

did not want to hear what he had to say; it was I who feverishly cut him off when he wished to interrupt me. Then, I submitted to his law; the authentic work of analysis was principally done in the interval between one session and the next. The role of the consultation was no more than to play the catalyst. Soon I understood the sense in scanning a word interrupted mid-way through a sentence whose syllables would haunt me until a brilliant interpretation was revealed. Lacan would brusquely get on his feet: that was what needed to be investigated, precisely that which was signaled by his suspension. It did not matter at what point that was: as soon as I came near an existence whose opening—without that brusque display of his body, that armchair suddenly left empty and that familiar agonizing breath—would have remained invisible to me. Ten seconds, twenty minutes? I didn't know. Time did not come into play: When the intensity is missing from the session, you would give the same that time would not pass as you would that your death would not come. Then I realized that the notion of uncertainty that he had brought to organization during the brief sessions recreated the intrinsic function of life in practice: set in motion the things that reproduced those accidents that make something alive, precisely because in it everything is precarious, uncertain, because in it nothing is given or acquired. In contrast, in my opinion, the ritual of the fixed hour, giver of assurances, shows itself a *posteriori* as a comfort which does not alter the most obstinate silence or the fossilization of the already-said, crushed in the monotony of a stutter.

JA

## What is the Real?

JACQUES-ALAIN MILLER

In order to reach you I had the opportunity to engage in a brief and stimulating stroll, given that it was prohibited to go through Sebastopol Boulevard due to a strike, and that my geographic location obliges me to take this road to get to the Conservatory of Arts and Crafts. This fact precisely highlights the function of time, of what is real in time—in your case the time spent waiting—that throughout this year we will have the opportunity to examine.

*What is the real?* is the question that needn't be formulated, because the way in which it presents itself doesn't favor the elaboration of the real as imposed in the analytic experience, at least according to Lacan. **The process of defining it is not capable of making us progress in what pertains to the real.** This procedure favors those who seek a truth, while the real does not adjust to it. At least, this is the conceptual framework that we will use as our platform this year.

We must, then, leave aside the question *what is the real?* insofar as we cannot raise it or it burdens us to do without this manner of raising it (that is why previously I had addressed the

real on the side of the answer and not the question). I will not use it as my starting point, and in its place I include a formula, a refrain that one learns in school which finds itself at a reasonable distance from this question.

"Racine—the playwright, author of tragedies—portrays men how they are, Corneille, how they should be." The quote belongs to La Bruyère and has served in innumerable dissertations. I refer to it because it simply shows us an opposition between fact and the ideal, between the being and the should be. I find myself driven by this formula because it is very difficult to abstract from the analytic experience the notion of the should be that sustains itself there—especially sustaining the patient. It is assumed that the analyst is protected from this. If he wasn't possessed, animated by his notion of the should be, it wouldn't be understood why he decided to start analysis in the first place, why he would enlist himself to the experience; this is to say that the ideal has a function which deserves to be considered as the driving force in the analytic cure.

#### ETIQUETTE

Men how they are, men how they should be... To tell you the truth, it's totally absurd. To top it all off, it deals with a pronounced formula in a society of characters with wigs who had invented a very sophisticated notion of what's natural. These characters who lived in an environment specifically codified by human relations that culminated in the court ceremony—it was not called etiquette until the 18<sup>th</sup> century—had an opinion of men just as they are, of their nature, and, at the same time, of their ideal.

The etiquette—*étiquette* as equivoque, meaning label or etiquette. We relate to each other with common etiquettes, little bits of paper or writable surfaces that one finds joined, hung, attached to an object to indicate something which concerns it—its price, its origin, its height, its weight—a significant particle that finds itself linked to it.

I asked myself where the term etiquette came from, which prompted me to find out that I would have to look into the Dutch root, *stikkenn*, which designates a fishing rod planted in earth, and, from there, a net tied to it to catch fish. It's about fishing, and there are, as it says in the Bible, fishers of men. Who knows by which channels this word transformed to that of the label that is placed on a cabinet which contains the files of a judicial process. Then—with this we are approaching it—it became the mark which indicates rank in order of precedence. So the etiquette, with a defined article, arrived at designating this very order, the set of etiquettes that assigns each one to his place, and with this, their role.

