

# The Origins and Organization of Unconscious Conflict

The selected works of  
**MARTIN S. BERGMANN**



MARTIN S. BERGMANN



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“In these selected papers of Martin Bergmann, profound meditations are offered on love and death, the leap from hysteria to dream interpretation in Freud’s intellectual development, the genetic roots of psychoanalysis in the creative clash between Enlightenment and Romantic ideas, old age as a clinical and theoretical phenomenon, the death instinct as clinical conundrum and controversy, and the interminable debate about termination in psychoanalysis and how to effect it. Crucial clinical and theoretical questions are constantly addressed and the challenges they pose cannot but engage and enlighten the reader. Bergmann is a philosopher of mind as much as he is a psychoanalyst and the range and scope of the ideas in these selected papers is impressive, instructive and illuminating.”

– **Dr. Eugene Mahon**, training and supervising analyst, Columbia Psychoanalytic Center for Training and Research and member of the Center for Advanced Psychoanalytic Studies in Princeton.

“This collection of selected papers on the history of psychoanalysis, psychoanalytic technique, and on love convey the depth and breadth of Martin Bergmann’s contributions to psychoanalysis. His clarity of thought, his creativity, his joy in learning, and his love of a good idea and their application in his seminars, which were ongoing for 35 years, inspired a generation of learning psychoanalytic work in the group.”

– **Marilyn LaMonica**, MPS, NYS Licensed Psychoanalyst.

From the preface by Dr. Otto Kernberg: “The present volume provides the reader with a wide ranging, comprehensive set of contributions by Martin Bergmann to major aspects of psychoanalytic theory, technique, and applications. Major subject matters include psychoanalytic technique, the scientific and ideological aspects of psychoanalysis, and the study of love. In all these fields, Bergmann follows a general strategic approach: first, he masterfully synthesizes Freud’s major contributions to a certain area, the origin and development of his thinking, the ramifications to present day psychoanalytic theory and practice, and, finally, Bergmann’s explanation of the nature of still unresolved problems that require further work. It is an exciting intellectual journey that fosters the reader’s confrontation with problems of actuality regarding theory, technique and application of psychoanalysis. The present volume is a rich, stimulating book that combines an historical analysis of Freud’s contributions with Bergmann’s analysis of the roots of present day controversies and unresolved challenges for the psychoanalytic community. It is relevant for clinicians, theoreticians, and, hopefully, a new generation of researchers as well.”

– **Otto F. Kernberg**, Director, Personality Disorders Institute, New York Presbyterian Hospital, Westchester Division; Professor of Psychiatry, Weill Medical College of Cornell University; Training and Supervising Analyst, Columbia University Center for Psychoanalytic Training and Research.

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# The Origins and Organization of Unconscious Conflict

*The Origins and Organization of Unconscious Conflict* provides a comprehensive set of contributions by Martin S. Bergmann to psychoanalytic theory, technique, and its applications. Following a general approach, Bergmann synthesizes Freud's major contributions, the development of his thinking, the ramifications to present day psychoanalytic theory and practice, and, finally, discusses unresolved problems requiring further work.

In these selected papers, profound meditations are offered on love and death, the leap from hysteria to dream interpretation in Freud's intellectual development, the genetic roots of psychoanalysis in the creative clash between Enlightenment and Romantic ideas, old age as a clinical and theoretical phenomenon, the death instinct as clinical controversy, and the interminable debate about termination in psychoanalysis and how to effect it. Crucial clinical and theoretical questions are constantly addressed and the challenges they pose will engage and enlighten the reader. Bergmann was a philosopher of mind as much as a psychoanalyst, and the range and scope of the ideas in these selected papers is impressive, instructive and illuminating.

Bergmann deals with psychoanalysis as a science, and with an ideology – referring to psychoanalysis as a “*Weltanschauung*,” a philosophical basis for psychoanalytic theory. He presented empirical research for validation from other sciences, attempting to clarify his own observations about irrational forces that constitute major motivators of human life, and require taking an existential position regarding their implications: the search for the meaning of one's existence.

