

**THE SEMINAR OF JACQUES LACAN**

**BOOK XIV**

*The logic of phantasy*

*1966-1967*

Translated by Cormac Gallagher from unedited French manuscripts

FOR PRIVATE USE ONLY

~~Finally, I will end on the reminder of what Freud indicates to us, in an articulated fashion, about what is involved in the relation of thinking to language and to the unconscious.~~

So, the logic of phantasy. We will begin from the writing of it that I already constructed, namely, from the formula: *S barred diamond small o* (\$ **o**). I recall what the *S* barred signifies: the *S* barred represents, takes the place in this formula of what it returns from concerning the division of the subject, which is found at the source of the whole Freudian discovery and which consists in the fact that the subject is, in part, barred from what properly constitutes it *qua* function of the unconscious. This formula establishes something which is a link, a connection between this subject as thus constituted and something else which is called **small o**. **Small o** is an object whose status what I am calling, this year, "constructing the logic of phantasy", will consist in determining - its status, precisely, in a relation which is a logical relation properly speaking.

A strange thing, no doubt, which you will allow me not to go into. I mean what this term phantasy suggests in terms of a relation to *phantasia*, to the imagination. I will not give myself the pleasure, even for an instant, of marking its contrast with the term logic with which I intend to structure it. The fact is, no doubt, that phantasy as we claim to instaure its status is not so fundamentally, so radically antinomical as one might first think to this logical characterisation which, properly speaking, disdains it. Moreover, the imaginary feature of what is called the **o**-object will appear still better to you - in the measure that we will mark what permits it to be characterised as a logical value - to be much less related, it seems to me, at first sight, to the domain of what is properly speaking the *imaginary*. The *imaginary*, rather, is attached to it, surrounds it, accumulates in it. The **o**-object has a different status. Undoubtedly, it is desirable that those who listen to me this year (3) should have had the opportunity last year to get some grasp, some idea of it. Of course, this **o**-object is not something which is yet, so easily - for all and especially for those for whom it is the centre of their experience, the psychoanalysts, even more - has yet, as I might say, sufficient familiarity for it to be, I would say, presented to them without fear or indeed even without anxiety.

"What have you done then," one of them said to me, "what need did you have to invent this little **o**-object?"

I think, in truth, that taking things from a broader horizon it was about time. Because, without this **o**-object - whose incidences, it seems to me, have made themselves widely enough felt for the people of our generation - it seems to me that much of what is done as analyses, of subjectivity as well as of history and of its interpretation, and specifically of what we have lived through as contemporary history, and very specifically of what we have, rather crudely, baptised with a most improper term, under the name of totalitarianism ... Anyone, who after having understood it, is able to occupy himself in applying to it the function of the category of the **o**-object, will perhaps see there being illuminated what it returned from, in that for which we still lack, in a surprising manner, satisfying interpretations.

The barred subject, in its relation to this **o**-object, is joined in this formula written on the board, by this something which is presented as a lozenge shape, which I earlier called the diamond (*le poinçon*), and which, in truth, is a sign that was forged expressly to join together in itself what can be isolated from it, depending on whether you separate it with a vertical stroke or with a horizontal stroke.

Separated by a vertical stroke, it represents a double relation which can be read in the first place as greater (>) or lesser (<): \$ smaller or indeed greater than big O. \$ included or in fact excluded from big O [*sic*]. What does that mean, if not that what is suggested at the first level of this conjunction, is something which, logically, is called the relation of *inclusion* or again of *implication*, on condition (4) that we make it reversible and which is articulated ... (I am going quickly, no doubt, but we will have time to expand and to take these things up again; today, I am indicating to you, it is enough for us to take some suggestive steps) ... this relation which is articulated in a logical articulation, which is called: *if and if only S barred* in this sense, namely: the *diamond shape* being divided by the vertical bar, is the subject barred from this relation of *if and if only* with the **o**-object.

