
Love and its Vicissitudes

André Green & Gregorio Kohon

 **Routledge**
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

**Also available as a printed book
see title verso for ISBN details**

Love and its Vicissitudes

In *Love and its Vicissitudes* André Green and Gregorio Kohon draw on their extensive clinical experience to produce an insightful contribution to the psychoanalytic understanding of love.

In Part I, *To love or not to love—Eros and Eris*, André Green addresses some important questions: What is essential to love in life? What, in the psychoanalytic method, is related to it? Should we understand love by referring to its earliest and most primitive roots? Or should we take as our starting point the experience of the adult? He argues that while science has made no contribution to our understanding of love, art, literature and especially poetry are the best introduction to it. In Part II, *Love in a time of madness*, Gregorio Kohon provides a detailed clinical study of an individual suffering a psychotic breakdown. He describes how the exclusive as well as the intense lasting dependence to a primary carer create the conditions for a 'normal madness' to develop. This is not only at the source of later psychotic states and the perversions but also at the origin of all forms of love, as demonstrated in its re-appearance in the situation of transference.

Love and its Vicissitudes moves beyond conventional psychoanalytic discourse to provide a stimulating and revealing reflection on the place of love in psychoanalytic theory and practice.

André Green is a Training Analyst and Past President of the Paris Psychoanalytic Society, and an Honorary Member of the British Psychoanalytical Society. A prolific writer, his books include *The Fabric of Affect in the Psychoanalytic Discourse* and *Key Ideas for a Contemporary Psychoanalysis*.

Gregorio Kohon is a Training Analyst of the British Psychoanalytical Society. He has published and edited a number of books, including *The Dead Mother: The Work of André Green*.

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First published 2005 by Routledge 27 Church Road, Hove, East Sussex, BN3 2FA

Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada by Routledge 270 Madison Avenue, New York,
NY 10016

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group

This edition published in the Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2006.

“To purchase your own copy of this or any of Taylor & Francis or Routledge’s collection of
thousands of eBooks please go to <http://www.ebookstore.tandf.co.uk/>.”

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Paperback cover design by Lisa Dynan

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photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission
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This publication has been produced with paper manufactured to strict environmental standards and
with pulp derived from sustainable forests.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data A catalogue record for this book is available from
the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data Green, André. Love and its vicissitudes
André Green & Gregorio Kohon.—1st ed. p. cm. Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 1-58391-744-6 (hardcover)—ISBN 1-58391-745-4 (pbk.) 1. Love. 2. Psychoanalysis. I.

Kohon, Gregorio, 1943-II. Title. BF175.5.L68G74 2005 152.4’1--dc22 2005003044

ISBN 0-203-01212-7 Master e-book ISBN

ISBN 1-58391-744-6 (hbk)

ISBN 1-58391-745-4 (pbk)

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Gregorio Kohon is a Training Analyst of the British Psychoanalytical Society. In 1988 he co-founded with Valli Shaio Kohon, the Brisbane Centre for Psychoanalytic Studies, which he directed until 1994. He has published *No Lost Certainties to be Recovered; The British School of Psychoanalysis—The Independent Tradition* (ed); and *The Dead Mother—The Work of André Green* (ed). He has also published three books of poetry in Spanish, and his novel *Papagayo Rojo, Pata de Palo* was finalist in the Fernando Lara Prize 2001, Planeta, Barcelona. He works in private practice in London.

Acknowledgements

The two papers included in this book are corrected and extended versions of the original ones presented at the English-Speaking Weekend Conference on *Love*, organised by the British Psychoanalytical Society in October 2000 at Regent's College, London. We would like to thank the British Society for having invited us to present our work, and to the people in the audience who contributed to the discussion.

'Love in a Time of Madness' was completed while participating in a Research Group on Borderline Phenomena (2000–2003), sponsored by the International Psychoanalytic Association. The members of the group were André Green (Chair), Jean-Claude Roland, Otto Kernberg, William I. Grossman, Fernando Urribarri, Jaime Lutenberg and Elizabeth Spillius-Bott. Gregorio Kohon is grateful to them for their comments on this paper during the discussions.

We would also thank Valli Shaio Kohon and Sebastián J. Kohon for their editorial help with the text.

André Green
Gregorio Kohon

Foreword

Love and its Vicissitudes is a scholarly and courageous revisiting of a subject that lies at the heart of some of the most exalted and debased dimensions of human experience. The book is an ambitious undertaking. As Green boldly and rightly says, the title is one ‘that can summarise the history of psychoanalysis’ (p. 9)—a claim that is borne out as these pages unfold. Yet this duo of monographs also moves beyond conventional psychoanalytic discourse and into new territories which defy tidy conceptualisation in any narrowly defined psychoanalytic terms. In each part, one finds oneself fully engaged not only with ‘the wreath’d trellis of a working brain’ (Keats, *Ode to Psyche*, 1.60), with two minds concentrating intently and brilliantly on their subject. One is also engaged (and very distinctively so) with two men for whom the subject stirs a sharp and wise reflectiveness—not only on the nature of psychoanalysis itself (its roots, its nature, its achievements and limitations) but also on the enthralling and terrifying nature of the phenomena of love itself. In so doing, they offer a re-exploration and repositioning of some of the fundamental principles of psychoanalytic theory and practice, reinfusing them with overlooked or scarce-remembered aspects of the more subversive and revolutionary dimensions, while also introducing some lesser known aspects of recent thinking. They grasp the nettle and seek expression for, among other things, the inseparability of passion from sexual desire, at-oneness, dissolution, loss, destruction, death, regeneration, madness—all compounded in that one simple word—Love. Each author engages with the mad-making contradictions of Eros and with the necessity of suffering it (that is, engaging with it, allowing and bearing it at all) without being cowed or overwhelmed by it. The two colossal concepts that bestride the book as a whole—each immanent in ‘Love’—are ‘passion’ and ‘madness’. The nature of passion is predominantly the preserve of the first part, and of madness the second. There are a great many common threads which constantly weave between the two.

For each author, to think about Eros is to explore the ability of psychoanalytic theory, heretofore, properly to engage with a vision of love, or to fail to do so. At one point, Green, having welcomed Lacan’s crucial, and untranslatable, terms *hainamoration* (a statement of fusion, ‘no love without hatred’) and *jouissance*, regrets the failure to give us an articulate body of ideas about it. This volume provides the desideration.

As for Part 1, I shall be focusing on the significance of Green’s choice of epigraphs and of the Addendum. This is not to mistake the part for the whole but rather to attempt to engage with one of his central tenets: that it is to literature that we must turn for enlightenment about the nature of Eros, in all its depth and complexity. In framing or situating his revisiting the place of love in psychoanalytic theory and practice, Green makes it absolutely clear that we are about to engage with the impossibility of disarticulating the chains of desire from the thrust towards life and passion on the one hand, and the concomitant pull towards its contradictory components on the other—ultimately those of hate, destruction and death. The links cannot be disarticulated because