*The Origins and Organization of Unconscious Conflict* is an exciting intellectual journey of the scientific and ideological aspects of psychoanalysis and the study of love. It will appeal to psychoanalysts, psychologists, philosophers and both undergraduate and postgraduate students studying in these fields, as well as anyone with an interest in mental health and human behaviour.

**Martin S. Bergmann** (1913–2014) was a Freudian psychoanalyst, author and educator. For many years he taught a course on the history of psychoanalysis in the postdoctoral program on psychoanalysis and psychotherapy at New York University and in private seminars. He was an honorary member of the American Psychoanalytic Association, an honorary fellow of the Post-Graduate Center for Mental Health, and a member of the International Psychoanalytic Association.

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# The Origins and Organization of Unconscious Conflict

The selected works of  
Martin S. Bergmann

**Martin S. Bergmann**

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Maria V. Bergmann

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# PREFACE

The present volume provides the reader with a wide ranging, comprehensive set of contributions by Martin Bergmann to major aspects of psychoanalytic theory, technique, and applications. Major subject matters include psychoanalytic technique, the scientific and ideological aspects of psychoanalysis, and the study of love. In all these fields, Bergmann follows a general strategic approach: first, he masterfully synthesizes Freud's major contributions to a certain area, the origin and development of his thinking, the ramifications to present day psychoanalytic theory and practice, and, finally, Bergmann's explanation of the nature of still unresolved problems that require further work. It is an exciting intellectual journey that fosters the reader's confrontation with problems of actuality regarding theory, technique and application of psychoanalysis.

Regarding the area of psychoanalytic technique, Bergmann describes how significant creative leaps permitted Freud to discover the essentials of psychoanalytic technique. The leap from his *Studies on Hysteria* to *The Interpretation of Dreams* included Freud's discovery of free association, the basic contribution of the patient to the collaborative work with the analyst, complemented by the analyst's free floating attention. This method facilitated the discovery of the Dynamic Unconscious, and continues, to this day, to be the cornerstone of clinical psychoanalytic exploration. This method has been expanded by Bion's recommendation to enter each session "without memory nor desire," and continues to be an essential aspect not only of psychoanalytic technique, but of all derived psychoanalytic psychotherapies.

The discovery of the Dynamic Unconscious was complemented, Bergmann goes on, by Freud's description of the very nature of primary process functioning and its impact on preconscious thinking, humor, fantasy, and distortions of language. The analysis of the Dynamic Unconscious led to the fundamental importance of infantile sexuality and the oedipal constellation. The next step was the discovery of the unconscious repetition in the "here and now" of unresolved conflicts of the past; i.e., transference, leading to transference analysis as an essential technique of contemporary psychoanalytic treatment.

Bergmann then describes the second great leap in Freud's development, the formulation of the structural theory, the discovery of super ego functions and super ego pathology, clarifying, in the process, depression and masochism, and leading to the discovery of the importance of severe, primary aggression directed against self and others, Freud's formulation of the concept of the death drive. Today we assume that both love and aggression originate in biologically determined positive and negative affect systems that, from birth on, determine the infant's interactions with

mother and with the expanding social world, and are expressed in the dynamics of unconscious conflict in all areas of development and psychic experience.

In the analysis of the nature of passionate love, Bergmann points to the combination of the unconscious search for the oedipally beloved or ambivalently loved object, but he also stresses the importance of the symbiotic longing for the original encounter with mother that has been highlighted in the study of early infant-mother relations. Nowadays, we consider attachment, eroticism and play-bonding as those primary positive affect systems that come together in what Freud denominated libido; in contrast to the death drive, that may be considered derived from the negative affect systems of “fight-flight” and “separation panic.”

