

What work remains in psychoanalysis through the exhaustion of the fundamental rule, the rule to speak? In his 1975 address at the Journées of the École freudienne de Paris, Lacan points us again towards a hole. It is a hole encountered only through the sweat of an analysis. Sweat implies a labor of the body—in analysis the speaking body is incited to work, an effort that doesn't stop with the particular formations of the unconscious. Jacques-Alain Miller has traced a line through Lacan's teachings: the unconscious, the speaking being, the speaking body. This lineage names the evolving relation between the three registers, symbolic, imaginary and real as psychoanalysis itself is put to work. With logic as means of access, Lacan develops the symptom as a particular relation to the real that each speaking being wants to keep under wraps. The long slog through a series of particulars, of symptoms, is not enough in itself, but a path that narrows around something else. It is worth the trouble to haphazard this thing, this hole, one that we have borrowed for the title of this issue of The Lacanian Review.



SUR LE PLAISIR ET LA RÈGLE FONDAMENTALE

Jacques Lacan

Je voudrais mettre l'accent—l'accent de mon approbation—sur ce qu'a fait André Albert. Je veux dire qu'il est vraiment tout à fait remarquable qu'il ait réussi, de ce sur quoi il se proposait de retenir l'attention, à savoir la règle fondamentale, qu'il ait réussi très remarquablement à en épuiser, il faut le dire, tout ce qui se trouve dans les énoncés de Freud d'abord, et, si je puis dire mieux encore, les points où j'y ai fait référence moi-même.

Bien sûr, la connaissance de cette règle fondamentale est supposée par moi être connue de tout ce qui, à un degré quelconque, entre dans l'expérience analytique, parce que c'en est en quelque sorte la condition. Mais qu'il ait été chercher aux points qui convenaient ce par quoi je m'y réfère sans expressément la nommer a été l'objet d'une véritable exhaustion, et je ne peux pas dire que je n'en sois pas aussi frappé que d'autre part je l'en remercie. C'est très remarquable et ceci vaut la peine peut-être qu'on revienne à ce qu'il a énoncé, pour autant qu'il a été enregistré, qu'on y revienne comme à un texte tout à fait fondamental.

Le fait qu'il ait tout de suite produit comme essentielle la relation de cette règle au principe du plaisir me paraît rendre compte de ce qu'il a su en dire. Le principe du plaisir, pour tout de même mettre un peu de poids dans ma contribution, a été accentué d'une façon tout à fait particulière par des gens grâce à qui—il faut savoir ce dont on parle quand on parle du principe du plaisir et on ne peut pas mieux le préciser que ne l'a fait Freud ; c'est le principe de tempérer, de tamponner la stimulation. Ça comporte bien sûr une certaine astuce, mais enfin une astuce qui justement consiste à ne pas mettre l'accent sur le piège. Le piège, ce n'est pas ce qu'on appelle le plaisir. Le piège, c'est la jouissance.

Le principe du plaisir, pour tout de même dire quelque chose qui est trop souvent oublié, le principe du plaisir, pour le dire en clair, c'est de rien foutre, c'est d'en faire le moins possible. Et le meilleur certificat

Texte prononcé en juin 1975, « Intervention à la suite de l'exposé d'André Albert, » *Lettres de l'École freudienne* 24 (1978): 22–24.

ON PLEASURE AND THE FUNDAMENTAL RULE

Jacques Lacan

KEYWORDS: *Fundamental Rule, Jouissance, Particular, Pleasure Principle, Singular, Symptom*

I should like to lay the accent, the accent of my approbation, on what André Albert has just done. I mean that it really is altogether remarkable that he should have managed—in what he has stepped forward to draw our attention to, namely the fundamental rule—that he should have managed to exhaust, it has to be said, the whole of what is to be found about it, in Freud's remarks in the first place and, if I may say so, better still, those points at which I have made reference to it myself.

