

The stranger Antonio Di Ciaccia

The Rome Forum follows on from the Turin Forum. The European forums, launched by Jacques-Alain Miller, are designed to continue asking the question which Lacan formulated concerning the relationship between unconscious and politics, as well as that of the place which psychoanalysts are to occupy in the city, in the polis, in society.

The Turin Forum, *Determined Desires for Democracy in Europe*, took up the problematic which Jacques-Alain Miller had exposed in his Madrid conference of 13 May 2017 in the following terms: "to make psychoanalysis exist in the political field".

Rosa Elena Manzetti, who masterfully organised the Turin Forum of 18 November, had given relief to the theme with reference to the most political seminar of Lacan, *The Other Side of Psychoanalysis*. Two tendencies can be isolated: identification with a fossilised master-signifier which can lead to diverse forms of totalitarianism, and identification with a knowing-it-all which can lead to various forms of mummified bureaucracy.

Psychoanalysis needs democracy. Conversely, democracy needs psychoanalysis because we can say that psychoanalysis, at least in Lacan's teaching, has the necessary resources to indicate how the social discourse might avoid the traps of totalitarianism and fundamentalism.

With the next European Forum in Rome, we go straight to the heart of a very important question. The title, *The stranger*, emphasises a structural aspect: the subject is a stranger as such. Because his locus is always the locus of the Other.

The subtitle, *Subjective Unease and Social Malaise in the Phenomenon of Immigration in Europe*, specifies that whether it be at the subjective or at the collective level, the presence of the 'stranger' is not approached without anxiety.

In the Rome Forum, the daily work of the analysts – namely, the work of the subject who believes he is someone but realises he is inhabited by a symptom which he himself finds strange, although it is his – will not be at the forefront. It will not be the main theme of the Forum; it can point to the direction to follow, also on the social level, when addressing such a problematic. Having strangers on one's land is a problematic which divides the member-states of the EU, which divides people within each European country, and also divides each social level and political group. Finally, it divides each one of us.

For how is a community defined, concretely? A community is defined through the exclusion of the other, of the stranger. Paradoxically, even the most open communities automatically imply the exclusion of the other. Lacan reminded us that democracy originated as a democratic community between masters from which the slaves were excluded.

Having strangers on one's land poses problems. But there is also the question of the possibility of insertion that they can be offered. On which terms? Which place do we give strangers, which rights? What are the rights and duties of a community towards those who are not part of it, but who wish to be a part of it? Lastly, what needs to be happen for a community not to be destabilised?

If a propaedeutic is necessary to limit and assimilate the stranger within each one of us, in the same way a propaedeutic is necessary to limit and assimilate strangers who ask to be integrated within a community.

Numerous people have answered our invitation to take part in, and speak at the Forum organised by the analysts of Lacan's School in Italy. Some of them have been studying this theme in depth for a long time. Others are directly implicated through their political, social or religious responsibilities. Others yet act in conjunction with organisations and associations whose testimonies they will relay. What is clear is that the expected answers cannot do without politics.

I want to conclude with a quote from Lacan's "Joyce-The Symptom", in which he subverts the usual reading of history made by the powerful in their thirst for power: "history is nothing but a flight, none of which is told but the exoduses." (The Lacanian Review 5, forthcoming).

Translation Véronique Voruz

