

About pain and vivisection

Pain..... PAIN.....?? ????

Imagine that we – you and me - are sitting at a table.

We are talking quietly with each otherwe allow each other time.

As I am writing now: thinking - talking.

And I try to imagine what you (while reading) are thinking and saying.

Of course, you are *not* really sitting at the table with me talking with a cup of coffee or a beer.

But just pretend!

Read this bit: talking to yourself.

SLOWLY at thinking speed.

And *use* the pauses and the questions:

Answer before you read further.

These are the lengthy intervals in a good discussion.

I do not avoid our *feelings* and the sentiment of words, because I believe that we can only talk to each other - also via these printed word - when we *completely* involve our feelings.

Experiments on animals?..... VIVISECTION!

To *cut* in the living.

To cut in *life*.....?

This word - these words - cause many emotions:

in you:

in me:

Fear pain death.....

You *feel* this now.

But: you do not *want* to feel it

No-one should feel this: no human beingno animal.

For

fear is FEAR of *death*

pain is *unbearable*: PAIN

deathto kill is MURDER; creates FEAR, causes PAIN.

What are you *thinking* about now?.....

What do you imagine now?.....

What do you *see* in front of you?.....

What do you *feel*?.....

Consider this further and to do that shut this book *now*.

If you have been really honest with yourself about these questions, then you will

- while you think about an other - have thought:

“*I feel* what the other - human being - the other - animal - feels.”

“*I am afraid* of that ; of PAIN, of DEATH.”

“That human being - that animal - *feels* what I feel.”

In addition , you will then have thought of situations in which you have been yourself:

In which you were shocked..... indignant angry

you tightened the muscles in your arms and your hands (*do this now*) thinking:

“I could *kill* that villain.....”

“ I want him, or her..... to *scream* from pain now.....”

You will have *done* this too:

What did you do as a child.....?”

And – recently- what did you think when you read something *horrifying* in the newspaper that someone had done:

“If I had that man in my hands!”

And you know: the people, who then lynch such a manthey are ordinary people: *ordinary*, like me.

You are –afterwards - glad that you were not there yourself.

And, that you *could* not do that

or walk away

or do nothing: in which case you would have thought yourself a *coward*.

You would like to forget this mixture of conflicting feelings quickly; you would rather not think about it. You *know* that you and I, both can be inhuman in our thoughts (actually I should say, *very* human).

You *know* situations can occur in which you will *really* do this, be this.

In spite of all the outward appearances you now have and in spite of the conflicting feelings that you will have.

Could it be possible that *this* is why you think that people who carry out experiments on animals - like me - *are* like this?:

“They *enjoy* hurting animals; it gives them pleasure”,

you think and:

“*Killing* gives them a kick”.

Although you know, you *could* know that they chose this profession because of their love and interest in man and animals.

You will have heard this or read it sometime; or they have told you sometime.

But you did not really believe it.

Still it is true:

I do *not* like having to kill an animal for each experiment.

On the contrary, I hate it and it grieves me each time.

But I *do* do it,

as calmly as possible (this is something you have to *learn*).

And because of this quickly and efficiently:

to *limit* the pain and above all to keep it as *short* as possible.

I am writing down here what I feel think and do.

With all the contradictions.

I am assuming that you believe me.

And *on the other hand* that in reading this, you do not deceive yourself.

Many people who work with laboratory animals feel driven into this corner:

that people *do not believe* that they work humanely.

Just think back to your reaction when you read the term 'vivisection'.

That is said to them written....

When you use the term vivisection, just realize what you mean by it:

-That you regard the other as inhuman, a sadist.

(Mind, that - when you would say this out loud - you would much sooner say "He (or she) *is*" than "I *think* that")

Thus:

-that you do not have to listen to him or her

-that his /her work is inhuman.....

therefore:

-it should be forbidden.

If you do not do this *consciously*, you should be aware that some *do* .

And that the people who work with laboratory animals understand it this way, *must* understand:

On Tuesday evening 17 May 1977 – from 10.05 to 10.45, the NCRV broadcast an episode of 'Under treatment' on Netherlands TV 1. This was a series about medical subjects.

This episode was about vivisection: experiments on : animals *and* on people.

