

## PAINISM - HISTORICAL AND ETHICAL ASPECTS

Richard D. Ryder

11 The Imperial, Exeter, Devon EX4 4AJ (UK)  
Telephone: 01392 426727, Fax: 01392 412747

### ABSTRACT

**Pain, broadly defined to cover all types of suffering, should form the basis for ethics. Utilitarianism, however, is rejected. Pains cannot be meaningfully aggregated across individuals. In painism, the pain of the maximum sufferer takes precedence in each case. Rules for applying painism are proposed. The author's term *speciesism* is used to attack the limiting of ethics to the human species alone; all painients should be included.**

**Keywords: Pain - Ethics - Speciesism - Painism - Painience - Painient**

### INTRODUCTION

One of the most extraordinary aspects of the history of human thought is that the subject of pain was ignored or glossed over by so many great thinkers and writers of the past. Why was this? As a psychologist I have often asked myself this question. I can only conclude that it was because of *denial*. When there are no effective analgesics or anaesthetics available what else can one do about pain but try not to think about it? Harsh militaristic societies breed a culture of machismo to this day in which a man is supposed to be able to endure pain without flinching. One way to do this is by the use of denial. In the hysteric, or in cases of hypnosis, denial can be so effective as to create local anaesthesia. I have seen it in both cases. Denial can produce a high level of anaesthesia in both conversion hysteria and in autohypnosis. Thinking about pain and writing about it will undermine such defence mechanisms. I believe this is why so many early philosophers failed to do justice to the subject. They simply did not want to break down their well practised defences against pain and distress. Their minds were employed to analyse every issue except this one. Pain was the taboo subject. To talk about it, and particularly to admit its importance, was to threaten their delicate defences against it.

In consequence, nearly the whole of the treatment of ethics in the Western canon is, in my view, of limited value until we get to the seventeenth century. I believe that Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, for example, often regarded as a key work, is seriously deficient.

This avoidance of the topic of pain is not, however, true of early Indian thought where pain and all forms of suffering are clearly seen as what is wrong in the natural order. *Ahimsa*, the principle of not doing harm to any living creature, is clearly related to pain. Buddhism teaches the avoidance of suffering by following the eightfold path. These

are practical defences against suffering based upon the four noble truths which state that the pains of existence can be banished by the elimination of desire.

What a relief it is to find a philosophy that admits the importance of suffering and tries to deal with it in a practical way rather than by attempting to ignore it - which was, in antiquity, the Western method!

It would be wrong, of course, to omit a mention of Epicurus (341 - 270 BC) who believed that only pleasure is good in itself. However, pleasure, in Epicurus' theory, was approximately equivalent to the absence of pain. Furthermore, he distinguished between two types of pleasure - an underlying harmonious state of mind and more fleeting "kinetic" (or sensual) pleasures. He preferred the former. Once the underlying state of harmony (*ataraxia*) had been achieved then there was no way to increase pleasure. Yet this peace of mind is particularly vulnerable, said Epicurus, to fear, especially the fear of the gods and the fear of death. Epicurus was, like Bentham later, convinced that both the dominant motivation in life as well as the object of virtue were the maximisation of pleasure and the minimization of pain. Epicurus particularly recommended friendship, self-knowledge and the removal of unnecessary desires in order to achieve *ataraxia*. *Ataraxia* (peace of mind) is similar to Aristotle's *eudaimonia* (wellbeing). Both have been identified with *happiness* rather than with *pleasure*.

Like many of the early writers Epicurus does not clearly distinguish between philosophy's role in teaching us how to enjoy a pleasant life for *ourselves* and how to show our concern for *others*. In my opinion, morality is by definition only the latter - it is *essentially* about our treatment of others. Ethics is about helping *others* to achieve their principal motivation, that is to say, the maximisation of their happiness by the avoidance of pain. Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* is not really dealing with ethics at all but with providing advice on how to enjoy oneself. It is a self-help manu-

al. It is a work of psychology. This is really not ethics as we understand it today.

