

transplantation alone. Costs would depend on whether it is necessary to keep animals in a gnotobiotic environment or even as purpose-bred transgenic animals created for a specific recipient. Whatever the exact cost, xenotransplantation would produce yet another burden on private health policies, and would remain inaccessible for the poor. In the UK, it is highly unlikely that our over stretched National Health System would be able to cover the additional costs and so, if xenotransplantation does become an accepted technique, it will inevitably create new ethical dilemmas over the allocation of scarce resources. In the mid 19th century the average lifespan was 42 years while today in the UK it is 72 for men and 78 for women. Perhaps in the end society in its decision on healthcare coverage has to weigh up the financial, ethical and social costs, together with the biological risks of the individual's desire for life. Whatever decisions are made some sections of our society will deem them wrong.

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***Touching Horses: Communication, Health and Healing Through Shiatsu***

Marion Kaselle and Pamela Hannay (1995). J A Allen: London. 192pp. Hardback. Obtainable from the publishers, 1 Lower Grosvenor Place, London SW1W 0EL, UK (ISBN 0 85131 579 8). Price £19.95.

In the introduction, there is a quick resume of the effects of the dogma of Cartesian science on medicine 'to treat the symptoms of the disease rather than focusing on the patient as a unified, indivisible whole governed by an energetic life force' (p xviii). This has a ring of truth to it, and wets one's appetite to find out more about what Shiatsu must be. Although there is a smattering of statements that tend to put one's teeth on edge slightly 'A yearling raised from birth with Shiatsu, recognized something in my greeting touch and immediately pressed specific points of her body – apparently sore from a day of intense play – into my hand', there is also some good sense 'Shiatsu does not replace your veterinarian. It cannot replace your veterinarian's specialised knowledge, experience and skills, but should be an eminent partner in healing and health maintenance.' All the healing modalities can be useful at various times, it is maintained, the important thing is to know when each should be used to maximize the horse's welfare.

Section 1 then continues to describe what Shiatsu is, it involves the movement of energy through the body, and by pressing various pressure points, how this can best be achieved. Statements such as the horses do this to each other with their lips and mutual grooming should, I suggest, be taken with a grain of salt – similar statements could be made to the effect that intimate human interactions are geared to touch particular pressure points to relieve, for example, stiff shoulders or back. Usually they have other more obvious functional pressure points! That the skin is the largest producer of hormones and immune cells in the body I did not know, but in this context I wonder about that too. However, that being said, there are numerous accounts of how horses have been helped and healed using shiatsu and the book gives a detailed account of how much of this can be done involving the Yin Yang energy balances, the integration of body-mind-spirit, and Tsubos or acupuncture points.

The next section on touch and intuition is a little fussy, 'intuition sees, hears, knows beyond the limits of our senses and the calculations of our minds. It is an endless resource'. Certainly escaping from our own preconceived notions and folk-psychology on healing and horses is only to be commended, but that intuition is always right is doubtful, and indeed people's 'intuitions' often reflect their cultural beliefs and folk psychology! One particular example of this I am always running across among the alternative therapists is that when they explain what the animal is feeling or thinking, particularly what they believe him to be thinking, it is couched in the human's own concepts of time, number, age, size and what you will. Since such concepts may well have very different meanings for different species, or none at all for some (as indeed there may be many we humans cannot grasp), it really destroys their arguments and even their achievements when they presented the animal in such a strictly human way. Surely this is not what it is about, but rather it should be trying to find a mutually comprehensible communication.

Of all the alternative techniques, shiatsu for horses as represented in this book does attempt to do this. It takes an Aristotelian position of pointing out there is a 'telos' or 'essence' which is the horse (although what this is, is not very explicit). There are some statements concerning the idea of knowledge of the horse which are certainly suspect, although said with conviction, but again, some valid points are made. The current stabling practices and over protection in conventional horse management, which is generally done to satisfy 'our' need to 'do something' and for our own convenience is sometimes to the detriment of the quality of life of the horse. I was disappointed to see that no further mention of the importance of thinking about the ethological and ecological requirements of horses, the degree of behavioural restraint and the resulting increasing chances of physiological stress and psychological distress to encourage health and healing is then dropped, it is taken for granted it must be so. This is by no means true.

