

Le Sinthome

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Translated from the *texte établi* by Luke Thurston.

1) 18th November 1975

Sinthome is an old way of spelling what has more recently been spelt symptom.

This orthographic modification clearly marks the date at which Greek was injected into French, into my language. Likewise, in the first chapter of *Ulysses*, Joyce expresses the wish that we should hellenise, that we should inject the hellenic language into something - one is not sure into what, since it is not Gaelic; even though Ireland is the subject, Joyce had to write in English. Joyce wrote in English in such a way that - as someone who is, I hope, in this audience - Philip Sollers - has remarked in *Tel Quel* - the English language no longer exists.

To be sure, it already had little consistency - which is not to say that it is easy to write in that language. But the series of Joyce's works added something which Sollers thinks should be written *l'élangues*, by which I suppose he aims to indicate something like elation; that elation said to be constitutive of whatever sinthome we in psychiatry give the name mania, which is certainly what Joyce's last work, *Finnegans Wake*, resembles - which he held back for so long to attract public attention. At the request of Jacques Aubert, present (and also *pressant*) here today, I was hauled up to inaugurate a Joyce symposium. That's why I've allowed myself to be diverted from the title I had planned for this seminar, which I announced last year as 4,5,6. I'm sticking to 4 - and a good thing too, for 4, 5, 6 would surely have been too much for me. Which is not to say that the 4 at issue is any less of a burden, for I am Freud's heir - despite myself - because I have set forth over time what could be extracted logically from the babble of those he called his group, that clique which frequented the Vienna meetings. Not one of them can be said to have followed the path I describe as logical.

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Nature, I would say, to be brief, is distinguished by not being one. Thus the logical procedure for approaching it - to term nature that which one excludes in the very act of taking interest in something, that something being distinguished by bearing a name. By this procedure, nature only risks being characterised as a hodgepodge of what lies outside nature [*hors-nature*].

The advantage of this last proposition is the following: if you find that what bears a name is in conflict with what seems to be a law of nature - that, for instance, in man there is no natural (this 'natural' with every possible

reservation) sexual relation - you have to conclude logically that this is not a privilege of man.

Don't however conclude that there's nothing natural about sex. Rather, try to see how it is in question in each case, from bacteria to birds - I've already referred to both - because they have names. Let us note in passing that in so-called divine creation - divine only in that it is a matter of naming - bacteria is not named. Nor is it named when God, fooling around with what is supposed to be the first man, suggests that he begin by saying the name of each little creature.

We have no clue about this first blunder unless we conclude that Adam was, as his name indicates - I refer to the function of the index in Pierce - that Adam was, in the joke made by Joyce, a Madam, and that he named the creatures in her language. This can be safely assumed, because she whom I would call Evie - the Mother of the living, that's what it means in Hebrew, if Hebrew can be termed a language - spoke this language straight away, since after the supposed naming by Adam, she was the first person to make use of it: to speak to the serpent.

So-called "divine" creation is thus copied by chit-chat, by the speaking-being [parlêtre], with which Evie makes the serpent into what you must forgive me for calling the *serre-fesse* ["scared stiff"], later termed flaw or even phallus, since it is certainly a requisite necessary for going-astray, for sin. Original sin - my *sinthome* has the advantage of beginning with that, the English sin. Thus the necessity that the flaw never ceases, but always grows, unless it submits to the cease of castration as possibility.

This possibility, as I have previously put it, is what ceases to write; but one must add the comma which I myself omitted. It is what ceases - comma - to write. Or rather would cease to go the right way if that discourse I have evoked, which would not be a semblance, were to at last arrive.

Is it impossible for truth to become a product of *savoir-faire*? No; but then it will be only half-said, embodied in the signifier S1, where there must be at least two. So Eve, the unique Woman, mythical in the sense that the myth makes her one of a kind, the only Woman to have been possessed by the taste of the fruit of the forbidden tree, the tree of Knowledge - Evie is therefore not mortal, no more than Socrates. The woman in question is another name of God, which is why she doesn't exist.

One observes the cunning side of Aristotle, who does not wish the singular to play a role in his logic. But in opposition to what he claims in that logic, it must be said that Socrates is not a man, for he is willing to die in order that the city should live - he is willing, it's a fact. Moreover, on that occasion he does not wish to hear his wife; thus my formula, which I pick out for your use, so to speak, drawing on the *μη παντες*, which I picked out from the *Organon* where my daughter marked it as the opposition in Aristotle to the universal of the *pas* - the woman is not all except in the form whose equivocation gives its piquant to our language [*lalangue nôtre*], in the form of the *mais pas ça* ["but not that"], as

one says *tout mais pas ça*. It was certainly the position of Socrates, the *mais pas ça*, and it's what I'm introducing under this year's title as the *sinthome*.

In the present instance - in the in(si)stance of the letter such as it is at present sketched out (and don't expect any better, as I've said; that which will be most effective will do nothing but displace the *sinthome*, or rather multiply it) - in the present instance, we have the *sinthomaquinas*. As you know, Joyce had a thing or two to say about this saintly man. One should state things clearly: as far as philosophy goes, it has never been bettered. That is not even the whole truth. This does not prevent the fact - consult Jacques Aubert's book on this - that Joyce does not figure things out very well concerning that which he values highly, and which he calls beauty.

In *sinthomaquinas* there is something termed *claritas*, for which Joyce substitutes something like the splendour of Being - this is the weak point at issue. Is this a personal weakness? I do not find the splendour of Being very striking. In this respect Joyce displaces the saint homme from my *madaquinisme*, and thus, contrary to what appears at first glance, given his detachment from politics, produces what I would call *sint'home* rule.

Despite the way Joyce gnashed his teeth about Home Rule - which the Freeman's Journal depicted rising like a sun behind the Bank of Ireland, which happened to be in the north-west, rather an odd position for the sun to rise in - it is nevertheless *sint'Home Rule*, *sinthome* ... *roulettes* ['on wheels', 'like clockwork'] which Joyce brings together. These two terms could be given different names. I use these names because of the two slopes they offered to Joyce's art, which will be our concern this year, in accordance with what I said a moment ago - introducing the *sinthome* and giving it a name which suits him, and displacing its orthography, for the two spellings are important to him.

But it is a fact that he makes a choice. In doing so, he is like me a heretic, for *haeresis* is exactly what defines the heretic. One must choose the way by which truth is to be grasped, although once the choice has been made there is nothing to prevent someone from subjecting it to confirmation, in other words from being a thorough-going heretic - that is to say, having recognised the nature of the *sinthome*, not depriving oneself of the logical use of it, until it reaches its real, beyond which it has no wish to go.

He did this close-up, for there could be no worse point of departure - born in Dublin with a boozing, practically good-for-nothing father, in other words a fanatic with two families - for it is always thus for a son from two families, when one thinks oneself masculine because one has a little prick. Naturally (excuse my use of this word), it takes more than that. But since his prick was a bit limp, so to speak, his art supplemented his phallic equipment, and that's always the way. The phallus is the conjunction of this parasite, the little prick in question, and the function of language [*parole*]. And it is thus that Joyce's art is the true guarantee of his phallus. Beyond that, let us say that he was a poor heir, and even a poor heir-etic.

There are no Joyceans to enjoy his heresy outside the University. He himself deliberately desired it, that this crowd should be interested in him, and the best is that he succeeded beyond all measure. It still goes on, and it always

will. He wished it to last three hundred years, he said as much - I want academics to be kept busy with me for three hundred years - and he will have his wish, so long as God doesn't atomise us.

This heir[...] is conceived as a hero, as is shown by the title he expressly gave to the text which he reworked into *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man: Stephen Hero*. [Text recommended by Lacan]

A portrait of the artist - the stress should be placed on the the, which in English is not of course quite our own definite article, but one can have confidence in Joyce - if he says the, it is because he thinks that of artists he is the only one, that there he is singular.

As a young man is very suspicious. That is translated into French as *comme*, in other words it's a question of comment ["how"]. French is indicative of this - when one says "as" making use of an adverb, when one says *réellement*, *mentalement*, *héroïquement* [really, mentally, heroically], one is lying [*on ment*]. A lie is indicated in all adverbs, and not by accident. When we interpret we should pay attention to this. Somebody not too far from me made the remark that not only does the tongue designate the instrument of speech, but that it also carries the taste-buds. I replied to her that this is not for nothing - *ce qu'on dit ment* ["what is said, lies"; pun on *ce condiment*]. You have the goodness to laugh, but it's not funny. In the end we have only that as a weapon against the symptom - equivocation.

It happens that I allow myself the luxury of supervising [*contrôler*], as it is termed, a certain number of people who authorise themselves, in my formula, to be analysts. There are two stages. At stage one, they are like the rhinoceros, they do more or less anything at all and I always approve them - they are effectively always right. Stage two consists of bringing into play that equivocation which could free one from the *sinthome*. For interpretation operates solely by equivocation.

There must be something in the signifier which resonates. It is surprising that this has been in no way apparent to the English philosophers. I call them philosophers because they are not psychoanalysts - they have a rock-solid belief that language has no effect. They imagine that there are drives and so on, when they don't translate drive [*pulsion*] as instinct, for they don't know what a drive is: the echo in the body of the fact that there is speech [*dire*]; but for this speech to resonate - for it to consonate, to use a word of *sinthomaquinas* - the body must be sensitive to it. It is, that's a fact.

It is because the body has several orifices, of which the most important is the ear - because it has no stop-gap - that what I have called the voice has a response in the body. The trouble is, to be sure, that it is not only the ear. The gaze is a vigorous competitor.

More geometrico - due to the form so dear to Plato, the individual presents himself as he is fucked, as a body, and this body has a power of captivation which is such that to a certain extent it is the blind one should envy. How could a blind man, if he can manage braille, read Euclid? The astonishing thing is that

form gives nothing but the sack, or if you like the bubble. It is something which inflates, and whose effects I have already described in discussing the obsessional, who is more keen on it than most. The obsessional, I've said somewhere, is of the same order as the frog who wants to make himself as big as the bull - the effects are known from a fable. It is particularly difficult, we know, to tear the obsessional from the power [emprise] of the gaze.

The sack, such as it figures in set-theory as founded by Cantor, manifests itself in (indeed - is shown in, if all showing is taken as a demonstration of the imaginary it implies), and should be given the connotation of, the ambiguity of 1 and 0 - the only adequate supports of what is confined by the empty set featuring in this theory. Thus our writing S index 1. It does not constitute one, but it indexes it as an empty sack unable to contain anything.

An empty sack is nonetheless a sack, albeit one which can only be imagined as a skin, in terms of the existence and consistence of the body. This ex-sistence and consistence should be held to be real, since the real is what holds them - thus the word *Begriff*, which means precisely that.

The imaginary here demonstrates its homogeneity with the real. This homogeneity only holds because the number is binary, 1 or 0, i.e. it only figures 2 because 1 is not 0, because it ex-sists at zero but does not consist in it. Thus Cantor's theory should set out from the couple, but in that case the set makes a third. There is no bridge between the first set and the rest.

This is why the symbol falling back into the imaginary has the index 2. Indexing the couple, it introduces division into the subject whatever is thus said as fact. The fact remains suspended by the enigma of *énonciation*, which is nothing but the closing-in upon itself of fact - the fact of fact, as one might write it, or the making of fact, or the fact of "things made", as it is said, the same in fact, equivalent in equivocality, and as such the limit of speech.

What is incredible is that although men saw very well that the symbol could be nothing but a broken fragment, for all time, they didn't see that this constitutes the unity and the reciprocity of the signifier and the signified - and consequently that the originary signified is without meaning, that it is a mere sign of the choice between two signifiers (and thus not arbitrary in relation to their choice).

There can be no umpire, to say it in English as Joyce writes it, without talking about empire, about the *imperium* on the body, of which all bear the mark from the beginning. Here the 1 confirms its detachment from the 2. 3 can only be reached by an imaginary forcing, which imposes the idea that the one wishes to interfere with the other, without being linked to anything.

For the condition to be expressly posited that starting with three rings a chain is produced, such that a break in any one ring renders the two others free from each other, it had to be observed that this was already inscribed in the Borromean coat-of-arms. The knot thus termed 'Borromean' was already there, without anyone noticing its significance.

It is wrong to think that this knot is a norm for the interrelation of the three functions which exist one-to-another in their exercise solely in the being who thus thinks of himself as man. It is not the break between symbolic,

imaginary and real which defines perversion, but that they are already distinct.

The Borromean link must, then, be thought of as tetradic. The fourth term, it happens, is the sinthome. It is just as surely the Father, in as much as perversion means nothing other than 'turning to the father' [version vers le père], and that, in short, the Father is a symptom, or if you prefer, a sinthome. The ex-sistence of the symptom is implied by the very position, which supposes this enigmatic link between the imaginary, the symbolic and the real.

If you find somewhere the drawing which schematises the interrelation of the imaginary, the symbolic and the real such that each is separate from the others - you have already, in the previous figurations by which I set out their relations, the possibility of their interlinking - by what? By the sinthome. You must see this: it is the folding back of the big S, that is to say that which maintains the consistence of the symbolic, folding it back in the following manner [reference to figures].

If this diagram is correct - I mean that, sliding under the real, it [S] will clearly also be under the imaginary, and will have to go over the sinthomatique - we have the following position: starting from four the result is this [reference to figure].

You have the following interrelation: here, for instance, the imaginary, the real, the sinthome, which I'm going to represent with a S, and the symbolic. Each one of them is expressly interchangeable. 1 to 2 can be turned around into 2 to 1, 3 to 4 likewise into 4 to 3, in a manner which I hope appears simple. But thus we find ourselves in the following situation: for 1 to 2, indeed for 2 to 1, to have in its milieu, so to speak, the S and the S, must mean that the sinthome and the symbol are positioned in such a way that there are four of them, as you see here, caught in the big R, and here, the I is included in a certain way by passing above the symbol and beneath the symptom. The link, which I have expressed here by the opposition of R to I, always appears in this form. In other words: the pair symbol and symptom emerge so that one of the terms encompasses them both, while the other slides, let's say, over that which is above and under that which is beneath. This is the diagram which you regularly end with in an attempt to make a Borromean knot *à quatre*.

The Oedipus Complex is this kind of symptom. It is entirely maintained by the fact that the Name-of-the-Father is also the Father of the name - which makes the symptom no less necessary.

This other in question is that which in Joyce emerges because he is, to put it briefly, burdened by a father. It turns out in Ulysses that Joyce has to support the father's subsistence. Through his art - art is always something which from ancient days comes to us as the product of the artisan - Joyce not only enables his family to subsist, but illustrates it, and at the same time illustrates what he calls my country, 'the uncreated conscience of my race'. Thus ends *A Portrait of the Artist*, and he gives himself this mission.

In this sense, I announce what will be this year my interrogation concerning art - how is artifice able to target expressly, so to speak, what first

appears as symptom? - how can art, the artisan, deploy that which the symptom imposes, in other words what I have figured in my two tetrads as 'truth'?

Where is it, truth? On this occasion, I said that it is somewhere in the discourse of the Master, as it is supposed in the subject who, divided, is still the subject of fantasy. Contrary to what I had stated before, it is at the level of truth that we can consider the half-said [mi-dit]. Effectively, the subject in this state can only represent itself in the signifier index 1, while the signifier index 2 represents itself - to put it in the terms I have just been using - in the duplicity of symbol and symptom. S2 is where the artistry is, in that through the joining of two signifiers it is able to produce the objet a, which I illustrated by the relation of the ear to the eye, indeed, by evoking the stop-gap.

It is to the extent that the discourse of the Master predominates that the S2 is divided. This is the division of symbol and symptom. But it is, as it were, mirrored by the subject's division. And it is the insistence of the subject, albeit that which a signifier represents for another signifier, which obliges us to show that it is in the symptom that one of these two signifiers in the symbolic finds its support. In this sense, it could be said that in the articulation of the symptom and the symbol there is only a false hole [fig X].

Supposing the consistence of any one of these functions, symbolic, imaginary and real, as forming a circle is to suppose a hole. But concerning the symbol and the symptom, it is the folding of the totality, the interlinking of these two circles, which creates the hole.

To produce a true hole, as Soury has clearly shown, it must be framed by something resembling a bubble, a torus, so that each one of these holes is outlined by something which holds them together, for us to have something which could be termed a true hole. That is to say, one has to imagine if these holes are to subsist, maintain themselves.

If we simply suppose a straight line here - it will fulfil the same function so long as it is infinite.

We shall have to come back to the definition of the infinite, as well as that of the straight line - in what does it subsist, how is it related to a circle. I must certainly come back to the circle - which has a function well known to the police, that of allowing circulation [*circuler*, 'traffic'], and the police have a support for this which is not new-fangled. Hegel saw very clearly what was its function, and he saw it in a form utterly different to the one in question. For the police, it is quite simply a matter of the turning-around continuing.

The addition of an infinite straight line to the false hole transforms it into a hole of borromean subsistence - I wish to end on this point for today.

2) 9th December 1975

There are too many of you for me to hope to get from you what I got from the public in the United States, where I've just been. I was there for a packed fortnight, and was able to notice a certain amount of things - namely, if I understood properly, a certain lassitude, principally felt by analysts. I can only

say I was very well looked after, but that's not saying much. I was sucked up into a sort of whirlwind there, which can only find a guarantee in what I am bringing to light with my knot.

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You have been able to follow each step of the way by which I have come to use the functions of the knot to express what I had first advanced as the triplicity of the symbolic, the imaginary and the real. The knot is tied in the spirit of a modern *mos geometricus*. We are in fact always captivated from the outset by a geometry, which I described last time as comparable to the sack, in other words to the surface, and it is very difficult - something which happens most often when your eyes are shut - to think about knots.

Analysis is, in essence, the reduction of initiation to its reality. The reality of initiation is that properly speaking there is no initiation. Every subject sets this up, that it was always there and was never anything but a supposition. Nevertheless, experience shows us that this supposition is always set up ambiguously, in as much as the subject is as such not only double, but divided.

What must be accounted for is the real of that division. How did Freud, a bourgeois, and one stuffed with middle-class prejudices, attain the force proper to what he had to say, his aim to speak the truth about man? For my part, I have added this correction, which has not been without difficulties for me - that no truth can be spoken; like the subject which it comprises, it can only be half-spoken (*mi-dire*).

My point of departure is to show man what Writing puts forth, not as an aid for him, but as one against him. I am trying to situate myself in this condition. And thus I have been led, and in a manner worth remarking, to the knot, to a geometry barred from the imaginary, or at least one which can only be imagined across all sorts of resistances. This barrier is properly speaking what the knot, in so far as it is borromean, constitutes.

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One of the things which struck me most when I was in America, was my encounter - completely intentional on my part - with Chomsky. I was, properly speaking, flabbergasted. I told him as much. What flabbergasted me was the notion of language which, I realised, he held. I can't say that it can in any way be refuted, as it's the commonest notion. His affirmation of it directly to me gave me an immediate sense of the full distance which separates me from him. This notion - a common notion then, and one which seems to me precarious - starts out from a conception of the body as provided with organs. In this conception, the organ is a tool, a tool for gripping, for apprehension, and there is no reason in principle why this tool should not apprehend itself as such. Chomsky is thus easily able to consider language as determined by some genetic fact. In other words language, he said to my face, is itself an organ.

That one should be able to turn language back upon itself as an organ, I find very striking. How could its operations be accounted for, in the end, if one

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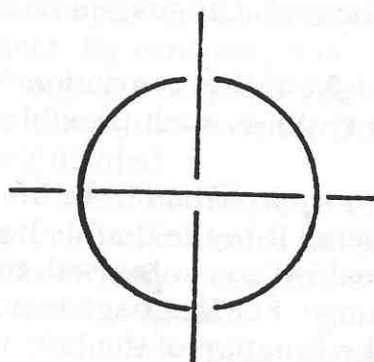


Fig. 1

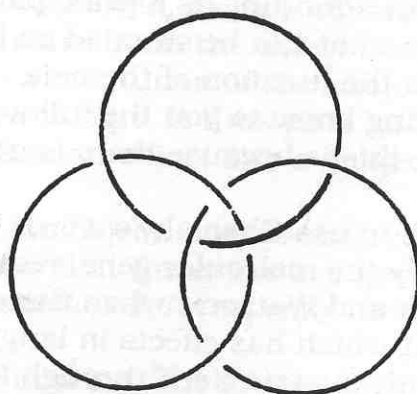


Fig. 2

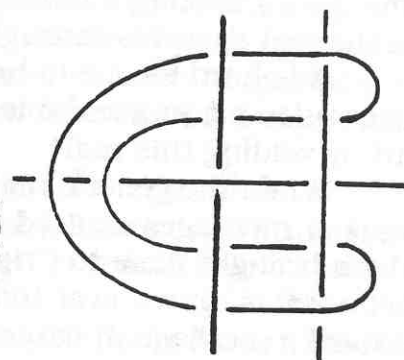


Fig. 3

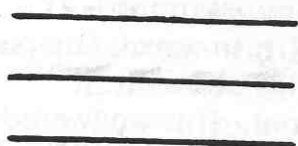


Fig. 4

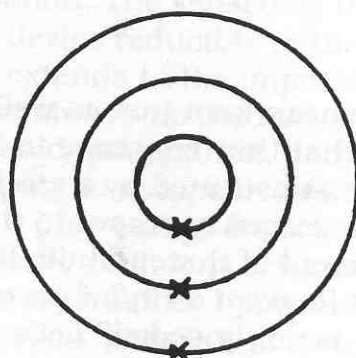


Fig. 5

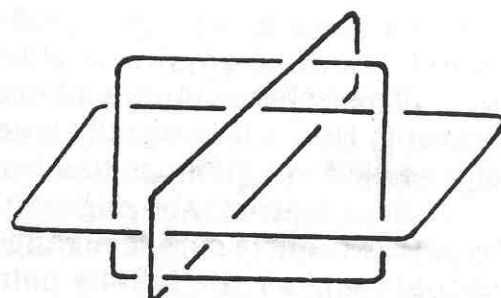


Fig. 6

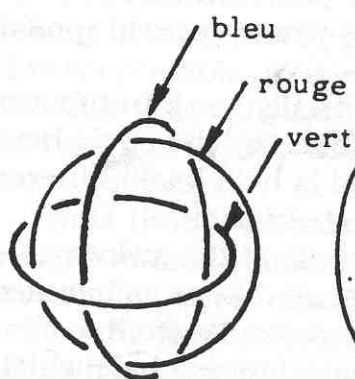


Fig. 7

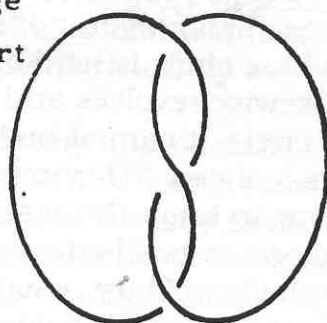


Fig. 8

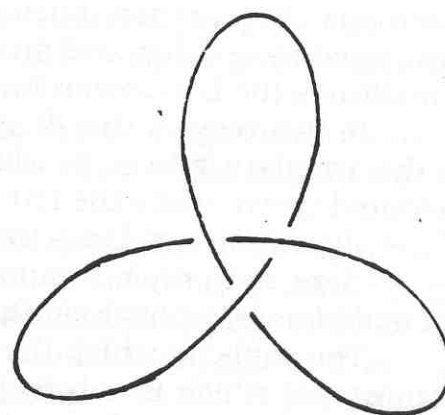


Fig. 9

Ces figures ont été dessinées d'après celles relevées au tableau par Diane Chauvelot.

refused to conceive language as making a hole in the real? It is not only difficult, it is downright impossible. I cannot see how any method of observation could engage with language without admitting as a principal truth that language emerges as making a hole in what can be situated as the real. Language's hold on the real operates through the function of the hole.

