

Letters to the editor

Dear Vivian,

Congratulations on the Primal Issue, and on the transportation of the cover, though I do hope we will not stick with this cover as we have been for so long stuck with the old one.

What I find particularly encouraging about Self and Society at the moment is an increased emphasis on psychotherapy as a process that takes time, and that there are humanistic therapists who insist on taking time over it.

I much appreciated a number of points in June Posey's interview with Glyn Seaborn-Jones. The first is the question of transference. If there is to be a specifically humanistic psychotherapy, does it accept transference, use transference, deny transference or ignore transference? I am curious over the possibility that people working in the growth movement manage to avoid or evade this issue, by working in a completely piecemeal way. Some people, it seems, successfully follow John Rowan's model of growth, picking and choosing things where they seem best able to help. Most people can't and don't. Too many simply chase one fad after another in the hope of 'the answer' they are unlikely ever to find.

Janov's Primal Therapy is one of the most extreme examples of 'the answer', in fact claiming to offer 'the only answer'. I am glad to see Glyn Seaborn-Jones taking a responsible attitude, insisting on long-term commitment

rather than a 3 week transformation.

A general comment on the Primal Issue...When you get back to birth and before, you inevitably have to grapple with what Jung calls the archetypes of the collective unconscious. If you want to talk about consciousness you must realise that it is just not ego consciousness. It is interesting to see Swartley making use of the Great Mothers archetype and the four functions in his Primal Integration work.

I am sad to see that Glyn Seaborn-Jones makes no mention of Jung in his list of mentors. The womb wish theory that he is working on is an illustration of a modern primal worker discovering for himself the basic groundwork of Jungian psychology.

Jungian Psychology is a humanistic psychology, top Jungians like Newman accept this and proclaim it. When is the growth movement going to face up to analytical thinking and discover what is there to be learned?

With the conference upon us, I conclude with a symbol taken from alchemy and from Jungian psychology. The symbol of the origin of consciousness, and of rebirth and self renewal.

Yours sincerely,

Nick Owen
London E.8

Dear Vivian,

Although I realize the 'Primal Issue had a British emphasis (in spite of the Americans) I was a little disappointed you did not make clear the real and important difference between the Primal Institute position and others: that there is a hell of a big difference between abreacting a Primal scene and actually Primaling it

Michael Holden has defined Primal Therapy as '...a method of re-entering sequences of suffering/disease and gradually, over months, *completing* incompleting sequences of healing.' It is a method. The aim is in completing. Less than this is 'abreaction' and those using primal techniques should be aware of this.

'The Primal Issue' was notable in omitting this simple but important point.

Yours sincerely,

Robert Francis

London N13

Dear Vivian,

As an orthodox Janovian I feel I must make an answer to some of the points raised in your 'Primal Issue'. (June).

1. David Freundlich maintains that, as with Freud, people have had to break with Janov in order to develop their own ideas and theories. Yet those who have actually broken away from Janov after training at the Primal Institute of Los Angeles have made little impact on their own and apparently have no contact with the IPA, whose leaders never have had any connection with the Primal Institute. Besides, it is worth pointing out that Freud and his theories have had a far greater and more lasting influence than those of his one time followers.

2. Bill Swartley's 'refinements' of Janov's theories topple over into pure metaphysical speculation. How do foetuses 'choose' their mothers? How can conception be remembered, given that the future person was just a few cells at the time? Is there any reason why Swartley likes to have 18 people in each of his groups apart from the fact that he likes the number? More generally, on what basis does he call his therapy (?) Primal, given that he incorporates some of the methods used by the growth movement?

3. Jenny James blames Janov for giving her prospective clients the wrong idea about what *her* treatment will be like. Yet this is hardly surprising since she regularly offers 'Primal Therapy' in the columns of *Spare Rib*, for example. I must say that Ms James comes across - to me, at least, - as a kind of female Charlie Manson, albeit with better revolutionary credentials. She is certainly choosy about who she allows to join her 'family', and the idea of certain individuals being met with a 'holocaust of anger' because they weren't liked I find disgusting, particularly since they appear to have been the kind for whom personal courage was needed to go for help in the first place. The AHP should disown Jenny James: but given your philosophy of libertarianism at all costs, coupled with the rationalised excuse of we-take-no-responsibility etc. it's doubtful whether you will.

I'd like to round off by advising Eric Robbie to read, amongst other things, an article called 'The Creative Process' in the *Journal of Primal Therapy* of Winter 1976 (Vol. III No. 1). Art is not 'just pain' and nobody suggests it is!

Yours sincerely,

Tim Thompson

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