I shall describe one part of it, with my own feelings and thoughts that I had at the time written in *italics*.

Image:

The last scraps of a discussion with students from Utrecht; a bearded student on the screen. They are against the experiments they have to do during the practicum during their medical studies.

Image changes:

Henk Mochel , the presenter - editor.

He says, without any further introduction or clarification:

"We are now going to watch the following film".

Close-up in the middle of a movement, blurred:

Two hands have just put an animal in a steel cylinder. Now a lid goes on. A lid with a hole with the tail of the animal sticking through it.

A pinky white tail like a cord of hairy rings.

It must be a rat. Not the wild brown ones but a tame white one: a laboratory rat.

Image changes:

A larger than life image of the tail. Held in a hand. Another hand with a

scissors The scissors goes around the end of the tail CUT!

At once three shrill screams from the rat Silence

I am shocked..... I am shocked now..... I feel sick inside..... Everything happened so quickly and unexpectedly.....

On the screen all is quiet. The rat is not screaming and is not pulling its tail.

Again the image changes:

The girl - now at first I see her - has a tube in her mouth fixed to a glass pipette in her hand. She sucks blood up from the wound in the tail: into the pipette.

Close-up:

A rack with glass test tubes. The blood runs out of the pipette into a tube.

I still feel sick.

Image:

Henk Mochel: says:

"These are images that rightly shock and appall us. But they happen....."

"The experiments which were carried out in the Nazi period in Germany in the years 40-45 must have been just as terrible and cruel....."

On the screen:

An old black and white film. Title: Nuernberg trial of Nazi doctors " "British News".

Voice of a news reader:

"On 6 December 1946, 22 men and 1 woman, all but three doctors, stood trial in Nuernberg."

Images of a court room. People who stand up.....

The voice reaches me again:

"concentration - camps Buchenwald and Auschwitz.

Hundreds of thousands of people died from horrible experiments."

What has just happened here? ?? ???

A test animal receives a cut; while conscious.

A keen pain. Short because of the speed of the cut. After pain? That must have been bearable as the scissors were clearly sharp. The wound will heal quickly and well. The *animal* will not be troubled by the wound; the *viewer* will.

I was emotionally shocked by it and probably many with me.

Still influenced by *this* I am now offered;

“Nuernberg Nazi period Buchenwald and Auschwitz hundreds of thousands of people terrible experiments died”

The intention is clear:

-in future every viewer will associate tests on animals *emotionally* with the murder of people, murder in the most atrocious form:

-that he will *continue* to do this long after this scene has faded, disappeared from our consciousness.

For when you couple phenomena in an emotional sphere, the relationship will be *learnt*.

This works in two ways:

1. That those who have seen this programme:
 - a. will abhor tests on animals
 - b. will condemn people who perform these tests and
 - c. are not able to differentiate.

But also

2. That they will make the association the other way round:

Every pain and every painful intervention will be now experienced as horrible : will become PAIN - you don't know why any more - thus that pain will be unbearable.

The makers of this film will probably not have thought about this. When you think of making an association like this or allowing it ...

(the end justifies the means, don't you think?)

- a. then you do not care what damage you do.
- b. that you are carrying out *vivisection of the mind*
- c. wholesale, on a large group of the public.

This is how we are taught about pain:

All pain will become unbearable for us: PAIN.

This is but one example from the entire process in our culture that wants to *ban* pain: by declaring pain to be *unacceptable*.

I am convinced that this works adversely. By ignoring pain, in my opinion

- a. our suffering will be increased
- b. and our dependence on the practice of medicine, doctors and medicines (not to forget drugs):
 - makes more investigation in painkillers necessary
 - and so more tests on animals, where pain has to be caused in order to test these substances

- c. we will become more vulnerable to *threats* with pain, for torture so that those kinds of practices will become more common (which we can read on a daily basis in the newspapers).

When you think every pain is PAIN - and suffer with it - you cannot imagine that this does not need to be like this:

That a cut or a burn does not have to hurt so much, and that the pain afterwards does not need to exist....

When you think every pain is PAIN: then you think that another – human or animal – suffers under an intervention just as you think that you would suffer.

Is this so? ?? ??? Take time to think about this before you go on reading.

x x x

There is a small field in front of my house, but this is soon to be built full of houses. At the moment it is a beautiful piece of nature.