Bergmann stresses the parallel development of Freud’s exploration of the unconscious life of his patients and of his own life experience as an ongoing task during his lifetime. Freud used the analysis of his own dreams, by means of free association, to explore his own unconscious; and Bergmann raises the question to what extent free association and dream analysis still continue to be the essential tools for investigating the deeper layers of the mind. While transference analysis has become the dominant focus of psychoanalytic technique, dream analysis is still a “royal road” to the unconscious. The importance of dream analysis continues to haunt psychoanalytic technique: recent developments of the neo-Bionian approach consider the patient’s free associations as similar to the manifest contents of dreams, so that patients’ descriptions of their emotional reality and their fantasies are treated as manifest contents of deeper unconscious developments that may be captured, in turn, by the analyst’s “reverie.”

Bergmann presents a penetrating analysis of the unresolved issue of analytic goals. He points to the fact that, in many cases, the aspired freedom from neurotic conflicts and pathological inhibitions to be achieved by psychoanalysis remains an unattained goal. This has become a growing concern for the profession, and has led to a sophisticated analysis of cases that do not respond to psychoanalysis proper but may respond to modified treatments: psychoanalytic psychotherapies. Bergmann points to the initial reluctance within psychoanalysis to engage in such modified treatments and, appropriately I believe, reaches the conclusion that psychoanalytic psychotherapy is an important area to explore and develop in order to help a much larger patient population than those responding to standard psychoanalysis. We already have solid empirical research that psychoanalytic psychotherapies have demonstrated their effectiveness. The discussion of the goals of psychoanalysis leads Bergmann to explore the differentiation between treatment goals and life goals, and the importance of setting up realistic indications and outcome expectations.

The analysis of erotic transference and countertransference is one of the richest contributions of this book. Bergmann points to Freud’s discovery of the importance of erotic countertransference and its challenge to technical neutrality, on the one hand; and the question of whether transference love is “real love” or a form of “neurotic” love. Bergmann convincingly shows how the characteristics of erotic transference correspond to those of a real, passionate love experience; but, insofar as it is directed to an unavailable object, it also acquires the nature of the oedipal situation. In contrast to the original oedipal situation, it now may be explored in the treatment – and, under optimal circumstances, resolved in a mourning reaction – that permits the transfer of the capacity for love to an available object in the patient’s real life. Bergmann wisely analyzes limitations to this optimal development and the risk that the relationship with the analyst, at times, is so much better than anything the patient has found in life before that it becomes difficult to resolve this transference.

Bergmann points to important contemporary developments in countertransference awareness, and the gradual shift of the analytic attitude from considering countertransference as an obstacle to the view of countertransference as crucial information regarding transference developments. He also discusses countertransference in connection with complications in the termination of treatment. Bergmann candidly discusses the difficulty of the analyst, as well as of the patient, in ending a relationship that has been so uniquely helpful, and, in fact, that may have been the most positive relationship that some patients have had in their entire life! Here the working through of termination becomes complex, and the mourning over the end of the analysis may become a major source of conflict and disappointment. Bergmann illustrates these conflicts with numerous clinical examples that reveal the subtlety and creativity of his approach to individual cases, his stepping outside the conventional assumptions regarding the effects of psychoanalytic technique, and his openness to unexpected and surprising developments in the analytic relationship. This openness also applies to Bergmann's observations regarding the developments of analysis during old age. The discussion of the loss of the dimension of the future in old age, the objective risks of loneliness and lack of support, the traumatic death of a spouse of many years, and patients' concerns over the possibility of the death of an aging analyst, are amongst the most interesting reflections of this volume.

A major part of the book deals with psychoanalysis as a science, and with what I have called an ideology – referring to psychoanalysis as a “*Weltanschauung*,” a philosophical basis for psychoanalytic theory. Bergmann presents an original, penetrating analysis of Freud's inner struggle, throughout his entire life, between the consideration of analysis as a science, to be submitted to empirical research and validation and related to other sciences; and, alternatively, analysis as the discovery of the deep, irrational forces that constitute major motivators of human life, and require taking an existential position regarding their implications: the search for the meaning of one's existence in this dramatic context.