Of course, I assume that anyone who enters the analytic experience, to whatever degree, has an awareness of this fundamental rule, because it is in some sense its condition. But his seeking out in the right places how I refer to it without expressly naming it has been the object of a veritable exhaustion, and I cannot say that I am not impressed by this, just as I also thank him for it. It's quite remarkable, and it would be worthwhile taking the trouble perhaps to revisit what he has said—since it's been recorded—to revisit it as an altogether fundamental text.

The fact that right away he put forward as essential the relation that this rule bears to the pleasure principle strikes me as accounting for what he was able to say about it. The pleasure principle—to bolster my contribution nevertheless—has been accentuated in an altogether particular way by people thanks to whom . . . well, you have to know what you're talking about when talking about the pleasure principle, and it can't be spelt out any better than it was by Freud. It's the principle of tempering stimulation, of buffering it. Of course, this entails a certain cunning, but ultimately a cunning that consists precisely in not laying the accent on the tricky bit. The tricky bit is not what is called *pleasure*. The tricky bit is *jouissance*.

Still, to say something that is too often overlooked, the pleasure principle, to say it clearly, is about doing bugger all, doing as little as possible. And the best certificate of intelligence—intelligence, I say—that can be given to someone is that they should have pulled this off to a certain degree.

Remarks made following the presentation by André Albert at the Study Days of the École freudienne de Paris, 14 June 1975. First published in the *Lettres de l'École freudienne* 24 (1978): 22–24.

So, it's quite clear that laying out the fundamental rule amounts to telling someone who has come to ask something of you, some help in this instance . . . it's nothing else but to point out to him that there will have to be a minimum amount of sweat if something is to be done together, namely that it won't work if one doesn't in some manner go so far as to displease, not the analyst, but to displease anyone whomsoever—to make an effort.

It's very hard not to notice by the same stroke that, as they say, the analyst finds an ally in the superego. Because the superego is precisely what makes . . . and this is why I tried to define it, in the way that André Albert at the end of his presentation recalled for us, as the imperative of jouissance. So, there is something for which I am quite sorry to be seeming to give him a good grade, because he has no need of me to give himself this good grade on his own—it's that, even so, he has decently, and quite right too, brought in the function of logic here, which is of course, such as I have defined it, the sole means of access to the real. And I'm not the one to inform him that he made a remark concerning what is involved in the fundamental rule, a little side note, speaking of the *singularity* of what is not to be left out. I'm saying this because I picked it up. I took copious notes and followed what he said very closely, and this reference to singularity . . . I think that after all there are enough people here who have read Aristotle to know that the singular is something quite different from the particular.

I'm fairly sure that one of the earlier speakers—I regret that I didn't jot down his name—mentioned *particularity*. For Aristotle, in the end, only the particular exists.

The particular is defined by a certain form of knot that I thought I was able to hear in this reference to particularity, I don't know which. At least, this was where I made my note, that particularity is defined across all levels. It's defined by the universal and, in a certain way, it may be said that were there no symbolic, that is to say, this kind of injection of signifiers into the real with which we are forced to compose, there would be no symptom. And the symptom is particularity inasmuch as it's what signals something different to each of us regarding the relation we have, as *parlêtres*, with the real. The universal in this is invariably something that steals away on the horizon and to which we refer only through numeration. These are my routine yarns. I think a fair few of you here are familiar with them.

So, the discrepancy is as follows. It's that we cannot help but give, at bottom, as a rule . . . and even so it is indispensable to know this when it comes to accepting someone into what we engage ourselves with in his regard—even so, the symptom is what lies at the heart of this rule. What

d'intelligence—je dis d'intelligence—qu'on puisse donner à quelqu'un, c'est d'y réussir dans une certaine mesure.

Alors il est bien évident que l'énoncé de la règle fondamentale, c'est quand même de dire à une personne qui vient pour vous demander quelque chose, une aide en l'occasion, la règle fondamentale, ça n'est pas autre chose que de lui faire remarquer qu'il faut en baver un minimum pour faire quelque chose ensemble, à savoir que ça ne peut pas aller si en quelque manière on ne va pas jusqu'à ce qui déplaît non pas à l'analyste mais qui déplaît profondément à qui que ce soit : faire un effort.

