

## Sacred Science: Person-centred Inquiry into the Spiritual and the Subtle.

John Heron.

PCCS Books, 1999, £14

I felt thoroughly intimidated on opening this book; indeed I needed a dictionary to cope with the first few pages. However, I have a great respect for John Heron's skills, especially his intelligence and erudition. What's more I remember clearly the fun and excitement of attending one of his early workshops into altered states of consciousness - (a co-operative enquiry). Consequently, I turned to the accounts of 11 similar workshops in Italy, New Zealand and Cornwall, including one longer on-going experience in New Zealand, and these are fascinating, if sometimes mystifying.

Perhaps one needs to have had similar experiences to really enjoy this important book. The individual reports are particularly interesting, but I would have enjoyed more 'feed-backs'. Group dynamics are always important since 'setting the scene' and auto-'suggestion' are always part of the agenda. It is of some consequence that most of the participants in these workshops were 'counsellors' experienced in handling their distress when it arose. However, I think that anyone who is interested in the spiritual dimension would find that John Heron explores so much of relevance, from the more orthodox and authoritarian religions, to the

exploration of issues involved into 'do-it-yourself' subtle psychical research. He evidences the possibility of a self-generating joyful, spiritual culture which affirms each individuals spiritual presence and authority, without projecting onto teachers and traditions.

I especially like the following extract:

'Since our personal knowing is always set within a context of primary experiential meaning and of secondary linguistic - cultural meaning, having a critical consciousness about our knowing necessarily means refining both. It includes exercising discrimination in our immediate reciprocal encounter with what there is, and dialogue, feedback and exchange with other persons. And this leads us to the methodology of co-operative enquiry'.

Managing divergence and convergence, authentic collaboration, challenging uncritical subjectivity and unaware projections or displaced anxiety, balancing reflection and action, and the dynamic interplay of chaos and order are all necessary for any participative enquiry. In this comprehensive study can be found such wisdom and guidance in abundance.

**Betty Gould**

# Person -Centred Therapy: a Revolutionary Paradigm

Jerold Bozarth

PCCS Books, 1998, £15

This little book is packed with exploration of many of the major issues that have arisen about Person-Centred Therapy since its inception in the mid-twentieth Century. One of the main issues has been whether the Person-Centred approach provides the necessary and sufficient conditions for effective therapy to take place ('effective' meaning a positive change in the client's personality). Bozarth both discusses and reconceptualizes the conditions, whilst remaining true to the person centred philosophy, and this is achieved by sticking to:

'A conceptual model entailing the relationship [to each other] of the three conditions of therapist genuineness, empathic understanding and unconditional positive regard...' (p. 43).

The author returns time and again to the fundamentals of Person Centred Therapy, and provides a thorough exposition of the points in his section entitled 'The Basics of Practice.' It is an important section and is necessarily placed here before taking readers through the applications of practice. In revisiting the basics, the underlying philosophy of Person-Centred Therapy is addressed and offers a paradigm within which the process of therapy should take place.

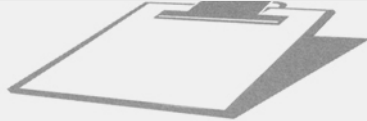
Carl Rogers' research has had a somewhat mixed reception within academe, in that much of what was done took place

within a university setting with a homogenous band of clients (students in the main); or with schizophrenic patients within a psychiatric hospital. The criticism has frequently targetted the fact that research was not upon 'ordinary' members of the public. Bozarth addresses the question of effectiveness by looking towards a potential model 'which can efficiently help clients find their own empowerment.' He is not completely uncritical of Rogers' contributions to research; but he does see Rogers as having made seminal contributions to the plethora of research studies of the past forty years into what makes for effective treatment. Moreover, a meta-analysis of research seems to indicate that it is the clients' inborn capacities for self-healing coupled with the quality of the therapeutic relationship that make for effective therapy. Rogers' approach, Bozarth feels, is at the core of what makes for that effectiveness.

Finally, the book offers a broader perspective of the person-centred approach in a chapter concerning critical mass-consciousness. It is here that Person-Centred Therapy is promoted as a living therapy which has much to offer the present generation of clients and therapists.

The personal integrity of Jerold Bozarth shines through this book. It is one that I would recommend for second year Diploma students and practitioners alike.

**Jen Popkin**



# The Scientification of Love

Michel Odent

**Free Association Books, 1999, £12.95**

The work of Dr. Odent is acknowledged, as visionary and revolutionary in the obstetric field, in the foreword by Dr. Miriam Stoppard. He enabled French women to give birth in a radically new way, with their partners assisting them, in positions utilising gravity, rather than in a high-tech, medical way, as was the practice twenty years ago.