It is hard for me to bring home to you the full weight of this conviction. If it seems to me unavoidable, this is because there is no truth as such possible but by voiding this real.

When the genetic real, to use Chomsky's words, is approached in terms of signs or messages emitted by the molecular gene, reducing it to the double helix which brought fame to Crick and Watson - when the real is thus subtilised, in fact a veil is drawn over that which has effects in language. For language is not in itself a message. It can only sustain itself through the function of the hole in the real. To approach it, we have the pathway offered by our modern *mos geometricus*, that is to say the concrete result of the effects proper to language - the knot in which I have faith, and which is entirely based on the equivalence of an infinite line and a circle.

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(fig 1)

(fig 2) This schema shows a borromean knot just as well as my standard drawing. Hence it is equally true that this [reference to fig 3], in which the pair of so-called infinite lines has been substituted by a circle, also shows it.

This figure is the edge of the exigency proper to the knot. It is answered by this extremely simple arrangement of three infinite lines in parallel. Where (fig 4) should we place the infinity point [*le point à l'infini*] on each line so that their concentricity, as we might call it, is not impeded? Let's put them here, for (fig 5) instance. We could just as well invert their positions so that the first line envelopes the others instead of being enveloped by them - the characteristic of the infinity point is that it cannot be placed, so to speak, on any given side.

But starting from number 3, the following is required [reference to fig 6]. Each one of these three lines completed by their infinity points must be enveloped by another and must envelope a third. This is what properly speaking constitutes the borromean knot as such. (fig 7)

In this respect this diagram is exemplary; you normally see it in the form of the armillary sphere, in which the blue circle is held back by the circle here coloured green, while the red circle likewise revolves and is held back. Whereas if the blue circle envelopes the green circle, it cannot be held back.

Here, even my hesitations are significant. They manifest the awkwardness [*la maladresse*] with which the borromean knot, the essential knot, is handled.

The triplicity which the knot allows to be illustrated results from a consistence which is only feigned by the imaginary, a foundational hole which emerges in the symbolic, and an ex-sistence which belongs to the real, as its fundamental characteristic. This method offers no hope of breaking the constitutive knot of the symbolic, the imaginary and the real. This refusal

amounts to a virtue, for it is thus that our analytic grasp of the knot is the negative of religion.

We do not believe in the object as such. And we deny that the object can be held by any organ thus conceived, as tool, separate tool - in other words, itself object. In Chomsky's conception the object is approached by another object. By contrast, it is as a restitution of the subject divided by the operations of language that analysis circulates. It thus puts science as such in question, to the extent that science makes an object into a subject, whereas the subject is in itself divided.

We do not believe in the object, but we observe desire. From this observation of desire we infer that the cause is objectal [*objectivée*]. The desire for knowledge encounters obstacles. As an embodiment of this obstacle I have invented the knot.

The knot must come undone. The knot is the only support conceivable for a relation between something and something else. If on the one hand the knot is abstract, it must at the same time be conceived as concrete.

This American ordeal, which is the reason I'm so weary today, has certainly been worthwhile, because I was able with these diagrams to create some agitation, some emotion. The sensed as mental, the senti-mental, is idiotic, because always by some device reducible to the imaginary. The imagination of consistence immediately extends to the impossibility of rupture [*cassure*], but it is in this that rupture can always be the real, the real as impossible, which is no less compatible with the said imagination, and even constitutes it.

In no way am I hoping to escape from what I have called the idiocy of this debate. Like anyone else, I only escape from it in the measure of my means, in other words by marking time, confident of no verifiable progress other than in the long term. In a fabulatory manner I propose that the real, as I think it in my *pan-se* [untranslatable pun on '*pensée*'], is comprised really - the real effectively lying - of the hole which subsists in that its consistence is nothing more than the totality of the knot which ties it together with the symbolic and the imaginary. The knot which may be termed borromean cannot be cut without dissolving the myth it offers of the subject, as *non-supposé*, in other words the subject as real, no more varied than each body which can be given the sign speaking-being [*parlêtre*]. Only due to this knot can this body be given a status that is respectable, in the everyday sense of the word.

After that exhausting attempt, which has done me in, I expect from you what I got more easily in America than anywhere else - that is, for someone to ask me a question.

Next time I will start by approaching this - that in his art Joyce, in a privileged manner, aimed at the fourth term of the knot. How can art aim, in an expressly divinatory mode, to embody in its consistence, and equally in its existence, the fourth essential term of the knot, how can it aim to render it as such, to the point of approaching it as closely as possible? We will begin with that.

So now I'm waiting to hear a voice, anyone's.

*

Mr X - It's a somewhat historical question. Who led you to believe that you would get something you would find useful from Chomsky? It is something that would never have occurred to me.

Dr Lacan - One always suffers from this kind of weakness, remnants of hope. Since Chomsky is a linguist, I was hoping to find in him a point of contact with what I have shown about the symbolic, that is, that it always has something to do with holes, even when these are false holes. For instance, it is impossible not to describe as "false hole" the totality formed by the symptom and the symbolic. But from another angle, the symptom subsists to the extent that it is hooked onto language, at least if we believe that we can modify something by interpretative handling, in other words by playing on the meaning. This assimilation in Chomsky is in my view in the order of the symptom, that is, it confounds the symptom and the real. It is precisely that which I found flabbergasting.

Mr X - Perhaps it's an idle question...[une question oisive]

Dr Lacan - trivial? [oiseuse]

Mr X - Thank you. As I'm American...

Dr Lacan - You are American? Once more I see that it is only an American who will question me. I can't say how overwhelmed I was in America by people who showed me in their ways that my discourse had not been in vain.

Mr Y - There is something I'm having difficulty getting hold of in your discourse - that you talk for an hour and a half and then wish for a more direct contact with somebody. I wonder if, in a more general sense, you don't speak in your theory about language without considering the part which the body, too, plays in exchange. There are moments where the organ can enable a very direct grasp of the real, without discourse. Is there not an alternation between the two in the life of a subject? It's a matter of the disembodiment of discourse from the body. At times, you have no need of language, no need of using language to make a hole in the real, because that hole doesn't exist due to a direct physical engagement with the real - I mean in love and jouissance.

Dr Lacan - It is nevertheless very difficult not to consider the real at that moment as a third. What I am able to seek as a response has to do with a call [appel] to the real, not as linked to the body, but as different. At a distance from the body, there is the possibility of something I termed last time resonance or consonance. And it is at the level of the real that this consonance is situated. In relation to its poles, the body and language, the real is what harmonises [fait accord].

Mr Z - You said a moment ago that Chomsky made language into an organ, and you said that you found this flabbergasting. I was wondering if this might be because what you, for your part, make into an organ is the libido - I refer to the myth of the lamelle. And I wonder if this is not the way in which the question of art should be addressed here...

Dr Lacan - The libido, as its name indicates, cannot but participate in the hole, just like the other modes in which the real appears. It is thus that I am trying to link up with the function of art; it is implied by what is left blank as the fourth term when I say that art can even reach the symptom. This is what I am

going to try to give substance. Your reference to the myth of the lamelle is to the point. You're on the right track there.

Mr A - When you speak of libido in this text, you note that it is distinguished by a coming-and-going movement. Now, this image seems to me to function like that of the chord, which is caught in a phenomenon of resonance and which undulates, in other words dips and rises, which makes an antinode and knots.

Dr Lacan - It is no accident that the metaphor of a chord comes from knots. What I am trying to do is to find what this metaphor refers to. If there are antinodes and knots in a vibrating chord, it is in as much as knots are being referred to. The use of language always goes beyond what is actually said, but the bearing of metaphor as such is always reduced - reduced to metonymy.

Mr B - When you move from the borromean knot *à trois* to the knot *à quatre* with the symptom, the borromean knot as such disappears.

Dr Lacan - Quite right - it's no longer a knot, because the three terms are only held together by the symptom.

Mr B - From this point of view, the hope of a cure in analysis seems to pose a problem...

Dr Lacan - There is no radical reduction of the fourth term. Freud was somehow able to propose an *Urverdrangung*, a repression which is never undone. It is in the very nature of the symbolic to comprise a hole.

Mr B - Isn't this knot, despite what you say, simply a model?

Dr Lacan - It does not constitute a model in that it comprises something before which the imagination fails. And its mathematical approach in topology is insufficient.

Let me tell you about my experiences this holiday. This (fig 9) constitutes a knot - not a knot *à deux*, since there is only one cord, but a knot known as a trefoil, which is the simplest of knots. It's the same as this one (fig 8), even though they look different. I have discovered that with this knot it is easy to demonstrate the existence of a borromean knot. It is sufficient to think that, on this double surface without which we would not know how to write anything concerning knots, on an underlying surface, then, you place the same knot. It is very easy to pass an identical knot at each stage under the underlying knot and over the knot lying above, and thus to produce a borromean knot.

Is it possible with this knot *à trois* to produce a borromean knot *à quatre*? I spent about two months doing my head in, without successfully demonstrating that there is a way of tying four trefoil knots in a borromean manner. That proves nothing. It doesn't prove that this knot doesn't exist. Last night it was still all I could think about. The worst is that I haven't found the demonstrative reason for its non-existence - it's simply that I've failed. If I could show that it cannot exist, why it is impossible, a real would be guaranteed. To tell you what I think, it's that it does exist - I mean that it is not there that we come up against a real. I don't despair of finding it, but the fact is there's nothing I can do. From the moment of its proof [démontré], it would be easy to show [montrer] you it, but I can show you no such thing. The relation of showing to proving is one of sharp separation.

Ms X - You said just now that in Chomsky's view language would be an organ, and that if so it would no longer be possible to understand its operations [maniement]. Is it the word *main* [hand]...?

Dr Lacan - What I am claiming is that, despite the existence of handshakes, one hand does not know what the other is doing in the act of shaking hands.

3) 16/12/1975

If analysis was taken as seriously as I take the preparation of my seminar, it would be so much the better, and would surely have better results. For this, one would need in analysis the senti-ment (in the sense I spoke of the other day) of an absolute risk.

*

I told you the other day that I had made a discovery concerning triple knots, (fig 1) which I draw like this and which can be obtained from the borromean knot - that they can be made into a triple borromean knot, and that I struggled for two months to try to produce a knot which would tie them together à quatre. I also told you that the fact that I couldn't do it didn't prove anything, apart from my clumsiness - and that I was sure it must exist.

That same evening, to my delighted surprise, there appeared on my doorstep the man called Thomé, who came to bring me the fruits of his collaboration with Soury: the proof that a borromean knot consisting of four triple knots does indeed exist - which certainly justifies my obstinacy, but makes my incapacity no less deplorable.

Nevertheless, I welcomed the news with feelings untainted by regrets for my impotence. My feelings were of pure and simple enthusiasm, and I think I was able to show them some of this when I saw them a few evenings later. They haven't been able to give me an account of how they came to find it. (fig 2)

On the blackboard I have reproduced their discovery, textually: my drawing takes a slightly different route, so that you can see perhaps a little better how it's done. I would like to commemorate this little event - which, besides, I consider not so little - and I'm going to tell you the reasons for my research.

What is the support of this research? Not what Sarah Kofman speaks of in her remarkable article *Vautour Rouge* ("red vulture"), in which she refers to the *elixirs du diable* Freud celebrates. But I recommend that you read the collection entitled *Mimesis* which contains this article, which I think is worth reading. For my part, I've only read the first, third and fifth articles; due to the preparation of this seminar, I've had other things to worry about. The first article - about Wittgenstein and, so to speak, the noise made by his teaching - is the only one, to tell the truth, that I've read right through.

16 Dec 1975

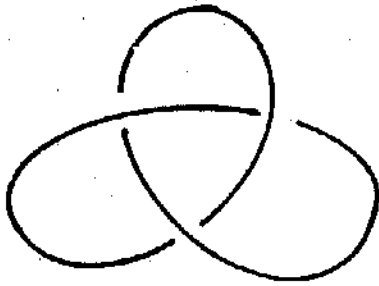


Fig. 1

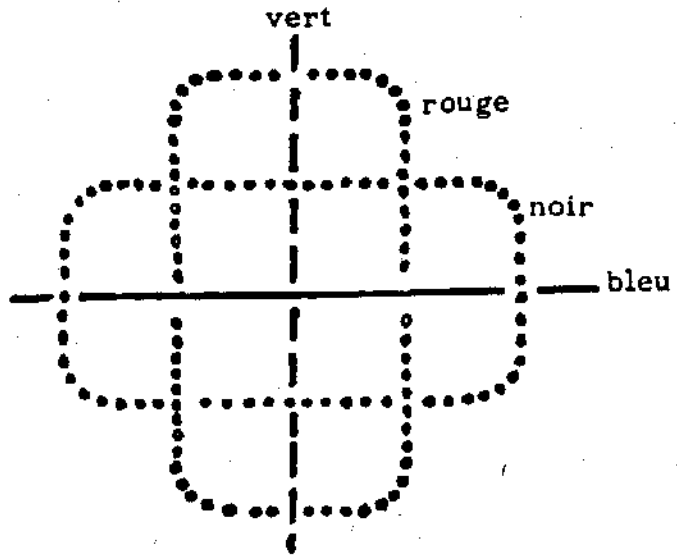


Fig. 3

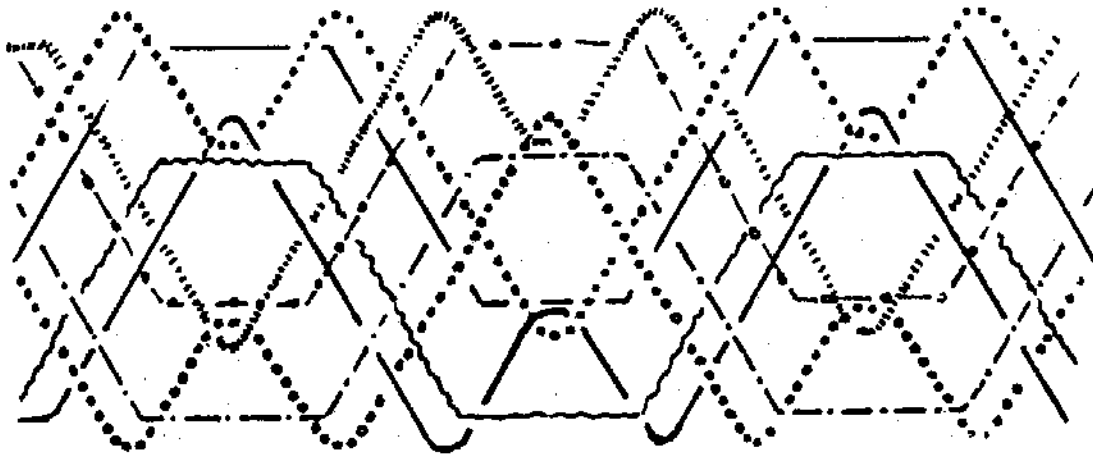


Fig. 2

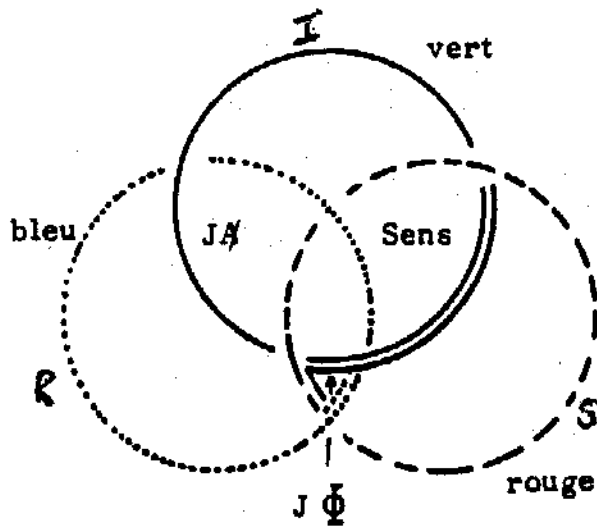


Fig. 4

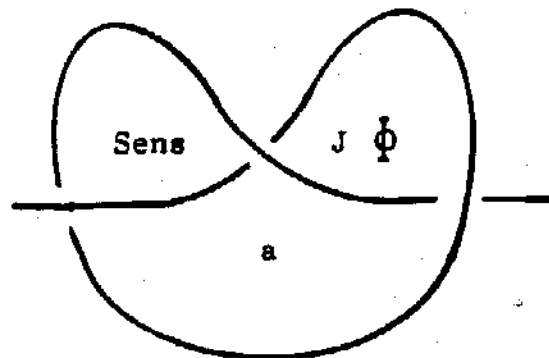


Fig. 5

I should say that the geometry of knots - a specific, original geometry - exorcises the so-called 'uncanny', which is unquestionably bound up with the imaginary. But that there should be something which allows it to be exorcised is certainly in itself strange...

The resistance experienced by the imagination to thinking anything concerning this new geometry, is something which strikes me because I have experienced it. It is certainly not pure chance that Soury and Thomé were fascinated by the conjunction of imaginary, symbolic and real which was emerging in my teaching, that they were quite especially attracted by the things I dream up. Let's say that they are gifted in that line of things. The strange thing is - here I let myself betray their confidences - that they make progress, they tell me, by discussing it together. Thinking is certainly not usually done *à deux*. The fact is, they manage it, and for a long time they have been producing things about the borromean knot which seem to me more than interesting - indeed, an achievement. This discovery is certainly not the crowning glory, they will make more.

I will not add what Soury has told me of his thoughts about teaching. In this matter, I think that by following my example, which I described a moment ago, he will certainly manage as well as I am able to; that is, in the same risky fashion. But that dialogue should prove fertile, especially in this field, is a confirmation of my need of it. For the two months I spent relentlessly looking for the fourth triple knot and the way it could form a borromean knot with the three others, I was alone in this search, I mean in this hopeful thinking-through. It is time for me to talk of the significance this research has for me.

*

This research is extremely significant to me for the following reason. The three circles of the borromean knot are all three, as circles, equivalent - I mean that they are constituted by something which is reproduced across the three.

I situate the support of consistence in the imaginary. Likewise, I make the essential constituent of the symbolic the hole. And I make the real the support of what I term ex-sistence, in this sense: in its sistance outside of the imaginary and the symbolic, it knocks up against them, its play is something precisely in the order of limitation; the two others, from the moment when it is tied into a borromean knot with them, offer it resistance. In other words, the real only has ex-sistence - in rather an astonishing formulation of mine - in its encounter with the limits of the symbolic and the imaginary.

To be sure, as much should be said of the two others - for example, it is to the extent that it ex-sists in the real that the imaginary also encounters conflict, which is here better felt. Why then do I place this ex-sistence precisely where it can appear most paradoxical? Because I have to redistribute these three modes, and it is exactly this ex-sistence which supports the thinking of the real.

But what is the result of this? - if not, that these three terms should be conceived as linked to each other. If they are so analogous, to use this term,

could one not suppose that this is due to a certain continuity? And thus we are led directly to tie the triple knot. Starting from the inter-balancing, inter-leaving of the three, it is not a great step to link up the points and make their arrangement one of continuity.

But what is the result if what is of the order of subject, in as much as the subject is always merely *supposé*, finds in the end its support in this knot? Is the triple knot tied into a borromean knot enough? My question concerns this point.

In the diagram of a borromean chain, does it not seem that the minimum is always constituted by a quadruple knot? Pull on the green cord and you will see that the black cord, here knotted to the red cord, is pulled by the blue cord, giving the perceived form of a borromean chain. It seems that the least one can expect from the borromean chain is this relation of one to three others. And if we suppose that the triple knots link up with one another in borromean knots, we will get to this - that a fourth will always be propped upon [prendra appui] three supports, which we will call here subjective - in other words, personal. You remember how I introduced this fourth element. Each of the three others are supposed to constitute something of the personal. In respect of these three, the fourth will be what this year I am terming the *sinthome*.

R S I
S I R
I R S
sinthome

There is a reason why I have written in a certain order RSI, SIR, IRS. Likewise Soury and Thomé have highlighted, as I mentioned last year, that in relation to the borromean knot there are two different types from the moment when it is given an orientation and colours.

What does this difference put in place [que suppose-t-elle]? Not that the identity of either is marked by an initial letter. The distinction between them which has effects in their orientation can only be traced in the way in which their difference is marked by colour - not the difference of one from another, but, as it were, their absolute difference, difference common to all three. It is to the extent that something which is one marks as such the difference between all three and not that between any two, that the distinction between the two structures of the borromean knot appears.

Which is the true one? Which is true in respect of the way the imaginary, the symbolic and the real are knotted together into the support of the subject? This is the question which should be posed. One should refer back to my preceding comments on the duality of the borromean knot to gauge its importance, for I have only been able to touch on it for a moment today. What is remarkable is that the triple knot shows no trace of this difference. There is only one kind of this triple knot, in which the imaginary, the symbolic and the real are in continuity, and which is thus an homogenisation of the borromean knot. Check this yourself.