There are two horses in the meadow.

Every evening a couple of girls come to take care of them.

Now it is Saturday morning nearly 12.00.

The horses have finished rollicking and now one is grazing quietly and the other is lying down dozing.

A few jackdaws are perched on the posts around the field watching the horses.

One flies up and lands on the flank of the horse that is lying down.

It scurries to and fro, *it's looking for something*.

Yes, it must see something: it is standing still and looking down with its head on one side. Then its head goes up, the beak on high, and then brings it down with force *in* the horse's flank. Again, and again.

But now it has got hold of something. It braces itself, pulls, free!

I cannot see what it has in its beak that it is eating now.

The bird scurries further along the flank and pecks again. A while later yet again, each time in another place.

The horse does not react at all!

And the jackdaw goes on. By the 7th or 8th time it pecks, the horse twitches its skin; but the jackdaw goes on. Now the horse moves its head and the jackdaw flies away leaving the horse to go on dozing.

x x x

My wife and I are on holiday in Vinkeveen. We have three nephews visiting.

It is time to eat. I have just watered the plants:lugged buckets of water to and fro from the canal.. Now we are sitting outside with our meal.

Suddenly nephew Bart asks: “Uncle, did you spill the ketchup?”

“No,why do you ask?”

“Well, look at the ground!”

I look.....: I am sitting with my bare left foot in a large puddle of ketchup

Ketchup ???

I lift up my foot and look under it. There is a deep cut between my third and fourth toe. The blood is spurting out in streams. *An artery has been cut!*

I put pressure on the wound. After ten minutes the bleeding has stopped.

I put some iodine on it and bandage it up. Before we go on eating, we wash away the pool of blood.

But now I want to know: *How did I get that cut? I do not remember..... or do I?*

Vaguely I remember that when I was watering, I stepped on something hard.

It is not hard to find the culprit. A long winding trail of blood leads me to a sharp stone concealed in the grass.

x x x

A cut or a burn does not affect me much.

x x x

It is said that a fox caught with its paw in a trap will bite it off, leaving the paw behind.

x x x

I am standing above an aquarium with snake-like fishes: lampreys; beasts with round suction - cap mouths. Caught while migrating to the pairing location.

They move little and remain with their mouths sucked fast on the glass wall.

How do these animals react to a wound?

I put my hand carefully in the water and grab one. The smooth slippery lamprey twisting wildly, struggles free. Now I take a razor sharp convex shaped operating knife in my hand, that I can drop along the fish so that it just causes a cut.

I shall do this and see what happens.

The knife falls..... The animal does *not* react at all; it remains *completely still*.

In its side there is now a cut of about 1,5 cm. Some blood comes out.

The water must also react with the wound. Nothing happens. The bleeding stops.

The knife lies shining on the bottom of the aquarium. After ten minutes I put my hand carefully into the water and grip the fish tight. At once it twists free and swims away rapidly.

x x x

A headache makes me feel wretched.

x x x

My wife is going to have an operation, her tonsils have to be removed. It will be done under narcosis: laughing gas. She is bound to a chair. The nurse puts a mask on her face for the anesthetic. Tubes run from the mask to bottles of laughing gas and oxygen that are mixed via a valve. The nurse manages the narcosis.

She passes the instruments. My wife's mouth is wide open. *I can see that she does not like this:* she moves to resist - but she is bound up.

The doctor has a strange instrument in his hands: a metal tube with a loop sticking out. *He speaks to her:* tells her what he is going to do!

The loop goes into her mouth, the tube is inserted.

He puts the loop around something. The tonsil? Suddenly he pulls on the handle of the tube. My wife moans, screams and struggles. *It hurts her.*

The doctor lays a tonsil in a bowl that the nurse holds in readiness.

My wife protests, moaning but is not intelligible.

I cannot watch anymore: *it is torture.* I am probably very pale, my stomach is playing up; my hands are wet with sweat. I walk away.....

Back in the hospital ward she tells me that she felt what the doctor was doing and knew what was happening *but that she felt no pain: nothing!* Now she does: the wounds in her throat are sore.

x x x

Our large aquarium is 'snake proof'. The two boas can crawl around freely: they cannot escape. One morning the animal keeper came to warn me .

