

DESIRE PUT TO WORK

Roger Litten

I am happy that you can all be here today to celebrate with us the end of the Twinning between the London Circle and the ACF/VLB that has been so much a part of our working lives for the past five years. This alliance has been an integral aspect of the activities of the London Circle during this time and has played an invaluable role in establishing our group as part of the wider Lacanian community.

It is not therefore lightly that we agreed to bring it to an end. But our Twinning was the product of a particular moment, not just in the history of our two groups but also in the broader history of events within the European School and the AMP, where the push towards establishing a global analytic community has culminated in the formation of the *Ecole Une*.

It is appropriate that the close of our Twinning should coincide with the rise of the *Ecole Une*, as it was in the context of that movement that the idea initially arose of developing working links between a more established psychoanalytic organisation within the ACF in France and a fledgling Circle of the European School in England.

Similarly, it was on the basis of contacts made in the course of a cartel that contained individual members of both the LC and the ACF/VLB that this possibility first arose. It is therefore just as appropriate that it should be by way of an Intercartel Day, where we come together to share some of the fruits of the work done in the course of those cartels, that we should mark its ending.

I want to talk then a little about these cartels that have been fundamental to the success of the Twinning, which as you know, has not been supported so much at the level of any grand institutional links between organisations, but at the practical level of working links within cartels. I want to say something about what I have learned from my own experience of these cartels, not only in the course of the work but also from the working relations and personal friendships established within the framework of the Twinning, which I hope will persist long after that framework has been dissolved.

But I also want to see whether it is possible to extract something a little more formal from that experience, to say something about the logic of the cartel and the form of psychoanalytic association that it implies within the broader analytic community in general. To a certain degree, of course, this is an Oedipal logic. We remember some of the concerns that were aired at the time about the very notion of a Twinning as running counter to the spirit of the School, as introducing effects of imaginary identification between Oedipal twins, with all the dangers of infatuation, aggressivity and ultimately fratricide that this would entail.

To some degree these were valid concerns, as demonstrated by the vicissitudes of some of the other Twinning established during the same period. If we are not to ascribe the success of our own endeavours solely to the spirit in which they were carried out, to that spirit of generosity and openness that we encountered in all our contacts across the Channel, which in itself has been an invaluable demonstration of the psychoanalytic spirit, then we must look for its secret in the cartels that formed the basis of our work.

The cartel was introduced by Lacan at the moment of his inauguration of a new form of psychoanalytic School in 1964. It was to be the basic element, the building block, for the work of this School, designed to serve not just as the nuclear cell of this base of operations against the discontents of civilisation, but also as a tool in the struggle to keep alive the cutting edge of the Freudian discovery against the stultifying effects of the group in whose care it has been left.

The logic of cartel, its structure and composition, the function of the plus one, all serve primarily to counter the Oedipal effects of group psychology in a psychoanalytic society. As such we might hope that a closer examination of this logic might introduce us to the post-Oedipal logic that the work of Lacan has placed at the heart of his School. In this way I hope to sketch a path from my own experience of cartel work within the Twinning towards the logic at play in the formation of the *Ecole Une*.

As to the theory of the cartel, I am always surprised to find how little there is written about this question in English. At the same time there is no need to make it more complicated than it is. In one sense it is the simplest of procedures. Four people who want to work on psychoanalysis get together, decide on a theme or area of work, ask a fifth to help them in their task and to inscribe it within the framework of the School, and then get to work and see what they discover.

Broadly, what they discover is something about their own desire for knowledge as it is put to work. And in this sense the cartel operates as a device that allows the re-articulation of knowledge, desire and *jouissance* in a subjective experience whose only parallel is the experience of personal analysis itself. In both cases this re-articulation takes place around an axis of transference. In the case of the cartel, however, perhaps even more so than in that of analysis, this experience will force us to reconsider what is at stake in this notion of transference so basic to psychoanalytic work.

One sets out with a desire for knowledge which is to a greater or lesser degree individualistic, auto-erotic and accumulative, tied as it is to a quest for a knowledge without consequences for the subject, safe in the shelters of the academic discourse. This desire for knowledge is then taken up in the process of cartel work, which is a process of collectivisation, de-individualisation and subjectification which changes the way we understand the very notions of work, desire and knowledge. Out of this experience comes some kind of knowledge about desire, a practical knowledge, a *savoir faire* that consists in putting desire to work, a desire put to work in the name of the transmission of the psychoanalytic cause.

