

Martyn Carruthers

Thoughtforms

This article was prompted by the fascinating article on “The Structure of Excellence” (in *NLP World*, Vol. 1, No 1, March 1994) by Eileen Watkins Seymour and Clive Digby Jones. I have endeavoured to explore some of the roots of psychotherapy, from a conviction that many useful discoveries have been forgotten or undeveloped. I focussed on the early history of hypnosis, then Animal Magnetism, back to the “occult” healing practises of the Middle Ages. My mother assisted in this research; she is both a professional archaeologist and a locally recognized “healer”. One of the fruits of this research complements “The Structure of Excellence” in many interesting ways.

For most of mankind’s history, mental and physical diseases were believed to be caused by unseen malign influences. Many healing techniques were developed to protect a person from these malign influences and to remove such influences from a person’s body. Some seemed to be effective . . .

Phineas Quimby, a prominent American faith-healer of the last century, wrote that disease was the result of mistaken beliefs, and that mistaken beliefs were represented in a person’s unconscious mind as horrific pictures. He described ways to change these beliefs. (See *The Quimby Manuscripts*, edited by Julian Dresser in 1921). Quimby’s work became the foundation for the “New Thought” movement around 1900, and was later distorted and popularized as “positive thinking”.

The name “Thoughtforms” was used a hundred years ago by occult researchers to describe “mental emanations”. Annegret and I use this name to honor those people, particularly William Leadbeater and Annie Besant, who published their research: *Thoughtforms* (Leadbeater & Besant, 1901, republished 1986 by the Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton, Ill, USA; ISBN 8356-0008-4).