

EROS IN ANALYSIS by Betsy Cohen, 2009

Eros, a cosmic, transcendent force, has been omitted from most psychoanalytic literature, yet love and truth are necessary to heal the patient. The founder of our young art and science, Sigmund Freud, was fearful of an erotic countertransference. This theoretical dissertation uses ancient wisdom, particularly the *Song of Songs* from the Hebrew Bible and Plato's erotic dialogues, *Symposium* and *Phaedrus*, to create a new template for Eros in psychoanalytic treatment—to incorporate the erotic into the experience of love between patient and analyst.

Through a thorough review of the history of Eros from Freud's thinking of transference love to contemporary psychoanalysis, this study uses the formulation that transference and countertransference are now considered a unity, the field mutually created by analysts and their analysands. Carl Jung and the erotic, particularly his relationship with Sabina Spielrein are explored. Also presented are some modern Jungian analysts, comfortable with Eros in the consulting room, encouraging their own and their patients' full presence in the relationship by not repressing Eros.

A meditative and deep immersion in the *Song of Songs* illustrates how the erotic between analyst and patient mirrors the two lovers in the *Song* and supports an exploration of desire, longing, absence, and imagined presence, intense vulnerability (*et alia*) in both the song and in analysis. Clinical examples illustrate how this biblical text might deepen analytic work with patients.

An exploration of Plato's theory of *Therapeia* reminds one how to resolve contradictory wills through the honest inquiry of Socratic dialogue, a foundation of analytic work. From the *Symposium* Diotima's teaching to Socrates is postulated as being fundamental for those seeking a road deeper into the self and away from self-absorbed egos.

Through a detailed analysis of Socrates's palinode in *Phaedrus*, understanding Eros as an originary force larger than sexuality, a new paradigm for accepting our souls' warring nature—the tension between desire and control—is employed. Plato's thinking, including Eros Tyrannos, helps the modern psychotherapist discover a love of wisdom and reason over ignorance. Clinical examples explicate welcoming Eros into the analytic relationship as analyst and analysand fully participate in healing of souls.