Since I hold at a distance the question *what is the real?* I can try in its place a definition of the etiquette. What is the etiquette? The etiquette is a discourse which indicates to each person what should be done, especially in the framework of ceremony. To tell you the truth, it is quite difficult to establish where human beings restrain themselves, in human action, in human society, in ceremony. I even ask about what pertains to the order of the ceremony... I wasn't able to convince the police that this is where I had to teach, which forced me to pick up my things and walk towards you all. If I had told them I was to celebrate a ceremony, perhaps they would have had more respect for my task.

It is not easier, on the other hand, to say where the kingdom of etiquette detains itself. I started by—it often occurs to me—a brief etymological summary and perhaps now I will move on to the homophony, given that in psychoanalytic etiquette this precedes etymology, like synchrony to diachrony. Moreover, in "On a preliminary question to every possible psychoses treatment," Lacan indicates that the dimension by which the letter manifests itself in the unconscious is less etymological than it is homophonic. And I take it as an excuse to jump from etiquette to ethics, since homophony suggests a comparison, a parallelism between both notions.

It's the same thing! Ethics—like etiquette—is a discourse



that intends to say what should precede and what should follow. Regardless, there is a difference: ethics is an etiquette that became problematic; it starts when there is no longer an etiquette to say who is who and in what place one has to locate oneself. Ethics is the absence of an etiquette, it is, most definitely, the search for one. Perhaps when you have the etiquette, you can do without ethics. I only see advantages in going from the ethics (*éthique*) of psychoanalysis to the etiquette (*étiquette*) of psychoanalysis; and if you want to delineate the relationship of both notions in French, you only have to introduce an h: *éthiquette*.

It also seems to me that Lacan transitioned from the ethic in psychoanalysis to its etiquette, that what he calls discourse is an etiquette, an order of precedence which indicates what is first and what is second. The discourse, according to Lacan, is a machine that assigns places, something which explains the relationship that is established between this and the art of dance. He defines, then, dance as an art which flourishes when various discourses occupy its places.

Indeed, today we find that the success of hip-hop in the suburbs is an attempt to remedy the fact that discourses do not settle into their place well.

The same thing happens with ethics, which is what we resort to when the discourses do not settle. Here I have an introduction to the paradox of the *presumed* (because he names it this way but uses the term with caution) analytic discourse that Lacan invented.

#### PROTOCOL

This discourse, this etiquette was imposed—in any case, was born—when the discourses proved unable to situate themselves very well in the era that Éric Laurent and I dubbed *the Other which does not exist*. Likewise, the era in which the only “discourse” that occupies its place is that of “science” (I put it in quotation marks because it is an anti-discourse, capable of dismissing all the others).

Descartes, who for good reason, is in the transference provoked by science’s discourse... I say that it’s a transference

because when this discourse was imposed, people started to love it, to practice it with enthusiasm; they became disgusted by chatter of wisdoms, of scholarship, and they started adoring science’s procedures, which mobilized all the snobbery of the era. This phenomenon that took place in the 19<sup>th</sup> century saw high society crazed by this new love; it had something ridiculous, but the ridicule of those ladies playing wise should not overshadow the fact that transference was still at work. Descartes himself was careful in respect to this newfound love; with wisdom, he specifically advised against extending the discourse of science to that of morals and politics, subjects in which he demanded to keep to the tradition. In other words, he considered—and he was no fool!—that one had to limit the expansion of science’s discourse and preserve the rightful place of the master, and, above all, not to extract the consequences of the first one in respect to the second.

What is clear is that this prudence was not followed, and this enabled us to continue into the era of Enlightenment, which consisted precisely of projecting an inappropriate light over the necessary darkness of the foundations. Ah, how delighted they were that the master signifiers were semblances! This is the spirituality of Enlightenment: the master signifiers, built, settled by tradition, reveal themselves in the light of science’s discourse, to be nothing more than semblances, conventions which needed to have their credentials removed so they could appear apart from the real, something which amused them a great deal and afterwards, towards the end of the century, ended up disenchanting them. One must see the work they put in afterwards to repair those master signifiers!

If one thinks about analytic discourse, from this perspective, it becomes the establishment of a new etiquette. Lacan understood it this way when he saw in the analytic experience the confirmation of a situation held between two *partenaires*—and I underline the convention in this situation that derails it to the register of semblance. On the other hand, the character of the

etiquette of the analytic discourse, from the situation that allows the analytic experience to take place, allowed it to make from this the setting, and from this setting, a standard, definitively, an order of ceremony.