~~This brings us to a stop. There exists, then, a *subject*. This is, logically, what we are forced to write at the origin of such a formula. Something, here, is proposed to us which is the division between *de facto existence* and *logical existence*.~~

~~*De facto existence*, of course, refers us to the existence of *beings* (the word *beings* between two bars) *speaking beings* - or not. These are in general living. I am saying "in general", because it is not at all necessary: we have the stone table companion who does not exist only on the stage where Mozart brings him to life, he walks around among us quite habitually!~~

~~*Logical existence* is something different and, as such, has its status. There is something of the subject (*du sujet*) from the moment we do logic, namely, when we have to handle signifiers.~~

~~What is involved in *de facto* existence, namely, that something results from the fact that there is something of the subject at the level of beings who speak, is something which like every *de facto* existence requires that a certain articulation should already have been established. Now, there is nothing to prove that this articulation takes place directly, that it is directly because of the fact that there are living beings or others who speak, that they are for all that and in an immediate fashion determined as subjects.~~

~~The *if and only if* is there to remind us of it. I am justifying here for you, the articulations we are going to have to go through; but they are themselves sufficiently unusual, sufficiently untraveled, for me to think I ought to indicate to you the general line of my plan in what I have to explain before you.~~

~~The small **o**, for its part, results from an operation which has a logical structure which is carried out not *in vivo*, not even on the living being, not at all properly speaking in the confused sense that the term 'body' preserves for us - it is not necessarily the 'pound of flesh', even though it could be, and that after all when it~~

~~multiplied by  $(a - b)$  equals ...  $a!$  In order for this to be equal to  $o$  (when  $o$ , of course, is naturally not this  $O$  here that I was speaking about). [The convention adopted by the translator requires this switch from  $a$  to  $o$ ]~~

~~The  $O$ , here, we are going to make (like earlier, when it was a question of obtaining 2) we are going to make equal to 1. It is to be clearly understood that it is  $(1 + i)(1 - i)$  which is equal to 2.~~

~~$(1 + o)(1 - o)$  gives  $o$ , on condition that  $o$  is equal to this golden number - it is worthwhile repeating it - that I am using to introduce, for you, the function of the little  $o$ -object. Verify this: when small  $o$  is equal to the golden number the product of  $(1 + o)(1 - o)$  is equal to  $o$ . [A note in the margin of one French manuscript says: "Jacques Lacan's golden number is thus the inverse of the golden number of the mathematicians"]~~

~~This is where I am going to suspend for a time, the time of the lecture that I have to finish, what I wanted to propose to you in terms of a logical *grid*.~~

(11) Let us now come to consider what is involved as regards the sexual act.

What is going to be of use to us in dealing with it, is what justifies the fact that earlier I introduced Marx's formula.

Marx tells us, somewhere in the *Philosophical manifestos*, that the object of man is nothing other than his very essence taken as object; that the object also to which a subject refers, by essence and necessarily, is nothing other than the proper essence of this non-objectified subject.

People, some of whom are among those who are listening to me, have clearly shown, the aspect that I would describe as primary, of this Marxist approximation. It would be curious if we were to be very far ahead of this formulation.

This object that is at stake, this proper essence of the subject, but objectified - are we not the ones who can give it its veritable substance?

Let us start from the fact - on which we have based ourselves for a long time - that there is a relation between what psychoanalysis states on the subject of the fundamental law of sex: the prohibition of incest - in so far as for us it is another reflection, already very sufficient, of the presence of the *third* element in every sexual act, in so far as it requires the presence and foundation of the subject.

There is no sexual act - this is the entry of psychoanalysis into the world - which does not carry the trace of what is called incorrectly, the traumatic scene, in other words, of a fundamental referential relation to the parental couple.

You know how things are presented at the other end. Levi-Strauss: *The elementary structures of kinship*, the order of exchange on which there is established the order of

kinship. It is the woman who pays the price, it is women who are exchanged. Whatever they maybe: patriarchal, matriarchal, is does not matter! What the logic of inscription imposes on the ethnologist is to see how the women travel between the lines of descentance.

It seems that between one and the other there is some gap. Well then, this is what we are going to try today to indicate: how this gap, for us, is articulated. In other words, how, in our field, it is filled.

We noted earlier that the origin of economic unmasking, demystification, is to be seen in the conjunction of two values of a different nature. This indeed is what we have to deal with. And, for the psychoanalyst, the whole question is this: seeing that what creates a problem about the sexual act is not *social*, since it is here that the principle of the social is established, namely, in the law of an exchange.