I can't help feeling that it may be the more relaxed and less restrictive environment as a result of the shiatsu approach that is much more important in the healing than the actually shiatsu dogma and detailed techniques! When in section two, it is mentioned that it might be better not to use 'cross ties' on your horse when working with shiatsu, this is illustrative. In Britain, we do not usually use cross ties when handling our horses, it is expected that we should be able to do all the normal stable routines and handle them loose in the stable or if tied, with one tie. We can go further and have them quite loose, if shiatsu is so enjoyable to the horse, they will not go away after all. Again an illustration of the particular dogma and folk belief concerning what horses are and what one can and cannot do with them. The recent television programme showing Monty Roberts using body language to teach a young horse illustrated well this same point; it might be great news for the Rodeo rider (which is what it was developed for) that restrictions, restraint and the buccaneer chauvinistic approach is not the only way to 'break' horses, but in Europe for 5000 years there have been classic schools of equine education, which have been more or less using these practices. Many of us have been using Monty Roberts' approach although not necessarily articulating it. But both Monty Roberts and Kaselle and Hannay can teach us how to refine a cooperative educational interactive approach further. The problem will come, as it is coming with the well-known 'Teddington Jones TTeam' workshop approach where it has been refined into a dogma: the whip is called a 'wand' and must be white and made by a particular company, and the improved handling becomes obscured in a quagmire of 'dos and don'ts'. If this

becomes the case, the handling, healing or welfare of the horse will benefit but little; we are back with the present military concept of conventional horse stable management, handling, breaking and even healing.

Thus as I see it, although there may be some important benefits through the details of the practise of shiatsu and having substantial knowledge of the pressure points and so on, the main benefit, and one that should not be ignored, is that of the quiet handling with a motive and some structure that continues for some time. This increases familiarity, relaxes both the horse and the human, and consequently 'enriches your relationship with horses, and helps cross communication boundaries of species and skin'.

In her foreword the Shiatsu practitioner, Pamela Hannay, states that when people bring their horses who have injuries to her workshop, what they predominantly gain is a 'new perspective, a new awareness of their horses' bodies and beingness, a new way to communicate with them'. This can be through shiatsu, sophistication of the use of body language, massage and gentle handling. What all these have in common is that they enforce the handler/healer to spend time with their horse, paying attention to her/him, touching and often talking and they result in greater relaxation of both and consequently fewer problems and better health. Such an approach cannot but be a positive contribution to equine welfare and surely we should be examining a great many more of our current equine 'good' management practises, if we are seriously interested in improving the welfare of the horse.

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### ***Cats in Shelters: Humane Care and Handling***

Produced by the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) (1995): Washington. Colour VHS video, 40 minutes. Obtainable from HSUS, Dept CV, 2100 L Street, NW Washington, DC 20037, USA. Price US\$20 plus overseas postage.

The welfare of cats when in animal shelters or other situations where they must be caged, has only recently received much attention beyond the basic considerations of physical health. Sandra McCune and other research workers have shown that cats can become highly stressed in confined surroundings, but may appear to become more rather than less docile as a result; their distress may therefore go unnoticed. Any publication which aims to raise awareness of the effects that rescue may have on a cat's psyche is therefore to be commended, and throughout this video emphasis is placed upon minimization of stress. Unfortunately the approach is somewhat anthropomorphic, most obviously in the section dealing with feral cats. However, there is a commendable emphasis on treating cats as individuals, for example in judging whether handling is likely to alleviate or increase stress.

The target audience for this video is not immediately apparent. It contains some very basic information on cat care and handling which would be second nature to anyone already working in cat rescue; envy at the quality of the facilities at the shelter where the film was made (in San Mateo, California) is likely to be the most immediate reaction from the cat rescue fraternity in the UK! I can see it being most useful for students on animal care and similar courses, who may have a rose-tinted view of animal rescue; no punches are pulled in the second part of the film, which mainly deals with the euthanasia of unhomed and unsocialized cats.