**FROM GREG BECKER:**

Thank you for the article on the not so big fears of Dutch people on gene manipulations.

You know, the great fan of Poland, Bismarck, once said :

There are two things that people shouldn’t know how they are made: sausage and politics.

:))

Actually it is the same with biotech products....as for all technology.

When new, they are threatening (and even the first time using them)...and then people get used to them - whether good or evil...

Some time ago I published an article on "what is technology", and I referred also to the fears people had once with traveling in a train running with the incredible velocity of 25km/h. Even researchers thought that a permanent speed of 25 will harm the brain and drive people crazy. And now we complain when the train to Warsaw drives with less than 200 km/h.

People get easily used to new things -- and that is what Greenpeace and others always have to fight against. -- and I think some bioethicists also think that a permanent alert mode is necessary, for tactical reasons, and not necessarily to serve the truth!

Frankly, I'm not worried so much about the general ability of people to be moral, but I'm literarily panicking when I see that people prefer to be thoughtless and to surrender to ruling circumstances.

(This attitude goes far and works in big firms as much as in private ones that you see, especially in Germany, but also in the Netherlands and in Denmark, and the question was discussed “why so many normal people collaborated with the Nazis.” They obeyed the ruling circumstances. Heidegger defended always this behavioural pattern, including himself btw, but not me. I understand that, but I don't have to agree.)

Generally it is the same with the temptations of modern biotech.

It may be that people feel it is something greater than the fears of the few or the one, and connected advantages -- who does not want to take them...?

It is said that the nature of fear includes the essential element that every fear wants to be defeated in the end, and so to surrender to circumstances is one possibility.

Anyhow, I'm still most disappointed that the elite, the researchers, restrict themselves to a positivist attitude like in the 15th century.

Scientific Facts may be facts, but they also have consequences and effects. And who would know the effects better than scientists discovering or inventing, but they prefer not taking consequences into consideration…to change that even at one facility.....

You see, maybe my choice to come live in Poland was **very** wrong, for we live amongst an incredibly fatalistic people here; but finally, this place is as good or bad than any other, for ignorant scientists are the same everywhere.

I hoped that "our" younglings still have that rebelious attitude every youth has and that we can use it for bioethical awareness creation.

But with the current nihilistic generations ...ahhhhh

Secondly, you may know the polish proverb:

***Nie pamiętam wół jak cielęciem był***

(The adult cow forgets how it was to be young.)

Once they have a MSc....

So, is our bioethics idea a failure - to make bioethics an integral part of biology ? I think it is!

But at this moment I try to start “negotiations” about "how many just men are needed " ....like old Lot ;)

There is a second even more psychological issue that needs to be mentioned. This point may be interesting for you as a Catholic believer, for it touches the crucial point of how to deal with guilt, once things have gone wrong.

You see, I finished one of my studies with an exam on the history of crime stories, and an interesting point was the theory that there is a parallel of the confession of the perpetrators to the policeman and the confession at church. Only if there is the acknowledgement of guilt, the case is really closed.

Reality often looks different. Single people may do so....comparably rarely; to become aware of being sinners ....a people never. The next generation only can afford to confess the sins of the fathers, for they have someone else to accuse but them. In case of a people, this is a very schizoid situation, I can tell you!

Recently we had court cases against Nazi workers in concentration camps, and literary everyone expected that the accused ones would bow to their victims. One did, the other one not.

After the war an American GI travelled Germany and was surprised that no one felt bad on the big crimes they all were part of. There is a moving documentary based on his diaries. A German old lady who was forced to see the mountains of dead bodies in the concentration camp of Bergen-Belsen said to American soldiers: "How could YOU do that to us?"...and she meant nothing else but the confrontation with the own guilt.

*Eichmann* himself seriously said to the officer who lead his interrogations: "Your entire family was killed in Auschwitz? Oh, that is so sad!"

I think it is illusionary to expect that (a) people admit(s) and regret(s) somehow automatically that they did wrong...and the more monstrous it is what they did, the more they will stick to the idea that it was somehow right or not so bad, or they simply close their eyes.

Anything else would be psychological suicide, and cannot be expected...

How to admit and to confess that you killed or helped killing children, 6 million Jews and set the world on fire???

So, we shall abandon the idea that evil people will become so easily good ones again, and that they start being new-born with a confession. Ignorance is a bliss when you have blood on your hands....

You see, also this mechanism works for great and small frames.

In terms of the new big gene manipulation hype by Crispr, it is not very probable that once it may go terribly wrong as such or by directions of actions (eg… a general ok for germ line intervention...what I see coming) people will say....sorry, we were wrong...

It is even worse, for the current wave of gene manipulation and its future application is based on the GOOD ideas of healing, helping and cure. These issues seem to justify everything.

The possible consequences -- who wants to think about that **now**? They open the gate to eugenics, and they even don't see that.

Once they start ....They will continue till someone stops them....and who could this be? How to stop a hurricane when it is already upon you...

Ignorance and indifference are the enemies of ethics, and these are the issues we have to fight -- not to take care that our students of biotech know Kant, but to know what *responsibility* means.

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