

The Trait and the Ones¹ Florencia F.C. Shanahan²

One

I have taken part in many cartels, the most recent entitled, “Ordinary psychosis and the body”³. The five traits of work were quite diverse. My own was *Ordinary psychosis and rigid hysteria in relation to the body*. The cartel met regularly and we would return enthusiastically to what was said, to the questions that had been posed, the references that had been mentioned. Either a clinical case or a punctuation of a paper was presented each time. All members of the cartel, specifically linked to their trait, wrote texts that were extremely distinctive with no ‘common places’ between them. Each participant’s style had managed to pass through and I will attempt to formalize something of this, in the *après coup*.

Two

The choice of a trait aims at establishing difference ; how to sustain a relation to the truth of each (linked to desire) and at the same time a relation to established knowledge that is not religious in the sense of Freud’s ‘Group Psychology’. Thus a cartel is not a reading group but rather puts the relationship of each cartelisand to master signifiers to work.

How could this not be paradoxical since from Freud, the operation at stake in the incorporation of the Other via a trait is that of identification? Does the trait that each one chooses function as unary? Lacan speaks of this in his *Ecrits*: “The first words spoken decree, legislate, aphorize, and are an oracle; they give the real other its obscure authority. Take just one signifier as an insignia of this omnipotence, that is, of this wholly potential power, of this birth of possibility, and you have the unary trait which — filling in the invisible mark the subject receives from the signifier — alienates this subject in the first identification that forms the ego-ideal.”

How to conceive then the work produced within a cartel via the suspension of the place of the Ideal and the concomitant opening up of a space for a desire to know? With Lacan there is no chance for desire without alienation but it is only separation that introduces the possibility of the subject as such. This can be put as follows: in order to access the one of my singularity I have to alienate myself to the Other (S₂) accepting a signifier, and in separating myself from it via the production of an object (*a*), knowledge in the sense of the unconscious and difference is produced.

To be subscribed to the unconscious is to have consented to alienation and separation. When a non-concord with regards to what comes from the Other is introduced, that is the subject. As regards cartel work the subject will only be produced if the possibility for a difference with what is read (in Freud, in Lacan) and with others, is preserved.

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A subject is a difference not only in the imaginary as distance from one's image and in the symbolic as perpetual impossibility of being named in one's being by any signifier, but also in the real as the mode of jouissance that constitutes one's utmost singularity.

Our orientation towards the real implies moving away from imaginary and symbolic identifications towards the production of this point of impossible from where the new may emerge in a beyond of repetition. This goes too for the production of knowledge in what we could call the anti-parroting effect of the cartel.

Three

We can follow the elaborations of the One throughout Lacan's teaching but especially in *Seminars 2, 9 and 19*. In the latter he distinguishes several dimensions of the One: the One of fusion with the other, the unary trait linked to identification; the living body as a form of the One; the body as adored image in the $i(a)$. As happens often with psychoanalytic concepts, the One does not make One, it is not unary or univocal but plural, multiple and ambiguous.

The One of the signifier has to be divided between the S_1 alone and the S_1 that connects with another signifier. There is also the phallic One, that odd signifier with no pair.

From *Seminar 20* onwards the pre-eminence of the big Other will give place to 'there is something of the One'. It is a verification that jouissance is produced by speech and not just limited by it.

These versions of the One emerged in the research of the trait that I had chosen. Specifically in the bodily phenomena present in hysteria via the mechanism of identification and in the incidence of the One of the phallus. But this, I did not know until now. Moreover, these forms of the One can also be located in the functioning of the cartel as a group, this was too a discovery.

Four

Formalizing the function of the various Ones in Lacan's work seems essential in order to situate how the cartel operates. In terms of Lacan's discourses it will be a matter of how to lodge the non-symbolic element among the symbolic ones (a in its relations to S_1 , S_2 and barred S). This is essential because a discourse is a social bond and corresponds to a specific way of producing knowledge, of embodying truth and of situating its product.

As E. Laurent puts it: "the different relations with the S_1 coupled with (a) can be situated according to the coordinates. [...] One can become enthusiastic about group dynamics, a way chosen by some of Lacan's students. For his part, he preferred insisting on the necessity to void interest in all these effects of the group in order to focus on the work to be done. The task of the plus-one is to make the group think of its work as such and not of its dynamics. As soon as there is a cartel, there are people who don't come to the meetings; this is a reaction of flight. There are people who come in a bad mood,

ready to criticize everything ... these are reactions of attack. There are those who want to take over to organize everybody's work, those who want to incarnate the function of direction in place of the plus- one ... a push-to-the-leader. All these effects are expected from the beginning. The point is for the plus-one to interpret them in such a way that they will not come to occupy center-stage in the work."

The question of cartels concern the School and as Lacan states the "work which in the field Freud has opened restores the cutting edge of its truth; which brings the original praxis that he instituted under the name of psychoanalysis back to the duty that in our world is incumbent upon it; which, through a sustained critique, denounces the deviations and compromises that encumber its progress while degrading its use."

As L. Mahjoub states, the Freudian invention is "the *one* of the split, of the stroke, of rupture [...] the One of the *Unbewusste* [...] one-slip [blunder]". The cartel is where to let oneself be duped by these Ones that do not constitute a unity.

+1

This *plus* may come as an injunction, imperative or invitation, a call for a spark of desire to be ignited, the discretionary power of the listener will decide. To utter it: let's cartelise ourselves, get together, do the work, alienate and then separate.

A cartel may be a pathway to the singularity one does not want to know anything about; it may function against identification precisely by engaging with it; it may be a reminder that the One-all-alone is not an alibi for solitary self-torment or slothfulness. Cartelise and you may discover that the Ones at play are the Ones with which one may create a collective that is not without joy.

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