This small, and densely packed book, is intended for a wide readership. It is probably too simple and lucid for the medically qualified, but for the interested, lay reader, it is full of gems of information and clear explanation of what exactly goes on in the areas of sexuality, attraction, birth, physiology of Romantic Love, orgasmic states, ecstatic states, and Love in a very broad sense. His use of metaphors and references to other cultures takes us beyond the narrow realms of medical approaches to birth. The main subject matter is the Power of Love, including maternal love and what exactly creates the bond between mother and her newborn. I found the short summary at the end of each chapter helped to clarify the overall content considerably.

The reader gets a clear and comprehensive look at studies of animal behaviour with their newborn and the way they attach to each other immediately after birth. This period is short, but has long term consequences. Odent moves on to the historical

experiments which preceded the discovery of the behavioural effects of the hormone Oxytocin. This hormone is involved with all aspects of Love, according to research articles published in 1992. Where the Ethologists (animal researchers) found bonding due to hormone effects, there is now plenty of evidence for the same in humans.

Dr. Odent's data bank at the Primal Health Centre contains many papers which make direct links with the way people are born, to the different forms of an impaired capacity to love. He asks, 'Can Research be Politically Incorrect' because of the complete disregard of many of these papers by medical journals and research institutions. What has been shown by some studies in Finland and Sweden, is that an impaired capacity to love can be directly related to early experiences during foetal life, and the period around birth. Autistic children have comparatively low levels of Oxytocin, the hormone of love, which raises questions about the reasons for its absence.

Comparing cultures and the way they intrude on the birth process, Dr. Odent concludes "the greater the social need for aggression and an ability to destroy life, the more intrusive the rituals and beliefs have become in the period

surrounding birth.” Furthermore, there is a pattern of actually neutralising messages which promote love. With the current ecological awareness, and scientification of love, Odent urges a shift away from aggressiveness, towards ways of developing the capacity to love.

The actual consciousness of a woman in labour changes and she needs to feel secure, and maintain a low level of adrenaline. Odent points out, most other mammals give birth privately. The effects of rational conversation, bright lights and intrusive observation, are the reverse of what is needed to reduce neocortical activity. Mothers giving birth are in the midst of a process where the primitive part of the brain releases hormones, which is like ‘going to another planet’.

Odent gives the reader a brief look at sexual attractiveness, and how research has evaluated the effects of body shapes, body size, smile, chemicals perceived on the opposite sex, before plunging into the Physiology of Romantic Love (Chapter 9) An Anthropological survey showed that romantic love is found in 147 cultures out of 166. Romance nowadays can be seen as a matter of serotonin levels dropping low, and endorphins acting to attach partners in the way that babies are attached to mothers.

By Chapter 12, I became aware that I had lost the plot, as the book moved into orgasmic states, ecstatic states and mystical emotions. There were a great many references - to Tantric sex,

and the relationship between our new brain and the older sub neo-cortical structures. At this point I began to question whether the book was intended for the lay reader such as myself, but it is certainly educational in terms of explaining how exactly different states of consciousness can be analysed, in terms of old and new brain structures. Taking this further, (Chapter 13)mystical emotions are next given scientific analysis. An ‘oceanic’ feeling on looking at a beach at sunset, occurs because the conditions are conducive - darkness, solitude, and silence..

Links between Birthing and Praying (Chapter 14)continues the universal and cross cultural theme of the woman in childbirth entering a state of mind where she stops being a ‘person’ and bends forward into a physical position of prayer, isolating herself from the outside world. This helps her to enter ‘another planet’ and is aided by the reduction activity of the neocortex at the same time. Giving birth on all fours therefore aids her into a transcendental state.

The chapter on the ‘mysterious influence of water on the birthprocess’ (chapter 12) raised the connection to the Aquatic ape theory, linking humans to other primates. The reader gets a glimpse of new biological ideas, and the revolution in science today. We need a new mind set to deal with Love at a Molecular level, jumping over brain studies of emotions, into a physiology approach in the 90’s. This is the world of sex hormones, endorphins, and Oxytocin. There is still much speculation about what happens and



research is continuing. Molecular biology explains emotional states these days.

This is not a long book, and the chapters are short, but there is a great deal to be considered in it, and there is something here for readers from varying backgrounds. I enjoyed the anthropology perspective of the baby and breast feeding throughout the ages and in different societies.

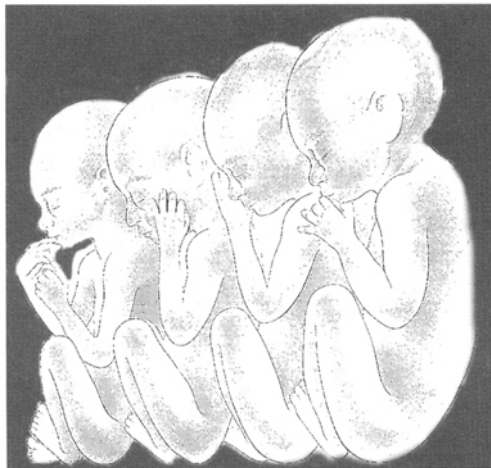
The Scientification of Love brings together recent scientific concepts and teachings which have been passed down the generations. Modern Quantum physics is concerned with interconnections. Somehow this links to Aphrodite, Goddess of love, Buddha and Jesus who were all conceived outside their community, and in a miraculous way. A conclusion reached from this is that the capacity to love is affected by early experiences during

foetal life, and the period surrounding birth.