He was shocked: “ The snake the snake has large wounds,”

I go with him straight away. The snake a big animal - at least 2 metres long is lying in the smaller aquarium.

I pick him up quietly. He is used to it. I examine him. *Very strange wounds:*

Immediately behind its head there are two long cuts: at the top left and right.

They are about one centimeter wide and deep.

They run along its back up to the tail. Each cut is certainly 1,5 m and they run parallel to each other. The distance between the cuts appears to be exactly 1cm.

How did the animal get them?

We agree that we have to try to discover what has happened by keeping watch in turns to see what the animal does. Fortunately, the answer comes soon. We let the animal loose on the floor of the aquarium: the snake glides quickly to the main aquarium: a large concrete box. There is a gutter behind it to drain the water off.

The snake crawls to the gutter. This is covered by a coarse metal grating, bent around at the beginning to the bottom to prevent stoppage. With its head the snake pushes up the grating from the bottom. It has sharp points! They are one cm apart!

Before we know the snake disappears under it and we see that he again tears two long cuts.

Before we know the snake disappears under it and we see that he again tears two long cuts.

A conversation does not endBut does stop.....

I CARRY OUT EXPERIMENTS ON ANIMALS.

I am fascinated by animals (including man):
what they *do*
how they are built
and how they work

As a boy - in Indonesia - I used to boil up fish heads and put the bones together again. A real slog, because of all the little bones. I needed a second head boiled but intact, as only by comparing the clean bones with the whole head I was able to complete the reconstruction.

I kept the skins and skeletons of dead animals. In the garden I kept the strangest animals: feline animals, birds, bees, fish and snakes:
especially snakes (non poisonous).

I discovered that they became tame by playing with them a lot, which I did systematically. When they had just been captured I used leather (bicycle) gloves but of course I did get bitten now and again; that was part of the game.

I still admire my parents who allowed all this and that tame snakes - about two meters long - crawled around the house. After all I was only 7 when I began to take an interest in snakes and there were 3 children in the family younger than I.

Killing animals I found miserable and abhorrent and I still do. When chickens or ducks had to be slaughtered, or fish, I always walked away. I could not bear it. But I also collected insects and other arthropods. These I did kill myself, I anesthetized and killed them with ether. That always went very quickly: one drop of ether dead (except scorpions, strangely enough they were not affected by ether).

For me it made - and makes - all the difference in the world whether an animal is *alive* or *dead*.

I do not have any objection to :
cutting into
dissecting
eating a dead animal or parts of it.
and experimenting on

An animal without a head, even though the body was still moving was already a *dead* animal for me!

Once when I was coming home from school, I found a beautiful poisonous snake lying dead on the road. Dead because someone had just cut off its head.

I took the animal with me to preserve the skin.

The dead beast was still very lively.

So at home, I put it into an open chest to die off.

I still remember how I was looking at what that headless animal still could do, first in amazement and then with study:

When I knocked on the chest with my hand, it rolled up and then shot out; just like a living wild snake.

In 1941, the war with Japan began - which meant for us that our family was split up: father in prison and mother and children in a concentration camp.

At first together but soon I was put into a work camp /boys - men's camp and then into another camp. All together I spent my 11th to my 15th years there.

We were given very little to eat and we were always hungry. To earn some extra bread we hauled corpses. I had to kill animals: by myself and with others. We ate everything we could get our hands on: snails, snakes and rats, dogs and cats. The snails were killed quickly by throwing them into boiling water. The other animals were hunted down and killed by a firm blow with a wooden club.

Later in the boy's camp (an agricultural farm with some livestock) animals were slaughtered: chickens, goats, and cows; just as in the period after the liberation (at the end of 1945) when we received livestock by exchange from the local people.

We killed with a very sharp knife by a quick slice across the throat. Each time I felt rotten. Especially beforehand and perhaps even more afterwards. I *knew* that I *had to* lay that feeling aside: so that I could handle rapidly, so that the flow to the brains would stop instantly.

Even now when I am typing this and visualizing these events, I experience those feelings of misery and disgust that I had at the time.

That I *never* lost.

Every time I have to kill an animal.

