

The Push of a Flash Cartel

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I first encountered a flash cartel at our Clinical Study Days last year in New York. Four cartelisans plus one, from three countries, presented texts. By necessity, they worked virtually up until that event, which was the first time they met in person. The presence of this solitary cartel disrupted the series of case presentations, provoking desire. What impressed me was the urgency with which they had banded and mobilized—only three months prior—to take up the theme. This was the instant of seeing that pushed me to begin a flash cartel for the 2018 NLS Congress in Paris. That was the first of three I've worked in since.

What is distinctive about flash cartels? I will offer three observations from my experience in the U.S.

First, their temporality is urgent. In two of my cartels, we met weekly, which intensified the work transference. When a cartel lasts one or two years, less frequent meetings and the ending are essential for diluting imaginary group effects. Given the short duration of a flash cartel, however, we need not assume the risk of such effects is exactly the same or that our *only* aim is to reduce them. If we consider Lacan's later teaching, it's possible that the imaginary consistency of a short, intense period of work in a flash cartel potentiates engagement with the School, beyond the cartel itself. This does not negate the importance of dissuading imaginary relations from overriding subjective singularity.

Second, the presence of the body is crucial to our work in the U.S., where the geographic real poses a risk to the life of the School. Most of our cartels never meet in person. The flash cartel offers a *sinthomatic* function in this regard because the prospect of meeting is assumed, insofar as it is oriented towards an event. To join one implies the possibility of transporting your body at the end. Furthermore, opportunities to share cartel products, either in the newsletter or by presenting a text, amplify questions of one's own desire. In my case, the flash cartel supports the drive to overcome distance, to participate in a live discourse that punctuates what was elaborated en route. I've seen it with other colleagues in the States, where participating in a flash cartel encourages attending events and sharing one's work. Thus sustaining the presence of the body in the 21st century requires inventiveness. Since the groups of the NLS are so dispersed, this challenge is structural.

Third, the unique potential of the flash cartel, and the propensity for these cartelisans to attend events, is that it allows us to hear what inspires new interlocutors to work with the School. In the U.S., many newcomers are participating. What are the contingencies or local circumstances that push them to establish an initial link? I think

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the work of flash cartels allows a closer examination of the juncture between the broader cultural and clinical fields, and the School.

The signifier “flash” interprets the haste of our contemporary era. It’s a way of working with the feeling that there is *never* enough time. If anyone can testify to the brevity of opportunity, to the ever escaping real, isn’t it those of us with a desire to read otherwise, and are not content to wait, and miss it? With the flash cartel, you can’t think too much. The speaking body must act ! ●