However, it is well known that there are two triple knots, depending on whether the knot turns to the left or to the right. What, then, is the link between the two types of borromean knot and the two types of triple knot? Whatever it is, if the triple knot is really the support of all kinds of subject, how can it be put in question? How can it be put in question such that it really concerns a subject?

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There was a time when my progress took a certain route, before I got onto that of analysis, which is witnessed by my thesis - paranoid psychosis and its relation, as I put it, to the personality. If I have been opposed to the republication of this book for so long, this is due to something simple: there is no relation between paranoid psychosis and the personality. Because it's the same thing. In so far as a subject makes a triple knot of the imaginary, the symbolic and the real, its only support is their continuity; all three have one and the same consistence. And this is what paranoid psychosis consists of.

To understand correctly what I'm proposing today, one could deduce the following: a fourth term could be knotted as a symptom to the paranoid three, a term which would be situated as personality, distinct from the three prior personalities, and their symptom.

Is this to say that this too would be paranoid? Nothing indicates this when it is a matter of a borromean chain made up of an indefinite number of triple knots. Such a chain no longer constitutes a paranoia, if only because it is common. The possible terminal flocculation of fourth terms in this braid, this tress of subjectivity, allows us to suppose that there are certain chosen points in the totality of the texture which function as the term of this quadruple knot. And this is exactly what the sinthome consists in - not in so far as it is personality, but that in relation to the three others it specifies itself as sinthome and neurotic.

(fig 3) Here we are given an insight into the nature of the unconscious. There is a term which is particularly connected to it which has a privileged relation to the sinthome. In this set of four, you see two couples are formed, red-green and blue-red. I read that as a link between the sinthome and the unconscious, and between the imaginary and the real. That is where the sinthome emerges.

(fig 4) These are difficult things I wanted to propose to you today. To complement this, I should certainly speak of why I have now opened up the triple knot, and am not giving it the usual circular form. I have already noted the field of $J(\bar{A})$ [barred A]. This is jouissance, and it is not that of the Other, because there is no Other of the Other; in the symbolic, site of the Other as such, there are no oppositions.

The jouissance of the Other of the Other is impossible for the simple reason that no such instance exists. All that remains, then, is what is produced in the field of the intersection of the circle of the symbolic and the circle of the imaginary: meaning.

Elsewhere there is so-called phallic jouissance, to be distinguished from any jouissance of the penis. The jouissance of the double, of the specular image

or imaginary body, is the support of a certain number of *béances* ['gaps/abeyances'], which constitute its different objects. By contrast, the *jouissance* of the phallus, $J\Phi$, is located at the conjunction of the symbolic and the real, and is experienced as a parasite by the subject supported by the speaking-being [parlêtre], in the sense of what I designate as the unconscious. I mark it in balance over against meaning. This is the site consciously designated as power by the speaking-being. (195)

The similarity is that the three rings participate in the imaginary on the level of consistence, in the symbolic as hole, and in the real as ex-sistent to these. The three rings imitate one another.

The fact that they do not imitate each other in a simple way makes this so much more difficult. In fact they make up a triple knot. Thus, after making the discovery that triple knots can be tied into triple borromean knots, I took care to note that if they are kept unconstrained, a triple knot exists whose play extends across its full texture; a knot which is well and truly a fourth term, and which is called *sinthome*.

4) 13th January 1976

One's responsibility only goes as far as one's *savoir-faire*.

What is *savoir-faire*? Let's say it is what gives a remarkable value to one's art. Why remarkable? Because there is no Other of the Other to pass the final judgement. This means that there is something we cannot enjoy. Let us call it the *jouissance* of God, including in this the sense of sexual *jouissance*.

Supposing that he exists, does our image of God indicate that he enjoys his creation? To answer that he doesn't exist is to deal too briskly with the question, if we take on the burden of a thought whose essence is to take its place in this reality - a first approximation of the word real which has a different meaning in my vocabulary - in this limited reality which testifies to the existence of sex.

These are the first truths I bring you this new year...

The very first outline of what is called thought, everything which produces meaning from the moment of its first appearance, comprises a reference to, a gravitation towards, the sexual act - however little that act is in evidence. The very word act implies the polarity active/passive, which is already to get caught in a false sense. This is how knowledge is described, with the following ambiguity - that what is active is that which we know, but because of the effort we make to know, it is ourselves we imagine to be active.

So knowledge, from the outset, reveals its true nature - its deceptiveness. This is why, from the outset, everything should be reconsidered in terms of the opaqueness of the sexual. I use the word 'opaqueness' because we do not see in the sexual any relation, founded on anything at all. This implies, following the

movement of thought, that there is no responsibility - in the sense where 'responsibility' means non-response side by side with response - there is no responsibility other than sexual responsibility, something in the end everyone feels.

What I have termed *savoir-faire* goes far beyond this, adding artifice, which we ascribe to God - absolutely gratuitously, as Joyce insists, because this is a point which tickled (what we describe as) his thought. God is not the author of this thing we call the universe. What we impute to God is the business of the artist. The first model for this, as is well known, is the potter, who is said to have moulded (with what, though?) this thing called, not by accident, the universe - which means only one thing, that there is One.

There is One, but we do not know where. It is more than unlikely that this One constitutes the universe. The real - that is, impossible - Other of the Other, is our idea of artifice, in that it is an activity which escapes us, in other words which far exceeds the enjoyment [*jouissance*] we can have of it. This absolutely slender *jouissance* is what we call spirit [*l'esprit*].

All of this implies a notion of the real which we must distinguish from the symbolic and the imaginary. The only trouble is that in this process the real is given meaning, whereas in fact the real is founded to the extent that there is no meaning, that it excludes meaning, or, more precisely, that it is deposited in this exclusion.

*

There you are. I tell you this as I think it, for your knowledge. The form most devoid of meaning, but which is nevertheless imagined, is consistence. Bear in mind this: that nothing forces us to imagine consistence.

I have here a book by Robert M. Adams, called *Surface and Symbol*, whose sub-title indicates what is at issue - *The consistency of James Joyce's 'Ulysses'*. This is a kind of presentiment of the distinction between the imaginary and the symbolic. Thus there is a chapter which places a question-mark after *Surface* or *Symbol*, surface or symbol.

What does consistence mean? It means what holds things together, and this is certainly why it is symbolised here by the surface. Our only idea of consistence, poor souls that we are, is what makes a bag or a cloth. We even feel the body as merely skin holding in its bag a heap of organs.

To put it in other terms, this consistence reveals the cord. But the imagination's powers of abstraction are so weak that it excludes from this cord, the residue of consistence, the knot.

It is on this point that I wish to add the only grain of salt I would perhaps accept responsibility for - the knot is the only thing which ex-sists, properly speaking, in the cord. It is not without hidden reason that I have had to provide you with access to this knot by starting with the chain, whose elements are distinct. These elements have their consistence in the form of the cord - or rather line, which we must suppose to be infinite so that the knot doesn't come undone, or rope-loop, in other words a cord which is tied together, or more

exactly is spliced together. The knot does not constitute the consistence, it exists in the cord element, the consistent cord.

So a knot can be tied. If I have taken the path of stitching-together the elements, this is because I thought it more didactic, given the mentality proper to the speaking-being [parlêtre], senti-mentality, because he feels it [il la sent], he feels the burden. It is also the mentality in so far as he lies [il ment]. It is a fact that he lies. What is a fact? It is precisely he who makes it [le fait]. There is no fact without the fact that the speaking-being says so. There are no facts other than those the speaking-being recognises as such by speaking about them. There is no fact without artifice, and it is a fact that he lies, in other words that he accords recognition to false facts; because he has mentality, in other words self-love [amour-propre]. This is the principle of imagination. He adores his body. He adores it because he thinks he possesses it. In reality he does not. But his body is his only - mental, of course - consistence. His body is always bugging off. It's already fairly miraculous that it subsists for a time, for the time of this consummation which in fact - due to the fact of its being said - is inexorable, because nothing can be done, it cannot be reduced. It is an observed fact even in animals that the body does not evaporate, it is consistent. And this is what is disagreeable to the mentality, entirely because it believes it has a body to adore. This is the root of the imaginary. I think this - p-a-n-s-e - in other words, I make a bandage of it, thus I clean it [l'essuie]. That's what this comes down to. It is the sexual which lies [ment] in this due to too much talk about itself, without the above-mentioned imaginary abstraction, which boils down to consistence. What is concrete, all that we know, is always sexual adoration, that is to say, misunderstanding [méprise], in other words contempt [mépris]. The object of adoration is supposed, except in the case of God, to have no mentality at all, which is only true of the body considered as such - I mean adored, because that is the only relation of the speaking-being to his body; so that it is always suspicious when he adores another body, for this entails the same contempt, a true contempt, because it is a question of truth. What is truth (as someone else said)? What is it, to say - as, when I started my bullshitting, they reproached me for not saying - the truth about truth? It is to do no more than I have effectively done - to follow the trace of the real, the real which only consists and ex-sists in the knot.

Haste has a function - I must go hastily. Naturally I won't get to the end, although I haven't dawdled. But tying the knot carelessly simply means going a bit fast.

Let us stick to the principle that there is no sexual relation, which I was led to by hysteria, in so far as it is, as Freud saw, the final perceptible reality concerning the sexual relation, precisely the final *usteron*. From this Freud learned the b-a-ba, which didn't stop him from posing the question WwdW - Was will das Weib? This was a mistake. He thought that there was das Weib; there is only ein Weib.

WwdW
WweW

*

Anyway, now I'm going to give you a little bit to get your teeth into. I would like to illustrate this with something which supports it, and which is certainly what is in question. I have already spoken at one point about enigma [nigme, also 'riddle'], which I write Ee. It's a matter of énonciation and énoncé. An enigma is an énonciation whose énoncé cannot be located.

You will find in R. M. Adams' book something of value - that, in the opening chapters of *Ulysses*, when he goes to teach at Trinity College in front of that diminutive nation which makes up a class, Stephen - in other words Joyce as he imagines himself (and who, since he's not a fool, he's not in love with - on the contrary, he need only mention Stephen and he starts giggling, which is not very far from my position when I talk, at least about what I'm chattering on about to you...).

What does the enigma consist in? In an art which I would term between-the-lines, to refer to the cord. It is not clear why lines which are written should not be knotted by a second cord.

Writing: it's an interest of mine. A certain Février has done a history of it, another, Guelb, has theorised it. For my part, I only think historically - it is through little bits of writing that we have entered into the real - that is, ceased to imagine. The writing of little letters, little mathematical letters, is what supports the real.

But how on earth does it do this? , I wondered. Truly, I said to myself, it must be that writing always has something to do with the way we write the knot

A knot is commonly written like this. [reference to fig. :]

This already gives us an S, in other words something which has a considerable relation to the instance of the letter as I maintain it. And this gives us a likely basis for beauty - if Hogarth is to be believed, beauty was always a matter of this double inflection. Bullshit, of course, but in the end, at least this would imply that beauty is connected to something other than the obscene, in other words the real. There would be, in sum, nothing but beautiful writing - why not?

Let's get back to Stephen, who also starts with an S. Stephen is Joyce as he solves his own riddle [il déchiffre sa propre énigme]. He doesn't get very far because he believes in all his symptoms. This is very striking. He begins with - well, he began long before that, he scribbled some little bits, even some poems. His poems are not what he did best. He believes in the uncreated conscience of my race - that is the ending of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, and it's clear that it doesn't go very far. The end is better - Old father, old artificer, stand me now and ever in good stead. It is to his father that he addresses this prayer - his father whose precise characteristic is to be an unworthy, lacking father, and who Stephen is to search for throughout *Ulysses*, in settings where he has no chance of finding him. There is clearly a father somewhere - Bloom, a father in search of a son, but Stephen places one in opposition to him - but not much of one, I would say, having had so much father I was sick of him. It is peculiar

that, throughout the novel, there is a gravitational attraction between the thoughts of Bloom and Stephen. Adams, whose name sounds more Jewish than Bloom, is very struck by the way Joyce attributes to Bloom a knowledge of Shakespeare which is manifestly unlikely, and which, moreover, is not necessarily favourable, like claiming that Shakespeare had relations with a certain herbalist who lived near him in London. For such a thing to occur to Bloom goes beyond what can rightly be imputed to him. This knowledge belongs to Stephen. The entire *Surface or Symbol* chapter talks of nothing but this. It culminates at the point in the text of *Ulysses* where Stephen and Bloom meet, which shows that they are not only made of the same signifier, but truly of the same material.

Ulysses bears witness to the way Joyce remains rooted in his father, even as he denies him - and this is exactly his symptom. I have said that Joyce was himself the symptom. His whole oeuvre is one long testimony to this. *Exiles* is an approach to what is for him the central symptom, that of the lack of the sexual relation. The form taken by this lack is not arbitrary, but it must take one - for Joyce, this is what binds him to his wife, the so-called Nora, during whose reign he dreams up *Exiles*. There could be no better term to express non-relation than exile. Non-relation means that there is no reason why he should take a woman, among others, to be his. A woman among others is also one who has a relation to some other man, and this 'some other man' is the character he imagines, and for whom he opens the choice of 'a woman' in question, who as it happens is none other than Nora.

Concerning the uncreated conscience of my race he invokes the supreme artificer who would be his father. But it is he who is the artificer, he's the one who knows what he has to do. However, he believes that there is a race which has an uncreated conscience, which is a great illusion. He also believes that there is a book of himself - the idea of making oneself into a book! The idea could only occur to a damn stunted poet. Why doesn't he say, instead, that he's a knot?

Let's get to *Ulysses*. A certain Chechner, who because he has read lots of books about analysis thinks that he's an analyst - it's an illusion that is fairly widespread, especially amongst analysts - has wished to analyse *Ulysses*. The effect this creates is absolutely terrifying, it truly gives the idea that the novelist's imagination, I mean the imagination which reigns over *Ulysses*, is to be thrown in the dustbin. Unlike *Surface and Symbol*, this analysis of *Ulysses* wishes to be exhaustive - naturally, because one can't stop when one analyses a book. Freud, all the same, only wrote some articles of this type, and moreover, he didn't, properly speaking, analyse the novel, with the exception of Dostoyevsky. He made nothing but a little allusion concerning Ibsen. He restrained himself.

Here is what our beloved Joyce, in the guise of Stephen, proposes to his pupils as a riddle [énigme]. It's an énonciation:

The cock crew
The sky was blue
The bells in heaven
Were striking eleven
'Tis time for this poor soul
To go to heaven. (U, 22)

I'll tell you what the answer was. After the whole class gives up, Joyce provides it - The fox burying his grandmother under the bush. This seems to amount to nothing, but beside the coherence of the énonciation - note that it's in verse, it's a poem, a consistent artefact - next to this, this little fox burying his grandmother under a bush is truly a wretched thing. What echo can that have for - I won't say for everyone in this room, but for those who are analysts? Analysis is that - the answer to a riddle; and an answer, it must be said, which is quite exceptionally stupid.

This is why one must hold on to the cord. If one has no notion of where the cord ends up - that is, in the knot of the sexual non-relation - one runs the risk of talking rubbish. Meaning is the result of an intersection between the imaginary and the symbolic. And if we hold that there is no Other of the Other, at least no jouissance of the Other of the Other, we must make a stitch [suture] or splice [épissure] between the imaginary and the symbolic: unconscious knowledge. All this to obtain a meaning - which is the object of the analyst's response to what the analysand reveals over time about his symptom.

In making this splice, at the same time we make another between what constitutes the symptom and the real. In some manner, we teach the analysand to splice together his symptom and the parasitic real of jouissance. This is what characterises our procedure. To render this jouissance possible is the same thing as what I would write as *J'ouis sens* ['I hear sense'], to hear a meaning. Analysis is a matter of suture and splicing.

But it must be said that we ought to consider the orders [instances] as in reality separate. Imaginary, symbolic and real do not intermingle. Finding a meaning entails a knowledge of the knot, and sewing it up with artifice. Tying a knot, with what I would term a borromean chain-knot, is this not an abuse? Leaving that question hanging, I must leave you.

I have not left any time for dear Jacques Aubert, who I had planned to give the floor for the rest of the session, to speak to you now; but next time he will talk to you about the Bloom in question - that is, about someone who is not badly qualified to get the hang of analysis, since he's a Jew - about Bloom and how he feels suspended between the sexes, which makes him wonder if he's a father or a mother. Regarding his wife, he feels maternal, he thinks he carries her in his belly. This really is the worst aberration one can experience vis-...-vis somebody one loves. But why not? Love must be explained, and explaining it as a kind of madness is the first thing which comes within reach.

5) 20th January 1976

You must be thinking that, when it comes to Joyce, I'm a fish out of water [lit 'like a fish with an apple']. This is obviously linked to my lack of practice, to my inexperience of the language he writes in. It is not that I'm totally ignorant of English, but rather that he writes with such peculiar subtlety in English, that he disarticulates it. You would be wrong to think this only begins with *Finnegans Wake*. Long before *Finnegans Wake*, he has a peculiar way of breaking up phrases, notably in *Ulysses*; indeed, it's a process aiming to give language another use - and one which is far from being ordinary. This is part of his *savoir-faire*. And on this question, I have already quoted Sollers' article, whose pertinence you would do well to sample.

So this morning I'm going to allow someone to speak whose practical experience, not only of the English language, but of Joyce in particular, is far superior to mine. This is Jacques Aubert, and I'm going to let him speak straight away, since he has kindly offered to take over from me. I will listen to him with the full knowledge I have gathered of his experience of Joyce; I will listen to him, and hope that my comments - brief as they will be, I don't ask him to abridge things, far from it - the brief comments I will add will be made with all the respect I owe him for having introduced me to what I have called Joyce-the-symptom.

(not in ORNICAR) p23-35 *

Jacques Aubert - Last June, Dr Lacan announced that Joyce was to feature on the path of his work. My presence here today in no way indicates that I feature on that royal road. Let me say immediately that I am, rather, on its verges; and you know why these are generally sign-posted: so what you are going to hear will be a roadmender's words! [punning untranslatably on Lacan's name]

I must thank Jacques Lacan for inviting me to produce some work; it is shoddy, not at all well tied-up, and not very articulate concerning knots. From another perspective, I would like to indicate that what I am going to say starts out from a sense I had of something that was threading through the text, certain of Joyce's texts at certain points - something woven in by Joyce. And this awareness of the thread leads me, precisely, to insist that this is not, as it might otherwise have been, a definitive statement.

To situate what happened to be my point of departure, I should specify - putting it in a very didactic way - that it was a little bit of 'Circe', part of an exchange from the episode in *Ulysses* which was given the name 'Circe' a posteriori, and described as the hallucinatory episode, whose art would be magic and whose category hallucination (according to a schema drawn up by Joyce for some friends).

Elements from preceding chapters, whose status cannot yet be determined, re-appear - real or fictional characters, objects, or signifiers. But what is interesting too, is the manner of this return, the way it is manifestly connected with speech [la parole], with a speaking. From the beginning one is made aware of this - since the first two characters, one might say, are the Call

and the Answer, clearly indicating a dimension developed in the form of the chapter; in the ostensibly dramatic style - the dimension of speech [la parole], and of the kind of institutions/ locations which generate it [installations de lieux d'ou ça parle].

What is important is that it speaks [ça parle], in all possible senses [sens], and that everything can be impersonated there (to take up a term that we will encounter shortly); everything can personate in this text, give rise to voice-effects across a mask.

I think I've isolated one of these functions - a detail of one of these functions or its mode of functioning - at the beginning of the chapter, in an exchange between Bloom and Rudolph (who is supposed to be his father and has been dead for eighteen years). I will read you the brief exchange in question

Rudolph first appears as an elder of Zion. He has the appearance, according to the stage-directions, of an elder of Zion. And after various reproaches to his son, he says this:

'What you making down this place? Have you no soul? (a native of Hungary, he is supposed not to be able to manage English)

(with feeble vulture talons he feels the silent face of Bloom) Are you not my son Leopold, the grandson of Leopold? Are you not my dear son Leopold who left the house of his father and left the god of his fathers Abraham and Jacob?' (U, 357-8).

At first glance, what is happening here, the reader of *Ulysses* thinks, is something described several times by Bloom himself with the expression retrospective arrangement; the term recurs often enough in Bloom's thoughts throughout the text. The reader cannot fail to be aware of this retrospective arrangement, nor that it is arranged in relation to a favourite quotation of the father, from a literary text which it would seem had a certain effect on him. This text is on page 62 in the Gabler edition:

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

One sees here that what returns does so with a subtle difference. But before outlining that difference, I would like to point to the effects this return-with-difference has on Bloom. What is his reply, in the Circe episode? This:

'Bloom (with precaution): I suppose so, father. Mosenthal. all that's left of him'.

Precaution - this is certainly a quality of Bloom, who is described as prudent throughout *Ulysses*. The prudent one is an aspect of *Ulysses* (but *Ulysses* is not merely that). He is described several times, in slightly Masonic terms, as the prudent member. The prudent member says I suppose so, I sous-pose so, I suppose something to reply to the question 'Are you not my son?'; 'I sous-pose something of the kind', which in principle connects back to what the father said, but which suddenly, as soon as one is following the text, appears as another figure, for we immediately have this moment of arrest marked by what the Anglo-saxons call a period, something which marks finality, a point not of

suspension but of closure, and beyond which Mosenthal appears, a new sentence, once again marked by a period.

It is precisely around this proper name that something relating to the declared sous-position is simultaneously articulated and disarticulated. What, then, is this supposition, this function of sub-pot/peau [see footnote 3] of Mosenthal?

Here, in this context, the function of this signifier is to refer the father's words back to the author of a text, the text which has just been evoked by the father. But in its abruptness the signifier obscures more than it illuminates, and the reader is led to isolate it, search for the thoughts it connects back to, the displacements it is implicated in.

One of these displacements is obvious: in the first text, from the 'Lotus Eaters' (U, 62) the name in question, that of the author, features before the quotation; here, it is in the position of signature, and also in the position of a response. It's very charming, particularly so because it is about Moses. But if one calls to mind - as one always does, because one spends one's time re-reading - the place Mosenthal held in the first text, one realizes that there it was a displaced response to a question about the existence of the true name; a question which itself could only be formulated with eloquent vacillation. I must note here another phrase which is precisely the question to which Mosenthal is supposed to be the answer:

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

For good measure I've included what follows, which maybe also has a certain interest.