Now you may already be feeling irritated that I am using words like *pain* and *suffering*, *distress* and *misery* in a slapdash sort of way. I am doing so deliberately and for the following reason - *they are all forms of pain*. For this reason I have no compunction about giving them almost exactly the same meaning. The two great traditions in psychology, the Freudian and the scientific, both acknowledge the central importance of the pain/pleasure dimension in the lives of all animals, although the languages of the two traditions, of course, are quite different. Freudians speak in terms of the *pleasure principle* while behaviourists and ethologists talk of *drive satisfaction* and *positive and negative rewards or reinforcements*. Pains are the things that not only direct our behaviour but are also so important to us subjectively. Every conscious moment is suffused with pains and pleasures of many sorts - emotional, cognitive and sensory. I may feel fear (which is a painful emotion), think of failure (which is a painful cognition) or receive a burn to my finger (which is a painful sensation). I can experience all these at once. Although they are, in some respects, quite *different* experiences, they have something very important in common - their subjective painfulness. They all also have the same sort of effect upon my behaviour, that is to say, I will try to avoid them. They are also negatively reinforcing. It is because so many different sorts of experience (fear, distress, boredom, grief, scalding, cuts, fractures, stings, shame etc.) all have this subjective painfulness and behavioural negativity in common that I am proposing, for present purposes, to call them all, quite simply, *pain*. This makes sense psychologically.

Historically speaking, it is not, I believe, an accident that the discovery of effective analgesics in the form of opiates, and their introduction into Europe, coincides with the beginnings of a closer philosophical examination of pain from the point of view of ethics. People began to feel that pain could be controlled, not just by adopting a stoical or denial approach to it, but by the use of external forces such as laudanum. Even if they could not afford laudanum, the mere knowledge of its efficacy changed everything; pain began to be seen as both conquerable and *as separable from existence itself*.

It is in the eighteenth century that the Utilitarians appear. It is they who identify pain as the essential wrong. Frances Hutcheson (1694 - 1746), Jeremy Bentham (1748 - 1832) and John Stuart Mill (1806 - 1873) all focus upon pain in this way. An action is right, said Bentham, if it is preventive of pain or unhappiness. Mill defined actions as being "right in proportion as they tend to produce happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness".

I do not really want to get sidetracked into an argument about the relationship between pain and unhappiness. We all know that pain is more specific than is unhappiness. Unhappiness tends to be a more generalised mental state. Secondly, pains, thank goodness, tend to be more fleeting. They come and they go. Unhappiness, on the other hand,

can endure for weeks or months or even for years. Unhappiness is very similar to depression. It is more like a mood than a simple emotion like grief. Is there then no correlation between pain and unhappiness? Certainly there is. The more pain that is experienced the greater is the probability of unhappiness. But some people remain remarkably cheerful while they are in pain. Almost certainly this is a defensive reaction at the neurochemical or cognitive levels. Also, we know that frontal lobe damage can produce a feeling of indifference towards pain. We should note that there is a two way relationship between pain and mood. Depressed moods can sometimes be deepened or lightened by external events when these are painful or pleasurable. More severe depressions, however, appear to have a life of their own, independent of changes in the environment. When depressed, even quite neutral events can seem painful.

The psychological picture is complex and interesting but I do not want to get involved in it today. Suffice it to say that *pain and unhappiness are highly correlated*. From the ethical point of view we are, I suppose, ultimately interested in unhappiness. On the other hand pain, in all its many varieties, is easier to study. Pains are less nebulous and more discrete. This is why I talk of my own ethical position as *painism* rather than as *sufferingism* or *unhappinessism*. I am embarrassed enough by the *-isms* I have created - I do not want to be accused of the last two!

The essential point I wish to emphasise about Utilitarianism is that it focuses upon pains and pleasures, unhappiness and happiness, instead of being distracted by lesser ethical goals such as liberty, equality, justice or any other sort of good. The Utilitarians were right. As Bentham observed, our lives are dominated entirely by pains and pleasures. These twin experiences direct all our behaviour and tinge every conscious moment of our lives. I do not believe any psychologist would disagree with this.

There is an old trick used by psychotherapists and psychologists which consists in asking patients why they desire something. They may reply by saying because it is "just". The interrogator then asks them why they want justice, and so on and so on. Always one ends in the same position. We want things because we believe they will give us pleasure or help us to avoid pain. In other words, it is pain and pleasure that underlie all our desires. For example: why is injustice wrong? Because it is believed to cause pain. Why is the lack of liberty wrong? Because it is believed to cause pain. Why is inequality wrong? Because it is believed to cause pain. Always we end up with the same answer. This is why I am convinced that pain and pleasure (unhappiness and happiness) are the foundation stones, not only of psychology, but also of ethics.

## ANALYSIS

Briefly then, what is my ethical theory of painism?