Finally Dr. Odent concludes that we must look at destructive and violent behaviour in our society, and our ecological awakening, and to accept that the period around birth is a critical link in a chain of events, that we must keep mothers and new babies closely connected and undisturbed.

At the end of the book, I am left feeling that this is the short version of three different books, linked to the main theme. It is an introduction to a huge subject, which has been condensed and made palatable for an average reader. It is probably a prelude to a vaster tome on what is a very exciting area of research. It should be of interest to all professionals working with pregnant women, childbirth, and the time following birth.

**Vivienne Silver-Leigh**



# Creating Love

John Bradshaw

**Judy Piatkus, 1999, £10.99**

I Love John Bradshaw's book. He describes what it is like to be a mystified, abused child and he shows that we can only help our child by becoming more adult. Aristotle argued in 'Ethics' for a non-blaming morality by describing the conditions necessary to make us happy and John describes the conditions necessary for us to create love for ourselves and each other; neither confuse blaming with judging.

Aristotle and his golden mean between opposite polarities and his virtues of prudence and temperance find an echo here in John and his plea for the need for object constancy and non-polarised thinking, neither the shameless, more than human, righteous view nor the shameful, less than human, degraded view offer a realistic perception of our own and others' limitations. They are both great teachers because they call on our realistic imagination.

If virtue is an achievement for Aristotle, then love is an equal and modern achievement us. The vices, now, are all or nothing addictions which John sees as originating, not in the person but in the shaming and trauma experienced by the child in the family and culture. He has a personal openness and gives vignettes about his addictions that help us see how he personifies his own argument.

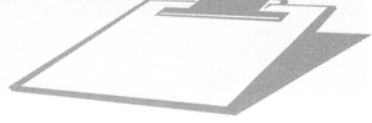
John Bradshaw ranges over the whole spectrum of love and he shows love's

fantastic, idealised and degraded forms.

He argues that to be fully human we need human relationships that are neither enmeshed nor isolated and defended, but rather free and equal, adult person to person relationships that achieve interpersonal bridges and create a soulful relationship to ourselves, our spouses/partners, our friends, our work and play. I particularly liked his appreciation of humour as a virtue and that a postman who delivers your letters to your home is an example of love and needs to be honoured.

**David Jones**





## Emotional Expression Among Cree Indians

Nadia Ferrara

**Jessica Kingsley, 1999, £14.95**

This is a book on an interesting topic produced in the rather opaque style of Western academic research papers, which is a great shame because the author still does manage to come through as a sensitive and humane therapist.

In many ways the book documents the clash of several cultures. Firstly, there is the background culture of the author: Euro-Canadian, female 'whiteman', art therapist. Secondly, there is the culture of the Cree Indians. Thirdly, there is the culture of the M.A. thesis production industry.

What this book provides of the first two is very interesting, but you have to dig it out from the heavy influence of the third. Nadia Ferrara got good results with Cree Indians by doing art therapy. This cut no ice with the establishment people she needed to influence so she realised, 'that in order to provide scientific evidence... I needed to become more research-oriented.' The book has 24 tables of statistical information and two other tables giving 'The concepts and measures of psychological mindedness' and the 'Historical precursors of alexithymia'. Alexithymia, I learnt, is the inability to express your feeling in words. Apparently a lot of people think this is a characteristic of the Cree (and of many other indigenous peoples who do not like talking to teachers and researchers). Ferrara thought they

were wrong, hence this research, designed to find out scientifically what she already knew, but was not allowed to say in scientific circles.

So, after much number crunching, we now know the following. The Cree people are much more likely to talk to you about their feelings after they have done a session of art therapy. They are not as taciturn as they are made out to be. They would, however, prefer to tell you a story than give you a list of facts. In general, the Cree seldom think it polite to tell their feelings to researchers from universities. This is in part because 'thoughts and feelings are viewed as sacred'. Art, however, can, for the Cree, be a form of sacred expression, though not one that is outside of the mainstream of daily life; which is quite the opposite of how art is generally regarded in white culture, where it is secular, yet set apart as a saleable artefact. Art therapy with these Indians can facilitate an inner story-telling process that enables the client to process their feelings and find a route to healing which is not the same as that employed by a white client symbolising their feelings in words. The book argues a good case for using art therapy - and art in general - with Cree Indians.

**David Brazier**