Branden evaluates love, sex

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nable the spread of the con-
cept of romantic love.

Next was an examination of
romantic love itself and the
psychological needs it satisfies.
He introduced the “mutual
principle,” named in honor of
his dog, because, he said, he had
discovered this principle while
playing with his dog one day. Its
core is that romantic love is
characterized by the response
one receives from one’s partner.
At that point he brought his
Objective philosophy into play,
explaining that romantic love
consists of seeing oneself, mir-
tered in one’s partner. This led
to an analysis of sex in such a
context. The sexual experience,
it seems, is “experiencing life as
a value,” proving that “happi-
ness on earth is possible” and
that “the human being is an end
in himself.” In addition, sex is
“the highest and noblest form of
selfishness” and “self-celebra-
tion.”

He then proceeded to deal
with the criticism of romantic
love, such as Ralph Linton, who
said, “The reality of romantic love
to other cultures could indicate
that it is a psychological abnor-
mality.” Branden maintained
that these critics are not crit-
cizing romantic love per se, but
rather some irrational processes
thought by some (mistakenly, of
course) to be associated with it.
The talk ended with a reminder
of his contention that romantic
love satisfies a basic human
need, which goes unfulfilled in
cultures where this form of love
is unknown.

The lecture was followed by a
period for questions.