Forty years ago, as a psychologist interested in ethics, I found myself drawn to Utilitarianism precisely because it

focused upon what was essential - pleasure and pain. But I was always worried by its implications. According to Utilitarianism, if many individuals benefit from causing pain to someone, and if all their consequent pleasures add up to a total that is greater than the victim's pain then, according to Utilitarians, their action can be right. Take, for example, gang rape: if all the rapists' pleasures, when aggregated, total more than the suffering of the victim then gang rape is considered to be okay. Or, if the aggregated pleasures of a group of sadists adds up to more than the agony of their victim then his torture is, according to the Utilitarians, justified. Clearly, there is a problem with the theory here! The more I pondered this the more I was convinced that aggregating the pains and pleasures of many different individuals just does not make sense. Ignoring the sheer practical difficulties in quantifying all these experiences, and even if this could be done (as it may well be in the future), it is still meaningless. Why? The answer is because *my pains and pleasures are experienced directly and so are entirely different things from others' pains and pleasures which I do not experience directly*. They are as different as is an apple from a picture of an apple. I am not saying it is only *my* pains that matter. On the contrary, it is in the essence of ethics that we should be concerned about the pains of *others* rather than our own. But each individual experiences her own pains. I experience mine and you experience yours. I may be upset at your pains but I am not directly experiencing those *same* pains that you are experiencing. I am, as it were, merely experiencing the "husks" of your pains. My pains to me remain far more vivid than yours can ever be for me. For each individual this is true. The pains of others are merely the *reports* of pains, they are not *actual* pains. The capacity to experience pain (painience) is coterminous with the boundaries of each individual. So, it is alright to add up the pains being experienced *within* each individual, but it is not alright to add up the pains of *different* individuals. The boundaries of consciousness and painience are the boundaries of the individual. This means that causing, say, 5 units of pain to one individual is far more serious morally than causing 1 unit of pain to a hundred or even a million individuals.

This is a situation we are sometimes faced with in everyday life; whether it is best to cause severe pain to one individual or to cause lesser pains to many. I am saying the wrongness of an action depends upon the quantity of pain caused to any one individual. So if I do something that causes 10 units of pain to each of ten people and 50 units of pain to one person, the significant pain score for moral purposes is 50 and not the grand total of 150. In other words, it is the quantity of pain experienced by the *maximum sufferer* in each case that is morally important (Ryder, 1989).

This is really what is new about my theory of painism. I recognise that it may have very serious implications for human society but I am, nevertheless, convinced of its truth. What I am doing is rejecting entirely the principle of aggregation that is found in all forms in Utilitarianism. What I am *not* saying, I hasten to add, is that trade-offs are impossible.

The trading off of the pains of one *individual* against those of another *individual* remains legitimate. I may, for example, be justified in increasing A's pain to the level of 10 units if I thereby reduce B's pain from 1000 to, say, 100. In each case of a trade-off we need to focus on the maximum sufferers on both sides of the trade-off equation.

The theory of painism comes somewhere between Utilitarianism and Rights Theory (Ryder, 1998a). It shares with Utilitarianism its focus upon pain but rejects its aggregation principle. On the other hand it shares with Rights Theory its emphasis upon the importance of the individual but rejects any mysterious references to *telos* or intrinsic values. I am also uneasy with the tendency of Rightists to deal with the trade-off issue - which is really one of the central problems of ethics - by invoking ad hoc conflicting rights such as the "right to self-defence" to get themselves out of difficulties.

Credit must here be given to Johan Braeckman who has used the term "pathocentrism" in rather the same way as I am using painism. My quibble with "pathocentrism" is that the Greek word "pathos" covers not only suffering but also emotion generally and disease. I feel we need to narrow our focus upon pain itself.

Of course, like most modern Utilitarians and Rights Theorists, I am not speciesist. So I extend my moral theory to cover all painient individuals regardless of their race, sex or species. A certain quantity of pain is of equal importance, morally, whoever or whatever suffers it. All painient individuals are in the same moral category. Indeed, all painients are equal. That is not to say that every horse must have the right to a parliamentary vote nor every dog the right to free secondary education. Ignoring for the moment that horses *could* be given more opportunity to show their preferences generally and that dogs frequently get far too little education, each species has different desires and needs and hence a different pattern of what causes pains and pleasures. So, I am not saying that precisely what is good for the goose is also good for the goosander. But when it comes down to pain I *am* saying that the pain of the one matters just as much as the pain of the other. *Five units of pain in a king counts for the same as five units of pain in a kangaroo*. Pain is pain regardless of who or what suffers it. To attach moral importance to one species over another is speciesism, which is just as unintelligent and disgraceful a form of prejudice as racism or sexism or ageism. The well known ethicist John Rawls has argued that if we did not know our position in society, we would choose a form of social justice that would guarantee basic liberties and maximise the condition of the least advantaged. He urges us to act as if we were behind a "veil of ignorance" concerning our current race, sex, class and status. To this list I would add "species". In other words, we should include all painients in our scheme of justice, as if we did not know to what species we might belong (Rawls, 1971).