Have to on my own orders: because I investigate how our nerves work. Not on people (obviously), but on animals: frogs.

From a frog I remove a nerve and from that nerve a microscopically small particle which I mount in a special saucer - also microscopically small. In this saucer are contact fluids that keep the nerve alive and instruments to measure the working of the nerve.

Physiological research (research on the working of living creatures) is possible because the organs themselves remain alive after the death of the creature itself.

For instance, consider kidney transplants, a treatment only made possible after experiments had been carried out on animals.

Because the organs survive I can work without haste, prepare and execute tests; after - quickly - having killed the frog.

Being human one lives and works constantly under the stress of conflicting feelings and opinions. Every choice, every decision brings you into such a position. An example.

Hetty, (5) is naughty and will not listen. What do you do?

-A tick on her fingers or on her bottom?

-Explain why? (does she understand it? does she want to understand? Is she able to understand?)

-Saying “ by your actions you are hurting me, your mother so much”? (The hurt is our cultural bogeyman, apart from the mental pressure a sentence like this contains)

-Or just leave it: because you should not put a child in an unpleasant situation? (What will this lead to later)?

A choice, any decision of yours *always* has consequences for others: next to the positive, there are *negative* effects. You cannot get away from it and you will have to take them in consideration while looking at the negative sides as such:

Is this as bad as I think?

But too:

is it maybe worse than I think?

Although I, myself am convinced that most animals do not *suffer* PAIN (which is somewhat different than *feeling* pain - what many animals in my opinion cannot) I act as though they can suffer and hurt them as little and as shortly as possible and give them anaesthetics when this is not so.

You might say that this is a contradictory attitude; perhaps you even may think “dubious”. (A term that includes a denigration: a negative estimation).

Then you are right as far as the contradiction is concerned. But I do not agree with the negative connotation. The belief that all our actions should be “correct” - logical and without contradictions, and consequent - is in my opinion a deeply rooted misconception. This belief reduces people to creatures whose conduct are predictable: *robots*.

It will be clear that I do not commit myself to any binding moral rules and neither to any beliefs I held earlier. Because of this I live and work constantly under stress.

With one guideline:

not to avoid pain and suffering but to strive to lessen and alleviate it and keep it as low as possible.

Keep evaluating.

On the basis of these considerations, I give the first year medicine students in Leiden as complete as possible course on human sexuality. They are required to take part actively: answer questions; assignments - very direct, practical - and work them out at home.

They do not like this - but often pretend they do.

But later they will be required to put themselves in the place of the patient: to recognise their (sexual) disposition and proceed from there. Because otherwise

they will be putting their own ideas first, unwittingly(?) make a judgement and help the patient from the frying pan into the fire.

Difficult problems need to be weighed constantly. Thereby you come up against a new problem, the most difficult:

Where do *I* put my limits?

Where do *you* have your limits?

And - then it becomes even more difficult:

Where do *we* put our limits?

So difficult that you have the inclination to ignore the problem:

by denying it

or by taking an *absolute* point of view.

“Vivisection should not be allowed” is such an absolute point of view.

With this you have:

a. got rid of the problem and thus

b. made it easy for yourself, and

c. created a lovely banner to enter into the battle against others: *battle* because you have made any discussion impossible.

Still you *do* kill the mosquito that stings you....

Some Hindu's walk constantly brushing the ground in front of them to avoid hurting or killing an insect by accident. But they *do* recognize the right of others to have other views.

“Thou shalt not kill “ is such an absolute point of view.

For *me, personally*, this concerns only people. When others also include animals in this, I respect their convictions (and on the other hand expect them to respect mine).

This is a reality, as medical students are expected to carry out experiments on animals as part of their studies to become a doctor. They are not obliged to do this, if it is against their principles they are given other tasks.

But here I have to make a distinction:

a. Not *wanting* to do something from conviction

b. Not *daring* to act from fear, letting their emotions get the better of them.

These people must learn to integrate their emotions and not to be overcome by them.:

A doctor who is afraid to cut into you when necessary: you do not want such a man at your bedside, (even though you do not like being cut). Or - even worse - a doctor who does proceed but shuts his eyes because he cannot bear to see what he is doing (believe it or not, I have known such a one).