To understand something about this process and the transference to work that it engenders, one needs to look at the function of the plus one in the work of the cartel. The plus one occupies the place but not the role of the leader of the group. His or her role is solely to facilitate the work of the cartel, to safeguard the productivity of its work against group effects of consolidation and stagnation and against the inhibitory effects of the relation to the Ideal. In this sense the plus one functions not simply as the pivot for the working transference of the group, the repository of its signifiers and ideals, but also occupies the properly analytic position of the interpretation of its effects. And it is on the basis of this position that the articulation can be made between a relation to the Ideal and an orientation towards the psychoanalytic cause.

In this way the work of the cartel revolves around the space kept open by the position of the plus one, a space for each one to speak about the work they are doing. It is through the functioning of the plus one that the place of the Ideal in the group can become a place of articulation, and ultimately of enunciation and speech. And it is in this possibility of speech that we can see the practical effects of the desire for knowledge put to work. Thus when we come together, as we do today, to speak about that work, to share in its discoveries, this is not solely in the interests of the transmission and systematisation of a body of psychoanalytic knowledge. More fundamentally it returns us to the primary effects of speech in psychoanalysis, of being able to stand up before you and say, this is what I have learned from the experience.

This testimony of speech follows the same principle as that at stake in the procedure of the pass, the point of articulation that constitutes the hinge between the subject and the School, a hinge that once again operates according to the logic of the cartel, in this case the cartel of the pass. On one hand the attempt to speak about one's subjective experience is fundamental to any attempt to constitute a body of systematised knowledge about that experience, one that is capable of verification and transmission and one that can be verified in that very process of transmission. At the same time the attempt to communicate this knowledge, to make it the object of transmission, has reciprocal effects not just on the position of the subject involved but also on the constitution of an analytic community founded around that experience.

It is here that we arrive at the point of articulation between the subjective processes at work in a personal analysis and the broader logic of the relation between subject and School recently elaborated by Jacques-Alain Miller in his *Turin Theory on the Subject of the School*. There he has demonstrated that this is no external or arbitrary conjunction, nor is it a question of simply conforming to an accepted doctrine, but rather that these two aspects, the subjective and the collective, constitute two dimensions of the same experience and answer to the same logic. Hence it is that the subjective processes at stake in analysis, where the re-articulation of knowledge and desire brings to light each subject's solitary relation to the cause of their desire, can form the basis for a community founded on a logic of exception and composed of a multitude of solitary relations to the psychoanalytic cause.

Most pertinent for the theme of our work here today are the passages where Jacques-Alain Miller measures the distance between the Freudian society and the Lacanian School and demonstrates the manner in which the Lacanian School is constituted according to a post-Oedipal logic. He shows how it was Lacan's analysis of the discrepancy between the cause of Freud's desire and the Freudian cause as such that allowed him to extract from it the desire of the analyst, separating it from the paternal fantasy to which it had until then remained fixed. It was this analysis which made clear the extent to which the community founded on the basis of Freud's desire, the psychoanalytic society, had been tied to an Oedipal logic of the

band of brothers united around the living signifier of the father. It was as a direct consequence of this Oedipal logic, based on the existence of a universal sustained by its antinomy to a One that would not be like the others, that the question of feminine *jouissance* and its object remained obscured in the Freudian doctrine.

In contrast, Jacques-Alain Miller has shown how Lacan's desire allowed him to go beyond Oedipus and beyond the logic of the psychoanalytic society in order to found the first properly psychoanalytic School, a logically inconsistent ensemble made up of a multitude of solitary relations to the psychoanalytic cause. It is on the basis of this logic and in the name of this cause that we come together today to share in the work that each one of us has done. So as we move towards the close of our association under the signifier of the Twinning, and as our moment for concluding itself becomes a moment for understanding, let me share with you the hope that we will be able to meet and work together again under the signifier of the School.

Copyright © by the Author. This text from the website of the London Society of the New Lacanian School, at <http://www.londonsociety-nls.org.uk>. Permission to circulate material from this site must be sought from the LSNLS. All rights reserved. Please include this portion of the text in any printed version of this paper.