Ethicists are always producing concepts of secondary importance with which to muddy the waters - autonomy, self-consciousness, or whatever. For example, they may ar-

gue that babies and animals can have no moral rights because they can observe no duties. Or, they may claim that only self-conscious or autonomous individuals have moral status. Or, that we owe no duties to irrational creatures or to those incapable of abstract thought. All such qualities are, surely, *morally irrelevant*. To paraphrase Bentham - the real question is not whether individuals are autonomous or rational or self-conscious or capable of abstract thinking or of observing duties, but whether they can *suffer*. Moral standing depends alone upon painience - the capacity to suffer.

It might be retorted that I am talking about "consciousness" - another word neglected by the ancients. Well, yes, I am. But even consciousness is too wide in its meaning. It covers all our conscious experiences, pleasurable as well as painful. Furthermore, it is possible to imagine aliens from some other planet who are highly conscious but feel no pain. Our essential concern as ethicists, in other words, is not with consciousness but with that part of consciousness which is the capacity to suffer (i.e. painience).

Why, then, is pain bad? This is a difficult question. It can be argued that pain is sometimes good as it helps us to avoid dangers. Yes, but this is its *indirect* effect. Pain itself, as experienced, is still bad. Avoiding danger without experiencing pain is better. But there is something circular in the answer. Badness and pain are inextricably linked in the human mind. Bad and painful are sometimes synonymous. What property is it that all bad things share? They all cause pain (in its broad sense). Killing, lying, cheating and stealing are bad because they cause pain. Injustice, inequality, and lack of liberty are bad because they, too, usually cause pain. Neglecting and rejecting are bad for the same reason. Pain is the common feature of all bad things. A bad thing is that which causes pain (Ryder, 1998b).

Some may wonder why I concentrate upon pain rather than pleasure. Part of the answer is that pain - although highly complex - is still simpler than pleasure to measure. Another is that pain at its extreme is more powerful than extreme pleasure. (We would rather avoid agony than gain ecstasy. Ecstasy is extinguished by agony but not the other way around.) I also feel, however, that there is something to be said for a negative theory. If one follows Popper one believes that while we constantly aim for truth we can never be sure that we have attained it. We cannot confirm a hypothesis but only *refute* it. Science has to deal with the *testable*. Pain has this concrete or testable quality. When it is there it is there. Trying to reduce it is like trying to refute it.

What, then, is the connection of pain with pleasure? I used to believe that they are closely linked. The reduction of pain *is* pleasure. Or is it? All unsatisfied desires, drives or needs produce a state of pain and the reduction of this pain state itself is pleasurable. Yes, but surely there are some other pleasures that are completely different? For example, the pleasure of hearing Beethoven or feeling the sun upon one's back? Surely, these are not pleasures that arise from an *unsatisfied drive* to hear Beethoven or to sit in the sun. They are more direct. Pleasures, like pains, can be emotions

(joy), cognitions (happy thoughts), or sensations (e.g. of warmth). They can also be deeply affected by mood. Hypomania makes almost everything seem a pleasure - the world is seen through rose-tinted spectacles just as in depression a grey fog descends. These are problem areas that will quite soon be illuminated by greater knowledge of the role of serotonin, dopamine and other brain transmitters in our experiences of pain and pleasure. So pains and pleasures are of two main sorts; those concerned with drives and their satisfaction on one hand and, on the other, those pains and pleasures that are *direct*, like being burned or tasting honey. In the former, the reduction of a drive-pain is associated with pleasure. Can the reverse happen? Can the reduction of pleasure cause pain? Less certainly. This is, probably, another important difference between pain and pleasure. The reduction of pain is always a pleasure (a relief) whereas reducing pleasure from, say, an intense level to a moderate level does not necessarily produce any pain at all.

