

numerous people in different countries and from various backgrounds. I hope that those involved with primal will continue to grow through a free exchange of ideas and experiences so that even more effective ways of helping people to grow will evolve.

Bill Swartley

Interviewed by John Rowan

I can't help associating Primal with Janov, and talking about it in relation to Janov. Do you have this three-week intensive which Janov first introduced or do you avoid that?

We avoid it. We think two things, which may sound contradictory. One is that his is his most original contribution. The other is that it's gotten very stereotyped. It's gotten to be almost magical and mythological at this point, and I coming from the encounter movement have as one of my major values spontaneity and self-regulation, so we encourage people to do whatever they want to do, and that means that some people will do three weeks, or two weeks, and some people will do one day. We let them *choose* how they do it.

I've got the impression that Janov's three week is really rather programmed. He knows what he expects to happen on Day 4.

I can't really answer that question. As far as I know that's not true. The one impression I have is that the three week intensive with Janov means somewhere between two and three hours a day for the five weekdays, i.e. 15 hours, and in a typical weekend marathon encounter group a person actually puts in that many hours working on himself, or that person can if they can stand it. I believe that a marathon can be a more intense experience than a three week intensive, because in Janov's format he has them staying at a hotel and they go back to the hotel each day, and get started all over again the next morning. That means some start-up time, and so a block of time of even less hours can be more productive than doing the three-week intensive.

How do you work normally?

In a typical group I have 18 people. That's my favourite number in a group. With a female co-leader and usually a number of assistants we'll be doing massage as an adjunct and have a pool as an adjunct. We go round and those 18 people decide what we are going to do in the next period of the group; and some will get into Psychodrama, and go through a rape that they experienced somewhere in their childhood, and others will decide to get into an incest situation with their father and set up a psychodrama situation for that, and others will go to the pool and get into pre-birth and pre-uterine experiences. They pair up and split up and go in whatever direction they are going, and some people will get into birth experience, and pre-birth experience and others adolescent experiences and so forth.

It can be anything really?

Uh-huh.

But presumably the expectation is that it will be at least possible for them to get into Primal experiences as such?

That's exactly right. The right word. We call it 'Primal Integration' and that is meant to imply that if someone wants to go that deep they can. But the curative part, the change part is in the integrative phase of the work, not in the primal phase. Wherever they have to go to get the material. . . it's like tearing down a rotten building. You tear it down until you get to something solid, and then wherever that is you build up from there.

Can you give an example?

I'll give you one case. The girl's father died, and that was traumatic. So she went back to that experience. And then underneath that, she had a good experience of her father. That is why it was so traumatic. . . there was such a good experience and suddenly it stopped. So 'solid' for her was before her father's death at age 5. Another case would be where somebody came out, looked at their mother, mother's eyes, and saw that they really weren't wanted, and 'solid' in that case is really the time before that, the intra-uterine state, that's what might be solid.

Or you might have to go further back again. In one case this woman was dying of tuberculosis, knew she was dying, and when she knew she was pregnant she didn't want to know, she rejected the baby right from the start, and that was transmitted to the child *in utero*. And there was no good motherhood to look back to, the mother had never been a good mother. So this person had to go further back, we took her back to Jung's archetypal level and she found inside herself the archetype of the Great Mother. And that is somehow inherited as part of the racial heritage, and she went back to Ireland and nourished herself with the Great Mother inside of herself. And that was 'solid' for her.

The next question follows on from that. Do you see Primal Integration as a form of therapy?

I never use the word 'Therapy' and in all our publications and letterheads we disclaim the word 'therapy'. I wrote an article on the difference between 'therapy' and the Growth Movement in which I contrasted in a number of ways the difference between the Encounter Model and the Medical Model. We never play an interpretative role and we tell people that we will never know as much of them as they do. And they know where the trouble is, they and only they know where the trouble is no matter how much they tell us and how much we learn. Their unconscious will always know more than we do. They know what has to be done there and how to do it. So all we do is

support that process emotionally, get hold of their hand, etc., and whatever we can help in any way, aiding and following their own process. Perhaps clarifying alternatives for people who get lost in their search. But none of that is therapy in the traditional medical model.

How far back do you think the foetus is conscious?

I'll answer that one on two or three levels. It's complex. I'm very excited about Francis Mott. All his research indicates that the foetus is conscious soon after conception. And the first consciousness is of sensations on the surface of the zygote, the fertilised egg. Certainly from there. Mott's basic contribution is that. . .you know the whole theory that phylogeny repeats ontogeny - people remember the splitting of the cells and the development of organs, kidneys, eyes, brain, genitals. The whole generation process is remembered in significant detail, is available through dreams and other altered states. To go a step further than that. We've had a number of people remember their conception and that gets very interesting because some people identify with the egg and some with the sperm and some with both - but apparently conception can be remembered. Even much more mysterious in one case where someone remembered their conception, they saw the seduction of their mother and they saw events which happened before their conception. And they saw details, labels on dresses and we've tried to confirm these details, and they do correspond as far as we can check.

