

## The Cartel and the Four Discourses

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Lacan initiated the concept of the cartel in the Founding Act in 1964. A cartel would remain in existence for one year, maximum two – at which point the structure would dissolve and members would be free to choose other cartels with different members. This arrangement was created to try to foster a circular rather than a hierarchical culture within the School. A way in to this concept of cartels is, following Miller, through thinking about Lacan's four discourses<sup>1</sup>.

Firstly, within the **discourse of the master**, the goal is to be in accord with the master signifier - for the group to be one and undivided. Knowledge (S2) is situated at the position of the Other, which means that in such a group, the others will sustain the master in his illusion of mastery instead of producing a knowledge of their own.

In the cartel, the goal is not to achieve some agreed, universal knowledge. As Frank Rollier (currently the NLS Delegate for Cartels) says: ... « in the cartel we are dealing with a singular relationship to knowledge and not to universal knowledge. Yet this singularity functions within a collective and thus the jouissance here – the jouissance of/with knowledge – is not free of the Other<sup>2</sup> ».

Secondly, as J.-A. Miller wrote, if the **university discourse** predominates in the cartel, if the plus-one of the cartel serves only as a plus-one of Knowledge, there will be a crisis in the cartel. In the university discourse, we find the objet a at the position of the Other, leading to objectification in the pursuit of objectivity and, as Paul Verhaeghe puts it, the ever increasing division of the subject as one tries to use knowledge (the signifying chain) to reach that object which is precisely beyond signification<sup>3</sup>. The DSM comes to mind – where we see ever increasing categories, more and more splitting, to the point where significance is lost.

Thirdly, while the **discourse of the analyst** is proper to psychoanalysis, the encounter between analyst and analysand, Frank Rollier reminds us that: « ... the real that operates in the cartel is not the real of the subject. The latter is for one's own analysis. The real of the cartel is the real in knowledge » (quoted in Loose, 2015).

In a work group setting, Dominique Holvoet would say that the analytic discourse prevailed within the cartel (say if the Plus-One took the position of analyst). In that case we would have free association without direction<sup>4</sup>.

Finally, the fourth discourse, **the hysteric's**. Philippe Lacadée says that: « The structure of discourse that best corresponds to the experience of the cartel is that of the discourse of the hysteric. That is why Miller specifies that it is appropriate to place a divided subject in the position of plus-one ... »<sup>5</sup>.

From this position, the plus-one can function as *agent provocateur*, as J.-A. Miller would have it. He can address a question to the cartelisand and, by putting him in the position of a master signifier, stimulate the production of knowledge.

1. J.-A. Miller : “ Cinq variations sur le thème de l'élaboration provoquée”, Lettre Mensuelle N° 61.

2. R. Loose (2015) *Some Points and Ideas Drawn from Franck Rollier's 'Le cartel a L'Envers de la Segregation*, available at [http://iclo-nls.org/?page\\_id=448](http://iclo-nls.org/?page_id=448)

3. P. Verhaeghe (1995) *From impossibility to inability: Lacan's theory on the four discourses*. The Letter: Lacanian Perspectives on Psychoanalysis, Spring 1995, Dublin, p. 95.

4. D. Holvoet (2013) Presentation at the SLP Congress in Milan, 12 May 2013, available at [http://iclo-nls.org/?page\\_id=448](http://iclo-nls.org/?page_id=448)

5. P. Lacadée : *The Cartel in Lacan's School*, available at [http://iclo-nls.org/?page\\_id=448](http://iclo-nls.org/?page_id=448)