

*An excerpt from his new, as yet unpublished book that explores the biological evolution of spirituality.*

Socialization arises from the herd instinct inherited from our mammalian ancestors. Our pleasure in gathering together with our own kind is found in most mammalian life. This herding instinct is the source of community and fosters the model imperative, extended nurturing and care, mutual sharing of esthetics, events, dreams, hopes, ideas and ideals, mutual appreciation of works, skills, creativity, cooperative ventures.

Enculturation, on the other hand, is enforced learning or adoption of *ideas about* survival, techniques believed needed in our environment to survive our environment. Enculturation depends to a great extent on “mimetic desire”. Our mimetic or imitative compulsions arise from our oldest, reptilian brain system, are intimately connected with survival and flight-fight, and, in fact, provide the principle tools employed in enculturating the infant child. We are convinced we must pass this culture on and do so quite deliberately, pounding it into our offspring “for their own good” as it was pounded into us “for our own good.”

Our sociality is instinctual and arises spontaneously of its own. Culture is intellectual, arbitrary, and must be induced, injected or enforced. Socialization is joyfully sought and accepted. Enculturation is instinctively resisted since we intuitively sense that it is a negative denial of life. Ironically, our natural resistance to enculturation requires and brings about intellectually derived techniques to overcome such resistance. These cultural techniques or tools involve threat, fear of deprivation, and the more primal anxiety over separation or alienation from others. That is, enculturation is induced by threatening us with a *loss of our true and naturally spontaneous sociality*.

Socialization is positive and based on pleasure. Enculturation is negative, based on pain and fear. Socialization opens to our higher intelligence of creative play. Enculturation plays on our most ancient instincts for survival. Paradoxically, our cultural ideation, or set of ideas, center around survival *of and in culture itself*.

We deliberately enculturate our children to protect them *from* their enculturated society, though this is never spelled out and seldom recognized. Very little if any enculturation centers on survival in its natural earth sense of sun, moon, wind, rain and such. This is the domain of our natural intelligence of the heart and, again ironically, these survival instincts we manipulate in our enculturation methods are the very drives which the higher heart frequencies can incorporate to actually provide for us if we could allow such provision. That is, if we could truly “take no thought of the morrow,” knowing what we were doing, our higher intelligence could provide for us through these very foundations on which our life rests. This kind of allowing requires a basic trust blocked by enculturation, however, and a profound distrust of life itself results which is a key factor in sustaining culture.

Enculturation is a remedy prescribed by culture for the disease of culture itself and we are impelled to administer this prescription to our young out of our genuine concern for them. How many times do we hear parents, reflecting on their child's future, ruefully point out "Man! It's a jungle out there!" The jungle is cultural, the predators enculturated humans. Such cultural prescriptions mask culture as the cause of our pain and suffering and lock us into culture as the only remedy of itself.

Psychologists refer to the instinctive drive for tactile exploration and knowledge of the world as *impulse behavior* and insist it must be curbed if the child is to be socialized (civilized) and a self-sense is to emerge. In turn, the caretaker's breaking down the child's resistance to these restrictions, which is equivalent to breaking the child's will, constitutes what is conventionally called *socializing* that child. The techniques used in this "socializing" are fairly straightforward "behavior modifications."

This, of course, is not socialization at all but enculturation, and essentially the demise of true socialization as it should unfold later. And here we get to the heart of the matter: "SHAME IS THE ESSENTIAL AFFECT THAT MEDIATES THIS SOCIALIZING FUNCTION." (Quoting Allen Schore's monumental and magnificent study centers on "affect regulation", pp 200.)

The authorities Schore quotes assume axiomatically that this "socializing" must be enforced; they consider prohibiting the infant-child's self-generated "impulse" actions the most critically necessary socializing function, and agree unanimously that instilling a sense of *shame* is absolutely essential to such socialization, and the most powerful, efficient tool available to the caretaker to ensure such "socializing." This, I hold, is a primary evil helping to bring about our species downfall. It is a demonic enactment of the fall from Eden myth and one we all repeat blindly once so enculturated ourself.