It appears that there are two things, neurology and consciousness, and those two things interface with each other, in a totally mysterious way. As if consciousness is independent of neurology and integrates with it as it develops.

What about implantation on the wall of the womb?

The characteristic movement of a Birth Primal is a pushing, to find a hold and get through. Implantation is very different, it's a searching, an attempt to adhere, to find the right spot to attach, usually with the forehead. Implantation is centred around what is called the Third Eye. An implantation primal just looks quite different.

If the foetus goes back as early as that and so on, has that affected your views on abortion?

My stand is, all I know is that unwanted children go through hell. For a lifetime. I think that's worse than abortion. And in my belief system I assume that whatever is aborted goes on its own way in another world. I also believe that people choose their mothers, and so if they are aborted, that was their choice. I've had a number of people working on this who remember attempts to abort them, and they are either *the* most difficult cases or become among the most difficult cases. So what I have to say about that is 'If you're going to abort, do it right. Failure is one of the most horrendous experiences you can do...'

What do you think the implications of what you are doing are for childbirth and bringing up children?

I think that there should be a universal contraceptive, like fluoride in the water supply, so that everybody is sterile, male and female, so that pregnancy should be a deliberate act and you should go to some effort to get pregnant. At - *least*, go to a drugstore and buy an antidote, to counteract the chemical put in the water supply. Conception should be difficult, at least as difficult as getting a marriage licence. Go to an office, get a blood test, wait three days - that difficult if not more difficult - so that some attempt is made to ensure that only people who want kids have them. A lot of mothers go through the process of having children because of social pressure. They even believe that they want them. There's someone here whose mother had a miserable childhood and hoped to undo the effect of that childhood by having him. That kind of neurotic attempt to use the child to undo something bad is extremely destructive for the child.

Birth and pregnancy should be the best possible experience. Birth can be, at its best, a triumphal entry into a much larger place than the womb which can be limited, for the mother and for the child, an entry into a new world..

What about bringing up children?

I can't answer that question yet. I have two children. We've raised them fundamentally different from the way most children are raised. We've attempted to raise them on Reich's principle, self-regulatory, and one is 18, one is 16 and one is 10. The eldest has only been in school a few grades. He took over responsibility for his own life when he was 13, and only time will tell whether he is an absolute mess, incapable of adjusting to the society where he lives, or if he will transform that society in some way towards the direction he wants it going. The next child, who is 16, she's dropped out this year. She's been in school until now. Her problem is that although she is 16, emotionally and intellectually she is in her twenties somewhere. Her problem is finding a male who isn't twice her age with whom she can sit down and talk. She and her brother hitchhiked last summer all the way across the country, and she came back and said there wasn't anyone else she could talk to except us and our few close friends. So when you do raise someone that way, they have real problems. I've asked them, do they regret that I've raised them that way, and they both insist 'no'. But I'm really concerned whether Ann's ever going to get married, because of the gap between her and other people. I hope she's not going to be lonely.

To what extent do you think that sex roles are phony?

What do you mean?

Most children are brought up to be a good example of a boy or of a girl and really a lot depends on that, socially, that they play the game the right way. Girls might be too assertive, boys might be too sensitive. It seems to me that part of being a man or being

a woman is real, and part is phoney. And it's really hard to sort out which is which, because our culture makes it very difficult.

Ray is simultaneously an ape man. His hero through much of his growing childhood was Tarzan. He literally swings through the trees when he can. To that extent he is a stereotyped he-man. But also extremely gentle and sensitive. So he's both. He's almost androgynous. The girl is very bright, very practical, realistic, hard-nosed, can be cynical and she can run everything she wants to run. So she's very tough and hard if she wants to be. If she ever finds something she wants, she goes out in a brutally effective way and gets it. So she's very masculine, if masculine is getting what you want. But she's also sweet and gentle and warm and affectionate. So I don't think either of them have given in too much to the generalised sex-role expectations.

What do you think about homosexuality? I ask because I really get the impression from Janov that he is prejudiced against homosexuals, and I wonder how you feel about that.

We don't have any official opinion on homosexuality. The answer in group is, 'you do your thing', You're here to find out. It's not for us to judge. So we have a number of homosexuals coming and they mix in the group, treated like anyone else. We'll encourage people to go through some sort of homosexual experience. Most groups have one or more homosexuals, a number of bi-sexuals. Based on the people we've worked with, it seems that homosexuality is a limitation. Most homosexuals have expanded their sexual orientation as they have expanded their other orientations, socially, emotionally, intellectually and otherwise. Heterosexuals have moved to homosexuality, to add that, and homosexuals have moved to heterosexuality to add that.

Is your work for you beginning and ending with the person involved, or do you see it as having implications for changes in society?

