

An extimate experience

It was curiosity, not yet recognized as desire, that led me to accept the invitation from Julia Evans to join the Flash Cartel on Pandemic and Being Lacanian. A Flash Cartel operates for a short duration to explore the individual quest of each Cartelisan in relation to a chosen theme. This Cartel operated from April to July 2020, with a total of 6 meetings.

In three months, my work topic morphed thrice, each time bringing me closer to taking responsibility for my desire. From a normative position of 'what ought to be the response of psychoanalysis to the pandemic?', I arrived at a singular question of 'what could my response as a Lacanian to the pandemic be?' The process of work we chose where each of us read texts that we could access; exchanged notes on what we're reading in-between meetings; and made a presentation in each meeting of where we've reached with our particular work topic helped us locate our respective desire. In listening to the presentations of my colleagues and speaking about what it may have triggered for me, I had an experiential understanding of what it means to be alone in one's quest, yet not isolated.

The role of the plus-un, which I realized through my experience in this and another Cartel that I am currently part of to mean that of leading without directing; intervening to help us reckon with the hole in our knowledge without getting traumatised by it; and providing a Lacanian perspective to our impasses without precluding our own individual sense-making, was instrumental in keeping desire alive, even in those times where I encountered my lack with respect to maintaining a distance from knowledge and truth.

In encountering the Lacanian term extimacy I found the impetus to proceed with my desire to respond as a student of psychoanalysis to my particular social context. From Jorge Assef's¹ articulation that psychoanalysis can counter the authoritarianism of the master signifiers the pandemic has spawned by giving subjective experiences of living in times of the pandemic its due place and voice, I drew courage to persist.

Ganesh Anantharaman 19h July 2020

This was an end note of New Lacanian School of Psychoanalysis cartel (<http://www.amp-nls.org/page/gb/33/catalogue-des-cartels>), Cartel 35 - Pandemic & being Lacanian Flash Cartel (from April until July 2020)

Members and their topic were : Ganesh Anantharaman - To examine what the 'new normal' of social distancing means for how we engage with the world inside and outside of us. : Gözde Kilic - To inquire into how we can position the coronavirus vis-à-vis the Symbolic and the Real? : Julia Evans - Between THE PANDEMIC & a pandemic – an exploration. : Paul Melia - How to practice that attentional stance Freud refers to as 'evenly-suspended' with few or no appointments during Covid-19? : Josephine Rostron - To consider the nature and impact of the virus and to elaborate on the presence of the body within Lacan's structure of the psyche.

¹ 'We Shall Build Up Again: 31st March 2020...' Assef, Jorge, www.TheLacanianReview.com. Available here: <http://www.amp-nls.org/page/gb/49/nls-messenger/0/2019-2020/4147>