

## LOVE CONSCIOUSNESS AND HEALING THERAPIES\*

*John C. Pierrakos*

Our birthright is supreme pleasure. We live in and are part of a vibrant medium and when we open ourselves to the fantastic forces of that medium, we experience pleasure. When we close ourselves and defend against these forces we create pain in ourselves which we also project onto others.

These forces which create pleasure when uninhibited are love, eros, and sexuality. They can either flow through the body, mind, emotions, and spirit or be blocked by them. When we fragment ourselves, we also distort and thwart love, eros, and sexuality, and create a reality of pain out of which we erect a culture of hatefulness or disharmony.

The history and evolution of humanity reflect a struggle between love consciousness and hate consciousness. Although these two avenues of consciousness have diametrically opposed values and behaviors, we constantly struggle in our everyday lives with the ideas of both. However, we have a choice between the two.

I want briefly to examine the characteristics of these two cultures before tracing the evolution of love consciousness. Mature love elicits a general feeling of harmony which is absent in most cultures. People who live in love cultures seem fairly happy and content. Their predominant mode of life is filled with love and affection, and sexual expression is free and joyous.

By contrast, hateful or disharmonious cultures exhibit a state of violence, discord, fear of death, and a high rate of murder. They are riddled with self-destructiveness and callousness toward others and their world. Such cultures display a widespread desire for vengeance, which causes an endless cycle of retaliation and

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homicide. Sorcery and magic also have wide popular appeal. In this context sex becomes a tool of conquest, not an expression of intimacy and affection. Marriages become very unstable and people confuse sex with love.

For example, presently in the United States relationships are expected to last approximately twelve months. However, one of the most extreme examples of abuse and destruction of marriage was evidenced in Nazi Germany. Women of "quality genetic heritage" were "bred" to men of so-called pure German heritage to ensure the preservation of the "master race." Even the pleasure of sex was debased to serve the needs of power.

Obviously, most cultures exhibit and express elements of both love and disharmoniousness; thus, most people also manifest a combination of the two in varying degrees.

### **The Evolutionary Struggle**

Human evolution has seen fantastic swings in consciousness: at times aspects of the forces of love, eros, and sexuality were given free rein—and misunderstood, distorted and debased. This distortion runs throughout human history from preliterate societies to the modern era. Primitive peoples generally allowed the life force to flow without hindrance. They were in touch with the forces of nature and could let natural processes heal the body. However, their belief systems were filled with superstition, magic, and sorcery. The gods they worshipped had to be appeased as well as worshipped and adored. Although they were often joyously sexual, the fear that proliferated their belief systems placed taboos on their means of expression.

In these societies there was a rough and ready equality among the members and between the sexes, as primitive mythologies attest. But they were deeply superstitious and hostile toward outsiders, a condition that persists in hate cultures today. Thus, their expression of love did not extend to the tribe across the river or beyond the hill.

The first civilizations were erected on this primitive foundation. These civilizations exalted the spirit at the expense of the body and the emotions which fuel the burning forces of love, eros, and sexuality. The ancient peoples of Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Middle

America thrived on power and hierarchy. Vast inequality separated the rulers from the rest of society. These civilizations were marked by war, wizardry, slavery, and the extermination or subjugation of those who differed.

Fifth century Greek culture and civilization embodied the principle of *meris corpore, mens sano* (good mind and spirit in a beautiful body). This idea was expressed through the art, architecture, drama, poetry, and philosophy of this period, which we continue to admire today. But the Greeks neglected the emotional aspects of love, eros, and sexuality.

Greek consciousness was severed by a tremendous rift. The ancient Greeks used women for heterosexual relationships and young boys for pederasty. For these Greeks, the women provided good sex, care of the household, and children, but were not considered on the same level or fully human. With few exceptions, they were excluded from intellectual exchange. For mental stimulation the Greeks had deeply respected friends with whom they discussed philosophy. This split between physical and intellectual love gave rise to platonic love, which eventually became pederasty. Mature men took in young boys to educate and eventually began having sexual relations with them. Socrates defined intellectual enlightenment as the corruption of youth, but the real corruption was this unequal relationship where the inexperienced young boys were subjected to and subjugated by the power of the mature men. A relationship of this kind has nothing to do with the forces of love, eros, and sexuality; it is exclusively about the exercise of power. Devoid of the integration provided by the emotions, Greek culture became a power culture.

After Marathon and Salamis ensured the defeat of the Persians, the suppression of emotions and the aggrandizement of power led to fratricidal war among the Greek city states. The Athenian Navy, the world's most powerful, defeated the Persian navy at Salamis. The Athenians then taxed the Greek colonies and other cities to maintain the Navy. They did not ask, they demanded. When they sought to impose taxation on Sicily, the Sicilians defeated them in a great naval battle.