Bergmann classifies major contributors to psychoanalytic thinking as heretics, modifiers and extenders. Heretics separated their thinking from that of Freud. Historically, the most important were Adler, Stekel, Jung, Rank and Wilhelm Reich. Bergmann states that during Freud's lifetime there were only heretics; extenders and modifiers appeared after Freud's death, when no one could lay claim to being the only heir to Freud's legacy. Modifiers significantly recast psychoanalytic theory and technique, but maintain themselves in the psychoanalytic mainstream. The most important early modifiers were Ferenczi and Federn, later ones included Hartmann, Melanie Klein, Winnicott, Lacan and Kohut. Bergmann proposes that extenders usually expanded psychoanalysis into new areas, but their findings did not demand modification. Among them, he refers to Karl Abraham, Hermann Nunberg, Robert Waelder and Otto Fenichel; interestingly enough, all of them (except Abraham) are linked with ego psychology. One might add that modifiers who remained within the psychoanalytic fold in turn gave origin to extenders, such as, for example, Bion, Rosenfeld and Meltzer as extenders of Kleinian theory. While relational psychoanalysis probably has not originated any major modifiers, it does constitute, as a group, a significant constellation of extenders in the development of object relations theory and technique. In any case, as Bergmann points out, the examination of the total field of modifiers and extenders indicates that there exist some major controversies in psychoanalysis that have not been resolved and are expressed in different theoretical and technical approaches that create an ongoing dynamic and problematic question about their resolution.

Bergmann points out that the essential controversy may be between those who see psychoanalysis as a scientific approach to the study of the unconscious and the resolution of neurotic conflict by resolving unconscious conflicts – following, in this regard, Freud’s major traditional approach – and a radical opposite position, implying that what is therapeutic is not only the interpretation of unconscious conflicts, but the very relationship that the patient establishes with the analyst. Ferenczi, Balint and Winnicott moved in that direction, and the entire contemporary relationist school has pointed to the fundamental importance of the reliving, in the analytic situation, of past traumatic experiences of etiological importance in the patient suffering. Whether what dominates in the cure are interpretations or a new relationship is a major question that separates ego psychologists, Kleinians, British Independent, and French analysts from the relationist school with its various facets of intersubjectivity, relational analysis, interpersonal analysis and self psychology.

Bergmann points to the difficulty of resolving this controversy on the basis of simply comparing clinical experiences that tend to be colored by the theoretical and clinical biases of the psychoanalyst. He proposes that these questions will have to be resolved by means of empirical research – an endeavor the psychoanalytic establishment has been so reluctant to embrace. In fact, I believe that the traditional reluctance – and even animosity against – empirical research has harmed psychoanalysis. It has isolated it from the university and academia, and slowed down the new applications to psychoanalytic psychotherapies.

Again, Bergmann points out how, behind this controversy, lurks the bigger one between psychoanalysis as a science or an ideology, a *Weltanschauung*. This, he observes, already became evident in the struggle between Freud and Jung – with Freud’s insistence on the scientific nature of psychoanalysis; while Jung pointed to the obscure and primitive nature of the unconscious forces affecting the human being in a manner that reflected the profound spiritual currents of German romanticist philosophy.

Bergmann convincingly illustrates this struggle between science and ideology in the three chapters dedicated to Freud’s conflict between enlightenment and romantic philosophy, involving the impact of Freud’s death drive theory, and the Jewish and German roots of psychoanalysis. In the process, Bergmann describes the fundamental influence of German philosophy on Freud, on the one hand, and, on the other, the uncompromising scientific attitude of Brücke, whose assistant he had been at one point.

Freud the scientist had demonstrated his deep knowledge of the neurology of his time in his book on Aphasia. When he abandoned his efforts to base his psychological theories on neurobiology, he did so because he realized that the neurobiology of his time was not yet at the level that permitted him to do that. In this connection, I have no doubt that if Freud were alive today his views would be profoundly influenced by the new developments in our neurobiological understanding – very much in contrast to psychoanalysts who hang on to ideas that clearly reflect Freud’s dependency on the neurobiology of the past.

