

Presentation at the SLP Congress in Milan, 12 May 2013

by *Dominique Holvoet*

When Paola Francesconi, president of the Scuola Lacaniana di psicoanalisi asked me to speak about the Cartel at the SLP, I was caught unprepared. I had just interrupted cartel work in a cartel for which I was the plus-one, supposedly due to other responsibilities, but also because of a certain malaise about which I hadn't yet drawn the consequences. I found myself called upon to participate in this cartel, to stand in as the person who would know, and from whom a teaching is expected, without being able to correctly function as a plus-one, to occupy the right place. With regards to Paola's proposition, I'll add that up until then I had always thought that it was better to form cartels than talk about them! I have revised my judgment after writing this presentation: it is necessary to know the structure of the cartel in order to avoid its pitfalls. Jacques-Alain Miller speaks about cartels in terms of the four discourses: absence of production if there is a master at the starting point, free association without direction if the plus-one thought s/he occupied the position of the analyst, cartel crisis if there is only "plus-one-of-knowledge" (*plus-un-de-savoir*). Knowledge is only gained if the plus-one is in the place of \$ (the barred subject).

Reading Lacan's founding texts and Jacques-Alain Miller's interventions on cartels, I revisited -after this cartel crisis- the important point that made me, thirty years ago, choose the Cause Freudienne as a School of psychoanalysis. I had, indeed, been very surprised and encouraged by the fact that analysts were taking the time to read my modest work, to listen, to comment and to help me move forward in my questions. This unique position, which I had never encountered at the university or elsewhere, gave me the desire to work and the cartel immediately seemed to me to be the best tool for reading Freud and Lacan, especially since the stimulating presence of the others is added to the support of the plus-one, which pushes the effort beyond that modesty which is always a bit fake, or coward. Because of this, the cartel has always seemed to me to be an incomparable means of controlled elaboration, and I believe that the WAP colleagues share my opinion.

Nevertheless, the Cartel never ceases to cause problems. We must in fact recognize that the cartel meets a resistance that seems to be structural. We return constantly to the question of the cartel in the Schools of the WAP, we talk about it over and over, we have to invent something to give it back its vigour. And you will notice, as I have, that just like the cartel, the "pass" keeps causing problems. One could say that the pass and the cartel are the two lungs of the School of Lacanian psychoanalysis. Without the cartel and the pass, the school would suffocate. But one could also say that the pass and the cartel are two grains of sand in the functioning of the group; two little grains of sand that Lacan placed there to jam the machine, to block the "it works" of the group, which is the other side of the discourse of the analyst; two grains of sand to make the School. As Jacques-Alain Miller has shown in his text, "The Cartel in the world"[1], the invention of the Cartel in 1964 accompanied an anti-authoritarian movement. The cartel, of course, responds to the Freudian logic

of the collective, which only constitutes itself as a group thanks to a leader, responding to the logic of male sexualization. But in the cartel the place of the *at-least-one*, the leader, is reduced. What's more, it is a permutative function. No *at-least-one*, but *one-more*, one-extra (*un-en-plus*) adding him or herself to the four to be the hysteric or Socratic agent of a provoked elaboration. The plus-one is here extimate, adding him or herself to the cartel only to incomplete it. The plus-one is the person who selects and discusses the work of each, the person who chooses the outcome to reserve for the work, writes Lacan, in the act of foundation. In short, the plus-one is the person who takes care to consider the work of others, to give to the work of each its place. But the plus-one is also the person who feminizes the cartel, making it pass from the logic of the all to that of the not-all.

Cartels in the NLS

In its relationship to the School, the cartel is thus one of its organs, that is to say, something that makes it lively, or... moribund if the organ is sick. Lacan wanted the cartel to be the place of ebullition of the School's work. But what is "the School's work?" Seen from the cartel, it is the elaboration that is sustained by each, an elaboration submitted to the attention and the criticism of peers in a small group, an elaboration that can know a public fate, since the plus-one looks after the outcome of the work. This is where the apparatus that was fine tuned ten years ago in the NLS by the first delegate of cartels, Gil Caroz, comes into play, an apparatus refined over the years. I'm not talking about the work of the cartels as a whole. There is the classical version of the cartels' work whose publicity is made in the online Catalogue of Cartels on the School's site, and then there is another version, that of the electronic intercartel. I will distinguish between the "electronic" use of the cartel and that of the intercartel per se.

The question of electronic use should be the subject of a work in itself and goes beyond the cartel, for that matter — it concerns our lifestyle which has been turned upside down by *chatting*, email and social networks in which the temporal dimension and that of the body of the other are put on hold. The electronic cartel essentially functions through email, that is, through a written form. This is a pragmatic choice that allows people to work together despite distance. But the absence of bodies in this work is not without effect. It goes, for some, against the logic of the cartel, while others see in this work through writing a positive effect of disimaginarization. I am not convinced by these opinions. Work through writing and the absence of bodies real-ize solitude and therefore add a supplementary demand that requires of the plus-one a strong desire that confines with the not-all.

The NLS's intercartel runs from September to May in accordance with the theme of the forthcoming annual Congress. It only takes into consideration clinical work. It is expected of the plus-one to select a clinical vignette, presented by one of the participants. This vignette is the subject of a continuous work of elaboration that begins inside the cartel. The elaborated vignette is then read by another cartel. Cartels are thus constituted in tandem. Each vignette is thus elaborated in the initial cartel, read and re-elaborated in the tandem cartel with the extimate, and re-read and finalized again in the

initial cartel. This finalized work is distributed to the rest of the participating cartels and only to them for reasons of confidentiality. A general public report is written by the delegate to the cartels that puts emphasis on this work, drawing theoretical and clinical conclusions from the provoked elaboration. This apparatus supposes a very active role on the part of the delegate of Cartels that animates the whole. S/he organizes the cartels that form and composes the tandems, chooses the extimes and writes two public reports a year. The result is the realization of a knotting of groups via effective and critical work. Thanks to this work, the intercartel is, with the Congress, what effectively constitutes the School in the NLS and makes it live.

Translation by Ian Curtis

[1] J-A Miller, Le Cartel dans le monde, Lecture given on 8 October 1994, La lettre mensuelle 134