Mosenthal, even if a German-speaker who knows slang understands something else, without the *tréma* is the name of the author of a play whose original German title Bloom is trying to remember, to re-translate. In fact, it's a woman's name, a Jewish name which had not been kept in English. It's a curious thing - that a melodrama whose German title was Deborah was translated into English under the name Leah; and this is what Bloom is trying to recall. He's therefore trying to translate back to the original title (which is a woman's name), and this takes the form of the search. One can clearly observe the game of hide-and-seek between the author's name and that of his creation at the level of art, which brings into play at once being - note the insistence of is - and the problematic of sexuality, a patronymic supplanting a maiden-name.

Here, the reader, whom of course nothing in *Ulysses* has escaped, says that this reminds him of something else, which has a connection with Bloom himself.

I'll give you the first passage (I'm sorry to do this in little pieces, but I'm simply following the steps I went through) and its context:

'Mr Bloom stood at the corner, his eyes wandering over the multicoloured hoardings. Cantrell and Cochrane's Ginger Ale (Aromatic). Clery's Summer Sale. No, he's going on straight [someone he's just been talking to, and who he thinks might be observing him]. Hello. Leah tonight [the play in question]. Mrs Bandmann Palmer. Like to see her again in that. Hamlet she played last night.

Male impersonator.[and here begins a little passage on the problematic of the sexes. Male impersonator - an actress who has taken the male persona or mask. But this could just as well apply to one of the plays Hamlet, as the other, Leah; this is what everything turns on].Perhaps he was a woman. Why Ophelia committed suicide' (U, 62).

So at one level there is the fact that the role of Hamlet was very often played by women. And an Anglo-Saxon critic had taken it into his head to analyse Hamlet precisely in terms of cross-dressing [travesti], by in a sense taking it seriously, and saying: Ophelia committed suicide because she realised that Hamlet was in fact a woman. I do not refer to this critique at random, to show my Shakespearean and Joycean knowledge, but simply because its implications re-appear elsewhere in Ulysses.

'Why Ophelia committed suicide'.

What do we read next?

'Poor papa! How in used to talk of Kate Bateman in that. Outside the Adelphi in London waited all the afternoon to get in. Year before I was born that was: sixtyfive. And Ristori in Vienna. What is this the right name is? By Mosenthal it is. Rachel is it? No. The scene he was always talking about where the old blind Abraham recognises the voice and puts his fingers on his face.

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

Every word is so deep, Leopold.

Poor papa! Poor man! I'm glad I didn't go into the room to look at his face. That day! O, dear! O, dear! Ffool! Well, perhaps it was best for him' (U,62)

In this passage, then, a whole series of questions are in play. Questions of existence - of being and names, of existence and suicide; the question of the name (which I am going to come back to), the name which in fact - as well as the name of the father, of his father - is that of the central character in the play; and finally the question of personating sex, the cause of personation.

Behind the question of the name is the suicide of the father, another of whose characteristics is precisely to have changed his name: we see this in another passage, where it is presented in a manner which is itself curious.

In a pub, some regulars are talking about Bloom. 'He's a perverted jew' says one of them, 'from a place in Hungary and it was he drew up all the plans according to the Hungarian system [Sinn Fein's political plans] [.....] He changed [his name] by deedpoll, the father did'.

It seems, then, that the father has changed his name, in a way which is rather interesting: according to a legal formula, deed poll - deed, or act (in all senses of the term); poll evokes or describes the act from the point of view of the document, a document which is 'polled' (evenly cut). And this poll which describes what has been cut in fact describes something beheaded, headless (a pollard is a tree which has been 'decapitated' and has grown back): poll in fact

means 'crown' 'top of head' The deed poll only consists of one section, which is why it is 'by decree', and it is opposed to an indenture, an act divided in two - each part, precisely, indented - to be entrusted to two parties.

This is how, Joyce tells us, the father changed his name. But which name did he change?

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

-Not at all, says Martin. Only namesakes. His name was Virag, the father's name that poisoned himself (U, 276).

There could be a play on the genitive and the name of the father here, which would allow another reading - that it is the name which has poisoned itself...

Virag re-appears; he is invoked in several places in *Ulysses*. He re-appears in Circe, first as a Virago, that is, the name which in the Vulgate, the translation of the Bible by Saint Jerome, serves to designate the woman from Adam's point of view. In Genesis, man is told to name woman: 'You will name her woman (Virago)'; although she is a woman, she is a little bit of man (vir).

Having got thus far in my imaginings, groping around between the lines of *Ulysses*, I would like to isolate, in amongst this interlacing, what appears as a gap [trou]. It is tempting, for interpretation, to make use of a schema involving the suicide, the name-changing and Bloom's refusal to see the face of his dead father. It would be very apt for all this to re-appear in Circe, in hallucination. But even if there is some truth in this, it is perhaps not sufficient to put the text to work, for example, to account for the 'Poor papa! Poor man!' passage: in the first passage, after 'Every word is so deep, Leopold', with the father's comments on the play, he says 'Poor papa! Poor man!', which was perhaps not very kind concerning what the father had said. 'I'm glad I didn't go into the room to look at his face. That day! O, dear!...Well, perhaps it was for the best for him'. In short, there is a whole range of things which must be accounted for, and above all, effects produced in the dramatic redistribution which is Circe. For it holds together, it works, and things take place right up alongside what looks like a gap. Joyce's handiwork consists in, among other things, exactly this moving around of what looks like a gap, in order to allow certain effects.

For instance, in the quotation I have given, the voice of the son is not mentioned, nor is the death of the father. But on the other hand an effect is produced by this filial voice, displaced in answer - but a filial voice precisely bearing a certain savoir-faire about the signifier. This precaution, this talent for supposing, for sous-posing [cf footnote], can be seen to propagate itself according to a logic which is completely eloquent. I have mentioned the eloquence of Mosenthal, the rhetoric of the periods: Mosenthal. All that's left of him.

In 'Circe', Rudolph's question is: Are you not my dear son Leopold who left the house of his father and left the god of his fathers, Abraham and Jacob? - All that's left of him, all that remains of him, all of him that's been abandoned - but also 'everything on the left of him'. If one recalls what the Credo indicates about the respective places of the Father and the Son, on high, this says lots about their relationship. Everything that remains of him, a name, an author's name;

everything on his left, thus something which is not in any case a true son. Let us pause there...

What is certain is that this gives Bloom pleasure, and that this is understood. And how can this be seen? Because the father is far from happy. The reply which follows begins with:

Rudolph: (severely) One night they bring you home drunk etc : please, no out-of-place humour, let's talk about your transgressions. Bloom is jubilant - he has prudently said what he had to say, and he makes everyone happy.

But in this series of effects, some of which have just been listed, there is a sort of cascade: another effect emerges, which is in a sense structural in relation to the others, a sort of result of the effects which precede it. The interaction with the father seems to slide into an engagement with the mother. This father who is challenged in different ways leads to a mother on the side of the imaginary.

Rudolph, then, refers to the transgression of the son, who came home drunk, having spent his money, and who also came back covered with mud. Nice spectacles for your poor mother! It's not me, it's her, who's unhappy!

But the way this happens, how things are referred back to the mother through the mud, is quite funny: those of you who have read the *Portrait* in English may have noticed that mud is also a familiar form for mother, and which is associated with a pantomime (P, 67). It's a little, lightweight playlet, of the epiphanic kind (I use the term slightly provocatively); Joyce has placed, in the opening chapters of the *Portrait*, a series of little playlets, where the child, Stephen, is finding his way about Dublin, starting from a certain number of points - scenes, places, houses. He is sitting in a house (the scene generally starts like that), on a chair, in the kitchen of his aunt, who is reading the evening paper, and admiring the picture of an actress, the beautiful Mabel Hunter.

"A ringletted girl stood on tiptoe to peer at the picture and said softly:

-What is she in, mud?

-In a pantomime, love" (P, 67)

Now, the passage in 'Circe' I was discussing a moment ago slides through the mud, since this signifier returns three or four times in the passage, slides through the mud to where the mother emerges: Nice spectacles for your mother, says Rudolph, and Bloom says Mamma! because she suddenly begins to appear. (As soon as certain words, certain signifiers are introduced in *Circe*, the object surfaces, so to speak). And how does she appear? In pantomime dame's stringed mobcap, widow Twankey's crinoline and bustle, and following the pattern of English pantomime, that is, a man disguised as a woman (the pantomime plays referred to are performed particularly at Christmas, and imply an overturning of dress-codes, a generalized cross-dressing: pantomime).

Feminine clothing, then. But there is another echo here, for from the beginning of *Ulysses* the mother has been invoked in connection with pantomime. After evoking his dead mother, Stephen says:

Where now?

Her secrets: old featherfans, tasselled dancecards, powdered with musk, a gaud of amber beads in her locked drawer. A birdcage hung in the sunny window of her house when she was a girl. She heard old Royce sing in the pantomime of Turko the Terrible and laughed with others when he sang:

I am the boy
That can enjoy
Invisibility.

Phantasmal mirth, folded away: muskperfumed (U, 8-9).

A fantasmatic ensemble appears, linked to the mother, via Stephen, with a radical ambiguity: what was she laughing at? At old Royce singing, at what he said, at his funny voice, God knows what else.

So this problematic mother is dressed exactly like the pantomime mother of Aladin, Widow Twankey. Widow Twankey's outfit is that of Aladin's mother in pantomime, a mother who clearly has no idea what her son has been doing, apart from that if you rub the lamp the Genie inside speaks...

I'll stop on that point, to pass on to another aspect of the way the text works.

Ellen Bloom, who has just appeared, is not at all like the father, on the side of the sages of Zion, but gives the impression rather of being on the side of the Roman, Catholic and Apostolic religion, for what does she say when she sees him all covered in mud? O blessed Redeemer, what have they done to him! ... Sacred Heart of Mary, where were you at all at all?(U, 358). This is, besides, rather curious, for one would expect it to be the Sacred Heart of Jesus - a way of indicating her narcissistic relation to religion; she is clearly catholic in the particular nineteenth-century manner, and this is an aspect which should be highlighted as soon as one speaks of Joyce, even if one has to look at the minor texts, *Stephen Hero*, *Dubliners*.

I would like to show this first in connection with the epiphany. The term 'epiphany' refers to fairly diverse things. Joyce only defined it in one place, in *Stephen Hero*. And what he said has certainly been cheerfully distorted. Here is the definition: 'By an epiphany he meant a sudden spiritual manifestation, whether in the vulgarity of speech or of gesture or in a memorable phase of the mind itself'. The definition is polished, didactic and thomas-aquinasante. But it occurs in a text which in two pages takes us from a dialogue with the mother, where she reproaches Stephen for his unbelief, continually invoking 'the priests'. Stephen at once breaks with her on this topic and in another sense skirts round the problem; his discourse slides to the relation between women and priests, and then on to the beloved; and suddenly he says that he is wandering the streets, and that a Dublin scene moves him - 'a trivial incident set him composing some ardent verses'. Then nothing more about the poem, but he reports the dialogue he has overheard, between a young lady and a youth, and one of the rare words which appear is the word chapel: apart from that there is practically nothing but points of suspension in the dialogue.

This dialogue of nothing, then, on the one hand makes him write a poem, on the other, is baptised 'epiphany', and given a learned definition in the lines which follow. This is what he wanted to do, he adds - to record these scenes, these realist playlets of such eloquence. There is thus a sort of doubling of experience (let's say, to simplify, into a realist aspect and an aspect which is in some way 'poetic'), and a kind of liquidation or censure of the poetic, in the text of *Stephen Hero*. Now, the title of the elided poem is 'The Villanelle of the Temptress', and it emerges precisely from a discourse which involves the mother and her relation to the priests.

This relation which I've roughly defined as an imaginary relation to religion appears in different guises in the *Portrait of the Artist*. For instance, in the sermons on Hell, which are interminable (at once Kantian and very sadistic) and aim to represent in detail the horrible torments of Hell, to give an idea in presentia of Hell. Or, in another manner, in the figure of the confessor, who listens but also answers. What does he say in answer? this is precisely the central question of Stephen's Easter mass, which should precede the confession of his sins. But for Joyce, this function is connected to that of the artist. Here I would point to two texts, one at the beginning of *Stephen Hero*, where Stephen says that in writing his poems he was able to fulfil the double function of confessor and confessing subject. The other passage comes at the end of *Portrait of the Artist*; it's the moment when, mortified to see the beloved hold her ear up with a smile, to a handsome young priest, he says that for his part he has given up the priesthood, that the matter is settled, it's not for him. He adds something like: 'To think that women place their trust in fellows like that, and tell them secrets in the shadows, while I...' (P, 220-1). He wishes to intervene before women gave birth to another of their race, thinking that what would take place, the effects of his words, would lead to some improvement of what he considers a deplorable race. This bears a relation to the famous uncreated conscience of my race spoken of on the last page: it passes through the ear (the well-known conception through the ear...), which is found elsewhere in *Circe*...

J.Lacan:...and to which great importance was ascribed by Jones; Jones, Freud's pupil.

-Another essential point about this imaginary dimension of religion is highlighted in the famous passage in *Ulysses* which opposes the problematic, trinitary conception of theology by opposition to an 'Italian' madonisante conception, which fills all gaps with an image of the Virgin Mary: in the end, he seems to say, the catholic church didn't do badly, placing the incertitude of the void at the foundation of everything. It seems to me that the names of the father are in play on multiple levels in the working of these passages.

But in 'Circe', as in the whole of *Ulysses*, things move around, artifice is created, when the names of the father are caught up in a game of hide-and-seek; in other words, that alongside what looks like a gap, we have the displacement of the gap, the displacement of the name of the father.

We have already picked out in passing, from the disorder, Abraham, Jacob, Virag, and Dedalus - and there is another one, which is quite funny. In a central episode, 'Cyclops', we meet a certain J.J., whom, if one has a good memory, one recalls having met in an earlier episode under the name J.J.O'Molloy, that is, 'descendant of Molloy', J.J., son of Molloy.

His situation is rather curious: he is, in principle, a lawyer, but a lawyer who is -I wouldn't say absolutely in decline - but well on the way to it. Practice dwindling, we are told. And his practice is on the wane because he gambles. In some way gaming has replaced practice.

This could evidently be elaborated on. I would simply like to point to the function of this perfectly false father whose initials are at once those of James Joyce and John Joyce, his father. Moreover it is striking that what J.J.O'Molloy talks about is other fathers. In a passage which links back to the riddle quoted in the last seminar by Dr Lacan (the episode is 'Aeolus', which takes place in a newspaper office), it is he who turns to Stephen to give him a nice bit of rhetoric, which is also interesting. We have learnt that O'Molloy, after turning to gambling, has done literary work for the newspapers. Note, by the way, that this brings to mind 'The Dead', the last story in *Dubliners*, where the hero, Gabriel Conroy, writes reports and other things for newspapers (this appears in a different manner in *Exiles*). What sort of literature? Is it literature which remains, deserves to survive? Gabriel asks himself that, and we will see he's not the only one.

So O'Molloy, J.J., tells us that he turns to Stephen, in the editorial office, and offers him a beautiful specimen of legal eloquence:

J.J.O'Molloy turned to Stephen and said quietly and slowly:

-One of the most polished periods I think I ever listened to in my life fell from the lips of Seymour Bushe. It was in that case of fratricide, the Childs murder case. Bushe defended him.

And in the porches of mine ear did pour. [interpolation from Hamlet]

'By the way how did he find that out? He died in his sleep. Or the other story, beast with two backs? [Stephen's thoughts].

- What was that? the professor asked.

ITALIA, MAGISTRA ARTIUM [one of the headlines dividing up the newspaper office episode].

- He spoke on the law of evidence. [the law of bearing-witness, not only bearing witness before the law], J.J.O'Molloy said, of Roman justice as contrasted with the earlier Mosaic code, the *lex talionis*. and he cited the Moses of Michaelangelo in the vatican.

-Ha.

-A few wellchosen words, Lenehan prefaced'.

[.....]

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

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

aught that the imagination or the hand of sculptor has wrought in marble of soultransfigured and soultransfiguring deserves to live, deserves to live'.(U, 114-5).

So O'Molloy starts by making himself an echo-chamber for legal knowledge, setting out the laws relating to evidence (also bearing witness), then has Bushe (bush) speak, making him bear rhetorical witness to art as the foundation of the right to exist (deserves to live), and the foundation of the right to exist of the work of art. One sees the resonance this has for the literature of newspapers: art is the legal basis of the bearer of the law, Moses, because it will remain, as the Vatican Moses (which is the name we give it, 'the Vatican Moses'): which is not without interest when one bears in mind what the Vatican represents in *Ulysses*...

And this deserves to live which is so insistent (rhetorical repetition) is marked, countersigned by its effects on the period's addressee, Stephen; J.J.O'Molloy has turned towards him, and this happens: 'Stephen, his blood wooed by grace of language and gesture, blushed' (U, 115). Oddly enough, this blush of Stephen's is one of a series across other texts of Joyce. I am thinking in particular of the passage in the *Portrait* which may have struck you, when during a trip to Cork with his father, Stephen visits a classroom in the medical school where his father studied for a while. The father looks for his initials. Stephen clearly does not notice that these are also his initials (Simon Dedalus, also S.D.). But what he comes across is the word 'Foetus', and this has a tremendous effect on him. He blushes, pales, etc. Again, one finds in relation to the initials (but a different relation) the 'right to exist'. I would add that this series could include another passage, from *Dubliners* - again in the story I mentioned a moment ago, 'The Dead' (the title does not necessarily indicate the plural). Gabriel Conroy is to make a speech, the traditional speech of the family reunion; he is always around to write things for the newspaper or make little speeches like this. And at table they have just been discussing artists whose names have been forgotten, and those who have left nothing but a name which is fraught with difficulties. 'His name, said Aunt Kate, was Parkinson. I heard him when he was in his prime and I think he had then the purest tenor voice that was ever put into a man's throat'. And this is what Gabriel talks about in his speech, finishing one of his sentences on two things: an echo of a song entitled Love's old sweet song, which ends by evoking a lost paradise; and a quotation of Milton (but not from *Paradise Lost*), which says more or less this: 'I would like to be able to leave to future centuries an oeuvre which they will not willingly let die'. These questions, then - of the right to existence, of the right to creation, of validity and also of certainty - are knotted together in Joyce's discourse.

One more thing about the bush. The eloquent Bushe who talks of Moses, also talks of a Holy Bush, the one in the Bible; God says to Moses that the ground he walks on before the Burning Bush is Holy, a Holy Bush which shows itself to have a certain relation to the fox. For when J.J.O'Molloy re-appears in Circe, he 'assumes the...foxy moustache and proboscidal eloquence of Seymour

Bushe' (ibid, p.379); a fox is seen more than once in the Portrait: it appears there, of course, because 'Fox' is one of the pseudonyms of Parnell, linked to his faults. But it is also, very specifically, a kind of signifier of dissimulation: He was not foxing, says young Stephen when he is in the infirmary and he's afraid of being accused of skiving off. And then, a little later, when he comes to renounce holy orders, he imagines a visiting card with 'The Reverend Stephen Dedalus, S. J.', and tries to picture the face which would be on it - and one of the things he calls to mind is, ah yes, the face of a Jesuit, called by some Lantern Jaws, and by others Foxy Campbell.

There is thus a bush-fox series. But there is also an effect of wordplay which functions around Molloy, Molly, and which links up with holy. We have holly, holy, Molly, Molloy - and another word which is not present in *Ulysses*, but which Joyce mentions; I rather take this from his pocket, or rather, from a letter - but he did, after all, write his letters. There, he gives us the name of something supposed to play a role in 'Circe', namely a plant, a kind of garlic, which Hermes gave to Ulysses so that he could escape from Circe's clutches; and its name is moly. Strangely enough, the only difference between the two - between moly and Molly - is phonetic. Molly is 'pronounced' in *Ulysses* with a simple vowel, and moly with a diphthong, or a 'ditongue', as it was once written, and the ditongue (di-tongue?) produces consonance; at the moment the ditongue becomes a simple vowel, there is a doubling of the consonant, producing double consonance, which appears in *Ulysses* in the form of Molly...

About moly he says some curious things. Dr Lacan will analyse one of them, I think; I will be content to point to the other. It is, he says, 'the gift of Hermes, god of public highways, and its invisible influence (prayer, chance, agility, presence of mind, power of recovery) saves you if an accident happens'. So it's something which confirms the prudent role of Bloom. He is the Prudent Member. He answers quite well to the definition one finds in a note in Lalande (which is quite deceptive concerning prudence, doubtless because it is Saint Thomas who speaks of it). A little note, without an author's name, says: 'Prudence: aptitude in choosing the means to obtain the greatest well-being for the self'. And this is how one gets by, Bloom seems to say.

The second thing I would like to stress is the continual question of certainty, and the way in which it can be established.

Certainty re-appears concerning precisely the famous Virag, about whom I have more to say... I broke off in the famous quotation where they were talking about, where O'Molloy was holding forth about Virag.

Page 275 in *Ulysses*:

His name was Virag, the father's name that poisoned himself. He changed it by deedpoll, the father did.

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

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

-Yes, says J.J., and every male that's born they think it may be their Messiah. And every Jew is in a tall state of excitement, I believe, till he knows if he's a father or a mother' (U, 275-6).

I would simply highlight what appears, perhaps, beyond the humour, which is one of the effects of the 'Cyclops' passage. Bar-room humour, but which is nonetheless humorous. This humour could, besides, be linked up with other problems around anti-semitism in Joyce, but I do not have time to go into this here. The imaginary identification raises another question: the problematic of the Messiah, and beyond it, that of succession. The problem of the king's word as the foundation of legitimacy, the word which even if the mother's belly has lied, allows things to be set right by legitimation. Legitimation, in other words the possibility of bearing the mark of the king, the crown, stephanos; or again, of bearing that other mark which appears in Circe, with Virag, the grandfather who falls down the chimney, labelled basilicogrammate, with the king's gramme. The problematic of legitimacy which shows itself to be that of legitimation takes a form here, perhaps, in the imaginary dimension, and its recuperation.