But then, in the 1920s, the effects of the First World War and Freud’s discovery of the profound influence of unconscious aggression and their self-destructive effects under the disguise of the moral constellation of the super ego, led him to become aware of the dark sight of existence, the thin layer of rational adaptation to social reality. This finding moved him again into the direction of ideology, a *Weltanschauung*, without explicitly stating that position. The very concept of the death drive implied an existential view of the fundamental struggle between love, happiness, and the drive to relate, on the one hand; and to aggression, turned inward toward the self or in the outward expression of violence toward others on

a massive scale, on the other ... Freud's analysis of the psychology of regressive mass movements, and their relationship to a leader, predicted with frightening accuracy the horrible mass destruction movements of the 1930s and 1940s, and, again, what we now perceive in the primitive destructiveness of political Islam.

Bergmann describes the controversy generated in the psychoanalytic establishment by Freud's structural theory, and his new theory of libido and the death drive, and how it remains one of the major divisive themes that agitates the psychoanalytic community. Ego psychology and the relationalist approach tend to reject the concept of the death drive, while Kleinian analysis and French analysis accept the theory of the death drive to this day.

In my view, we do have solid evidence that inborn negative affect systems – the “fight-flight” system and the “panic-separation” system – originate the potential for aggressive behavior that, under conditions of environmental traumatization may expand, become dominant, and be structurally built into the individual's character structure and superego, or else remain as repressed forces that may be triggered at moments of regression. André Green's proposal that narcissism represents not only the libidinal investment in the self, but also expresses the combined investment of libido and aggression in the self, is convincing to me. Under normal circumstances, the overcoming of the paranoid-schizoid position, the integration that is reflected in the depressive position, permits the modulation of aggression: love dominates and modulates and tones down aggression. Under pathological circumstances, with an excessive development of aggressive drive, severe splits of the personality may remain, giving rise to borderline personality organization. Under these circumstances aggression also may invade a pathological grandiose self, giving rise to malignant narcissism and to personality structures in which aggression becomes the dominant motivation of the individual.

In his book *On the Future of an Illusion*, Freud expressed his conviction that religion reflects the remnants of an infantile search for a protective, powerful benign father figure. He expressed his hope that in the long run rationality will prevail and make religion unnecessary. Bergmann agrees, and takes the side of a scientific approach. To me, Freud's affirmation, however, seems more an ideological hopefulness than a scientific observation. Psychoanalysis has much to say about religiosity and the development of the capability for a spiritual realm of existence, but cannot make decisions about the truth values of theological affirmation. Here Martin Bergmann and I diverge, because Martin, in a proud gesture, was prone to say: “The buck stops here.”

The final section of the book contains a major contribution to our understanding of passionate love. Here Bergmann draws on his own work, but also considers the limited psychoanalytic literature about the subject and, of course, Freud's contributions to the subject. Freud described the essential function of the oedipal constellation in determining one's search for a lost love object. Mother is the first love object: after the intensity of longing for her related to the oedipal phase of development, and the decrease of the intensity of this relation during the latent period, the search for a refinding of this first love object re-emerges in adolescence. Now both erotic feelings and tenderness combine in the search for an object that unconsciously represents mother and, by the same token – in the case of women – the idealized father of the oedipal period. Opposed to this search is the unconscious guilt over oedipal longings, with the potential of defensive splitting between tender feelings and sexual feelings, the various types of sexual pathology that include impotence, sexual inhibitions, masochistic approaches to love, or aggressive efforts to exact revenge for oedipal disappointments. Bergmann stresses, in combination with these major determinants, the development of narcissistic features – in the sense



of the idealization of the love object that is internalized as the ego ideal – and then reprojected outside in order to find, in external reality, the person that symbolically will reflect one's own ego ideal. And underneath these features, Bergmann stresses the wish for fusion with the symbiotic mother of earliest development.