Lacan tried to relate analytical discourse with scientific discourse, reconcile it with the antidiscourse, moving it away from the order of ceremony, which precisely ridicules what can be of the order of the real. And to reconcile psychoanalysis with the scientific discourse means that its specific manipulation of the semblance would constitute a protocol that would give access to a real.

There is ambiguity in the word *protocol*, which is simultaneously the formulation of a ceremonial etiquette and the joining of rules that determine the execution of an experience from which one can hope to access something real; it would be to go from the ceremonial protocol to the protocol of experience.

#### FIRST MATHEME

This attempt to reconcile psychoanalysis with scientific discourse led Lacan to form his first concepts of structural linguistics. Starting from the fact that evidently psychoanalysis seemed to occur in the linguistic field, he resorted to what in the '50s looked to be promoted as the science of language. He did so in the steps of Lévi-Strauss, who had received his revelation from Jakobson's classes in New York during the war, like he tells himself, and thought that the concepts presented were applicable to anthropology, to sociology. Lacan reduced them with what he had designated as a *matheme*, capital S over lowercase s, separating the signifier from the signified.

S  
—  
s

With this diagram he believed he had united psychoanalysis with the discourse of science. To qualify this diagram as a *matheme*

means that it constituted an automatically applicable rule, and with sensational results, to the phenomena that takes place in the field circumscribed by the analytic operation. This way, successively, the Other, the phallus (that which analysts refer to as a masculine organ), and the father became signifiers. And then the swarm of concepts: regression, signifier phenomenon, the ghost, signifier phenomenon, etc. One only needs to follow the progression of Lacan's Seminars IV and V to see the systemic application of this *matheme* in the field of psychoanalysis.

Over this background, let us infringe on our *caveat* from the beginning and ask ourselves what the real is according to this *matheme*. The first answer Lacan provides is that the real is outside of this *matheme*, that the real is somehow previous to it and that, precisely, the analytic operation does not want to know anything about it, that it only liberates its effects outside of the real, that psychoanalysis is only interested in the signifier, the signified and their relationship.

But this response—which we find somewhere in Seminar IV—does not at all impede the identification of that which Lacan began by assigning the quality of being real in psychoanalysis. The previous real would be the real as such. The psychoanalytic real is something else, and I don't think I'm risking too much by saying that what psychoanalysis deals with, as to the real of its operation, is the meaning.

Lacan started out precisely trusting this *matheme* because of a definition of the real—this time we can speak of definition—by which the real is the meaning. He definitely doesn't sustain anything else, when he posits in his inaugural text "*Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis*" that the unconscious is history, understanding history as a succession of re-significations of the real.

To say that the unconscious is history is to say that it is constituted by the sum of the effects of meaning, where it has, in a certain way, its real substance. Lacan's teaching originates,



precisely, from the notion that the real is the meaning. This starting point was veiled by Lacan's next step—and what crystallized as *Lacanianism*—according to which the psychoanalytic real is the signifier.

This is the natural consequence of having established a causal relationship between the signifier and signified, to having made the signifier the cause of the effects that populate the domain of the signified. It is the consequence of its construction—which takes from Jakobson and transforms it over the metaphor and metonymy, which, translated in terms of the real, simply means that the psychoanalytic real is the signifier. The development of this notion occupies the central, classic message of Lacan's teachings, by which the unconscious is not history but knowledge, *what assigns the real indicator to the signifier*. There, in the most self-evident way, the marriage between psychoanalysis and science is celebrated—it is as if the unconscious gives evidence that there is knowledge in the real, that the real presents itself in the form of knowledge.

## SECOND MATHEME

Only in the perspective of his teaching and in what constitutes the hesitant, yearning search of the last part of his teaching, does Lacan point to the notion of a real that would neither be signifier nor signified, that would be something distinct from meaning, and distinct from knowledge. This real would remit sense and knowledge to the register of semblance, remit signifier and signified comparatively to the register of semblance, as if this first matHEME could be substituted for another that separates the real from meaning and knowledge.