I'm looking for the fulcrum to move the world, like Archimedes, and if I have to mention one person who influenced me most it'd be Wilhelm Reich. Reich kept going back further and further looking for the same fulcrum. I understand that at the end of his life he concluded that he'd have to change the infants. If you can change them you can change the world. So he left all his money to the Reich Infant Trust, which has been badly misused by the single trustee he left it to. My theory is that the best single place to change the world is to change birth procedures. I've just been reading this study when sixteen extra hours of skin contact in the first three days, led to significantly higher I.Q's five years later, and higher skills in languages. Theoretically, if you change our birth procedures, we could raise our IQ and Leboyer has now done some follow-ups which show some important changes, such as being ambidextrous, for example.

As for politics in the usual sense, my children don't seem to be interested in joining anything, wielding political power in that fashion. They are waiting to evolve something else. They haven't seen anything they wanted to join yet.

Do you see any applications of this stuff to education, organisation, or community organising?

I don't know of a single company that is successfully organised on humanistic lines. So I'm very disillusioned in that sphere.

The community. I've attempted in a number of times and places, to organise a humanistic organisation. For instance, I moved to Chicago two years ago and started this new branch up there and we attempted for a year to run it using all the principles I knew and expounded of decision-making by consensus. There were only six of us on the staff, and it took us one whole day to decide everything by consensus. Incredible the expense, even in terms of time, and broke down in the end for personal reasons rather than for any other reasons.

I have yet to succeed. This year I'm just running it by myself which is incredibly more efficient. Whenever a humanistically oriented organisation has worked, it has been when someone really does their own thing, takes full responsibility for it and isn't carrying anyone else, and no one can blame another.

Education. Likewise I'm discouraged. My children have been in a whole series of 'alternative' schools, all of which have faded in the end. The best one was the one my daughter was in last year and that worked well for almost a whole year for her, but by the end on the year was not working well. And again, unmet primal needs among the students finally undermined the whole decision-making process. They too spent *hours* in what they called community meetings, untangling all their emotional involvements with each other, they were all trying to satisfy needs for a family that just couldn't be satisfied in the school. They were trying to get more from the school than the school could give. And therefore after struggling and not succeeding, they became very disillusioned. I've made numerous attempts on all of those three levels, all of which have been relatively unsuccessful. At this moment, I'm disillusioned and don't have any advice to give anybody.

What are your future plans?

I'm coming back in April for three weeks, and then I'm back in August for at least 9 months. We're going to do a two week residential training programme the last two weeks of August, then we're going to do an intensive group, shit-thumping group from September to December, then in January a formal professional training programme in which I'm to be teaching and hopefully Frank Lake will be teaching and David Boadella. Al Pessa is coming over, and Jack Painter is coming over and Armand de Miele who does Primal therapy in New York is coming over, so we are going to do a formal six-month training programme, and then I'm bringing with me a French psychologist and if she decides - she's now on a forty day marathon Primal Group - if she decides to be a primal clinical psychologist we will probably start a branch in Paris with three other people, an English girl, a Canadian girl, an English man. So we are tentatively planning another branch in Paris where I might or might not move when I

leave here. Then I've plans for Germany and Greece and and Turkey, Pakistan and India and Bangladesh and Burma and so on to Japan. So I want to establish a chain of centres doing primal education, each functioning independent of the others, as all our branches now do. From the Mississippi River (laughter) to Japan and Australia. I'll wander around like Fritz did and be a wise old patriarch, wear a jump suit! My best role model would be Fritz and to a lesser extent Assagioli.

Is there anything I've left out which you would have liked to have been in there somewhere?

The only thing I'd want to emphasise is that is as I conceive it, primal is a natural self-healing process. It will happen all by itself. The best analogy is like a wound on the body, somebody's cut. All anyone can do when someone is cut is to provide the optimum circumstances for the wound to heal. You can wash it, put some antiseptic on it, bandage it, protect it but the healing process itself is internally programmed. You can't do anything about it. You can just provide the optimum circumstances for the healing process. The less anyone else does to interfere with that process the better, and I have very strong feelings that though there appear to be times when you can do things for people, almost miraculous things, when you do those things it does two things. It permanently robs them of the opportunity to do the same thing themselves, which I think is a major loss, because it lowers their whole self-esteem, self-image and secondly it breeds some kind of dependence, more or less insidious. So I believe that the best thing a leader can do is emotionally support a painful, self-directed healing process and to help clarify alternatives. When he does any more than that they are really interfering with a process rather than helping and it may take a little longer if they don't interfere, but it will be much more solid, more permanent and leave the person much more self-reliant for the rest of their lives. I tend to wait for people to figure out what they want to do and how they want to do it, even if that delays the process, its worth it for the rest of their lives.

A.M. Liley

The Foetus as a Personality

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Until recently the human foetus in situ was inaccessible to study and this seclusion has had two further unfortunate results. First much reliance has been placed on animal experiment in spite of the fact that there is more variation throughout the mammalian order in reproductive physiology than in the physiology of any other body function. Second for want of experimental verification or repudiation theories have flourished without serious challenge. As a consequence, at one extreme, J.J. Rousseau and his