Let me return to ethics. I have argued so far:

- 1) *That it is pain (in a wide sense) that matters morally. Pain is the essential evil.*
- 2) *That the pains of different individuals cannot be aggregated meaningfully.*
- 3) *That our primary concern should always be with the maximum sufferers.*
- 4) *That all painient individuals, of whatever race or sex or species, have equal moral standing.*

So, do I see painience as the basis for rights? Yes, I do. Occasionally, I use the word "rights" although I do so in the sense of a *passive* right not to be caused pain. This usage is not to be confused with the concept of *legal* rights nor with *active* moral rights (e.g. the right to own property). I also sometimes use the word "duties". Rights and duties seem to me to be equally acceptable human-made concepts. They are opposite sides of the same coin.

There is one other very important point that needs elaboration. I referred to Aristotle as not writing about ethics but about psychology. What I meant is that in the "Nicomachean Ethics" he is giving advice on how to enjoy oneself or how to be happy. What he is not saying is *how we should treat others*. He is talking about what *is* and not about what *ought* to be. Morality is certainly about *ought*. But more specifically it is also about how we ought to treat *others*. Techniques for how I can be happy is what a psychotherapist teaches. They can be taught just like culinary recipes. The muddle in Aristotle is not so much between "is" and "ought" as between "me" and "you". I can say legitimately - "If I want a good meal I *ought* to go to the Ritz" but that is not, in my view, an ethical statement. Essentially, ethics is about how I should behave towards *others*. This confusion between psychology and ethics still bedevils much of the modern debate. So, if morality is about how we should treat others then this touches upon altruism. Altruism is often driven by compassion and compassion is a natural feeling. We are all born with the potential for compassion. Compassion may itself have survival value or it may, more probably, be a "spill-over" of innate parental feelings (which

clearly do have survival value). Ethics should be a rational superstructure built upon the foundation of this compassion.

So, how, then, can painism be applied? Can we draw any useful rules of thumb from the theory? A couple of years ago Peter Singer asked me to propose some ethical rules of thumb for use by conscientious animal experimenters and these were published (Ryder, 1999). Animal experimentation is a much discussed topic that has helped to clarify certain ethical issues. It starkly illustrates, for example, the "trade-off" question. How far am I justified in causing pain in order to derive benefits for others? Trade-off problems cannot be avoided. Imagine pushing aside a brigand in order to rescue some starving and terrified hostages. Is it justified to cause the brigand some mild pain by pushing him? Or, how about secluding a sick child so as not to infect others with a dangerous illness? Or, waging a 'just' war in which innocent individuals are likely to be hurt? Or, scolding a bully in order to protect his victim? These are all forms of trade-off. How much pain can I legitimately cause A in order to reduce the pain of B? This is the great dilemma facing all ethical theories. It is not just a problem for those of us with a particular interest in reducing the sufferings of animals in research. It seems to me to be such a difficult problem that some sort of flexibility in ethical theory has to be accepted. Rigid principles, if they are extreme, can lead to absurd consequences: either to the Utilitarian absurdity of allowing torture if it proves to be very beneficial to others, or to the extreme Rights Theory absurdity of permitting agony in order to avoid inflicting even mild inconvenience or stricture on those who are the cause of that agony.

There are two further ethical problems illustrated by research on animals: first, with *deliberately* causing pain that otherwise would not have occurred and, second, with the disparity in *certainty* between causing pain *now* and justifying it in terms of benefits that may or may not occur sometime in the future. In a painful experiment, the pain is certain, but the benefits are always uncertain. Let us briefly look at these two problems. The first can be put in the form of the question: if it is wrong to cause pain, is it more wrong to do so deliberately than inadvertently? Most ethicists, from whichever school, would agree that *prima facie* it is more wrong to cause pain deliberately. There are those who consider that there is a very considerable difference, morally speaking, between deliberately inflicting pain and not intervening to stop or reduce pain that is occurring "naturally". One cannot, practically speaking, spend one's life trying to stop "natural" pain occurring everywhere, but one can seriously try to avoid deliberately causing pain oneself. The sin of commission seems far worse than the sin of omission. On the other hand, the sufferers of pain do not care *how* their pain is being caused; all they desire is that it should be reduced. Both animal welfarists and genuine medical researchers may be motivated by the same desire to reduce the suffering of others. Yet the latter accept that they can deliberately inflict pain on A in order (they hope) to reduce naturally occurring pain in B. Animal welfarists, on

the other hand, and certainly those who see themselves as animal rightists, tend to reject this argument and deny that good ends can ever justify such bad means.

The second special ethical problem facing the animal researcher when commencing an experiment is that the hoped-for benefits of the research still lie in the future. As scientists, we are especially sensitive to the difficulties of prediction. It is never certain that a particular experiment will have a beneficial result. We all know this. I believe this makes the case against painful research even stronger. It involves a trade-off between real pain and hypothetical benefit.