As for the use Joyce makes of certainty, it seems to me that he brings it into play in relation to effects of voice. Even if what they say is disputed, spoken words, the words of a father, have effects, it seems to be suggested, in 'personation', in what is behind personation, perhaps in phonetics, and for instance in whatever 'deserves to live', in melody. Perhaps due precisely to this something which has effects on the mother, through melody. The phantasmal mirth of the mother, evoked at the beginning of *Ulysses* (U, 9), specifically concerns the pantomime, and old Royce (Roi-Joyce) who sang in it. Something occurs through melody; and not only melody as sentimentality. Of course, Irish culture at the turn of the century was filled with melodies, above all those of Thomas Moore, which Joyce calls Moore's maladies in *Finnegans Wake*. This was where Joyce's father, John Joyce, excelled. And for his son, something different took place, was posed, in this art of the voice, of phonetics.

In brief, if certainty about what he makes is always related to the mirror, to effects of mirroring which must be listed, it also has to do with the voice-effects of the signifier. I would recall 'The Dead', with which Joyce tied up *Dubliners*, at a crucial moment in his poetic production, a moment when things, in a way, came unblocked; his dominant idea for 'The Dead' came to him when his brother had spoken to him of a particular interpretation of one of Moore's melodies, about ghosts and their dialogue with the living. Stanislaus had said to him: the man who sang that sang it in an interesting way, in a way which really said something. And one of the story's centres is the moment when the hero's wife is rooted to the spot, frozen like the other Moses, as she hears a man's hoarse voice singing a melody. And what effect does this have on the hero? It symbolises a woman, he says. He sees her at this moment, and asks himself: 'what is a woman standing on the stairs in the shadow, listening to distant music, a symbol of'. He describes her in vaguely realist terms, but at the same time says: what does that symbolise? It symbolises a certain way of listening, amongst other things.

This certainty, and the problems of certainty in the way its foundation related to the effects of voice on the signifier, Joyce wished to codify into rules in an aesthetic science. But fairly quickly, he realised that it was not all that linked to science, and that it was, precisely, a *savoir-faire* linked to a practice of the signifier. What I find comes to mind very strongly here - across and beyond what Aristotle said about *praxis* in the *Poetics*, which Joyce found so striking - is Lacan's definition: 'A concerted action by man which puts into effect the treatment of the real by the symbolic'. This question of action [*la mesure*] can be clearly seen at work in 'Circe', at the moment when Bloom is seen entering the brothel by Stephen, as he turns round (U, 353); and as if by chance there is also a quotation from the Apocalypse. No doubt it would be best for me to stop before my discourse becomes too apocalyptic...

*

J.Lacan - I would like to say a word in conclusion. I thank Jacques Aubert for getting his feet wet, for it is clear that, to make use of the term used by the author of *Surface and Symbol* to pin down Joyce's art, it is a matter of inconceivably private jokes. In the same text there appears a word I had to look up in the dictionary, *eftsooneries* (I don't know if the word is common); *eftsooneries* are things put off for a while. That's what it all comes down to; not only are things put off for a while, but the effect they have is most often disconcerting.

Obviously, all this does not go without founding something to which I am trying to give a consistence in the knot. What is this sliding of Joyce's, which I have realised I was referring to in my seminar *Encore*? Dumbstruck, I asked Jacques Aubert if that was why he'd asked me to speak about Joyce; he told me that at that point the seminar *Encore* had not yet been published, so that it cannot be this which led him to offer me this hole which I won't risk myself in, no doubt by some prudence such as he has defined it; but the hole of the knot nonetheless begs the question.

I have of course realised that the knot rightly termed Borromean, which is actually a chain rather than a knot, cannot be sketched in its doubleness, I mean there are not two, unless the circles, the loops of thread, are coloured; but I owe this comment to Soury and Thomé - that if they aren't coloured, in other words if nothing distinguishes one loop from another, there is no distinction either between the knots. You will say that in the diagram [*mise à plat*] there is one which turns to the right, and another to the left; but that's exactly what constitutes the problematisation of the diagram. The diagram implies a specified point of view, and it is doubtless not an accident that the notions of left and right can in no way be translated into the symbolic.

The knot only comes into existence beyond the triple relation. How is it that this triple relation has such a privileged position? It is exactly there that I would like to push myself to resolve the question.

There is something there which should relate to Jacques Aubert's isolation of phonetic effects, precisely in the way they support the signifier. But this is the

sharp edge on which I am left in suspense, namely the point at which signification, in so far as it is written, is distinct from simple effects of phonetics, is what transmits the proper function of the name; and we will start with the proper name, I hope, next time we meet.

6) 10th February 1976 : The entanglements of truth [*Les embrouilles du vrai*]

It is not going well, and I'll tell you why. I spend my time trying to soak up the enormous literature - for all Joyce's loathing of this term, it's nevertheless what he brought about, and willingly so - the enormous blather around his work.

How does this come about? Jacques Aubert, who is down there in the front row, from time to time sends me from Lyons a list of supplementary authors to read. He is not innocent in this matter (but who is innocent?), having himself produced things on Joyce. Why, then, am I engaged in this work of soaking-up? Because I began it, for sure. But I am trying, as one does for all reflection, to ask myself why I began.

The question is worth asking - at what point is one mad? Was Joyce mad? Not being able to give an answer today does not prevent me from beginning to orient myself according to the distinction I have proposed to you, between the true and the real. In Freud - it is clear this is how he organised things - the true is what gives pleasure, and this is just what distinguishes it from the real, which does not necessarily give pleasure.

This is obviously a point where I am twisting something in Freud. I make the observation that enjoyment [*jouissance*] is the real. This leads me into tremendous difficulties. Why? Firstly, because *jouissance* which is real comprises masochism. Masochism is the major form of enjoyment given by the real. Freud discovered this, he did not immediately expect it. Once you have entered it, you are dragged into this route.

For my part, I began by writing *Ecrits inspirés*, which is why I should not be too astonished to find myself confronting Joyce, and this is why I dare to ask the question - was Joyce mad? What was it that inspired his writings?

Joyce left an enormous quantity of notes, scribblings, scribbledehobble - this is the title given to one of Joyce's manuscripts, published by a certain Connolly, whom I knew once (is he still alive?).

It is no accident that he left his notes and drafts in this state, scribbled, he had to watch over them, and even encouraged those known as researchers to look through them. He wrote a vast number of letters. There are three great thick volumes. Amongst these letters, there are some verging on the unpublishable - which as you know, does not in the end stop someone publishing them. The priceless Richard Ellmann has brought out a last edition, *Selected Letters*, containing a certain number of letters which had been thought unpublishable in the first volume.

I confess, I can't find my way round this jumble. I get hold of a few little threads of course. I get a certain idea of his affair with Nora, based on my

practice, I mean on the confidences I receive, since I have dealings with people for whom I arrange things so that speaking the truth gives them pleasure. Everyone says - well, everyone(!) - Freud says that if I can do this, it is because they love me, and they love me thanks to what I have tried to pinpoint as the transference, that is, that they think I know. It is obvious that I don't know everything, and in particular, I don't know, when I read Joyce - for that's what's frightful, I am reduced to having to read him! - what he believed about himself. It is absolutely sure that I haven't analysed him - and I regret it. But anyway, he was clearly not very disposed to it. The names Tweedledum and Tweedledee, came naturally to his pen to designate Freud and Jung respectively - which does not show that he was inclined to analysis.

Read, in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, the chat he reports he has with a certain Cranly, his friend. He does not dare to state what it is he is entering into. Cranly presses him, harasses him, pesters him, to know if he will draw any conclusion from the fact that he says he has lost his faith, the faith in the teachings of the church which have been his education. It is clear that he does not dare to free himself from those teachings, because they are quite simply the armature of his thought. He plainly will not take the step of affirming that he no longer believes, he recoils from the cascade of consequences which would follow the act of rejecting the whole huge apparatus which remains his support. Cranly invokes him, urges him to take the step, and Stephen does not take it.

The question is the following: he writes that, and what he writes is the consequence of what he is - but to what point does this go? How far did this go, whose tricks - silence, exile and cunning - he gives, a means of navigation. I put the question to Jacques Aubert - is there not some trace in his writings of his making himself what he calls in his language a redeemer? Does he go so far as to substitute himself for what he manifestly has faith in - this redeemer, the true redeemer whom the priests tell him about in their twaddle (which in my opinion is what it is). Did he think he was the redeemer? I don't see why I shouldn't ask Jacques Aubert, his feeling for these things is as good as mine, since we're reduced to feeling [sentiment] - we are because Joyce has not spoken to us, he has written, and when one writes one can access the real, but never the true. Well, Jacques Aubert?

Aubert - There are traces, yes.

Lacan - That's why I'm asking the question, because there are traces.

Aubert - In *Stephen Hero*, for instance, there are very clear traces of that.

Lacan - The annoying thing is, it's never clear. In the *Portrait of the Artist*, it is not the Redeemer, but God himself, who is artificer, artist.

Aubert - If I remember correctly, the passages in which he describes the appeal of a false Christ, are equally those where he speaks of enigma of manner. This seems to correspond to the well-known period when he was fascinated by Franciscanism, in its two aspects, one concerning the imitation of Christ (we are

D'après les figures relevées par Diane Chauvelot

— noir
 --- bleu
 rouge

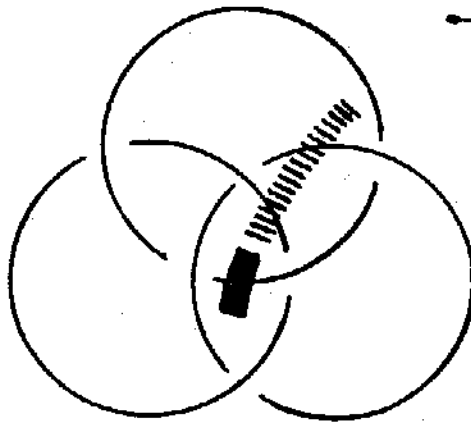


Fig. 1

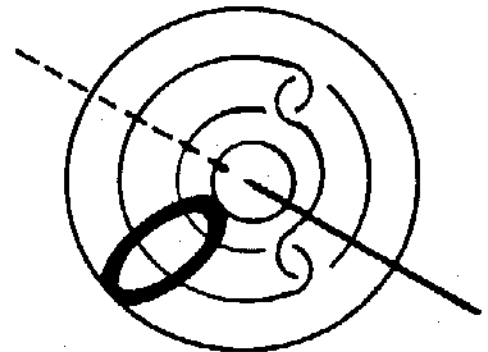


Fig. 3



Fig. 2

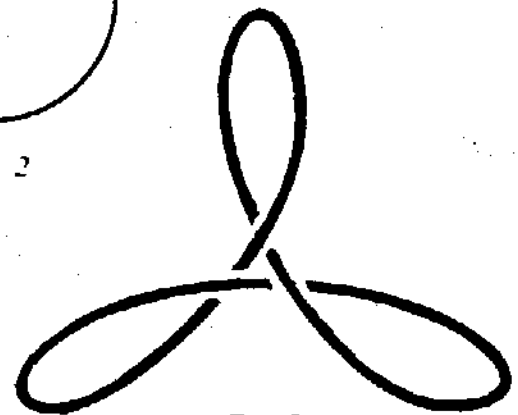
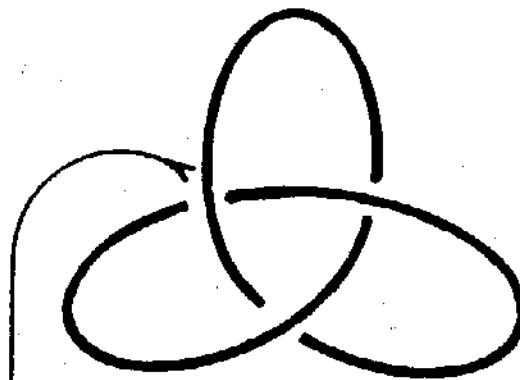


Fig. 5



Si vous changez quelque chose

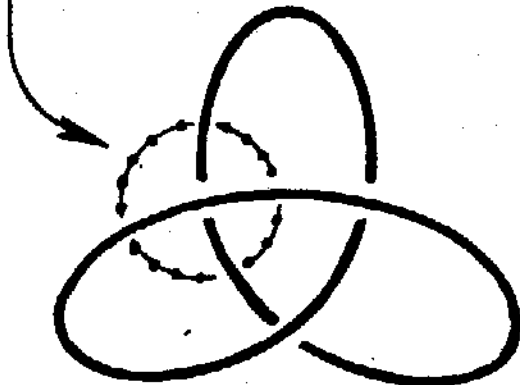


Fig. 6

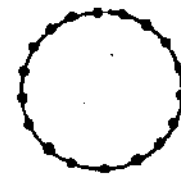


Fig. 7

all near to the Son, we imitate him) and the other poetry, the Little Flowers. And one of the texts which he looks through in *Stephen Hero* is not a theological, but a poetic text, by Jacopone da Todi.

Lacan - Yes, exactly. But how can the extent of his belief be determined? What kind of physics should be used? This is where I place my hope in my knots, with which I operate, for lack of any other recourse. I didn't get there straight away, but they provide me with things - things which tie things up for me, I should certainly say.

Fig 1) Knots have a dynamics, which has no use [ne sert à rien], but rather binds together [serre]. What can this bind together? Something one supposes to be stuck in these knots. Only, if one thinks that these knots are all that is real, how can there be space for something to be bound in? That there is, is certainly supposed by the fact that I place a point there, and it is not unthinkable to see the reduced notation of a cord, passing in there and out the other side. (fig 2)

Topology is based on this: that at the very least, without counting whatever else there is, there is the torus. My good friends Soury and Thomé (fig 3) have resolved the relations of the Borromean knot and the torus. The infinite line, if made to pass through here, makes the false hole into a true hole, in other words something representable in a diagram.

In fact, the diagram still poses a question. In what way is it appropriate? All we can say is that it is demanded by knots, as an artifice of representation, which is only a perspective, since we must supplement this supposed continuity at the moment when the infinite line is thought to emerge from the hole. What is the function of this hole? That of a ring. But a ring is not, like the line of a circle, a pure abstraction. We must give a body to the circle, in other words give it consistence, it must be imagined as having some kind of physical support, for it to become thinkable. Effectively, nothing thinks but the body.

Let us return now to the path of Joyce.

What is Joyce's relation to Nora? Oddly enough, I'd say it is a sexual relation, even though I say there's no such thing. But it's a funny kind of sexual relation.

Something one seldom thinks of is to turn the left-hand glove inside out, and put it on the right hand. This can be found lying around in Kant. But anyway, who reads Kant? It is very pertinent in Kant, but there is one thing he didn't think of, perhaps because in his day gloves didn't have buttons, which is that once the glove is inside out, the button is on the inside. Apart from this, the comparison would be completely satisfying. Well then, Joyce's inside-out glove is Nora - that is his way of thinking that she fits him like a glove.

For Joyce, there is only one woman, she is always modelled the same, and he only puts on his glove with the most intense revulsion. It is palpably only with the greatest of depreciations that he makes Nora into a chosen woman. Not only must she fit him like a glove, but she must be tight as a glove. She has absolutely no use. And when they are in Trieste it even gets to a point where every time she drops a sprog - I have to use these terms - there is a scene. It had no place in the programme. Things between Jim (as he is called when one writes

about him in a matey way, because his wife wrote to him under this name) and Nora start going badly as soon as there is a kid. Each time, there is a scene.

The button may well have something to do with the name of an organ. The clitoris is certainly the dark point in this business, metaphorical or not. This has, besides, some echoes in the behaviour which is not observed enough of what is known as a woman. It is very curious that a woman is so interested in, precisely, dark points. The first thing she does to her boy is to take the dark bits off him - it's a metaphoric expression of her wish that her own dark point should not take up so much space. It's always the button of the inside-out glove. There are women who sometimes have to go in for de-lousing, like monkeys, but one shouldn't muddle things up - squidging a bug and extracting a dark point are not the same thing.

Let's carry on with our journey. Imagining oneself to be the redeemer, at any rate in our tradition, is the prototype of what I write as père-version. It is to the extent to which there is a relation of the son to the father, and since a long time ago, that the barmy idea of the redeemer has emerged.

Freud tried to free himself from this sadomasochism, the only point where there is a supposed relation between sadism and masochism - sadism is for the father, masochism for the son - although these terms have strictly no relation between each other. To imagine that sadomasochism is explained by a polarity, one must really think an infinite line penetrates the torus, and believe in active and passive. Freud clearly saw something which is much more ancient than this Christian mythology, castration. The phallus is passed on from father to son, and it comprises something which nullifies the father's phallus, before the son has the right to carry it. It is essentially this symbolic transmission which is referred to in the idea of castration.

This is what has led me to pose the question of the relations between the symbolic and the real. These are highly ambiguous, at least in Freud. And this is where the question of the critique of the true is raised. What is the true, if not the true real? And how can one distinguish - if not by using some metaphysical term, Heidegger's *Echt* - the true from the false real? For *Echt* is after all on the side of the real. There, Heidegger's metaphysics comes to a stop - in this little bit about *Echt* he confesses, if I can put it thus, his defeat. (*échec*)

The real is situated in the entanglements of the true, and this is what led me to the idea of the knot; which results from this - the true is interpenetrated, due to the fact that its use creates meaning out of everything; and this because it slides, it is sucked up by the image of the bodily hole which emits it, namely the sucking mouth.

There is a dynamics of the gaze which is centrifugal, that is, which starts from the seeing eye, but also a dynamics of the blind spot - it starts from the moment of seeing, and takes it as a support. In fact, the eye sees instantaneously - this is what is called intuition, which redoubles what is termed space in the image. There is no real space. It is a purely verbal construction, which has been spelt out in three dimensions according to the so-called laws of geometry, which are those of the ball or the balloon imagined in kinaesthetics, in other words oral-anally.

The object I have termed a is in fact one and the same object. I have given it back the name object because it is ob, an obstacle to the expansion of the concentric, that is, engulfing, imaginary. Conceivable means can be grasped in the hand - it is the notion of *Begriff* - like a weapon. And, to invoke some Germans who weren't stupid, this weapon, far from being an extension of the arm, is from the beginning a weapon to be thrown. We didn't wait for bullets to throw the boomerang.

What appears from all this is that, in sum, all that subsists in the sexual relation is the geometry to which what we said about the glove made reference.

This is all that the human species has left to support this relation, and is why it is from the beginning involved in the business of inflating [soufflure, lit. 'blowing up' (e.g. balloons)], in which it has made the solid more or less fit. Nevertheless, we should differentiate between the outline of this solid and the solid itself. Now, what has the most consistence in this inflated, concentric sphere, is the cord - the cord which makes a circle, which turns round into a loop, unique in that it is part of the diagram.

What proves, after all, that the spiral is not more real than the ring? In which case nothing indicates that to join itself up, it has to make a knot, if it is not the falsely named Borromean knot, that is, a chain-knot [chainoeud] which naturally produces the trefoil knot, which derives from the splices of the noeud bo. (fig 4)

What is no less striking is that when it is reversed like this (reference to fig 5), it does not produce a trefoil knot. (fig 6)

It was immediately shrewdly observed that if you change something here in the passage underneath on this side of the knot, the entire knot is undone.

The question I raise at the end of this little chat, is about whether or not Joyce was mad. Why should he not have been? It's not a privilege. In most people, the symbolic, the imaginary and the real are entangled to the point where they are continuous, one to another, if it is true that there is no procedure to distinguish them in the so-called Borromean knot - for the Borromean knot is not a knot, it is a chain. Each of its loops is in continuity with the next in a non-differentiated way, and at the same time this is not a privilege only available to the mad. (fig 6) (fig 7)

This, purely and simply a ring, when folded produces this 8. We can provide a remedy for this schema by adding a loop to it, thanks to which the trefoil knot will not come unravelled. Does the case of Joyce not amount to a way of making up for this unknotting? Is Joyce's desire to be an artist who would occupy everyone, or anyway as many people as possible, not an exact compensation for the fact that his father had never been a father for him?

Not only did the latter teach him nothing, but he neglected just about everything, except for falling back on the good Jesuit fathers, the diplomatic church - the word diplomatic is from the text of Stephen Hero, but in the Portrait of the Artist too, the father speaks of the church as a very good institution, and the word diplomatic is likewise foregrounded.

Was it not in compensation for this paternal abdication, this Verwerfung in fact, that Joyce felt himself imperiously called - this is the very word,

17 Fev 1976

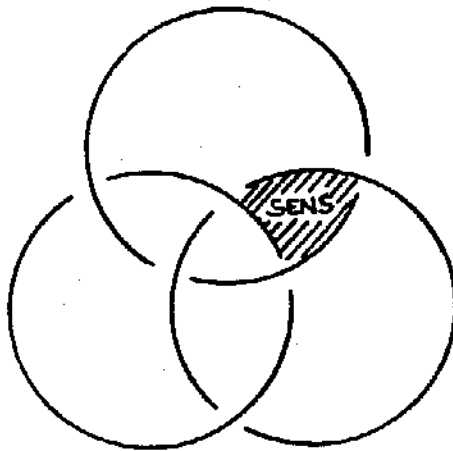


Fig. 1

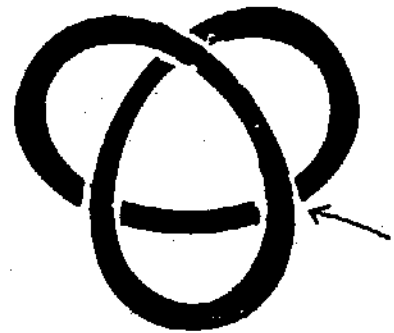
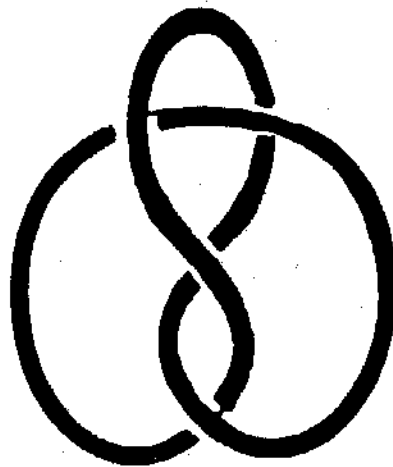
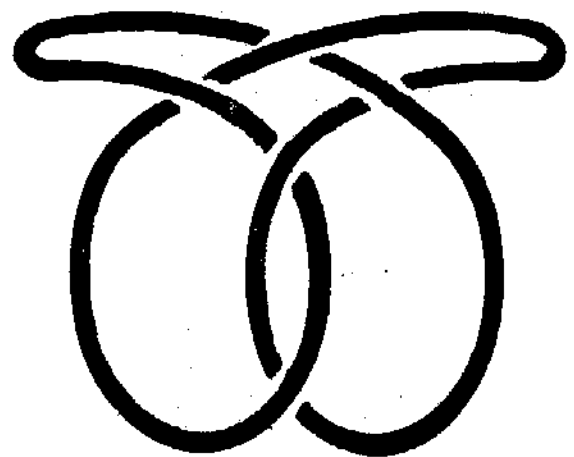


Fig. 2



Nœud de Listing
Fig. 3



Nœud de Lacan
Fig. 4

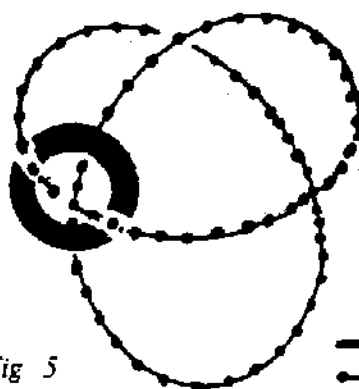


Fig. 5

— vert
... rouge

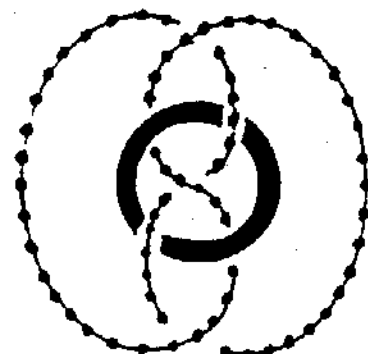


Fig. 5 bis

resulting from a mass of things in his text - to valorise his proper name at the father's expense? It was this name which he wished to be paid homage, the homage he had himself refused to pay to anyone. The proper name makes every effort here to be greater than the master-signifier.