In the words of Jesus Christ, the Greeks sowed the wind and reaped the whirlwind. Their arrogant exercise of power wasted

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their creative energies and left them open to conquest by Philip and Alexander of Macedon, and eventually by the Romans.

The Romans exalted the mind and will at the expense of the emotions and the spirit, and developed a rigid civilization based upon power and law. The suppression of emotions led to repression of the spirit; emotional and physical pleasure deteriorated into erotic excesses, orgies, and sexual conquests. Roman culture exhibited very little mature love. Like the Greeks, the Romans, who founded their civilization on slavery, regarded women as inferior beings. Physical hedonism and mental rigidity created such a brittle structure that it collapsed.

Greco-Roman culture generated tremendous pain and then developed philosophies that espoused the denial of pain. The word *stoic* comes from one of these philosophies. The prevailing philosophical awareness of the age could not recognize that pain was the result of denying that love, eros, and sexuality work in total harmony. The pain was either projected onto others – women, slaves, foreigners – or denied.

Within the heart of Roman culture Jesus Christ proclaimed the transforming power of love. Teaching that the kingdom of heaven is within, he brought a new understanding of spiritual love. This revolutionary doctrine of love included neighbors and enemies, not just family and friends. This represented a radical departure from the attitude that outsiders were alien and nonhuman. (Had not the brilliant Greeks coined the word "barbarian" to describe non-Greeks?) But Christ also taught to resist not evil, for the recognition and acknowledgment of sin and evil is the first statement of truth.

However, the simple egalitarian love of the early church became usurped when it became allied with Roman political power, encrusting itself with a hierarchy that preached fear and damnation as the price of deviation from dogma. The result was a suppression of eros and sexuality, and the exaltation of what became a rigid and sterile spiritual love. Aspects of the hate culture in the Middle Ages included persecution, the inquisition, self-flagellation, the subjugation of thought to the narrow tenets of orthodoxy, and the continued oppression of women. Even within the church there was unbridled sexuality among those who preached celibacy and virtue.

The Renaissance ushered in the rebirth of intellectual faculties. Art and science again flourished, drawing on the Greek heritage that had been preserved and embellished by Arabic culture. But the Renaissance also emulated the Greek tendency to suppress emotions. Although it was a time of great creativity, which included the renewal of painting and sculpture, architecture, poetry, drama, music, and philosophy, it was also a time of vicious warfare among nations and tiny principalities. Murder and revenge ran rampant among Italian renaissance cities. Once again, the repression of emotions contributed to a perversion of sexuality and to an unwillingness to recognize women as equals.

Although the enlightenment enshrined reason, the spirit had begun to wane. Humanity's faith in the spirit was replaced by a faith vested in reason that fueled the scientific revolution. The significance of emotions and of the living body was ignored, and the vibrant body came to be regarded as merely another scientific object upon which to perform experiments and operations. Consequently, this suppression of emotions led to the Victorian era of stagnation. Western European nations used science and political power to create another empire-building era. The populations of non-European nations were subjugated and slaughtered, at first in the name of the love of Christ and later under the rationale of scientific progress. A pretense of reason and civility masked a shame of sexuality, which was then acted out. Prominent men kept mistresses and engaged in affairs.

The rigidities of the Victorian era were shattered by a world war and by Freud's discovery of the unconscious. Freud recognized that repressed sexuality was the root of much mental illness and wanted to erect an academy of love in Vienna. His early work focused on the energy of the repressed emotions. The libido theory was originally a theory of energy which became a mental construct rather than a living one.

We remain in the thrall of the age of reason, but we are also emerging into a new age of consciousness. Freud's successors expanded his concepts to include the body and the spirit as well as the mind and emotions. This will be discussed below.

Today humanistic psychology, awakening spirituality, and therapies that include all human dimensions – body, mind, emotions, and spirit – herald an age in which love can transform the

disharmony of the past. In this emerging culture of love we will all learn to permit the forces of love, eros, and sexuality to flow without hindrance or repression and inherit the birthright of pleasure that is ours by the nature of our humanity.

### **The Evolution of Healing Therapies**

The history of healing practices very much parallels the evolution of the consciousness of love. Throughout the ages, healers have focused on different aspects of the human entity in seeking to restore it to a functioning organic whole. Usually, however, there was a fragmentation that left out one aspect to focus on others. As modern medical practices developed, physicians failed to recognize the connection between the emotions, the mind, and the body in creating and curing disease. In primitive societies grounded in the unity of spiritual and natural forces, spiritual and healing practices were regarded as one. However, these more primitive societies did not recognize the importance of the mind and relied on sorcery and magic to effect cures. This magic did, however, help healing because of its powerful effect on the emotions and the imagination.