C'est très difficile de ne pas s'apercevoir que du même coup, comme on dit, l'analyste trouve un allié dans le surmoi; parce que le surmoi, c'est justement ce qui fait — et c'est pour ça que j'ai essayé de le définir de la façon que, à la fin de son exposé, André Albert a bien voulu rappeler, comme l'impératif de la jouissance. Alors il y a quelque chose pour lequel je suis absolument désolé d'avoir l'air de lui donner une bonne note, parce qu'il n'a aucun besoin de moi pour, cette bonne note, se la donner tout seul, c'est quand même qu'il a déçument, c'est le cas de le dire, fait intervenir là-dedans la fonction de la logique, qui est bien entendu, telle que je l'ai définie, cela seul par quoi il y a un accès au réel, et ce n'est pas moi qui vais lui apprendre qu'il a fait une remarque concernant ce qu'il en est de la règle fondamentale, une petite note au passage, la singularité, a-t-il dit, de ce qui ne doit pas être omis; je dis ça parce que je l'ai relevé, j'ai pris beaucoup de notes, j'ai suivi de très près tout ce qu'il a dit; et cette référence à la singularité, je pense que quand même il y a assez de gens ici qui ont lu Aristote pour savoir que le singulier, c'est tout autre chose que le particulier.

Il y a quelqu'un—je n'ai pas noté son nom, je le regrette—qui tout à l'heure a évoqué, parmi ceux qui sont intervenus, la particularité, il me semble bien. Pour Aristote n'existe en fin de compte que le particulier.

Le particulier, ça se définit par une certaine forme du nœud que j'ai cru pouvoir entendre dans cette référence à la particularité, je ne sais quelle—c'est tout au moins là-dessus que j'ai pris ma note, que la particularité, ça se définit à tous les niveaux, ça se définit par l'universel, et que d'une certaine façon, on peut dire que s'il n'y avait pas de symbolique, c'est-à-dire de cette espèce d'injection de signifiants dans le réel avec lequel nous sommes forcés de composer, il n'y aurait pas de symptôme. Et le symptôme, c'est la particularité, en tant que c'est ce qui nous fait chacun un signe différent du rapport que nous avons, en tant que parlêtres, au réel. L'universel, là-dedans, est toujours quelque chose qui se dérobe à l'horizon et auquel nous ne faisons référence que par la numération (ce sont mes bateaux, je pense qu'il y en a pas mal ici qui les connaissent).

So, it's quite clear that laying out the fundamental rule amounts to telling someone who has come to ask something of you, some help in this instance . . . it's nothing else but to point out to him that there will have to be a minimum amount of sweat if something is to be done together, namely that it won't work if one doesn't in some manner go so far as to displease, not the analyst, but to displease anyone whomsoever—to make an effort.

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is targeted in setting out the fundamental rule is the thing about which any subject is the least inclined to speak, namely—let's say, because I want to articulate things well here—his symptom, his particularity.

And it's in this respect that what André Albert alone has indicated is remarkable. It's that the only thing which is valid is not the particular but the singular. The rule means—it's worth the trouble. *It's worth the trouble* is a very fine way of putting what it means. It's what I said just now—you have to work up a bit of sweat. It's worth the trouble of faffing though a whole series of particulars so that, as he has just said, something singular will not be left out. It's worth the trouble of deriving some *jouissance* from this unique position that can be defined in one way only—I mentioned it in its time in my seminar—as what I called *encounter*. The encounter that is never a true one, that only comes about haphazardly, from tugging on the knot that is nevertheless strictly specified for each of us.

If something is to be met that might define the singular, it's what even so I called by its name—a destiny. That's what the singular is. It's worth the trouble of getting it out, and this comes about only by good luck. Yet good luck has its rules. There is a way of narrowing in on the singular, and this is by the path of the particular, the particular that I'm equating with the word *symptom*.