A fiction which has been spread forever through history is that this subject had two names which were proper to him. That Joyce was called James too, is only followed on by the use of the nickname Dedalus. That in this way they can be heaped up in piles leads to only one conclusion - bringing the proper name back to the status of the common noun [nom commun].

That's where I've got to at this point. You must have had your fill [votre claque] even your jaclaque, since I would also add an han! which would express my relief at having got through this lot today. Thus, I reduce my proper name to the commonest noun.

7) 17th February 1976 : Imposed Speech

I had put some hope - don't think this is some coquetterie or titillation - in the fact that it was the holidays. Lots of people go away. At least in my clientele, this is striking. But not here. I see the doors are still bursting as ever, despite my hopes for a smaller audience, in return for which I was hoping to become confidential, to speak in a slightly more intimate manner. All the same, it would be nice if I could get some response, some collaboration, some interest.

But it seems to me difficult to take an interest in what is becoming a (re)search [recherche]. I mean that I am beginning to do what the word *recherche* implies - to turn round and round. At one time, when I was a bit strident, I used to say, like Picasso, I don't search, I find. Nowadays I have more trouble clearing my path.

The Borromean knot is no such thing; it is contradicted by its name, which like all names reflects a meaning; its meaning allows the location of meaning somewhere within the Borromean chain.

If we term this element of the chain the imaginary, this the real and that one the symbolic, meaning will be there (reference to fig. 1). We can have no hope of placing it anywhere else, because every thought we have is imagined, in the end. Only we don't think without words, contrary to what has been advanced by certain psychologists, those of the school of Wurzburg. (fig 2)

Last time, I remarked that a single fault anywhere in the triple knot was enough to reduce it to a simple ring. This does not happen automatically. For instance, take the quintuple knot. As there is a well-known quadruple knot (figs 3 & 4) known as Listing's knot, I've crazily named this one: Lacan's knot. If you make a mistake at either of these two points, the whole thing comes apart and one is left with a ring, as in the case of the triple knot. If, on the other hand, you go wrong at one of these three points, it remains a knot, a triple knot. So it does not follow, then, that an error at one point in a knot automatically dissolves the knot.

What I have defined for the first time as a *sinthome* is what allows the symbolic, the imaginary and the real to be held together, although no one is any longer linked to another, due to two faults. This does not make a triple knot, but it looks like one.

What I proposed very gently last time was that Joyce has a symptom whose origin is this: that his father was lacking, radically lacking - he speaks of nothing but this. I centred things around the proper name, and in my opinion it was by wanting to make a name for himself that Joyce compensated for the lacking father. I said this, because I was unable to say better, and I will try to articulate it in a clearer fashion. At any rate, Joyce's art is so particular that the term *sinthome* is very fitting for it.

It happens that last Friday, at my presentation of what is generally known as a 'case', I examined a case (of madness, certainly) which began with the *sinthome* *paroles imposées* ['imposed speech/words']. This, at least, was the articulation given by the patient himself, and it seems to me the most sensible kind of articulation I could describe as Lacanian. How is it that we do not all feel that the words on which we are dependant are, in a sense, imposed on us? It's true that a so-called 'sick' man sometimes sees more than what we call a normal person. Language [*la parole*] is a parasite; it is a veneer; it is the form of cancer which afflicts the human being. Why does the so-called normal man not notice this? There are some who go as far as feeling it, and Joyce gives us a taste of it.

Last time, I didn't mention his daughter Lucia (he gave his children Italian names), with the aim of not getting into storytelling. Well, she's still alive - in England, in a hospital, because she is what is usually termed a schizophrenic.

The case I was presenting had suffered a deterioration. Having had the experience, which for my part I think sensible, of words being imposed on him, he also had the feeling that he was affected by what he called telepathy - by which he meant, not that he was aware of what others were thinking, but that everybody else was aware of his thoughts, and in particular his reflections concerning the above-mentioned imposed words.

For instance, he heard *sale assassinat politique* ['dirty political assassination'] which he made the equivalent of *sale assistanat politique* ['dirty political assistantship']. The signifier can be clearly seen reduced here to what it is - equivocation, a twisting of speech. But in response to *sale assistanat* or *sale assassinat*, he said something to himself which started with a 'but...', and which were his thoughts on this subject. And what filled him with panic was the thought that any reflection he made in addition to what he thought of as imposed words, was known by everybody else.

He was, then, as he put it, a telepathic emitter, in other words he no longer had any secrets, and this was what had led him to attempt to end it all, which was another reason for him being there, and for my having to be concerned with him.

My reason for speaking to you today about Joyce's daughter Lucia is that Joyce, who fiercely defended the daughter, labelled schizophrenic, against the control of the doctors, had only one thing to say about her: my daughter is

17 Fev 1976

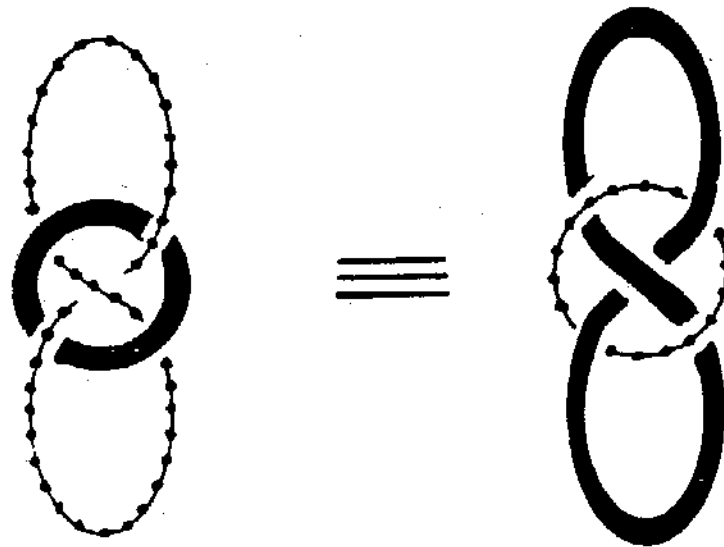


Fig. 6

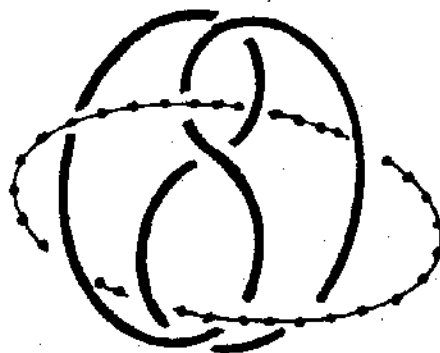


Fig. 7

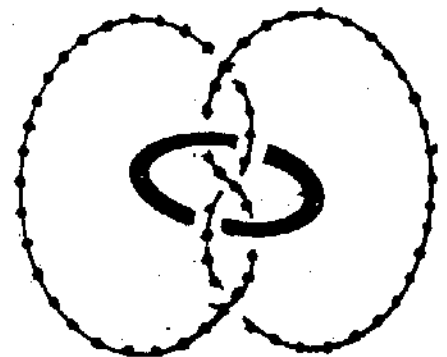


Fig. 8

telepathic. In the letters he writes about this, he states that she is far more intelligent than everyone else, that she informs him in a way that is miraculous - this is the word he implies - about everything that happens to a certain number of people, and that these people have no secrets from her. It's very striking. Not that I think that Lucia was in reality telepathic; but Joyce attributes this quality to her on the basis of certain signs, declarations which he understands in a special way. To defend his daughter, he attributes to her something which is an extension of what I will call, for the moment, his own symptom - namely that something was imposed on him at the locus of speech [à l'endroit de la parole].

In fact, in the continuing progress of his art - namely, that speech [parole] which comes to be written, to be broken, dislocated, so that in the end to read him seems an encounter with a continuing progress, from his first efforts in the critical essays, then in the *Portrait of the Artist* and in *Ulysses*, concluding with *Finnegans Wake* - it is hard not to see that a certain relation to language [la parole] is increasingly imposed on him, to the point where he ends up breaking or dissolving language itself, by decomposing it, going beyond phonetic identity.

Doubtless there is a reflection here concerning writing. It is through the intermediary of writing that language [la parole] breaks up at the moment of imposing itself as such, in a deformation which is always ambiguous - is it a matter of breaking free from the verbal parasite [parasite parolier], or, rather, of being invaded by its phonemic qualities, by the polyphony of language [la parole]?

At all events, the fact that Joyce declares Lucia to be telepathic seems to me, because of this patient whose case I considered, certainly indicative of something Joyce bears witness to at the same moment: the absence [carence] of the father.

My supposition is that what I am supporting with the sinthome - which is shown here as a loop of string_x - is produced at the very place where an error occurs in the knot's layout. (495)

Now, the slip [lapsus] is certainly the foundation, in part, of the notion of the unconscious. The joke is to be put under the same heading - it is not unthinkable that it derives from a slip. This is at least how Freud himself constructs it, as a short-circuit, an economy in relation to pleasure, to satisfaction.

So the sinthome is situated at the place where the knot slips, where there is a lapsus of the knot.

A knot is something which fails. Likewise, it is due to the consistence of the unconscious that there are heaps of failures. But is error [la faute], which is made into sin by the conscience, of the order of a lapsus? The word's ambiguity allows the passage from one meaning to the other. This original sin which Joyce makes so much of - does it contain something of the lapsus?

This is to conjure up a whole imbroglio. But we are caught up in it, in the knot, and by the same token in an entanglement [embrouille]. The lapsus occurs at a single point; but its consequences can be seen at two other points. There is thus an ambiguity concerning the way to correct it. What is left of the triple

knot's basic structure differs, according to whether the sinthome is positioned where the lapsus occurs, or at the other two points in the knot.

What is extraordinary is that things have something in common in the way they form knots, which is shown here by a certain direction or orientation - let's say by the fact that compensation turns to the right. But it remains that the result of compensation with the sinthome is different from what happens here and there (reference to fig 5) (...). (fig 6)

(fig 5) The red 8 with the green ring is strictly equivalent to its inverse. Take one, and you will easily get the other form. There is thus a strict equivalence. Now, after the path I've opened about the sexual relation, it is not hard to suggest that when there is equivalence, there is no relation. If we uphold the present equivalence - the fact that in both sexes there has been a failure, a failure of the knot - the result is that the two sexes are equivalent. Nevertheless, if the error is put right at the place where it occurred, the two sexes (here symbolised by two colours) are no longer equivalent. For if here you see what corresponds to what I have just termed equivalence, what then corresponds is this (reference to figure), which is far from being equivalent. (fig 7)

(fig 6) If one colour here can be replaced by the other there (fig 8) there can be no equivalence. The green cord will never be able to cross the outer band of the red double 8.

At the level of the sinthome there is thus no equivalence in the relations between green and red; there is no sexual equivalence - in other words there is a relation. Effectively, if we say that non-relation is a function of equivalence, it is to the extent that there is no equivalence that the relation is structured. There is no relation except where there is sinthome. It is the sinthome which supports the other sex. I would go so far as to say that the sinthome is the sex which I don't belong to, that is, a woman. A woman is a sinthome for every man. Another name must be found for whatever man is for a woman, as the sinthome is characterised by non-equivalence. Man is anything you like for a woman, an affliction worse than a sinthome, a devastation even.

That there should be no equivalence is the only basis for what is known as the sexual relation in the human speaking-being [parlêtre]. Is this not what we see demonstrated by what is termed clinical work, that is, in bed? When we see human beings in bed, and not only in hospital beds, it is there, anyway, that we can get an idea about this oft-mentioned relation.

Everything I hear on another bed, the famous couch where people tell me all about it, shows that there is a slender link, to be defined, between the sinthome and the real of the unconscious - if the unconscious is indeed real.

How can we know if the unconscious is real or imaginary? It takes part in an ambiguity between the two. But thanks to Freud, we are involved in it, and this on the basis of sinthome. Henceforth, we have to do with the sinthome in the sexual relation, which Freud held to be natural (which is meaningless).

8) 16th March 1976

My only excuse - the truth is, I need an excuse, at least in my own eyes - my only excuse for telling you something today is that it is going to be meaningful. In exchange for this I will not achieve what I want.

What I want is to give you a bit of real [un bout de réel]. I come down to thinking that something meaningful could function provisionally. But this provisional quality is fragile. I mean that I'm not sure how long it will be able to function.

These days, I'm very preoccupied with Joyce. Joyce is stimulating. This is what is suggested by him - but it remains only a suggestion, an easy way of presenting him; in exchange for which, and this is certainly his importance, everyone breaks a tooth there - even my friend Jacques Aubert, who in this is one of the most distinguished, and before whom I feel unworthy.

Jacques Aubert cannot - no more than anyone else, no more than a certain Adams, who has produced masterpieces in this genre - manage an easy way of presenting him. I am going to show you what this is linked to, perhaps, in a moment.

I, too, have dreamt of this easy way of presenting him. I dreamt about it last night. Obviously [évidemment] - évidemment as one says - you are my public, but I'm not an actor. What I told you about was the way in which (not being an actor - I'd call it a pen-pusher [scribouillard], rather) I judged characters other than my own, in which obviously I departed from my own. Or rather, I had no rôle. It was something in the genre of the psychodrama - which is an interpretation.

That Joyce caused me to dream of functioning in this way must have a value. A value which is moreover not easy to define, since anyone can be subject to this suggestion, that there should be a Joyce who can be managed. The suggestion is based on the fact that psychoanalysis exists, and many folk go charging off down that path. But it is not, all the same, because I am a psychoanalyst, and by that token too interested, that I must refuse to envisage this today.

There is an objectivity about this. Joyce is an affreud. And he is an ajoyce. All objects - except the object I term a, which is an absolute - are linked to a relation. The tedious thing is, there is language, and relations are expressed there by epithets. Epithets force one to 'yes or no'. A certain Charles Sanders Pierce has based his logic on this, which because of the emphasis he placed on the relation, led him to a trinitary logic.

It is absolutely the same path that I follow, except that I call the things in question by their names - symbolic, imaginary and real, in the right order. For to be forced to 'yes or no' is to be forced to the couple; there is a relation between language and sex - a relation which is certainly not yet completely defined, but which I have, so to speak, broached.

There, you see that! I realise that by using the word broach I have used a metaphor - and what does it mean, this metaphor? I can speak of metaphors in a general sense. But what this one means, I will leave you the trouble of

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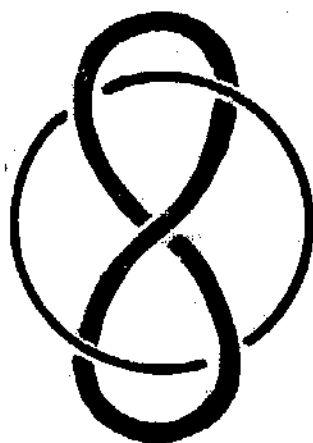


Fig. 1

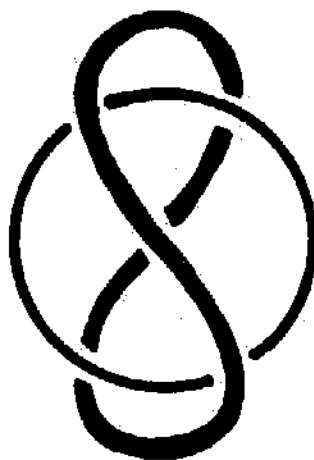


Fig. 2



Fig. 3

D'après les figures relevées par Diane Chauvelot.

discovering. Metaphor indicates only this: the sexual relation. Except that it proves in fact - from the fact that it exists - what the sexual relation is: mistaking a bladder for a lantern. This is the best way to express a confusion - a bladder can be made into a lantern provided a flame is placed inside it, but so long as there is no flame, it is not a lantern.

Where does the flame come from? The flame is the real. The real sets fire to everything. But it is a cold flame. The fire which burns is a mask, as it were, of the real. The real is to be sought on the other side, on the side of the absolute zero. It has, all the same, been reached. There is no limit to the high temperatures that can be imagined, no limit that can for the moment be imagined. The only thing belonging to the real is the lower limit. It is this that I term something which can be orientated. Because that is what the real is.

There is an orientation. But this orientation is not a meaning [sens]. What does this mean? It means that I am taking up what I said last time, by suggesting that meaning is perhaps orientation, but orientation is not meaning, because it excludes the sole fact in which meaning consists: the copulation of the symbolic and the imaginary.

The orientation of the real, in my formula, forecloses meaning. I say this because last night I was asked whether there were other kinds of foreclosure than the one which results from the foreclosure of the Name-of-the-Father. Without doubt, foreclosure is to some extent more radical, since the Name-of-the-Father is, in the end, something quite light-weight. But it can certainly function there, in place of the foreclosure of meaning by the orientation of the real, which we have not yet reached. We must break through into a new imaginary in relation to meaning. This is what I'm trying to establish with my language.

This language has the advantage of laying a wager on psychoanalysis, in that I'm trying to set it up as discourse - that is, as the most realistic pretence [le semblant le plus vraisemblable]. In sum, psychoanalysis is an example, nothing more, of a short-circuit which passes through meaning - as I defined it a minute ago: the copulation of language (as it is with this that I support the unconscious) with our bodies.

I should tell you that in the meantime, I've got together with Jacques Aubert somewhere, without you being invited, and there I made a few reflections on what the English call the ego and the Germans the Ich.

The ego is a thing which I've been thinking about with a knot, a knot which was thought up by a mathematician by the name of Milnor. He has invented an idea of a chain: link (reference to fig. 1.).

(fig. 2) This is a knot. You must see that it's knotted. But supposing, says Milnor, you allow that in any chain, a particular element can traverse itself, you will then have this, which immediately shows you that what went under here, in the centre, goes over there - there is no longer a knot, a link.

(fig. 3) I propose to your sharp intellects the following observation: if you double each of the elements in the first knot - so that instead of having one here, you have two going in the same direction - it is (however unlikely this may seem to you - I hope you will check this, I haven't brought my drawings, and I won't risk

showing you how this wriggles about) radically impossible to separate the four elements.

In the light of this, what does my argument mean - in the seminar *Encore*, it would seem (because, of course, I never read the seminar; it is others who read it) - against the equivalence proposed by some people - I've completely forgotten who - between S (barred A) and the function Φ - I don't say the little ϕ , but the big Φ , which is a function such that there exists an x for which that function is negative: $\exists x. \Phi x$?

Of course, the ideal state of the matheme is that everything corresponds. Indeed, this is exaggerated by the matheme for the real, for, contrary to what one imagines (I don't know why), it is not the end of the real. As I said a moment ago, we can only get hold of bits of real (bouts de réel).

The real, that which is in question in what is called my thought, is always a bit, a core - around which, certainly, thought embroiders, but which is its cicatrice. This real is not, as such, linked to anything. This, at least, is how I conceive of the real and its little moments of historical emergence.

There was, one day, a certain Newton, who found a bit of real. This was bloody frightening only for those who were thinkers, in particular one Kant. One could say that Newton caused an illness. And moreover everyone, all the thinking beings of the time, caused one, each in their own way. It rained down on not only men, but also on women. Mme du Châtelet wrote a whole book on the Newtonian System, which is utter rubbish. It is extraordinary, all the same, that when a bit of real is reached, it has such an effect. But this should be the starting-point. It is the very sign that the core has been reached.

I am trying to give you a bit of real, concerning this in which, in the skin of which, we exist - in other words the skin of that implausible history, the human species. And I say to you that there is no sexual relation. But it's embroidery. It is embroidery because I take part in 'yes or no'. From the moment I say there is no, it is already very likely not to be truly a bit of real, because the cicatrice of the real is that it is linked to nothing.

One only recognises oneself in what one has. One never recognises oneself - this is implied by what I advance, and by the fact recognised by Freud that there is an unconscious - in what one is. This is the first step of psychoanalysis.

What one is is of the order, when one is a man, of copulation - that is, of what redirects so-called copulation into the equally, and significantly, so-called copula constituted by the verb to be. In its inflection by the copula, language is proved to be a twisting path which is completely obscure. Obscure is only a metaphor there, because if we had a bit of real, we would know that the light is no more obscure than the shadows, and vice versa.

The metaphor copula is not in itself a proof. It is the way the unconscious proceeds. It gives only traces, and traces which not only efface themselves, but which any use of discourse tends to efface, analytic discourse included. You yourselves will only think of erasing the traces of my discourse, because it is I who began by giving the discourse its status: starting from the disguising [faire semblant] of the objet a. Man takes up 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. This decided filth must be passed through, so that something in the order of the real may perhaps be found [retrouver].