The fact that mother unconsciously induces a capability for erotic desire in the infant, in correspondence with the activation of a neurobiological erotic affect disposition of the infant, is one of the major new developments in psychoanalytic understanding. Martin Bergmann stresses the importance of the search for an ecstatic primary erotic union in adulthood. At the same time, he emphasizes the developing human capacity for idealization in the developing ego idea and the development of oedipal love, which together determine the capacity for a passionate love engagement. This general concept is beautifully illustrated in clinical manifestations of these desires. Bergmann describes, among the pathology of love relations, the repetition compulsion of traumatic past relationships that are unconsciously reactivated in new love relations. These dynamics are expressed, for example, in the selection of an object totally opposite to the maternal one, the development of intolerance of separation as part of love relations, the reactivation of conflicts of separation individuation, and the many difficulties in integrating developmentally the various currents that determine the capacity for passionate love.

Bergmann attempts, through a historical review of the development of our knowledge of sexuality, to synthesize what we now know about it, and points to what we still have to learn regarding the ultimate integration of erotic desire, emotional tenderness, idealizing relations and the intense search for fusion in love relations. He implies that we know more about the pathology of love relations than about the characteristics of mature love.

In the last chapter of this section Bergmann once again comes back to the relationship between transference love and love in real life. Bergmann concludes that love may be repetitive in terms of the refinding of the primary love object, but it also has an element of novelty derived from real life. He states that transference love is not adaptive by itself, and that it is only the sublimation of transference love with the aid of the analyst that makes it adaptive for the purposes of cure when serious love problems affected the patient before the treatment. Oedipal love necessarily leads to disillusionment, which fosters the building up of defenses against loving. The working through of transference love liberates the capacity for love, that now can be invested in a new object – but the first new object will necessarily be the analyst himself. The mechanism of sublimation will permit the renunciation and transfer of this newly learned capacity. Transference love, therefore, is a “special hot house variety of love.”

The present volume is a rich, stimulating book that combines an historical analysis of Freud's contributions with Bergmann's analysis of the roots of present day controversies and unresolved challenges for the psychoanalytic community. It is relevant for clinicians, theoreticians, and, hopefully, a new generation of researchers as well.

Otto F. Kernberg, M.D.

May 14, 2015

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Psychoanalytic Training and Research

**PART I**

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THEORY

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## CHAPTER 1

# PSYCHOANALYTIC OBSERVATIONS ON THE CAPACITY TO LOVE<sup>1</sup>

From the Greek tragedians and the Roman poets, the Western world has inherited the idea that love is an overwhelming and dangerous emotion that reduces the mind to a state of inconstancy and childishness. The destructive power of love is described with particular force by Euripides in *Hippolytus*. That play, it will be recalled, records the gradual disintegration of Queen Phaedra's superego and ego under the impact of her love for her stepson. Euripides lets the nurse say to Phaedra, "The love queen's onset in her might is more than man can bear," and the chorus implores Aphrodite: "O never in evil mood appear to me, nor out of time and tune approach" (Coleridge translation). Sophocles lets the chorus in *Antigone* sing:

Love, unconquered in the fight, Love, who makest havoc of wealth, who keep-  
est thy vigil on the soft cheek of a maiden; thou roamest over the sea, and  
among the homes of dwellers in the wilds; no immortal can escape thee, nor  
any among men whose life is for a day; and he to whom thou hast come is mad.

The just themselves have their minds warped by thee to wrong, for  
their ruin ...

(Oates and O'Neil 1938, p. 445)

In a similar vein, Menander treats love as a sickness, and Plutarch regards love as a form of madness. With the notable exception of Ovid, the poets of antiquity feared love because it induced regression; and they were dimly aware of a relationship between love and infancy.

By contrast, Shakespeare's dominant attitude toward love is ambivalence:

The bitter-sweet character of the food of love is emphasised by Shakespeare  
as by no one else. It is luscious and bitter, sweet and sour, delicious and loath-  
some, "a choking gall and a preserving sweet."

(Spurgeon 1958, p. 147)

The metaphors with which Shakespeare expresses love are strikingly oral: "Love surfeit not. Lust like a glutton dies." And of Cleopatra it is said, "other women cloy the appetite they feed, but she makes hungry." And Juliet, the heroine who embodies love as few of his heroines do, declared, "My bounty is as boundless as the sea. My love as deep." Plato expressed the ambivalent feelings toward love by a myth. Eros is described in the *Symposium* (p. 203) as the Son of Plenty (Poros) and Poverty (Penia). From his father he has inherited the sense of plenty that accompanies love; and from his mother, the distress that lovers feel.