In order to situate the ideas, I offer Lacan's second matHEME, the one that erects a bar between what is real and everything that can create meaning and articulate itself as signifier, between the real and everything that is no more than semblance. I will add that, at the same time, it deals with bringing to ques-

tion the unconscious as meaning, as history, that is, as meaning and as knowledge. For this reason Lacan hinted that what he was searching for was located, these are his words, "beyond the unconscious," according to his first lesson in his seminar titled *L'insu que sait de l'une-bévue s'aile à mourre*. It is the search of a notion, a concept, a movement, a vector that would go beyond the unconscious.

Furthermore, this supposedly submits truth to the discussion—the analytic experience itself as a search for truth. Indeed, from whatever angle one addresses it, the truth belongs to the register of meaning to which it adheres.

To my understanding, Lacan establishes in his last teaching that where the analyst searches for the truth, the matHEME conduces him to find the real, and that the deception of the truth is correlated to an access to the real, where it is certainly less about him finding the real than the real finding him. This is the phase shift between the truth that is searched for, its deception, and the discovery of the real—leaving the genitive with its ambiguity.

There is, nonetheless, another phase shift that concerns Lacan—that circumscribes and relates with the previous—precisely, the one that is produced between the psychoanalyst and psychoanalysis. It is as if he had been absorbed by a proposition relative to La Bruyère's where I had started, this is to say, the discouraging difference between psychoanalysts as they are and psychoanalysts as they should be. In this phase shift between the psychoanalyst and psychoanalysis—whose similarities with those produced between the truth and the real I attempt to outline—the invention of the pass finds its meaning, which is already a procedure beyond psychoanalysis.

Lacan denies that it is beyond psychoanalysis, although the pass is evidently a strengthening, a supplement to the analytic experience. It is already in the movement that will drive it, towards the end, to posit a dimension beyond the unconscious. This already present movement animates the pass.



Loyal to this algorithmic inspiration by which he celebrated the marriage between psychoanalysis and science, he saw himself driven to elaborate in symmetric form the beginning and end of the analytic cure, to make worth for both a demand equal to formalization. He believed himself capable of giving at the same time an entry formula—the installation of the algorithm of analysis—that of subjective input, and an exit formula, the output.

This symmetry was new when he introduced it in psychoanalysis—no one had previously thought to establish a correlation between the entrance and the exit. The analysts had already studied the establishment of transference, they even thought that it was susceptible to a standardization—an entrance such as the one Lacan established with his *mathème* of initial transference, of the entrance into analysis, of the transference as is established at the edge of the process. By now the end of analysis was conceived in form of a certain dispersion, and it only condensed in Freud as an obstacle to the conclusion. Lacan, on the other hand, proposed, in the sense of this algorithmic process, a formula of detention—a real conclusion deemed necessary—which allows the logical definition of an analysand subject.

#### THE ANALYST AND THE PRACTITIONER

With the introduction of the pass, he created the analysand, gave him a rigorous definition, supposedly demonstrable, and distinguished him from the practitioner of analysis. He distinguished between the analysand and the analyst, even instilled between them something like an etiquette, a precedence, the privilege of the first over the second, suggesting that the analyst *par excellence* is the analyzed.

Although, to say that he is the analyst *par excellence* is to say there is another one. And in Lacan, starting with his proposition of the pass, the definition of analyst is twofold: there is the analyst exactly how he is portrayed in the *après-coup* of his analysis, and there is the analyst exactly how he is portrayed in

the *après-coup* of his practice; there is the one who gave proof of his aptitudes as an analysand and the one who gave proof of his aptitude as an analyst. And there are, well, two different sources in recognizing the analyst, their own analysis and their practice, that do no more than reflect the phase shift between the psychoanalyst and psychoanalysis.

In assigning the quality of the analyst to the analysand, that is, to the freshness of the analytic experience, Lacan evidently moves away from his conception of the practicing psychoanalyst as an analyst against analysis. It just so happens that starting from his “*Proposition of The 9<sup>th</sup> of October 1967 on The Psychoanalyst of The School*” he was inspired by the idea that analysts aren’t at the height of analysis and that even, on a deeper level, do not concur with Freud’s discovery. In those years this signaled, “as analysts, they keep denying the revelation that they obtained from their experience as analysand.”

