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Roland Gori, Logique des Passions

(Paris: Denoël, coll. L'Espace analytique, 2002)

Roland Gori's books resemble a journey in which his curiosity for the socio-cultural space, reflections from his clinical practice and echoes from his wide-ranging theoretic interests unfold and intermingle in a unique weave of ideas.

Roland Gori gives himself license to make audacious *excursuses* beyond disciplinary lines-psychoanalytic psychopathology-in order to somewhat rattle our ideological bases, which tend to fix the epistemological positions of contributors to the field. In his earlier work, *La science au risqué de la psychanalyse* [Science at the risk of psychoanalysis], he noted that you don't get rid of the question of the relationship between psychoanalysis and science simply by settling for the latter. It should instead be made a *problem*, and hence one of the axes constituting the theory and practice of psychoanalysis.

His most recent book, *Logique des passions*, is fully inscribed within this perspective: although passion and science are thought to occupy apparently opposed spheres, excluding *a priori* any dialectical exchange, Gori's approach for getting hold of it nevertheless obeys a common axiology. If psychoanalysis is not subject to a science *of the external*, then passion is what is exempted from a psychoanalysis *of the internal*. External limits to internal limits; these are the recurrent problems encountered by psychoanalysis.

The book begins with the following paradoxical question: "Do you have to be mad in order to believe someone loves you"? In other words, is this belief, which in the imagination underlies every request of the Other, already madness? In any case, when it takes the form of erotomania, that passionate delusion invests in the Other the entire responsibility of having to love-leaving open for the subject, as the second part of the book shows quite well, the field of hate. One of the most important French figures in the area of the psychopathology of erotomania was Gaëtan Gatian de Clérambault (whom Lacan called "my only teacher in psychiatry"): beginning in the prison infirmary, he studied with endless patience this "feminine madness" that tormented his erotomaniac patients. Clérambault compiled remarkable notes of his clinical interviews, which are practically recordings given their word-for-word reproduction of the interviews-and Gori reveals the mad nature of it, often at the very limit of a delusion *à deux*. In his cases, Clérambault highlights the structure itself of the discourse, which allowed him to give a logical form to passion. The nuances of the discourse thus bring out this tragic dimension of the irreconcilable: things aren't as they appear; words do not grasp all there is-from this gap there emerges the essential ontological conflict which makes it possible to think of the division of the subject in a particularly sensitive way. For this very reason Gori is "convinced that erotomania, in a number of ways, was part of Lacan's conceptual edifice". In fact, it's not possible to think of the subject of psychoanalysis or of the unconscious without the epistemological framework outlined by Lacan with this notion of *division*, raised to the level of a principle of the subject and highlighted in such a striking way by that passionate delusion, erotomania. This conflict in erotomania could be summarized by the formula, "suffering for the Other". This formula is the elective mode by which the erotomaniac subject displaces in the Other, through a paranoiac dynamic, the lack whose existence he senses in himself; but at the same time he maintains the impossibility of tolerating this lack as such and, before any possible acceptance, of recognizing it as a lack. The illusion of being able to make up for this in the partner by

making oneself the object of his lack and thus passionately giving oneself over to him, is always accompanied, however, by a desperate rage once the subject realizes the impossibility of this. One sees that erotomania is related to fetishism: Clérambault's conversations with his patients reveal the fear of castration by the Other which passion *disavows* and delusion precludes [*forclos*]. The very moment the subject glimpses the renunciation of the plenitude that the subjective position requires, he annihilates himself in order not to face the nothingness that fills the lack and sets off the fetishistic incantation underlying the passion of which erotomania is an avatar. Here you can see the impasse for erotomaniac subjects: like fetishists, they confuse object and signifier. This impasse constitutes the passion's horizon, a passion that simultaneously avows and disavows the subjectivizing lack.

