

Patrick Wall recounts the origins of the journal, *Pain*

Oral History Interview with Patrick D. Wall, 10 August 1993 (Ms. Coll. no. 127.2), John C. Liebeskind History of Pain Collection, History & Special Collections Division, Louise M. Darling Biomedical Library, University of California, Los Angeles

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PATRICK WALL: So that you talk about being with Noordenbos -- Noordenbos was a quite extraordinary person -- I mean, for starters, a neurosurgeon who hated to operate. He would operate under clear conditions where the chances of improvement were very high. He wasn't going to operate because somebody said this ought to work. But a sensory examination of a patient with Noordenbos was a good two days' work.

JOHN LIEBESKIND: Where did you first meet him, be influenced by him? You knew his book, of course.

WALL: You know, I'm very embarrassed that I didn't read his book for probably five years after it was out, and it was Melzack who stumbled across it and said, "Boy, look at this guy."

LIEBESKIND: When did you meet Noordenbos first?

WALL: I suppose about 1970.

LIEBESKIND: You and he were really very close, were you not?

WALL: Yes. About 1970.

LIEBESKIND: Was it in connection with IASP and the journal?

WALL: Probably.

LIEBESKIND: Oh no, not if it was 1970.

WALL: But you see, he was certainly in there at the beginning of IASP; and I'm not certain if he was at the Seattle meeting, but certainly he and I went to Elsevier, which was actually before the Seattle meeting that we had done this. I have to confess to you that I was very strongly in favor of IASP because I thought there ought to be a journal, *Pain*, and I didn't think there was enough interest in pain to float by itself and that there really ought to be a society, which for me in a totally selfish way --

LIEBESKIND: It would force its members to keep the journal economically viable.

WALL: Exactly. So it's not very complimentary to IASP, but I thought that was its function, as far as I was concerned.

LIEBESKIND: While we're on that topic, what was your first connection with IASP? Obviously, I remember you were at the Issaquah meeting.

WALL: Right. And pushing Bonica: "Let's form a society."

LIEBESKIND: So this was in the planning stages of that. Did you know Bonica -- that he was talking about this, or did he just call you or write you and say, we're going to have a meeting in Issaquah?

WALL: I've really forgotten. I don't remember. But certainly I went to Issaquah determined, pushing for a society with this hidden agenda, as I've said. By that time I'd reckoned that there really ought to be a journal. Because by that time, you know, a lot of things were brewing.

LIEBESKIND: Had you and he already discussed the fact that there should be a journal and that you might be its editor?

WALL: Again, I should know this thing. I've forgotten, but I certainly put it to him at that time.

LIEBESKIND: Had you ever met him before Issaquah?

WALL: I don't think so. [Ed: Actually Bonica attended and gave a talk at a course organized by Wall in Israel in April 1973, the Bat-Sheva Seminar, so clearly they knew each other prior to the Issaquah meeting.] I knew his book, which was another important thing -- also probably ten years after he had written it in that case, in the '60s -- I'd seen it [*The Management of Pain*, first published in 1953].

LIEBESKIND: What are your recollections of the Issaquah meeting?

WALL: Quite tense, because I wanted to brew this up into something, and, as I said, I was really focused on the need for a journal.

LIEBESKIND: Why? What was the need? It wasn't clearly just so that you could be the editor of it and have something to do -- it was that you felt --

WALL: No, the need which I'd already seen, that there were questioning people, anesthetists in particular, a few, very few neurologists, who were beginning to be thoroughly dissatisfied, not knowing what they were dealing with, seeing that they needed to redescribe the classical syndromes, for one thing, plus the neurophysiologists and pharmacologists.

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