Psychoanalysis is the search for this good luck, which is not always inevitably or necessarily what is called *bonheur*, compressed in a single word. But it's quite clear that when we set out the fundamental rule, we make specific reference to particularity, and inasmuch as it disturbs the pleasure principle. The pleasure principle consists in not having anything particular. The pleasure principle is, all the same, what a fair few are still attached to—politeness, normality. Analysis is something that indicates to us that there is only the knot of the symptom, for which evidently one has to sweat a great deal in order to lay a hand on it and isolate it. It takes so much sweat that one might even make oneself a name out of it, as they say, from this sweating. It's what culminates in certain cases with the apogee of the best that anyone can do—a work of art. This is not for us. Our intention is neither to lead someone to make a name for themselves nor to make a work of art. It's rather something that consists in inciting them to pass through into the good hole of what is offered to them as singular.

Translated by A.R. Price

Alors le décalage, c'est ceci : c'est que nous ne pouvons, dans le fond, donner comme règle—et c'est quand même indispensable de le savoir pour ce qui est de l'admission de quelqu'un à ce par quoi nous nous engageons envers lui, c'est que quand même c'est le symptôme qui est au cœur de cette règle. Ce qui, dans l'énoncé de la règle fondamentale, est visé, c'est la chose dont le sujet quelconque est le moins disposé à parler, c'est à savoir, disons, parce que je veux là bien articuler des choses, c'est de son symptôme, c'est de sa particularité.

Et c'est en ça qu'est remarquable ce qu'a indiqué seulement André Albert, c'est que la seule chose qui vaille, ce n'est pas le particulier, c'est le singulier. La règle veut dire : ça vaut la peine—ça vaut la peine, ça dit très bien ce que ça veut dire, c'est ce que j'ai appelé tout à l'heure : il faut en suer un peu—ça vaut la peine de traîner à travers toute une série de particuliers pour, comme il dit, que quelque chose de singulier ne soit pas omis. Ça vaut la peine de jouir de cette position unique qui ne se définit que d'une façon, je l'ai évoqué en son temps dans mon séminaire, par ce que j'ai appelé la rencontre ; la rencontre qui n'en est jamais une vraie, qui ne se fait qu'au gré du va-comme-je-te-pousse, du tiraillement du nœud qui est pourtant pour chacun strictement spécifié.

Si quelque chose se rencontre qui définit le singulier, c'est ce que j'ai quand même appelé de son nom, une destinée, c'est ça, le singulier, ça vaut la peine d'être sorti, et ça ne se fait que par une bonne chance, une chance qui a tout de même ses règles. Il y a une façon de serrer le singulier, c'est par la voie justement de ce particulier, ce particulier que je fais équivaloir au mot symptôme.

La psychanalyse, c'est la recherche de cette bonne chance, qui n'est pas toujours forcément ni nécessairement ce qu'on appelle un bonheur en le comprimant dans un seul mot. Mais il est clair que quand nous proposons la règle fondamentale, nous faisons référence spécifiquement à la particularité, et en tant qu'elle dérange le principe du plaisir. Le principe du plaisir, ça consiste à n'avoir rien de particulier. Le principe du plaisir, c'est tout de même ce à quoi pas mal de gens encore se rattachent : au poli, à la normale (en deux mots). L'analyse est quelque chose qui nous indique qu'il n'y a que le nœud du symptôme pour lequel il faut évidemment en suer un coup pour arriver à le tenir, à l'isoler ; il faut tellement en suer un coup qu'on peut même s'en faire un nom, comme on dit, de ce suage. C'est ce qui aboutit dans certains cas au comble du mieux de ce qu'on peut faire : une œuvre d'art. Nous, ce n'est pas ça, notre intention ; ce n'est pas du tout de conduire quelqu'un à se faire un nom ni à faire une œuvre d'art. C'est quelque chose qui consiste à l'inciter à passer dans le bon trou de ce qui lui est offert, à lui, comme singulier.

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