Medicine grew out of spiritual healing, and early civilizations developed such practices as the trepanning of skulls and other surgical operations. The Greeks gave birth to the great healing center of Epidaurus which existed for over a thousand years (700 B.B. to 500 A.D.). Even the Roman conquests did not destroy it, but enhanced it by creating medicinal baths. The Greeks possessed a deep awareness of healing power which was based on the teachings of Aesculapius and Epicurus.

The treatment was as follows: After a patient marched for several miles, he would bathe in a Castillian spring and then sleep for a hundred days in a private room in a special temple. During this period he asked the gods for guidance through dreams. The priest/physicians would interpret the dream and prescribe the particular procedure the dream indicated. This work utilized dimensions of the emotional, the medical, and the spiritual. Next to the temple was a theatre seating 20,000 where comedies and tragedies were performed. People would cry and beat drums and have cathartic dreams.

These early, more holistic medical practices later became a more regimented system and lasted through the Middle Ages. In Egypt, however, particularly where Muslim mystics introduced Sufism, healing methods were even more organic and spiritually oriented. Christ, of course, had demonstrated the power of the spirit to heal. Gradually, the practices of medicine and religion separated, and the diseases of the body became attended by doctors while maladies of the soul were left to the priest.

In the 15th century Paracelsus attacked mechanized medicine and used his intuition and spiritual knowledge to enhance medical research. Until this time, medicine had been intolerant of spiritual, psychic, and emotional practices in healing because it equated spirituality with the muddy, superstitious knowledge of the dark and middle ages.

In the 1700s the study of anatomy was established, but the dichotomy between medicine and feelings remained. Medicine began developing specific techniques for the examination and diagnosis of disease. Evernot, the German pathologist, was the first to study the psychological function of disease. He examined the anatomical functions of the brain and the influence of psychological phenomena on the brain. This was the first attempt to bridge the gap between medicine and psychology.

Freud made his great discovery of the unconscious at a time when the emphasis on the mind was resulting in stagnation of the emotions. His theories have gone through many changes, but the unconscious is largely regarded as a repository for negative emotions and frightening instincts. The founder of psychoanalysis did not sufficiently account for the body and spirit.

Carl Jung restored a spiritual dimension to psychology, positing that the unconscious contained benign, healing forces as well as frightening and dysfunctional ones. But Jung's theories also virtually ignored the importance of the body and of energy in the origin and healing of disease. Both Freud and Jung did recognize, however, that it was the suppression of destructive emotions that produced illness. They and their heirs have dedicated their work to uncovering the destructive self and allowing it modes of benign expression.

Wilhelm Reich recognized the importance of the body and the function of energy in the development of mental and physical

diseases. His orgone theory of energy connected the human entity to the vast energies of the cosmos. Reich discovered that the destructive self was not repressed only in the mind and emotions, but that defenses were constructed in the body in the form of what he appropriately called "armor." He came to understand that it was blocked energy in the body, mind, and emotions that broke down the unity of the human entity and produced disease.

Building upon the foundation of Freud, Jung, and Reich, Alexander Lowen and I further developed Reich's theories through bioenergetics, which recognizes the importance of the will in the process of healing. However, Reich, Lowen, and other practitioners of body therapies, and virtually all of psychiatry and medicine, left the spirit out of the healing equation. Indeed, Reich dismissed Jung's spiritual theories as "mystical armor."

During her lifetime, Eva Broch Pierrakos delivered a series of 258 lectures which emphasized the importance of the spirit in dealing with the problems and illnesses of life. These lectures stressed the importance of meeting life's challenges by utilizing all aspects of the human entity – body, feeling, mind, and spirit.

Eva led a group of seekers called the Pathwork in using spiritual practices, particularly meditation, as tools for human and spiritual development. Our marriage led to the marriage of the spiritual practices of the Pathwork with the psychological, physical and energetic work of Reich, Lowen, and myself. The further elaboration of this union has resulted in the concept and practice of Core Energetics, and the recognition that our defense against and resistance to love, eros, and sexuality leads to the fragmentation of the human entity, which results in physical and mental disease.

*John Pierrakos, M.D., is founder and director of the Institute of Core Energetics in New York, where he also maintains a private practice. He regularly conducts Core Energetic seminars in California, Europe, and Mexico, and lectures nationally and internationally.*