Infant-child impulses that bring prohibiting and inhibiting negatives are hardly limited to the obvious bowel and bladder issues and/or discovery, exploration, exposure of or "touching" of genitalia. Prohibition extends to a majority of all exploratory movements that involve direct contact. "Keep out of reach of children" is the most prevalent warning pasted about our current scene, and enacted to the hilt by most parents. Television is the prime means for passive enforcement of this directive, which is, again, a subject demanding its own study and far too large for us here. *[Foot Note: The 6,000 hours of television the average American child sees by age five accomplishes most of these cultural prohibitions automatically, while systematically and thoroughly eliminating all traces of the family triad of needs. No audio-visual communication takes place at all. Children are neither seen nor heard, but forced to see, given nothing else, that which cannot be touched or interacted with. No nurturing takes place in this strange vacuum, and play has virtually disappeared in American children.]*

Every nine minutes a NO! or DON'T blocks the toddler at this time of life when the greatest learning is designed to take place. A "good child" is too often the immobile docile one whose will to learn on this sensory-motor level has been broken.

Schore states that ". . .The mother utilizes facially expressed stress-inducing shame transactions which engender a psychobiological missatunement with the mother." The mother accuses the child just by her look and this accusative look warns the child that the action he or she is taking or about to undertake will break the bond. This becomes a permanent imprint. We carry that accusing face with us, lifelong.

The mother or care giver is the major model at this period of early life. She is the child's proxy high-brain, source of food, nourishment, and hopefully nurturance, or love. A break of this rapport is *the most severe survival threat the young toddler can experience*. The devastating effects of psychological abandonment or separation anxiety were studied throughout the twentieth century and found to be the most devastating experience a child can undergo. Such devastation is threatened by the very shame-inducing *look* of the mother.

"Such bioaffective communications trigger an inhibition of the infant states of hyperarousal *that support a positive affect*." That scolding face (even without words) shuts down the infant's positive emotional state on which exploration and learning depend. The infant will withdraw from a new tactile world exploration out of fear of *further threat to the bond*. Even if the toddler continues with an exploration, in spite of the threat, that action is then carried out in a *negative emotional state* and the learning involved will carry this negative imprint.

"...stressful stimulation is a critical experience for triggering further, emotional-prefrontal structural development, which is required for ongoing direct genetic expression, or growth of brain-mind to occur." The mother's negative prohibitions are considered *necessary*, by Schore's authorities, to ongoing growth of emotional affect and cognitive knowing supportive of "socialization."

Schore describes, over many pages, how each prohibiting NO! is a shock or profound threat to the child; how each negative block brings a direct interruption of the built in impulse for exploration and learning, and produces a cascade of negative hormonal-neural reactions in the child. Schore describes at length the infant-toddler's depressive state, shock and confusion brought about through these prohibitions of natural actions. These are heart-rending and he is quite obviously distressed over the extent of such "shame-stress."

Again, the confusion in the child comes from these two powerful directives nature builds in to the infant. First is to maintain the bond with the caretaker at all costs. Secondly is to explore the world *and build a knowledge of it*.

Throughout history the caretaker was the major support, mentor and guide in the toddler's world-body exploration and learning. When the child, driven by nature's imperative to explore his or her world, is threatened if he does so *by* the care giver - with whom he is equally driven to maintain the bond - the contradiction is profound. The resulting ambiguity sets up the first major wedge in that infant mind, a wedge that finally becomes a gaping chasm.

The toddler and young child will maintain what integrity they can, but eventually will truly split and become one of us. We will then speak of the emergence of the child's "social self" by which we mean he or she has adopted the enculturated persona mask we have learned to wear, has learned to live the lie we live, trying to protect any remnant of integrity that might remain. And this is the mask we eventually identify with and become, forgetting who we are.

As adults we learn the mature forms of shame threat, how we will be censured and shamed if we fail to observe all the politically correct ideas and behaviors currently in fashion. And thus we move in "mimetic" waves of destruction, wondering why "they" don't do something about "it," whatever "it" happens to be!

END

**Joseph Chilton Pearce** is the author of numerous books *including The Magical Child, Crack In the Cosmic Egg, and most recently, Evolution's End*, and is internationally recognized for his vision of human development and learning.