commenting on Joyce, makes a great deal of this use of the circle and the cross, makes great use of it in the book that he has himself entitled *Structure in James Joyce*. And very especially in connection with *Finnegans Wake*.

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

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

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



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

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

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

There you are!

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

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

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

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

Fig. XI-1



Fig. XI-2





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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Psychoanalysis is something different.

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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



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

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

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

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



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

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

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

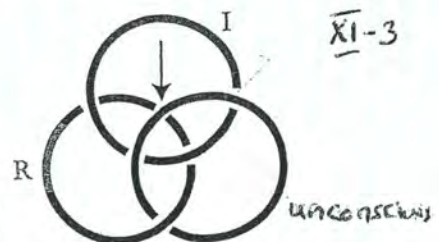


the father is the carrier of castration. This at least is what Freud put forward in *Totem and Taboo*, namely, the reference to the first horde. It is in the measure that the sons are deprived of women that they love the father.

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

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

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





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

And then, what I am suggesting, is the following (XI-4), is that, it is not complicated to see, suppose that here, there I am marking it clearly there to show that it passes above, suppose that the correction of this error, of this mistake, of this slip than which after all there is nothing more ordinary to imagine - why should it not happen that a knot that is not Borromean should fail? I made

errors ten thousand times on the board in drawing it. Here exactly is what happens and where I am incarnating the ego, here, the ego as a corrector of this lacking relationship, of what does not knot in a Borromean way to what constitutes the knot of the Real and the Unconscious, in the case of Joyce.

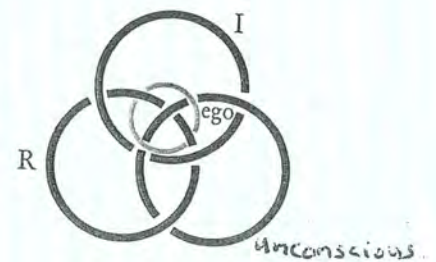


Fig. XI-4

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



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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

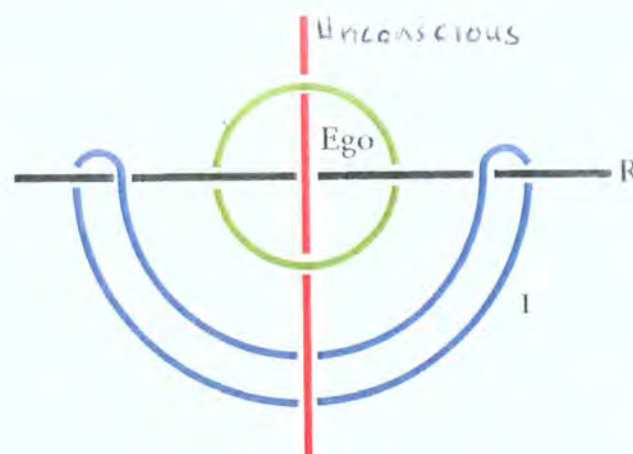


Fig. XI-5

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

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

There you are, I am setting you free.

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