Exchange of women or not, this does not concern us yet. For if we perceive that the problem is of the order of value, I would say that, already, everything begins to be sufficiently illuminated, by giving it its name. At the source of what is reduplicated, (12) of what duplicates, in its structure, value at the level of the unconscious, there is something that takes the place of exchange-value, in so far as, from its false identification to use-value, there results the foundation of the object of merchandise. And one can even say more: capitalism is necessary for this choice, which far anticipates it, to be revealed.

In the same way the status of the subject, as science forges it, is necessary - this subject reduced to its function of interval - for us to perceive that what is at stake, in terms of the equalising of two different values, is suspended here between *use-value* - and why not?, we will see this later! - and *jouissance-value*.

I underline: *jouissance-value* plays here the role of *exchange-value*.

You ought, right away, to sense clearly that this function of *jouissance-value* is something that concerns the **very heart** of analytic teaching. And that, perhaps, this is what is going to allow us to formulate in a completely different fashion what is involved in castration. For, after all, if something is accentuated, in the very notion, however confused it may still be, in the theory of instinctual maturation (*maturation pulsionnelle*), it is all the same the fact that there is no sexual act - I mean in the sense that I have just articulated its necessity - which does not involve (a strange thing!) castration.

What do we call castration?

It is not, all the same, like in the formulae so nicely put forward by little Hans that "the little tap is unscrewed"! For it is necessary for it to remain in its place. What is in question, is what is displayed everywhere, moreover, in analytic theory, is that it cannot take its *jouissance* in itself.

I am at the end of my lecture today. So that here, you can be sure, I am abbreviating. I will come back to it the next time. But it is simply to accentuate the following, from

which I would like to start; namely, what this equation of two values, described as *use* and *exchange*, contains as essential for our material.

Imagine man reduced to what has to be described - he has never yet been reduced institutionally - to the function that the stallion has among domestic animals. In other words, let us use English, where as you know, to say *une chèvre*, you say a *she-goat*, which means an *elle-bouc*. Well then, let us call man, appropriately, a *he-man*. It is quite conceivable, instrumentally. In fact, if there is something that gives a clear idea of use-value, it is what one does when one brings along a bull to cover a certain number of times. And it is quite curious that no one should have imagined inscribing the elementary structures of kinship in this circulation of the all-powerful phallus!

It is a curious thing. It is we who discover that it is the woman who represents this phallic value!

(13) If *jouissance* - I mean penile *jouissance* - carries the mark described as that of castration, it seems that it is in order that, in a way that we will call with Bentham, "fictional", the woman should become what one enjoys (*jouit*).

A singular pretension! Which opens up to us all the ambiguities proper to the word, *jouissance*, in so far as in terms of the juridical development that it involves since then, it implies possession.

In other words, here is something turned inside out. It is no longer the sexual organ of our bull - use-value - which will serve for this sort of circulation in which there is established the sexual order. It is the woman, in so far as she herself has become on this occasion, the locus of transference of this value subtracted at the level of use-value, in the form of *object of jouissance*.

~~It is very curious! It is very curious, because this leads us: if I introduced earlier for you, the *he-man* - here I am, and moreover in a way very much in conformity with the genius of the English tongue, which calls *la femme* "woman", and God knows that literature has gloated over this "wo", which indicates nothing good (*laughter*) - I would call her *she-man*, or again, in French, by this word - which is going to lend itself, once I introduce it, to some gloating and, I suppose an enormous amount of misunderstanding: *l'apostrophe - homme-elle*.~~

~~I am introducing here the *homme-elle!* (*laughter*). I present her to you, I hold her by the little finger. She will be of great service to us.~~

~~The whole of analytic literature is there to bear witness to the fact that everything that has been articulated about the place of the woman in the sexual act is only in the measure that the woman plays the function of the *homme-elle*.~~

~~Let the women who are here not wince, for in truth, it is precisely to reserve, where it is, the place of this Woman (capital W), about whom we have been speaking from the beginning, that I am making this remark.~~