You see, I use the word (re)find [retrouver]. (Re)find is already a slippage, as if everything it concerns had already been found. This is the trap of history. History is the greatest of fantasies. Behind history, the factual history historians are interested in, there is myth, and myth is always captivating.

The proof is Joyce, who having borne careful witness to the sinthome of Dublin, being only inspired by what is his own, does not fail to do something fabulous: to fall into the myth of Vico which sustains *Finnegans Wake*. The only thing which protects it is that *Finnegans Wake* is presented as a dream, and, moreover, portrays Vico as a dream as well. In the end, so are the babblings of Mme Blavatsky, the Mahanvantara and everything which comes with it, the idea of a rhythm which I myself relapsed into with my *retrouver* above. We do not refind, or rather we only ever turn in circles. We find.

The one advantage of this *retrouver* is to highlight my point - that no progress is known, that we turn in circles. But there is perhaps another explanation, that there is no progress but marked by death, which Freud underlines by triebing death, by making it into a *Trieb* ['drive'], which is translated in French (I don't know why) by *pulsion* - what about the word *dérive*? The death-drive is the real in so far as it can only be thought of as impossible - that is to say, that every time it peeps round the corner it is unthinkable.

We cannot hope to approach that impossibility, because it is unthinkable; it is death, of which the foundation of the real is that it cannot be thought. What is incredible is that Joyce, who had the greatest contempt for history (although in fact his contempt was futile) - he described history as a nightmare, which unleashes against us the great evils he stresses cause us so much harm - could find in the end only this solution: to write *Finnegans Wake*, albeit as a dream, which like every dream is a nightmare, even if it be a mild nightmare. Except that he says - and this is how *Finnegans Wake* is made - that the dreamer is no particular character, it is the dream itself. In this, Joyce slides towards Jung, towards the collective unconscious. There is no better proof that the collective unconscious is a sinthome than Joyce, for one cannot say that, in his imagination, *Finnegans Wake* does not form part of this sinthome.

The sign of my entanglement is indeed Joyce, in that what he advances in a singular artistic manner - he knows how to - is the sinthome, such that there is no way it can be analysed.

I said this recently - a rock-solid catholic like Joyce, who could never say that he wasn't well brought up by the Jesuits, a true catholic (but of course there are no true Catholics here, you lot weren't brought up by the Jesuits) - can a catholic be analysed?

On this question someone (Jacques-Alain Miller, of course, who did not waste the chance) reminded me that I had said the same thing about the Japanese. I stick to it. It is not for the same reason. Since that evening at Jacques Aubert's you weren't invited to, I've seen a Japanese film. It was in a

little cinema, you couldn't have been invited to this either, and anyway I would not have wished to give you bad ideas. I was, properly speaking, flabbergasted, because it was feminine eroticism. From this, I've begun to understand the power of the Japanese. Feminine eroticism seems to be taken to its extreme there, and this extreme is neither more nor less than the fantasy of killing the man. But even that is not enough. After he has been killed, one must go further. After - why after? That is what is in doubt. The Japanese woman in question, who, it should be said, is the mistress of his partner, cuts his cock off. One wonders why she didn't cut it off before. Because it's a fantasy, nothing else - I don't know how it happens after death, but there is a lot of blood in the film, I would prefer the erectile tissue to be staunch, but after all I know nothing about it, this is something which I said a moment ago was in doubt. Here, one clearly sees that castration is not a fantasy. It is not so easy to situate its function in analysis, as it can be fantasmatized [fantasmatisée].

At which point I come back to my capital Φ , which could also be the first letter of the word fantasy. This letter situates the relations of what I will term a phunction of phonation. Here, contrary to what is thought, is the essence of Φ , a phunction of phonation which is found substituting the male, said to be man, as such. The signifier which I have only been able to support with a complicated letter of mathematical notation, $S(\text{barred } A)$, is something else entirely. It is not this with which man makes love. In the end, man makes love with his unconscious, and nothing more. The woman's fantasy, if this is what the film shows us, is certainly something which completely prevents the encounter. The intermediary - in other words the instrument one uses for copulation - is, obviously, chucked in the bin. This is not of the same order as what is at stake in my $S(\text{barred } A)$, which records that there is no Other, apart from where there is supplying [suppléance], that is, the Other as the site of the unconscious, that which I've said is how man makes love, in another sense of the word with - that is the partner.

I am sorry to have found nothing but the bar for our purpose. There is one bar which any woman knows how to cross, the bar between the signifier and the signified, as the film I've just referred to showed you. But there is another bar, which I place over the Φ . I regret, moreover, not having made it in the same way as the other, for like that it would have been more exemplary. It says: there is no Other which would respond as a partner - the whole necessity of the human race being that there should be an Other of the Other. This is what is generally called God, but which analysis unveils as, quite simply, The woman.

The only thing which allows her to be called *The* - since I've told you that The woman does not exist (and I have more and more reasons to believe so, especially after seeing that film) - is that, like God, she is fecund [pondeuse, 'produces children']. Only, the progress which analysis leads us to make, is to perceive again that the myth of The makes everything emerge from a single mother, namely Eve; there are only particular women who are fecund. Concerning which I recalled, in the seminar *Encore* it seems, the meaning of that complicated letter, the signifier of this: there is no Other of the Other.

There you are. Everything I tell you there is nothing but meaningful, and therefore full of risks of going-astray, as all history proves. This is all that has ever been done. If I run the same risks, it is really rather to prepare you for what else I could tell you, in an attempt to produce a *folisophy* less sinister than that of the Book said to be of Wisdom of the Bible. I recommend you to read it. It is sober, and of an excellent tone. Catholics rarely read it. It could even be said that Catholicism has consisted over the centuries in preventing its followers from reading the Bible. But in order to found wisdom on lack, which is the only way to found it, it's really not bad at all, it's amazing.

Will I ever be able to tell you - this must not only be a dream - what would be called a bit of real [bout de réel], in the true sense of the word bout I specified a while ago?

For the moment, it could be said that Freud himself produced only things that were meaningful, and that this deprives me of all hope. It is not, for all that, a reason not that I should just hope to do it, but that I should not really achieve it one day.

9) 13th April 1976 : The Real is without law

I should like today, since I have occasion - it's my birthday - to be able to verify whether or not I know what I talk about.

Speech aims, despite everything, to be understood. I would like to verify whether I am not content to talk for my own sake - as everyone does, of course, if the unconscious has a meaning (I say again: if the unconscious has a meaning).

I would have liked someone to write something which would justify this labour I have been putting myself through for around twenty-two years, a little more; for someone to invent something which could be of use to me. I am convinced that this is possible. Today, I ask you to ask me a question which pays me back.

I have invented what is written as the real.

Naturally, it is not enough to write it real, because quite a few folk have done this before me. I have written this real in the form of the borromean knot which is a chain. One of its three minimum elements I call real.

These three elements chained together produce metaphor. This is nothing more than a metaphor of the chain. How can something which is nothing but number produce metaphor?

This metaphor is called the figure [le chiffre]. There are a certain number of ways to keep track of figures. The simplest is what I have termed the unary trait [trait unaire]. Marking traits or points is enough to indicate a number.

Energetics is nothing but the manipulation of a certain number of numbers, from which one isolates a constant number. Freud, taking his reference from science such as it was conceived in his time, only produced from it a metaphor, which he was not even able to maintain in a realistic manner. The notion of a constant, for instance, linking stimulus to response, is impossible to

uphold. The idea of an energetics of the psyche has also never been given a true foundation.

In the metaphor of the Borromean chain, I claim to have invented something. What does it mean to invent something? Is it an idea, this idea of the real? It is not an idea which is sustainable.

What is an idea? Reduced to its analytic value at least, an idea is what comes to you when you are on the couch. But whether one is lying on a couch or standing upright, the chain-effect which is obtained by writing cannot be thought, cannot be imagined, easily - at least in my experience. One does better to break off from it beforehand, if one wishes to succeed in giving it written form - which you have been able to witness a hundred times, in the slips of my pen as I have tried to produce a writing to symbolise that chain.

I consider that having articulated the real in question in the form of a writing has what is generally called a traumatic value.

Not that it has been my aim to traumatise anybody, certainly not my audience, for whom I have no reason to wish this. Let's say that it is a forcing. The forcing of a new writing which, through metaphor, has a bearing which must certainly be termed symbolic; the forcing of ideas which are not the kind that bloom spontaneously, simply due to the production of meaning - that is, due to the imaginary.

This renders palpable, brings to the hand's grasp - but in a completely illusory manner - what reminiscence may be. Concerning something which has the function of an idea without being one, one imagines it is due to reminiscence, so to speak. In this, reminiscence is distinct from memory [la remémoration]. Freud distinguished these two functions, and it must be said that he had a sense for distinctions. But memory is evidently something he forced, due to the term impression. His supposition was that things imprinted themselves on the nervous system. Why provide them with letters? There is no reason for an impression to be represented by a letter. There is a world of difference between a letter and a phonological symbol.

I have, in a sense, given the networks of the Project a new, more rigorous form; I have made them into something which, instead of being simply woven together, form a chain. But it is not easy to integrate them into what is already there, which is called knowledge.

Effectively, I have attempted to be rigorous by revealing that what is upheld by Freud as the unconscious always supposes a knowledge, and it is a spoken knowledge. The minimal supposition allowing the unconscious to be interpreted is that it should be reducible to a knowledge.

Following this, it is clear that this knowledge requires at least two supports, which one calls terms, symbolizing them with letters; thus the way I write knowledge as supported by S - not squared, but S supposed to be number 2, S². The supporting function of S index1 - S₁ - is to represent a subject as such, to represent it truly. Truly means, in this instance, in conformity with reality. The true is speech which conforms to reality, which in this instance is what functions, what functions truly.

Only, what functions truly has nothing to do with what I indicate as the real. It is a precarious supposition that my real - I must indeed refer to it in my name - conditions reality - for instance, the reality of your listening. There is a gulf there, which we are far from confident of crossing. In different terms: the instance of knowledge revived - I mean, renewed- by Freud in the form of the unconscious, does not in any way necessarily suppose the real which I employ.

I have got lots of Freudian things going, I've even entitled one of the things I've written 'The Freudian Thing' - but in what I term the real, I have invented something which imposed itself on me.

To the imaginary and the symbolic, that is, to things which are quite alien to each other, the real brings the element which is able to hold them together. This is something which I can say I consider nothing more than my symptom. It is my own way of taking what Freud dreamed up to the second degree - of taking the symptom itself to the second degree. If Freud really made a discovery, and supposing that it is true, it could be said that the real is my symptomatic response to it. But to reduce it to something symptomatic is at the same time to reduce all invention to a symptom.

Let's move on to something else. From the moment when one has a memory, does one have a memory? By saying one has it, does one do more than imagine that one has it, that it is at one's disposal? I would prefer to say 'at one's dire-sposal', ie., that it has to be said [on a à dire].

Here, the English language has all sorts of resources. 'I have to tell' - the translation, j'ai ... dire is, moreover, an anglicism. But that not only 'have', but 'ought' can be said - 'I ought to tell' causes the slippage. J'ai à dire becomes je dois dire. In this language, one can put the accent on the verb, and say 'I do make' - I insist that this 'making' is only fabrication. One can also separate negation and say 'I don't', je m'abstiens de faire. 'I don't talk', je ne choisis pas de parler. Don't talk what? In Joyce's case, it's Gaelic.

This implies that one chooses to speak the language which one actually speaks. In fact, one only imagines having chosen it. And what resolves the question is that, in the end, one creates this language. One creates a language to the extent that at each moment, one gives it meaning. At each moment one gives the language which one speaks a little prod, without which it would not be living. It is only living in so far as it creates itself at every instant. This is why there is no collective unconscious, only particular unconsciousnesses.

It is a question for me, then, of knowing whether or not I know what I say to be true. It is for each of you here to tell me how you understand it. It is not certain that what I say about the real is any more than blathering on. To say that the real is a symptom does not prevent this also being the case for energetics, which I mentioned a moment ago. The privilege of energetics is that, providing that one's manipulations of it conform to a certain mathematical teaching, one always deals with a constant number. But one realizes that this is a pre-established requirement - the constant must be obtained, and this is what constitutes energetics. The thing which allows the constant to be obtained is supposed to be in conformity with reality. But I make a distinction between the supposed real of that organ - which has nothing to do with a bodily organ, and

by which the imaginary and the symbolic are knotted together - and what functions as the foundation of the science of reality.

In this knot on the board, I show a field distinct from the real, which is that of meaning. In this respect, one could say that the real both has, and does not have, a meaning. That the real has no meaning is what is illustrated by this - with meaning here, and the real there, in distinct fields. Meaning is the Other of the real. As for the symbolic, its quality is to be particularised as hole - but the true hole is here, where it is shown that there is no Other of the Other. In the place of the Other of the Other, there is no order of existence.

To sum up, what Freud dreamed up is antipathetic to energetics. And the only concept which can fill the place of so-called energetics is that which I have put forward with the term real.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

I will read you what people have had the goodness to write to me, which is no worse after what I've said - that the real is linked to writing.

-If psychoanalysis, the question is put to me, is a symptom - I never said that psychoanalysis was a symptom - is not what you are doing, with your knot and your mathemes, deciphering it, with the consequence of dissolving its signification?

I do not think that psychoanalysis is a symptom. I think that psychoanalysis is a practice whose efficacy, despite everything tangible, implies my knot-making. I am not sure that the distinction between the real and reality is caught up with the value I give to the term real. As the real is stripped of meaning, I'm not sure that the meaning of this real couldn't be illuminated by being thought of as no less than a symptom.

To the question which I am asked, I respond - if I support the unconscious with this rough topology, this is because I think I can state with certainty - because my practice comprises it - that the function of the unconscious is not without reference to the body, and this is why the function of the real can be differentiated from it.

If, according to Genesis in André Chouraki's translation, God creates for man a help against him, what is the psychoanalyst a help against?

I think that the psychoanalyst can, effectively, only conceive of himself as a symptom. It is not psychoanalysis which is a symptom, it is the psychoanalyst. Psychoanalysis is, in the end, a help which one could describe, in the terms of Genesis, as a turning-back. That the Other of the Other, that little hole, can provide a help - it is in this that the hypothesis of the unconscious finds its support. The hypothesis of the unconscious, as Freud stresses, can only be sustained by supposing the Name-of-the-Father. To suppose the Name-of-the-Father is God. In this psychoanalysis, when it

succeeds, proves that the Name-of-the-Father can just as well be by-passed, as long as use is made of it.

Is not every speech-act, the coup de force of a particular unconscious, a collectivization of the unconscious?

If every speech-act is the coup de force of a particular unconscious, it is quite clear that every speech-act can hope to say something, and this saying gives onto something theorised, theory being the support of all kinds of revolution - a theory of contradiction. One can say things which are very diverse, contradicting each other, and that from that a reality emerges which is presumed to be revolutionary. But this is what has never been proved. It is not because there is contradictory bustling-around that nothing has ever come out of it constituting a reality. One can only hope.

What limits do you set to the domain of metaphor? It's a very good question. It is not because the straight line is infinite that it has no limits. For, the question continues - is it infinite, the domain of metaphor, like the straight line, for instance?

The status of the straight line certainly deserves reflection. The fact that a line which is cut is finite as it has limits does not imply that an infinite line has no limits. It is not because the finite has limits that a line which has what is called an infinite point, ie., which forms a circle, is enough to provide a metaphor of the infinite. The straight line is, actually, not straight. The ray of light seems to offer such an image, but according to the latest news from Einstein, it is flexible, it curves. How can a straight line which sometimes bends be conceived? My question about the real implies that one can ask this. Lenin expressly declared that a straight line could be bent, and he captured it in a metaphor - a baton, which is roughly an image of a straight line, can be bent, and at the same time can be straightened out. What could be the definition of the straight line outside the support of what is called, at close range, the ray of light? There is none other than what is termed the shortest path from one point to another. But how can the shortest route from one point to another be known?

I always expect you to play on ambiguities. You have said: There is a one. You have spoken to us of the real as impossible, you do not rely on a possible. Concerning Joyce, you speak of imposed words. You do not rely on the Name-of-the-Father as One posited [Un posé].

I don't set any special store by sacred ambiguities. It seems to me that I demystify them. There is a One, and it is certain that this One is a heavy load for me. I can only do things with it - since, as everyone knows, the One is not a number. I speak of the real as impossible to the extent that I think, precisely, that the real - if it's my symptom, tell me - must be said to be without law. The true real implies the absence of law. The real has no order. This is what I mean

when I say that the only thing I will perhaps one day be able to articulate before you is something concerning what I've called a bit of real.

What do you think of the contradictory bustling-around which has been going on in China for several years?

I am waiting, but without any hope.

The point is defined as the intersection of three planes. Can this be said to be real? Writing, inscribing, as an alignment points - are they real in your sense?

There is no common point between everything in the chain which is consistent - it certainly excludes the point of the real. That a figuration of the real can only be maintained by the hypothesis that there is no common point, no connection, no Y in writing, implies that the real does not comprise the point as such.

Does the constant number you speak of have a relation to the phallus, or the phallic function?

I think - in so far as my thought is something more than a symptom - that the phallus can absolutely not be a sufficient support for what Freud conceived as energetics. What is striking is that he himself never saw this.

Someone has written to me in Japanese. I would like the person who sent me this text to translate it for me.

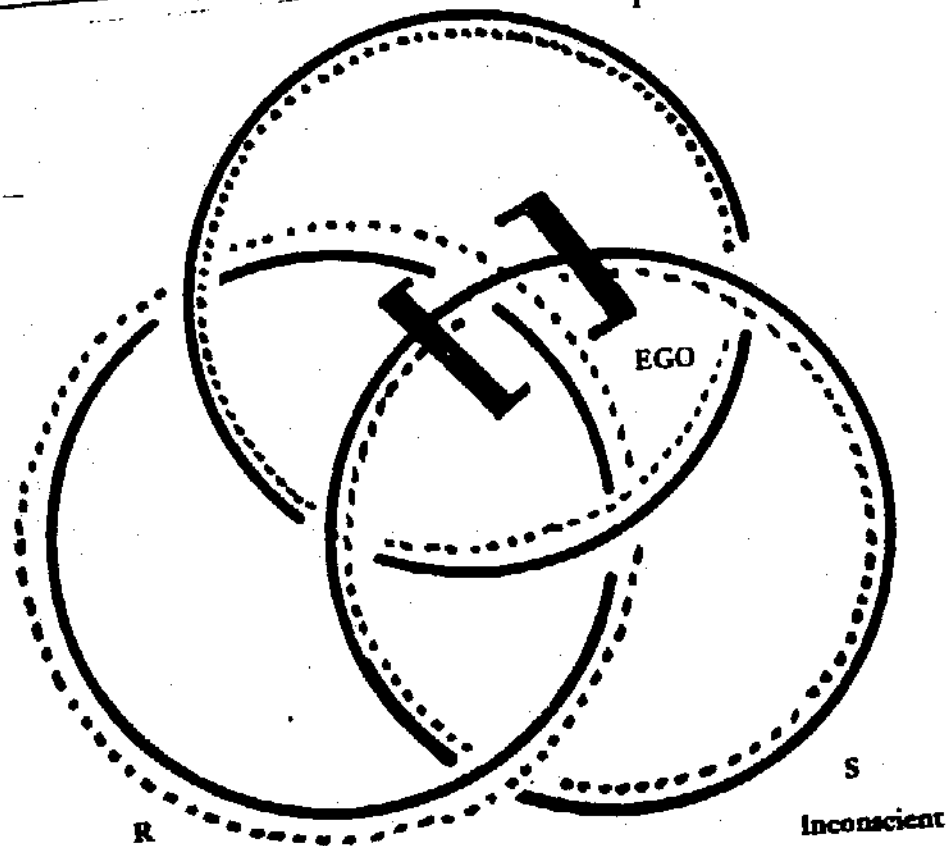
Are you an anarchist? Certainly not.

What can be the status of a response made to something dreamed up, based on which it would define itself as a symptom?

It was a question, in my comments of a moment ago, of the dreaming-up of the unconscious. You have certainly perceived that I had to lower the symptom a notch to think of it as homogeneous to the dreaming-up of the unconscious, and that it presents itself as knotted together with it. I reduced the symptom in response, not to the dreaming-up of the unconscious, but to the reality of the unconscious. Certainly, even in this form it implies a third term to keep these two loops of thread separate. This third term could be anything. But if the symptom is considered as the equivalent to the real, this third term could only be, in this case, the imaginary. After all, one could produce a theory of Freud by making this imaginary, namely the body, into what keeps separate the whole constituted by the knotting-together of the symptom and the symbolic.

Is your bent cigar a symptom of your real?

11 Mai 1976



Dessin relevé par Diane Chevelot

Certainly. My bent cigar has the closest relation to the question I raised about the straight line, which is likewise bent.

10) Le Sinthome 11th May 1976

Last time, I confessed to you that a strike would have suited me very well; because I had no desire to tell you anything, being myself uneasy. It would be very easy for me to find another excuse - that the mike isn't working, for instance - not that this time I do not have something to say to you. But it is certainly true that last time I was too tangled up with my knots and Joyce to have the least wish to talk to you. I was uneasy. Now I am slightly less so, because I think I've found some things, in the end some transmissible things. I have been rather active, clearly - I mean that it provokes me, this difficulty, so that I spend every weekend desperately trying to work out something which won't go. What won't go is the fact, having found what is called, in the end, the Borromean knot, I am trying to force things, because Joyce had absolutely no conception of the Borromean knot. Not that he didn't make use of the circle and the cross. They talk of nothing else, in fact, and someone called Clive Hart, an eminent scholar who has devoted himself to commentary on Joyce, makes a great deal of this use of the circle and the cross in the book he has entitled 'Structure in James Joyce', and particularly concerning *Finnegans Wake*.

The first thing I can tell you, then, is this: I wish that the expression 'it must be done', in current usage, had not been so over used, as it fits so naturally the fabrication of the knot: it must be done. What does that mean? It comes down to writing it. What is striking, curious, is that this knot which I describe as Borromean - you should know why - is a support for thinking. I will allow myself to illustrate this with a term which I must write: 'support for un-thinking' [appui à l'appens,e], allowing la pens,e to be written differently. It is a support for thinking which justifies the writing I have just put on that little piece of white paper for you, it is a support for thinking, for 'un-thinking'. But it is curious that this 'support' is necessary, that it has to be written to get anything from it, because it is quite apparent that it is not easy to represent this chain - for it is a chain, not a knot, in reality - it is not easy to see how this Borromean chain only functions in thinking (now cutting la from pens,e). It is not easy, even at the simplest level, and this indicates what the knot brings with it. It must be written to see how it functions, this noeud bo. Which makes one think of something mentioned somewhere in Joyce, 'on Mount Nebo the law was given to us'.

