

# 'Primal therapy' this year's rage

By MARTIN KASINDORF  
Newsweek Feature Service

LOS ANGELES — The annals of psychiatry have been filled with dramatic new treatments for which extravagant claims have been made. But few treatments have been more dramatic, more highly touted or quicker to catch on than one that has gaudily burst upon the American scene this year.

It is called "primal therapy," it is the discovery of a brash, natty Hollywood psychologist named Arthur Janov, and it consists of having patients roll on the floor, cry, suck their thumbs and otherwise re-enact critical moments of their childhood.

In strictly fashionable terms, primal therapy is



Janov patient was recently describing his personal experiences in it to an audience of 300 psychiatrists and psychologists in Beverly Hills when a member of the audience called out, "But How do you feel?"

"I don't feel very good," the youngman said. "I'm sad." Whereupon he put his head on the table and started to cry, beat the table and thrash his legs wildly. "Mommy," he screamed, "you promised you wouldn't!" He kept it up for five minutes while, throughout the audience, other primal patients literally took up the cry.

"We're used to seeing some strange things," one psychiatrist said later, "but that night was one of the

the painful feelings that result, creating crippling "tensions" that he can't release.

To get rid of these tensions, Janov's patients go through what he calls a "catastrophic" reliving of the childhood traumas. In his West Hollywood office, they screech and writhe while six psychologists comfort them. And with the trauma thus re-experienced, the theory goes their tensions are banished.

A native of Los Angeles and a graduate of U.C.L.A., Janov stumbled across primal therapy in 1967 when a young patient in conventional therapy suddenly began yelling convulsively and Janov urged him to call out for his parents. "I made it,"

against him and that the press lies about him.

His papers, in fact, have been repeatedly turned down by professional journals. He delivered one paper, brashly titled "Revolution in Psychotherapy," to a group of Los Angeles psychologists — and 15 of them walked out. Since then, he has concentrated on such forums as "The Dick Cavett Show."

And he has, in the meantime, attempted to support his claims with data. Three of his associates, two of whom have also been his patients, have presented figures showing that primal therapy lowers a patient's blood pressure, pulse, temperature and brain-wave frequencies. But basically, Janov

for his patients. I think it, the young man said afterward. "I can feel."

During the next 18 months, Janov led 63 patients through a similar experience, and in his book "The Primal Scream" he claims a 100 per cent cure rate. He now gets 100 requests for treatment a day — despite a price tag of \$1,650 for three weeks of intensive therapy, plus \$20 for each group session thereafter.

"The greatest hoax of the 20th century is psychiatry," Janov says beligerently. "In the future, there will be no need for a field called psychology. And we would need only 20 per cent of the present medical profession since 80 per cent of all ailments would be cured by primal therapy."

He is even more critical of his fellow professionals. "I think some of the sickest, most closed-off people in the country today are the shrinks," he says.

Still, Janov is bitterly resentful of any criticism of his own methods by psychiatrists. He claims the profession is prejudiced

weirdest I can remember."

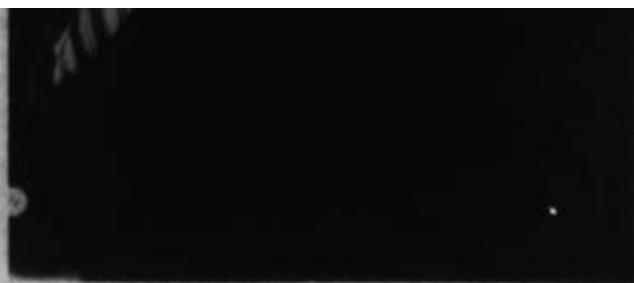
Not surprisingly, a number of psychiatrists dismiss primal therapy as just another psychiatric fad, like the orgone box. Dr. Judd Marmor of Los Angeles, for instance, calls Janov's sweeping claims "hogwash."

"This is one of the hoariest myths in psychotherapy," he says. "It was first suggested by Freud more than 75 years ago and then discarded by him. Its popular appeal rests on its promise of a quick, dramatic cure."

Primal therapy's basic principle is that all neuroses and most physical ills are created by childhood frustrations; the child buries

terms, primal therapy is clearly this year's rage. Ex-Beatle John Lennon has taken it up and sings its message in his new album. Actor James Earl Jones claims it cured him of smoking, hemorrhoids and other problems. Pianist Roger Williams says it got rid of his cold hands, and on a recent television show, even listed the 43-year-old Janov as one of history's five greatest men (along with Socrates, Galileo, Freud and Darwin).

Janov and his wife, Vivian, moreover, have been unabashedly acting as supersalesmen for the therapy. "It is the most



## Janov developed treatment

...it's all around cure, he says

important discovery of the 20th century. "Janov says flatly. He claims that primal therapy has cured

bad skin, menstrual cramps and drug addiction.

But astonishing as these claims are, the results of primal therapy are even more startling. A former

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