What is the nature of this denial? As you may have noticed, to speak of denial of a revelation orientates towards the register of the truth. For that reason, Lacan often comments this negation in terms of something forgotten or a repression, words whose reference is necessarily the truth. But, if appropriate, he calls it—besides *Verneinung*, as “negation/denial”—“turbid rejection” (*louche refus* as he proposes to translate).

To qualify this negation he borrows from the register of neurosis (when speaking of repression), from the register of perversion and, furthermore, from the register of psychosis, since sometimes he happily qualifies it as foreclosure. He thus formulates on page 16 of the “*Proposition...*” that “to make a prohibition out of what imposes itself from our being is to offer ourselves to the return of luck which is curse. The rejected in the symbolic [...] reappears in the real.” And that is how he accounts for the phenomenon, for affinities between the position of the analyst and the closure of the unconscious. To be the cause of desire of the analysand, the ideal of the analyst is to close himself off to

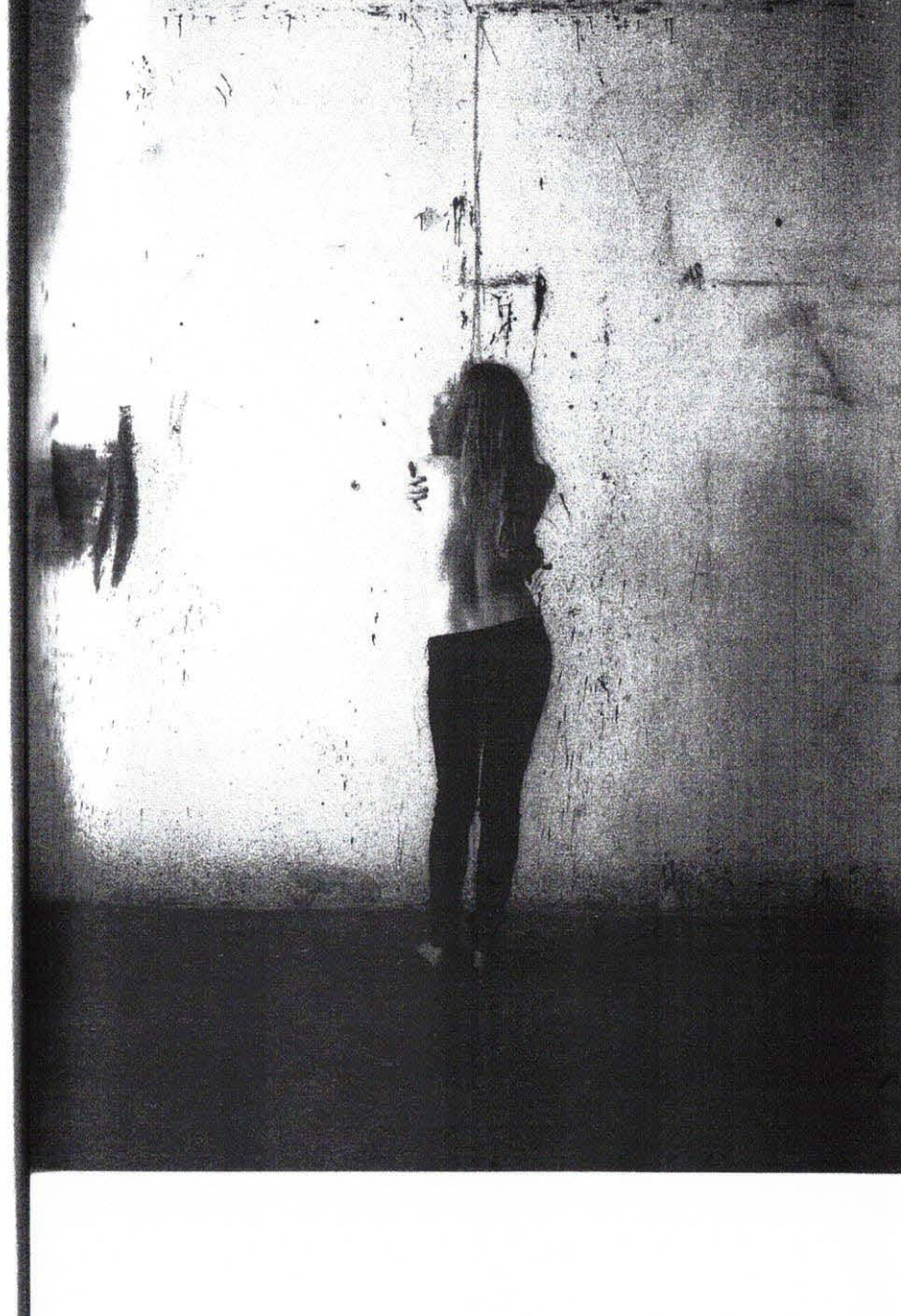


his own unconscious, which is precisely what is hidden behind that which grants unity to what is called orthodox psychoanalysis: the counter-transference which invites the analyst to take as ideal their being as subject of the unconscious, while the position of the analyst, according to Lacan, is inverse and complementary to the analysand position.

The desire of the analyst as a desire to obtain the absolute difference—I take Lacan's definition—is not a desire of knowing. With everything, I have time to display on the blackboard the Lacanian etiquette of the analytic experience, to say that the desire of the analysand is a desire to know, while the desire of the analyst finds itself above the other term of the line underneath: the desire to obtain the appearance, reappearance, the fall of this subjective etiquette that we call master signifier or identification.



Lacan's institutional question is precisely inscribed in this distance: it is simply about knowing how to re-inoculate in the analyst the desire to know, as if to return him to the position of analysand with respect to the subject-supposed-to-know, when this goes against his position as agent of the analytic discourse. A very powerful strength which also belongs to the zone beyond psychoanalysis or beyond Freud's own concepts is needed. This strength is what Lacan called school. The school is precisely that strength capable of returning the analyst to the position of analysand with respect to the subject-supposed-to-know, putting him in contact with his own ignorance. Then, in opposition to an analytic society construed over an infatuation with the *I already know*, this school whose outline Lacan draws is characterized by a dissatisfaction; it's more a school of wanting to know, which without a doubt





leads to placing it in a **hysterical** position. And I think this is how it operates.

