

Interview with Mitra Kadivar



Dalila Arpin: What lessons have you learned from your recent experiences?

Mitra.Kadivar.: Dear Dalila, my recent experiences are not yet over for me, for me to have the perspective necessary to draw conclusions. As long as I cannot see those who sent me to the psychiatric hospital in Justice I continue to burn alive. No lessons. The irony of the situation is that I have to deal with the same judicial system that supported the whole affaire.

D.A.: For the *Latigazo* readers who weren't able to hear you in Brussels, could you summarize the essential points of your presentation, "A Superb Self-Reliance?"

M.K.: For a summary of *my presentation* I would refer you to the one written by Philippe Bouillot in PIPOL NEWS 63, which I find particularly well done. However, I would summarize *my presence* in Brussels in one word: joy... times one thousand. The joy of being among 1300 new friends, those who supported me when times were difficult; the joy of seeing old friends; the joy of building a friendship, email by email, with Gil Caroz; the joy of meeting Jorge Forbes, to mention only a couple people.

D.A.: Given the difficulties that psychoanalysis has encountered that you addressed in your presentation in Brussels, do you think it possible for psychoanalysts to practice in Iran? In your own case, how do you practice in Teheran?

M.K.: It is possible to practice psychoanalysis in Iran, but it isn't easy. In Iran, just like elsewhere in the world, doctors and health workers have become merchants, which arouses a lot of distrust towards them. In the case of psychoanalysis, the problem is doubled by the outbreak of wild psychoanalysts (it is Freud who uses this adjective). There are more and more cases of psychosis resulting from the intervention of this kind of "psychoanalyst." I wouldn't be surprised if one day the authorities decide to prohibit the practice of psychoanalysis. Actually, it would be logical if psychoanalysis were to be monopolized by the wild psychoanalysts, since it is they who have never been analyzed and who can therefore believe that psychoanalysis is a desirable line of work.

Raquel Cors: For your liberation, a coalition was created that was not merely made up of the signatures of internationally-known psychoanalysts, friends of psychoanalysis, politicians and intellectuals. This coalition was also a combative campaign that, in your name, incarnated a defense of psychoanalysis. This campaign touched everyone in a particular way. But you, the protagonist of this singular movement, how did you experience this event?

M.K.: During the entire campaign and even now I am astonished by the credit and respect inspired by the names of Jacques-Alain Miller, Bernard-Henri Levy, and others who supported this campaign. I am astonished at the weight of the signifier “psychoanalysis,” which rests on the names of our masters, Freud and Lacan. And I am proud of having made the choice of being the servant of this signifier. I was even ashamed to thank the signatories, as if I were so impudent de pretend not to know where the point of interest lay.

R.C.: In an interview on lepoint.fr Jacques-Alain Miller was asked what he knew about Mitra Kadivar and he responded that she was a “strong” woman. What do you think of this adjective?

M.K.: I am honored.

D.A.: Are you familiar with the work of Marjane Satrapi, the Iranian graphic novelist who, since her exile, has used humor in order to introduce the historical figures of her country to France?

M.K.: I only know her by name. I haven’t had the chance to see her work, about which I’ve heard a lot of praise.

D.A.: What do you see for the future of psychoanalysis in your country?

M.K.: During the twenty years that I practiced psychoanalysis in Iran, I always expected reinforcement from abroad, especially from France. I was certain that there were Iranians who were being trained in psychoanalysis abroad and I hoped that they would one day return to their country. In vain. Over the past twenty years only two Iranian Lacanian psychoanalysts have come to Iran, and they quickly returned to France. I cannot accept all of the people who seek analysis, and those I have trained are not in a hurry to receive patients, mostly due to logistical problems. In the current state of affairs, a person looking for an analysis has more than a 90% chance of falling into the hands of a wild psychoanalyst. After my recent adventure, I have lost all hope of receiving reinforcements. Who would want to run the same risk? I’ll let you guess what psychoanalysis’s future will be in Iran.

R.C.: What do you think about the Internet’s role in psychoanalysis, for example the speed of the signing of petitions or of the diffusion of psychoanalysis itself?

M.K.: In effect, these advantages are unarguable.

R.C.: Lastly, I would like to have your opinion on a publication by Jacques-Alain Miller in laregledujeu.org, which appeared as “SOS Mitra. Appeal to the Psychoanalysts and to Friends of Psychoanalysis and Freedom.” Here is an excerpt from this publication: “The Lacanians, we are like the Talmudists: two rabbis, three opinions. We know each other well, we’ve fought each other well, we’ll perhaps fight again one day. [...] There are the psychologists. There are the psychiatrists. To all, all the grades, the with-out grades, the Societies, the Schools, the journals, I’m asking you to say with us to our Iranian colleagues the price that we accord to the respect of the human person. This person is not abstract. She is here and now, she is straight

away, Mitra Kadivar.” (Trans. Victoria Woollard)

M.K.: I wonder: had Jacques-Alain Miller never been born, or if I had not known him, or if I had never been able to get free from the police station to send him my first email, what would have become of me? The *furor sanandi* of the psychiatrists would have made a vegetable of me and no one would have ever heard of me. This is the basic anxiety of my repeated nightmares, even now, seven months later.

Translation by : Ian Curtis