Finally, there is a third group of poets and philosophers who affirm love without reservation. Bertrand Russell (1930) once quoted an anonymous poet who wrote that “Love” was greatly wronged by those who called its sweetness bitter, when in fact the richness of its fruit was such that nothing could surpass its sweetness. And he himself adds:

not only is love a source of delight, but its absence is a source of pain ... it enhances all the best pleasures, such as music, and sunrise in mountains, and the sea under the full moon. A man who has never enjoyed beautiful things in the company of a woman whom he loved has not experienced to the full the magic power of which such things are capable.

(p. 40)

The three basic attitudes have in common the conviction that love is an overwhelming emotion which fundamentally affects the mental stability and the outlook on life of the person who is “in love.” We intuitively recognize that a relationship is not love when a radical change in mood has not taken place or when the beloved is painlessly exchanged for another.

We speak of selecting a mate as we speak of choosing an occupation, and we know that both decisions are the result of a complex interaction between conscious reality-oriented considerations and unconscious wishes. However, when the mate is chosen on the basis of realistic considerations, we suspect prudence rather than love. We speak of “falling in love,” and earlier writers spoke of being smitten by love, and evoked the mythological image of the blindfolded Amor. Other languages maintain a similar distinction, as the German distinction between “*lieben*” and “*sich verlieben*.” In the vocabulary that Federn developed, we may say that love can be experienced with active or passive ego feelings (Bergmann 1963). Thus, Robert Browning:

How say you? Let us, O my dove,  
                     Let us be unashamed of soul,  
 As earth lies bare to heaven above!  
                     How is it under our control  
 To love or not to love?

(*Two in the Campagna*)

In keeping with these passive feelings, lovers are prone to stress the accidental and unpremeditated nature of their meetings. Love, however, cannot simply be equated with a selection of a mate based on unconscious rather than utilitarian reasons. Psychoanalytic experience demonstrates that it is possible to have a relationship which is monogamous and tenaciously adhered to, and yet devoid of the experience of love. Such mates often stand for parental figures that were more hated than loved, or for repudiated aspects of themselves.

Before Freud, love was the domain of philosophers and poets. Freud drew heavily upon this Western tradition, but these philosophers and poets did not have a genetic psychology at their disposal. They therefore could not discern how one form of love could be related to another, nor could they gain insight into the psychic forces that promote or retard the development of the capacity to love. By contrast, Freud approached the mystery of love through a path that had never been tried before – infantile sexuality. From this vantage point, psychoanalysis could make its unique contribution to the understanding of the origin of the capacity to

love. I hope to show that today we can go further than Freud did in this understanding, since we have at our disposal not only his insights but also the findings of Mahler and her co-workers, observations that I believe have special relevance to the genesis of the capacity to love.

On the subject of love, classical thought from Hesiod to Lucretius remained firmly rooted in the mythopoetic point of view. Hesiod saw Eros not only as the god of sensuous love, but also as the power that binds the separate elements of the world. This view was taken over by the pre-Socratic philosophers. To Parmenides (fragment 13), love was the force that made men live and thrive. To Democritus (fragment 78), it was the desire for all beautiful things (Bowra 1957, p. 196).

Freud (1937a) acknowledged his indebtedness to one of the pre-Socratic philosophers, Empedocles, when he said:

I can never be certain, in view of the wide extent of my reading in early years, whether what I took for a new creation might not be an effect of cryptomnesia.  
(p. 245)

Freud (1925a) acknowledged his indebtedness to Plato, at least indirectly, when he said:

what psycho-analysis called sexuality was by no means identical with the impulsion towards a union of the two sexes or towards producing a pleasurable sensation in the genitals; it had far more resemblance to the all-inclusive and all-preserving Eros of Plato's *Symposium*.  
(p. 218)

It is possible that Freud was also influenced by other Greek philosophers, since we know (Eissler 1951) that Gomperz's *Greek Thinkers* was one of Freud's ten favorite books.