In the end, what does the intolerable lack say about the erotomaniac subject? Only that you cannot lose, not what you didn't have, but what didn't happen, which Gori calls "the unrealized". In fact, the actual object of hate in question doesn't concern what's lost, which instead favors love, but the unrealized, of which the author paradoxically says that it is the only true real, brought about by hate in seeking to abolish it. One finds here the tragic nature of the immutable logic of passion that fatally unveils precisely what it tirelessly tried to veil, which acts against itself at the very moment in which it believes it's going to reach its final unveiling. Seen this way, the erotomaniac position is at the origin of all forms of passion, of all ontological passions. Erotomania and transference, the passion peculiar to analytic treatment, both obstruct the same thing: mourning, which is not over what one has lost, but over what has remained unrealized and that secondarily takes the shape of hate. The logic of the passion of hate proceeds according to a rationality that consists, especially for violent acts, in striking where one was hurt. The Other turns out to be an image in which the subject's being was imprisoned, abducted, and where it continues to be held captive. According to Gori, Marguerite Duras' novel *Le ravissement de Lol V. Stein* (*The Ravishing of Lol Stein*), referred to in the second half of the book, already expresses this with the wonderful ambiguity of the French term *ravissement*, meaning both the feeling of plenitude and subjective abandonment: how better to support what Gori says, that the ambiguity may be the very blind spot of erotomania? "The psychotic or one with passional delusion", he tells us once again, "desperately tries to reconstruct this primitive ontological attack by looking for objects around him that can instantiate this image in order to be able to destroy it by making it disappear. His act constitutes an attempt at healing". In fact, it's a matter of healing from this imaginary, alienating identification, of this *ravissement*, since if I cannot love in the other that of the Other which I lack, then I hate him, *Je le hais*, or rather, *Je le est*, I am him (1): the "I" becomes "him", a stranger to himself, possessed by the hatred of seeing himself so irreparably divided. Hate is thus an ontological matter, a passion of being as Lacan noted in his first seminar, *Encore*: "Hate [...] is what gets closest to being, what I call *ex-sister*".

This triumvirate of passion puts not only love and hate into play, but also, and transversally to these two domains of subjective realization, ignorance: as much as in love as in hate, it's a matter of obstinately continuing to ignore that division of which, as subject, you are yourself the result. Now, in the epistemological field of psychoanalysis, Gori shows in the third part of the book that there is "an indivisible link between the emergence of *passions* and the essential *problematicity* of speech and language". In other words, as Aristotle observed, it's quite possible to create a passional rhetoric, there being only the question of knowing whether all the paths lead to ignorance. The analytic mechanism itself, in the statement of the basic rule, refers to a rhetorical effect that stands as a first interpretation of the vague state of the subject's suffering: one always suffers as a result of the signifier, and it's in speech itself that one unknowingly continues to ignore it. That is to say, the passion of ignoring is closely linked to the passion of speaking. This is why the subject can only interpose speech with her/his signifiers by way of surprise, through so-called free association; in other words, she/he does not know, but can access this ignorance in its fully raw state, can somehow see it. Is ceasing to ignore therefore something other than giving credence to your own ignorance? To the age-old saying, "The only thing I know is that I don't know anything", psychoanalysis proposes a variation that nevertheless remains along the same lines: "The only thing I know as a result of analytic treatment is that I don't want to know anything about my unconscious knowledge". Taking into account this cursed aspect, namely unconscious knowledge, which is more *heterological*, to use Georges Bataille's term, than logical, is as much the core of passions as it is of analytic treatment, but always in an *extime* fashion. One could say: a type of speech in inclusion that's outside of its object, treatment; the only

speech to both dwell within treatment and make it possible, while at the same time continuously exceeding it and bringing it into question. Finally, we should note that for Gori, This place assigned to our cursed part [...] is accompanied, during treatment, by a productivity whose extremely creative nature was noted by Freud on several occasions. This productivity prompts dreams, new symptoms, new opportunities for being affected, in short, new formations of the unconscious. And in our *civilization of hate*, analysis may be the only place for a theory having no practical aim. Treatment may be the only place where one can find a parry to these everyday traumas that make up the 'conformist terror' of the logic or barbaric demands of the economic horror.

Translated from the French by **Marcel Lieberman**

Notes:

1) The phrases *Je le hais* and *Je le est*, are phonetically identical in French