A writing is thus an act [un faire] which provides a support for thinking. Properly speaking, the noeud bo in question completely changes the meaning of writing. It gives writing an autonomy, and an autonomy which is all the more remarkable in that there is another writing, which is what Derrida has emphasised, namely the result of what could be termed a precipitation of the signifier. Derrida has laid emphasis on this, but it is quite clear that I showed

him the way, for the fact that I found no other means of supporting the signifier than writing it 'S' is already a sufficient indication. But what remains is that the signifier, in other words what is modulated in the voice, has nothing to do with writing. This, in any case, is what is perfectly demonstrated by my noeud bo. It changes the meaning of writing, it shows that there is something to which signifiers can be attached - and how can these signifiers be attached? Through the intermediary of what I term dit-mension - in my way of writing it: the mention of speech. The advantage of that way of writing it is that 'mention' can be extended to mensonge ['lie'], thus indicating that what is said is not necessarily true.

In other words, the speech [dit] which results from what is called philosophy is not without a certain lack, a lack which I am trying - trying - to fill [suppléer] with recourse to what can only be written in the noeud bo, what can only be written for something to be taken from it. It is no less true that what there is of filia in philosophy can take on a significance: that of time as it is thought. And what I put forward is that writing in this instance changes the meaning, the mode of what is at stake - and what is at stake is this filia of wisdom. What is wisdom? It is what is not very easy to support other than with the writing of the noeud bo itself. So that in the end - forgive my infatuation - what I am doing, what I am trying to do with my knot, is nothing less than the first philosophy which, it seems to me, can be supported. This is simply the introduction of these noeud bos, of the idea that they support a bone [os], a bone which is as it were a sufficient indication of something I'll term os-bjet, which is certainly what characterises the letter which I link to it, the letter a. And if I reduce this os-bjet to a, it is precisely in order to mark the fact that the letter here is nothing less than a testimony to the intrusion of a writing as other - as 'other' with, precisely, a small a. The writing in question comes from somewhere other than the signifier.

My interest in this business of writing does not date from yesterday - the first time I put it forward was when I spoke about the unitary trait, the einziger Zug in Freud. I have given this unitary trait another support through the Borromean knot, which I haven't yet shown you - in my notes I have written it DI (droite infinie, 'straight line'). The straight line in question - it is not the first time you've heard me talk of it - is something I characterize as equivalent to the circle. By combining two straight lines and a circle, you have the essentials of the Borromean knot. Why does the straight line have this quality? Because it is the best illustration of the hole. Topology shows us that there is a hole in the middle of a circle, and one even starts trying to imagine what its centre would be, which extends to all sorts of expressions (the nervous centre, for instance, which no-one knows the exact meaning of). The straight line has the quality of having the hole all around it. It is the simplest support of the hole.

So what does this give us as a reference to analytic practice? That man, and not God, is made up of a trinity of what we'll call elements. What is an element? An element is that which makes One, in other words the unitary trait; that which makes One, and which, because of this, sets in motion substitution. The characteristic of an element is that it goes into a combinatory. Thus, Real,

Imaginary and Symbolic - which after all amounts, it seems to me, to the other triad which, according to Aristotle, goes to make up man: νοῦς, ψυχή, σῶμα (or will, intelligence and affectivity).

What I am trying to introduce with this writing is nothing less than what I'll call a logic of the sack and the cord; because there is obviously a sack whose myth, as it were, consists in the sphere. But nobody, it seems, has sufficiently considered the consequences of the introduction of the cord, that the cord proves that a sack is not closed unless it is tied, and that in every sphere we must imagine something, which is of course at every point of the sphere and which knots it, making it something one can blow into, knots it with a cord.

People write their childhood memories. This has consequences: it is the passage from one writing to another. I will speak to you in a moment about Joyce's childhood memories, because I clearly have to show how this so-called logic of sack and cord is something which can help us to understand how Joyce functioned as a writer.

Psychoanalysis is something different. Psychoanalysis goes through a certain number of utterances. No-one says that psychoanalysis puts one on the path to writing. This is exactly what I'm trying to set before you with my language: that it's worth looking long and hard when someone turns up asking, in the name of some inhibition, to be put in the position of writing. For my part, I think carefully when I'm asked that (it happens to me as to everyone), because it's not at all clear that it can be achieved with psychoanalysis. This calls, properly speaking, for an investigation into what it means to write. And what I am going to suggest to you today concerns, very precisely, Joyce. It came to me all at once, as a whole [*dans la boule*] - a boule which here is far from being spherical as it is attached to everything we know - that with Joyce something happened - in a way which I think I can account for - so that what is generally called the ego played a quite different role to the simple role it plays for the everyday mortal. With him, the ego fulfilled a function which I can only account for with my mode of writing.

What put me on the track of this is worth indicating. It is that writing is absolutely essential to his ego, which he illustrated when [...] someone went to see him and asked him something about a picture, the reproduction of a view of the town Cork. Joyce, who knew how to catch people out, answered that it was Cork; to which the chap said, 'Yes, I know, it's obviously the main square in Cork, I recognize it - but what is that around it?' To which Joyce replied, 'cork'. This is given as an illustration of the fact that in Joyce, in what he writes, there's always more - you only have to read the little schema of Ulysses he gave to Stuart Gilbert (and a rather different one he gave to Linati and Valéry Larbaud). Every single thing he brings together, everything he narrates to make up the work of art that is Ulysses, is in a relation of homonymy, at least, with the way it is framed. That each chapter of Ulysses is given as support a certain mode of framing, termed for instance 'dialectical', 'rhetorical', 'theological', is for him linked to the very materiality of what he narrates. And, of course, this does

not fail to suggest my little rings, which are also the support of a certain framing.

In question is the following: the consequences of an error [faute] not entirely caused by chance. For psychoanalysis teaches us that an error is never the result of chance, that behind every slip there is a signifying finality - in other words that the error aims, if there is an unconscious, to express something; not simply something that the subject knows, because the subject is situated in the division, the relation of one signifier to another, that is the life of language, which is something completely different to what is simply called life, for what signifies death for the somatic subject has its place in drives, which have to do with what I have just called the 'life of language'

The drives in question have to do with the relation to the body, and the relation to the body is not in anyone a simple relation. Not only does the body have holes, this is even, so says Freud, what should have put mankind on the track of these abstract holes which concern the utterance of anything at all. The something, briefly, which is suggested by this reference, is what one should try to extricate from an essentially muddled idea, that of eternity. It is an idea which is connected to nothing but thought time, *filia*, which I mentioned just now. One thinks, and sometimes one even talks wildly, about an eternal love. One has truly no idea what one says! Is it the other life, as it were, that is understood by that? You see how everything gets involved, and where this idea of eternity, which nobody knows the meaning of, leads you!

As for Joyce, I'd like to read you something here - but in fact you know it is available, you can read it in French, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. There Joyce tells us this: for some reason - connected with Tennyson, Byron, some poet anyway - his friends tie him up against a fence and give him a beating. The friend leading the gang was called Heron - not an indifferent term, this *eron* - who beats him, helped by the others; and afterwards Joyce wonders why, now the thing is over, he has nothing against him. Joyce expresses himself - as should be expected from him - very aptly: I mean that he metaphorizes nothing less than his relation to his body. He observes that the whole affair has emptied out; he expresses this by saying that it's like a fruit being peeled. What does this tell us? It indicates something which is so imperfect for all human beings, the relation to the body - who is there who knows what goes on in his body? This is clearly something extraordinarily suggestive and it is even, for some people, what gives meaning to the unconscious. But if there is one thing that I have carefully articulated from the beginning, it is precisely that the unconscious has nothing to do with the fact of one's ignorance about many things concerning one's own body, and that what one knows is of a quite different nature. One knows things to do with the signifier. The ancient notion of the unconscious as *Unbekannte* was precisely something supported by our ignorance of what went on in our bodies; but the Freudian unconscious - this is something worth stressing here - is exactly what I have said, namely the relation that exists between a body which is foreign to us and something which is a circle, or rather a straight line (they are equivalent), which is the unconscious.

What meaning can we give to that which Joyce bears witness to, in other words not simply the relation to his body but, as it were, the psychology of that relation (for, after all, psychology is nothing but that - the confused image we have of our own body). But this confused image is not without a component - let us give it its name - of affects; in other words, if we imagine this psychical relation, there is something in the psyche which is affected, which reacts, which is not detached - as Joyce testifies, having been beaten up by his 4 or 5 friends, there is something which simply slips away, like the skin of a fruit. This is striking, that there should be people who have no affect when subjected to bodily violence. There is something, moreover, which is ambiguous about it: it gave him, perhaps, some pleasure; masochism is in no way outside the possibilities of sexual stimulation for Joyce, as he emphasized sufficiently in the case of Bloom. But I would say that what is more striking is the metaphor he uses, the detachment of something like the skin of a fruit. This shows that he did not experience jouissance, but rather - this is something which is valid psychologically - he had a reaction of disgust, and this disgust relates to his own body. It is like someone who expels a bad memory, puts it in parenthesis. This is absolutely left as a possibility in the relation to his own body as foreign [étranger]. And this is just what is expressed by the use of the verb 'to have': one 'has' a body, one 'is' not it in any way; and this is what leads to belief in the soul - there's no reason to stop there, so one ends up thinking one has a soul, which is the last straw.

This kind of 'dropping out', the 'dropping out' of the relation to the body, is highly suspicious to an analyst. This idea of the self, of the self as body, has something of significance. This is what is termed the ego. If the ego is said to be narcissistic, this is because something at a certain level supports the body as image. But in the case of Joyce, is not the fact that this image is not here engaged - is that not a sign that the ego has a quite particular function on this occasion? How can that be written in my noeud bo?

So now I'm going to trace, go through something which you might not necessarily follow. How far does père-version go, so to speak (written, as you know, in my way)? The noeud bo does just that: it sanctions the fact that Freud makes everything depend on the function of the father. The knot is nothing but the translation of the fact, which I was reminded of last night, that love - and beyond the marketplace, love one could describe as eternal - is what relates back to the function of the father, addressing him in the name of this: the father is the bearer of castration. At least, that is what Freud puts forward in Totem and Taboo, in other words in referring to the primal horde: it is because the sons are deprived of women that they love the father. It is actually something quite unique, quite staggering, which only Freud's intuition sanctions. But I am trying to give that intuition another body, with my noeud bo which is so apt to evoke Mount Nebo, or, as is said, the Law - the Law which has absolutely nothing to do with the laws of the real world (which are an entirely open question). The Law here is simply the law of love, in other words perversion.

It is very curious that learning to write - to write my Borromean knot, at any rate - has a function. And what I am about to illustrate is this: imagine that

there is somewhere, there for instance [reference to *mise à plat*], a mistake, in other words that the writing makes an error there; what will this lead to? You will certainly not have imagined that the Borromean knot has, in its own nature, an imaginary aspect; here, as you see, the ring 'I' there can simply take its leave. It slips away: exactly in the manner of what Joyce feels after receiving his beating. It slips away, the imaginary relation has no place. It has no place in this instance, and this makes one wonder whether Joyce's intense interest in perversion had perhaps a different signification. Maybe, after all, the beating did disgust him; maybe he was not a true pervert. Because it is quite a task to imagine the reason why Joyce is so unreadable. If he is so unreadable, it is perhaps because he arouses no sympathy in us. But could not something be suggested in all this by the fact - quite visible, actually - that he has an ego of a totally different kind than the ego which does not function, precisely at the moment of his revulsion, which fails to function immediately after this revulsion? For he manages to become detached from himself - that's for sure - but afterwards, I'd say, he no longer recognizes having suffered that beating.

So what I'm suggesting is this: that one supposes the correction of that error, fault or lapsus here - I mark it on the board there, one passing over the other. After all, nothing is simpler to imagine: why should a knot not be Borromean, why shouldn't it come undone? I have made thousands of mistakes drawing it on the board. There is exactly what happens, when I embody the ego here as the correction of the lacking relation, of what does not knot itself in a Borromean way, as that which knots together the real and the unconscious in the case of Joyce.

Through this artifice of writing, I would say that the Borromean knot comes to be restored. As you see, it is not a question of one of the faces of the Borromean knot, but of a thread. Ordinary geometry is where we get the word 'face' from - polyhedrons are full of faces, stops and summits - but the knot (actually a chain here) presents us with a quite different dimension, which I would describe - in contrast to the evident quality of a geometrical face - as 'voided' [*vid.*]. And because it is voided, it is not 'evident'.

Someone once asked me why I didn't say the truth about the truth. I do not say the truth about the truth, because the truth is that it is a lie. 'In-tension-al' truth (allow me to write it 'in-tension', as distinct from 'ex-tension') can, from time to time, touch on something of the real; but if it does, it is by chance. One can never over-estimate the frequency of errors in writing. The lapsus calami has no primacy over the lapsus linguae, but it can be conceived as touching the real. I am quite clear that my knot is that by which - and uniquely by which - the real is introduced as such. There's no point in getting worked up about that; it doesn't amount to all that much. I am not the only one who handles it. Equally, I make use of it because it serves me in explaining things to you. My fooling around, with the feeble means I have, can certainly be tolerated - as that's exactly what you do. But it is a way of articulating precisely this: that all human sexuality is perverse, if we follow carefully what Freud says. He never succeeded in conceiving that sexuality as other than perverse, and that is the very reason I question what could be termed the fecundity of

psychoanalysis. You have heard me very often declare this, that psychoanalysis couldn't even be bothered to invent a new perversion. That's sad - because, after all, if perversion is the essence of man, what a lack of fecundity in this practice.

Well, I think that thanks to Joyce we are reaching something I had not imagined. I had not immediately imagined it, but it came to me with time - to consider Joyce's text, the way it is made. It is made exactly like a Borromean knot, and what is striking, also, is that this totally escaped him, in other words there is no trace of anything like it in his whole oeuvre. But that seems to me, however, a sign of authenticity. Had I stopped there, what I would have found striking, when reading the text and especially the commentaries on it, is that not only is the Joycean text teeming with enigmas, but it could be said that he played on that, in the knowledge that there would be joyceans for two or three hundred years. These people are occupied uniquely with resolving the enigmas - namely, at least, why Joyce put it in that way. Of course, they always find a reason - he put it in that way because there's such-and-such a word right after it. In the end it's exactly like my tales of os-bjet, mensonge or dit-mension just now. In my case, there are reasons, I wish to express something, I equivocate. But with Joyce, one always loses what I could call his Latin (especially as he knew a bit of Latin).

The enigma, then, is something in which luckily I took interest at one time. I wrote it Ee - it being a question of the enunciation and the statement [énoncé] - and the enigma consists in the relation of the E to the e, in other words why the hell a particular statement has been pronounced. The enunciation is the enigma. When the enigma is taken to the power of writing, it is something worth pausing over. Would this not be the result of the sewing-up which is so badly done by an ego whose function is enigmatic and reparatory?

That Joyce is the writer of the enigma par excellence is what I urge upon you - I could have given you dozens of examples if it wasn't so late - but I advise you to go and verify this for yourselves. *Ulysses* exists in a French translation, reprinted by Gallimard, if you don't have the old edition of Sylvia Beach's day.

I'm going to indicate a few small things which seem to me notable, before leaving you. You must be aware of what I've told you about man's relations to his body, which entirely consist - this is what I've told you - in the fact that man says that he has a body, his body. To say 'his' is already to say that he possesses it, like he possesses a piece of furniture, and this has nothing to do with anything allowing a strict definition of the subject. The subject can only be defined correctly as a signifier as it is represented for another signifier.

I would also like to say something which might perhaps even slow down a little the gulf opening in what we are able to grasp of this perversion, by using the Borromean knot. There is something which one is astonished to see is no longer of any use to the body - not a body, but the body as such: that is dance. This would allow me to write the term 'condensation' a little differently...

Is the real straightforward [droit]? That is the question I'd like to put to you today. I'd also like to point out that in Freud's theory the real has nothing to do with the world. Because what he explains, about something concerning precisely the ego, namely the Lust-Ich, is that there is a stage of primary

narcissism, and that this stage is characterised, not by the absence of a subject, but by the absence of a relation between interior and exterior. I will certainly have to come back to this - not necessarily before you, because after all I am not certain at present that next year I'll still have this amphitheatre.

I must say a few more words - it's something I've prepared - about the 'epiphany', the famous Joycean epiphany, which one encounters at every turn. Please note this, when he gives a list of his epiphanies: that they are always distinguished by the same thing, that they are the result of a mistake, namely that the unconscious is linked to the real. It's an amazing thing, which Joyce himself does not describe otherwise. It is absolutely legible in Joyce that the epiphany is where, due to a mistake, the unconscious and the real are knotted together.

There is something - today I have been a bit slow, but that's because I wanted to be understood - there is something I want to draw for you here. If you have some idea of the meaning of a Borromean knot, I'll show you this: that, if this is the ego as I drew it for you just now, we are situated to see the Borromean knot reconstitute itself in the following way: here is the real; here is the imaginary; here is the unconscious; and here is Joyce's ego. You can easily see on the schema that the rupture of the ego sets the imaginary relation free. It is easy to imagine that the imaginary will bugger off - if the unconscious allows it to, and it incontestably does.

There you have what I wanted to point out in this last session. One thinks against a signifier - that is the meaning I gave to the word *appensé* - one leans against a signifier in order to think. There you go, you are free.

Sollers' neologism plays on *les langues*, the plural of Lacan's *lalangue*, and *élan* ('speed', 'surge'). Cf. Philippe Sollers, 'Joyce & Co', in *In the Wake of the Wake*, ed David Hayman and Elliott Anderson, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978.

* *l'Evie* - punning in French on *les vies*, 'lives'.

* I've put in so many enigmas and puzzles that it will keep the professors busy for centuries arguing over what I meant, and that's the only way of insuring one's immortality'; Ellman, James Joyce, *op.cit.*, p.521.

* See seminar of 16th March 1976 (number 8 in my translation;p.), for another reflection on the translation of Freud's *Trieb*, this time preferring *drive* to *pulsion*.

* Playing between *pens,e* (thought) and *panser* (to dress, bandage), Lacan's pun is untranslatable (except perhaps in a roundabout way, 'which I a-dress in my thought').

* *r,ellement* - *le réel mentant* - cf. seminar of 18th November 1975 for this trope.

* Lacan's metaphor refers to the idea of a subjective *trousse* (plait, braid), in which certain strands cluster into tufts or clumps; under 'flocculate', Chambers has 'to aggregate in tufts, flakes or cloudy masses'. For more on Lacanian flocculation, see SVII, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, *op.cit.*, p.102.

* *se trouvent le terme* implies 'set a limit, almost 'function as a terminus' (cf terminale two lines above)

- Punning on panser, 'to dress (a wound)'.
- Actually, Stephen doesn't teach at Trinity, but at a rather less exalted academy - the village Boys' School at Dalkey; Ulysses, op.cit., p.20ff.
- Lacan's parenthetical comment - 'the translation is Les Exils, but it could just as well mean Les Exils' - perhaps suggests differing senses of exiler - 'banishment'/'(self-imposed) exile'.
- Ce sont donc des propos à la cantonnier - Aubert re-plays one of Lacan's jokes, punning on his name by claiming to speak à la cantonnade ('to everyone in general')
- Cf Ulysses, op.cit., p. 350.
- Literally, 'under-put'; Aubert puns on supposer by introducing sous as its first syllable. This is then (see below) expanded into a play between supp^t ('underling') and sous-pot (-peau?) ('under-pot/-skin').
- Aubert contrasts Valéry Larbaud's translation - Est-ce pour ça qu'Ophélie s'est suicidé? - with the original English text of Ulysses (1922) - Why Ophelia committed suicide? - to suggest that semantic possibilities are erased in translation. Gabler's 1984 edition omits the final question-mark (perhaps making Bloom's thought into a less curious, more melancholy reflection?).
- Cf. Ulysses, op.cit., p.276. Aubert has 'polled'(or 'indented') the quotation from 'Cyclops' somewhat; but see below.
- Stephen Hero, op.cit., p. 216.
- Ibid.
- Aubert paraphrases a passage in 'Scylla and Charybdis' (U,170) on the 'mystical estate' of fatherhood as foundation of the church (thus 'founded, like the world.....upon the void').
- Ulysses, op.cit., p.103
- Dubliners, op.cit., p.174
- Not quite what Gabriel says; but see ibid, p.177.
- Martin Cunningham, not J.J.O'Molloy, is telling the company about Bloom's father.
- Dubliners, op.cit., p.183
- Connolly, Thomas E., ed. James Joyce's Scribbledhobble: The Ur-Workbook for 'Finnegans Wake', Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1961.
- Selected Letters of James Joyce, ed. Richard Ellmann, op.cit.
- Lacan's pun makes perversion into a 'turning to the father'.
- Joking about the audience having 'had it up to here', vous devez en avoir votre claque, Lacan invents another pun on his name, by adding a han (phew!).
- Lacan puns on videment, 'scooping-out', 'hollowing-out'.
- Tri-lingual punning: affreux in French means 'horrible', 'frightful'; Freud's name is a rough 'translation' in German of Joyce (freude, 'joy'); the prefix a- seems to imply negation (as in 'James Joyless', one of Joyce's versions of his name).
- ...prendre une vessie pour une lanterne is a proverbial French expression for error, something like, in English, 'to think the moon is made of green cheese'.
- As a translation for the Freudian Trieb, Lacan looks to the English term drive (itself avoided by Strachey, who notoriously prefers instinct in the Standard Edition), which, subjected to a Joycean 'pun', becomes dérive ('drift'). This idea

had appeared a long time before - for instance, on January 13th 1960 (SVII), in the seminar L'Ethique de la Psychanalyse, op.cit., p.90.

· "History, Stephen said, is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake."
Ulysses, op.cit., p. 28.

· Cf. Ellmann, James Joyce, op.cit., p.551.

· A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, op.cit. pp.82-3.