

THE TRAUMATIC SHAPE OF THE CARTEL¹

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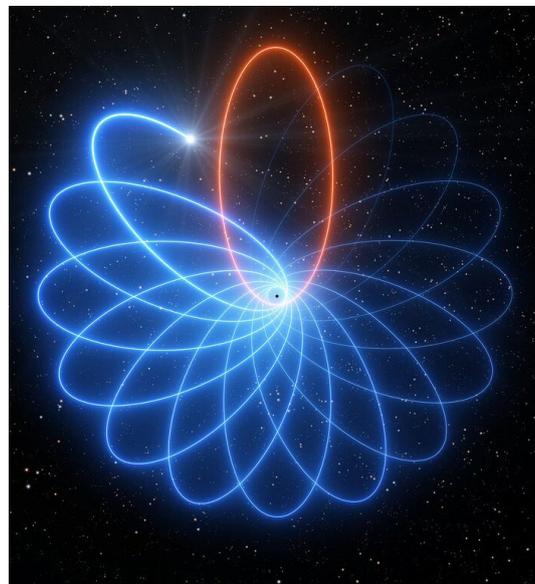
The Cartel is an organ of the School shaped by trauma.

It owes its origins to the efforts of British psychoanalysts Rickman and Bion who dealt with traumatised soldiers in Northfield Military Hospital during the Second World War. Éric Laurent reminds us in his paper on trauma that one possible use of psychoanalysis is a treatment² by sense, where “the recognition of a particular trauma specific to each producing recognition, and therefore meaning” is the direction of treatment. This is the psychoanalyst as a “bestower of sense” or as a “hermeneutic hero” working with survivors of events like airline disasters or wars.

Following this sense of recognising singularity to generate sense, the Cartel is a “hinge” which opens the door to its members to form a “work-transference towards the School, to the benefit of psychoanalytic knowledge”³. Forming your own question, working on texts by Freud and Lacan, and meeting regularly with a plus-One transforms an until-then private endeavour into an activity oriented towards the School. Jacques-Alain Miller points out how “Lacan’s teaching’ (*L’enseignement de Lacan*) is the response of someone who did not get used to the hole (trauma) inflicted by Freud on universal discourse⁴. In other words, the ambition of Lacan’s teaching is to echo (*répercuter*) the Freudian trauma,

to pass it on. One could say that the formation of a Cartel is meant to bestow sense and orientation upon the trauma of reading Freud and Lacan in private.

But there is another place of trauma, namely as an antidote to sense.



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After the formation of the Cartel, one sees that this process of meeting and talking can go on forever and runs the danger of turning into exegesis, if the plus-One does not intervene. There is even a sense of comfortable familiarity with the Cartel meetings which rhythmically punctuate our existence. Here, the role of the plus-One becomes important. Just as the plus-One orients the speech of the cartelisan towards the School in the previous approach, here the plus-One has to embody the hole at the centre of the School — that means ultimately there is no support for the speech of

the cartelisan aside from the satisfaction afforded by the body. Laurent reminds us Lacan speaks of the “analyst as traumatic.”⁵

An artificial time limit imposed on the Cartel precipitates the production of writing as a testament to the paths trodden by speech and the body in pursuit of knowledge. This makes it possible for the Cartel to be “a place to elaborate from a hole, relying on the possibility given to each member to face the hole in knowledge.”⁶

1. This paper was produced as a result of working in a cartel in which I traced the trajectory of “trauma” through Freud’s career.

2. Laurent, É., “Trauma in Reverse”, *Ornicar?* Digital 204 (3rd May, 2002). Available at <http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=12265>.

3. Rollier, F., “The Cartel’s Whirlwind: Affinities Between the Cartel and Lacanian Psychoanalysis”. Available at <https://www.londonsociety-nls.org.uk/index.php?file=Cartels/Texts-on-Cartels/Presentation-on-cartels-by-Frank-Rollier.html>

4. Miller, J.-A., “The Real Unconscious”, text established by C. Alberti and P. Hellebois, trans. R. Grigg, *The Lacanian Review: Hurly Burly*, No. 6, WAP & NLS, Paris, p. 31.

5. Laurent, É., “Trauma in Reverse”, *op.cit.*

6. Rollier, F., “The Cartel’s Whirlwind”, *op.cit.*