#### THE FUNDAMENTAL SYMPTOM

I spoke of the ideal that we have maintained in parentheses and I said that the consideration of *what is the real* drives us to problematize it. The complaint that presides over the entrance in analysis makes no more sense than the wanting to be another, a relation with a should be. Under this complaint there's always the ideal from which the analysand subject constructs his story and even his symptom. **There is a dependence in the symptom in respect to the ideal, and because of that Lacan makes of it a phenomenon of belief.**

**As a result, to believe you have a symptom, as something that does not function well, there has to be an idea of how it should be functioning, that is, a representation of the ideal. And the weight of the ideal measures exactly the non-identification with the symptom.** What is indicated in this diagram of the fall of ideal identifications frees up space for another value of the symptom.

We repeat these days that the symptom is real, that there is a real coming from the symptom, but this real is first of all imaginary—let's stop here—first it is a signification. There are registers where it is perceived especially in everything relative to the complaint about *jouissance*, complaints relative to the masculine impotence, where the **dependence is confirmed with respect to women's sayings. As for the feminine relationship with the orgasm, this finds itself deeply marked by phenomena of belief and a subjective modality subject to variations, which, if one believes in the real of the symptom at this level, sometimes surprises because of its flexibility.** The first statute of the symptom is imaginary, and it is in analysis where its symbolic statute moves to the first plane, until a reduction permits saying that it reaches the symptom as real.

The symptom as real?! Let's say the fundamental symptom <sup>in</sup> order to place it in symmetry with Lacan's expression of

the fundamental **fantasm**. The fundamental symptom does not cross over, but rather it is the mode of *jouissance* of the subject, which translates a displacement of identity signifier. This trajectory goes from the identification signifier to the mode of *jouissance* whose identification assumes the distance with the ideal. It is a displacement of identity, if you will, or even the transformation of its problematic—because the term *identity* is always marked on the side of the signifier—the transformation of identity into consistency. A law of the variation could also be formulated here in opposition to that of the identity and the consistency.

Nonetheless, it is a good time to hold back my development underway. I will continue next time with the difference between meaning and the real, and I will attempt to bring to life the formula of the empty intersection between both concepts. I write this formula as such, and will attempt to show how it comes to life in our clinical categories.

$$R \cap S = \emptyset$$

See you next week, and—I hope—much more as the semester continues.

18 de noviembre de 1998

November 18, 1998

Experience of the Real, Lesson #