For me the issue “thou shalt not kill” *people*, is not an absolute point of view as well. Again it is about *limits*. Probably to the horror of absolutists who in their

vision immediately think that everyone will be outlawed.

Where do I draw the limits here?

Where do you do that?

1. At the human *form (the body)*?

In the past the absolute line was the human form and it was even forbidden to cut into a dead person. Medicine was only able to make progress when this limit was left behind (several hundred years ago. e.g. Vesalius).

Still the human body appeals to many; if you consider the leaflets distributed by the anti-abortion group in 1976: with colour photos - colour because the red blood would repulse people - with bits of foetuses: little hands, feet

This presentation simplifies the problem for them. Just like another slogan that others use "We are against abortion because it is a question of life and death", and "protect unborn life".

2. For them the 'standard' is *life* whereby in discussions their choice of words is characteristically careless. They often do not speak about 'human life' but about 'life'. (e.g. in an interview with a clergyman over the radio on 22 August 1977, concerning the problems around abortion during the formation of the cabinet). For the sake of convenience, from carelessness or intentionally, the emotional charge is spread over *everything* that lives.

3. Then again there are others who look at the *viability* of the child: whereby, because of progress in medicine, problems caused by the extending limit occur.

4. Lastly, you can put the accent on *being human*: then it becomes very difficult. But for me the most sensible: because then you really need to reflect - and that you are most *human* in that reflection.. It is this reflection from where modern understanding of death comes: the absence of constant activity in our brain - which now applies for animals too (at least for animals who have a brain). I myself "feel" the "being human - borderline" when embryos have a developed brain (about 24 weeks) and then put this limit ample prior to that: again to be on the safe side.

In politics -- together-with-each-other-as-good-as-possible-adjusting-and-adapting-our behaviour -- we set *one* limit together. Again and yet again for all sorts of varying cases, while everyone has different limits. That is why politics are so difficult and especially when absolutists see and impose *their* limit as the truth. That's why they consider politics as a *dirty* business. Something I can imagine because their vision keeps to their "certainties". By that they evade *being-human-beings-together*.

In medicine there is one unwritten rule: the 'nil nocere'. Freely translated: "Thou shalt do no harm". This is not accepted absolutely, because another saying is "soft doctors make stinking wounds".

A doctor is always weighing up the situation and the possibilities. When the possibilities are limited he will not hesitate to act even though the intervention might be painful.

In the Japanese period we had a doctor in our camp, a woman, who only had some instruments; knives and forceps. There were no medicines; and no narcosis. Still you underwent the treatment, if you needed to have a tooth removed, you had broken a bone, or an infection required cutting. Like everyone else, I walked on bare feet and sometimes got an infection that went through the calloused skin. Because the callous was quite thick the knife had to be forcefully stuck into the foot. The idea was worse than the pain itself, which was quite bearable. The relief when the tension in the abscess was released was a reward that made it all acceptable.

I think that through this kind of experiences and the minimal ado that was made, I learnt to bear the pain of a cut, burn or electric shock; indeed barely be bothered. I believe that this is also true for animals. The luxury of the petty upbringing that we now allow ourselves, does not occur with animals; perhaps with the exception of dogs who grow up close to humans. Maybe it is not that absurd that the anti-vivisection movement has been concentrated so long on these animals (and cats). I would never keep cats or dogs, because besides their environmentally destructive influence (their bird-hunting), feeding them with tinned meat is almost unavoidable. I am unable to check the origin of this meat and that I might help to exterminate whales - creature with the largest brains there are - and that with a *death agony* of an *hour* or more is for me an unacceptable form of vivisection and environmental destruction. There is no narcosis in the harpoons.

I believe too, that there are animals that cannot *feel* pain. Then I think about unicellular animals (and plants), insects, in short all creatures without brains. Some, not all, can react to injuries (just as a human being or a frog without brains).

With this I do *not* want to say that a 'play-safe' is *unwanted*. On the contrary but then based on the consciousness of *our* role: there must be *no* wiping out of animals or plants even if they have no knowledge of it. *No* needless causing pain - even if it might be no pain - and certainly *no* torture (also not of animals directly or indirectly as with the whales). Always acting humanely, but not taking flight for pain or for death than; and *keeping* asking where the limits are and *daring* to lay them down.

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