In keeping with the mythopoetic view, love and hate were to Empedocles quasi-natural and quasi-mythological forces.

when the elements combine to form animals or plants, men say these are born, and when they scatter again men call it death ... Never will boundless time be emptied of these two [fragment 16].

In Anger all are diverse and sundered, but in Love they come together and are desired of each other. For out of these are born whatever was and is and will be – trees, men, women, beasts, birds and water-feeding fishes, yea and long-lived gods highest in honours [fragment 21].

To Empedocles, Aphrodite was not only a goddess residing on Olympus, but she literally entered men.

she it is who is acknowledged to be implanted in the limbs of mortals, whereby they think kindly thoughts and do peaceful works, calling her Joy by name and Aphrodite.

(fragment 17 [Guthrie 1962])

I have quoted the Greek philosophers at some length because I wish to stress that the Greek concept of love was indeed a broad one, and Freud's idea of

sublimation is at least implicit in their writings. It becomes explicit in the writings of Plato, who believed that all arts and sciences sprang from some longing or desire and therefore had their origin in Eros. "Touched by love, every one becomes a poet even though he had no music in him before." Not only the "melody of the muses" but also "the arts of medicine," the "metallurgy of Hephaestus," and the "weaving of Athena" are inspired by Eros (*Symposium*, p. 197). I have shown elsewhere (Bergmann 1966) that Plato also anticipated Freud's topographic division when he described the emergence of oedipal wishes in dreams, "when the mild and rational soul is asleep." To Eros, Plato assigned the task of bringing together the two natures of man, the divine self and the tethered beast in him (Dodds 1951).

Aristotle quoted with approval Euripides' statement, "Parched earth loves the rain and stately heaven, when filled with rain, yearns on the earth to fall" (*The Nichomachean Ethics*, Book 8). Browning, in the poem quoted earlier, used the same language, but to him the embrace of heaven and earth was a poetic metaphor, while to Aristotle it was a scientific explanation that illuminated the deeper origins of love.

This mythopoetic view of love as a cosmic force is beautifully expressed by Lucretius in his evocation of Venus (*Lucretius de Rerum Natura*, English translation, W.H.D. Rouse, Book 1, Verse 1–50).

O goddess, from thee, the winds flee away, the clouds of heaven from thee and thy coming; for thee the wonder-working earth puts forth sweet flowers, for thee the wide stretches of ocean laugh, and heaven grown peaceful glows with outpoured light.

... the herds go wild and dance over the rich pastures and swim across rapid rivers, so greedily does each one follow thee, held captive by their charm ...

For thou alone canst delight mortals with quiet peace, since Mars mighty in battle rules the savage works of war, who often casts himself upon thy lap wholly vanquished by the ever-living would of love ...

The image evoked by Lucretius became popular in the Renaissance in the many paintings depicting Venus as holding the sleeping Mars in her arms and thus assuring peace. Freud's idea of taming aggression by fusion with libido leans upon a long mythopoetic tradition. Greek philosophers also raised a number of the questions which Freud (1914d) dealt with in his study of narcissism. They wondered whether love arose from the need for an unlike complement or whether like was attracted by like. Aristotle even asked whether it was possible for a man to "feel friendship for himself." He went on to add, "devoted attachment to someone else comes to resemble love for oneself" (*The Nichomachean Ethics*, Book 9, chapter 4).

In the context of this essay, it is of interest to note that Aristotle defined love as an intensification of friendship, "an emotion of such high intensity that it can be felt only for one person at a time" (*The Nichomachean Ethics*, Book 9; see also Hazo 1967). Freud (1930) derived aim-inhibited love from sensual love (p. 103). Aristotle also recognized their affinity but, unlike Freud, derived love from friendship. Here I will be concerned only with love as defined by Aristotle and leave aside the manifestations of aim-inhibited libido.

Plato intuitively comprehended an aspect of love that psychoanalysis learned to appreciate only after Mahler illuminated the significance of the symbiotic phase in human development.