These two problems also arise in many other situations of ethical choice. I am not trying to say that I have eased the trade-off problem. It has plagued ethics for centuries and will continue to do so. Would it be justified to experiment painfully on one nonconsenting human being in order to produce, with absolute certainty, a widely applicable cure for cancer? If so, how much pain in the experiment would be justified - severe agony lasting for weeks? If not, would a short twinge be acceptable? A simple solution to the problem, either way, causes difficulties. So, if one is to permit trade-offs at all, they had better be under very special regulations. For example, my theory would never permit causing pain to others in order to reduce the pain of the maximum sufferers to absolute zero. If, in order to reduce the pain of the maximum sufferer B, it is necessary to cause pain to A, then this trade-off could only ever be justified to the point *where the pain of B is reduced to the same level as the pain of A*.

There are basically three ethical positions (Scheme 1) among us animal ethicists, those of Peter Singer, Tom Regan and myself. (These positions apply to the treatment of human animals, too.) I agree with Singer that pain is the crucial issue, but disagree with his Utilitarian aggregation of the pains and pleasures of several individuals. I disagree with Regan's view that it is the "inherent value" of an animal that matters. This is a bit too vague for me. I prefer pain (broadly defined) as the basic criterion of what is wrong. But I agree with Regan's emphasis on the importance of the painient individual. It is the suffering of each *individual* that matters. All three of us, however, are opposed to speciesism.

Here, then, are my rules of thumb. Like all such rules they are open to challenge on theoretical grounds. To an extent they have to be arbitrary. But active people need rules they can use. So here they are:

- 1) ***Speciesism is always wrong.*** My concept of speciesism is similar to racism and sexism. Pain is pain regardless of the species of the sufferer. (Pain, in this context, covers all forms of suffering including fear, boredom and distress.) Try to act, therefore, as though human pains count for no more than nonhuman pains.
- 2) ***The aggregation of pains and pleasures across individuals is meaningless.*** Consciousness, and hence, painience, is bounded by the boundaries of the individual. It is wrong, therefore, to try to justify inflicting pain on one indi-

Scheme 1. Differences between ethical positions regarding pain in animals.

Three ethical positions	Basic criterion is pain	Some individual trade-offs allowed	Aggregation of pain/pleasure among many	Against speciesism
Utilitarianism (Singer)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Painism (Ryder)	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Rights theory (Regan)	No	?	No	Yes

vidual by aggregating the supposed or actual benefits accruing to several others. Try to act as though the interests of the many count for no more than the interests of the one.

3) ***Our first moral concern, therefore, should always be with the individual who is the maximum sufferer.*** It is not the quantity of sufferers that matters morally. It is the *degree* of each individual's suffering that is of concern. One victim of abuse or torture is just as morally important as are a hundred victims. As a priority we should try to help the ones who suffer most, the maximum sufferers. When their pains are reduced there will be new maximum sufferers to attend to, and so on. So try not so much to reduce the *quantity* of individuals suffering pain as to reduce the *severity of the pain* experienced by every one of them.

4) ***It is always wrong to cause pain to A merely in order to increase the pleasure of B.*** It is wrong, therefore, to rape. It is also wrong to torture for fun or to cause (unconsented to) pain that is merely for career advantage, convenience, luxury or sport.

5) ***Only if there are no alternatives may causing (unconsented to) pain to A be allowed.*** Causing even mild pain or discomfort is, of course, always quite wrong (regardless of benefit) if there are painless alternative ways of achieving the same results. These should always be tried first.

6) ***The pain to be reduced must always be severe.*** We should only cause pain to A if B's pain is severe. In other words, it is legitimate to hurt A only if B's predicament is extreme.

7) ***The action must be likely to succeed.*** We do not want to cause pain to A and then discover that this action does not-

hing to help B. We should first carefully review the probabilities of pain and benefit arising from our actions.

8) ***Whatever the benefits, it is always wrong to cause pain that is severe or prolonged.*** So, regardless of benefits, torture is always wrong.

#### CONCLUSION

The idea of loving our neighbours as ourselves is at least two thousand years old. So is the idea of doing to others only what we would like done to us. Painism may be just a new way of looking at these old ideas. Ethical theory needs to refocus upon pain as its central issue. The traditional context of doing so, Utilitarianism, is, however, unsatisfactory and must be rejected. I have suggested a new ethical framework based upon the importance of pain.

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