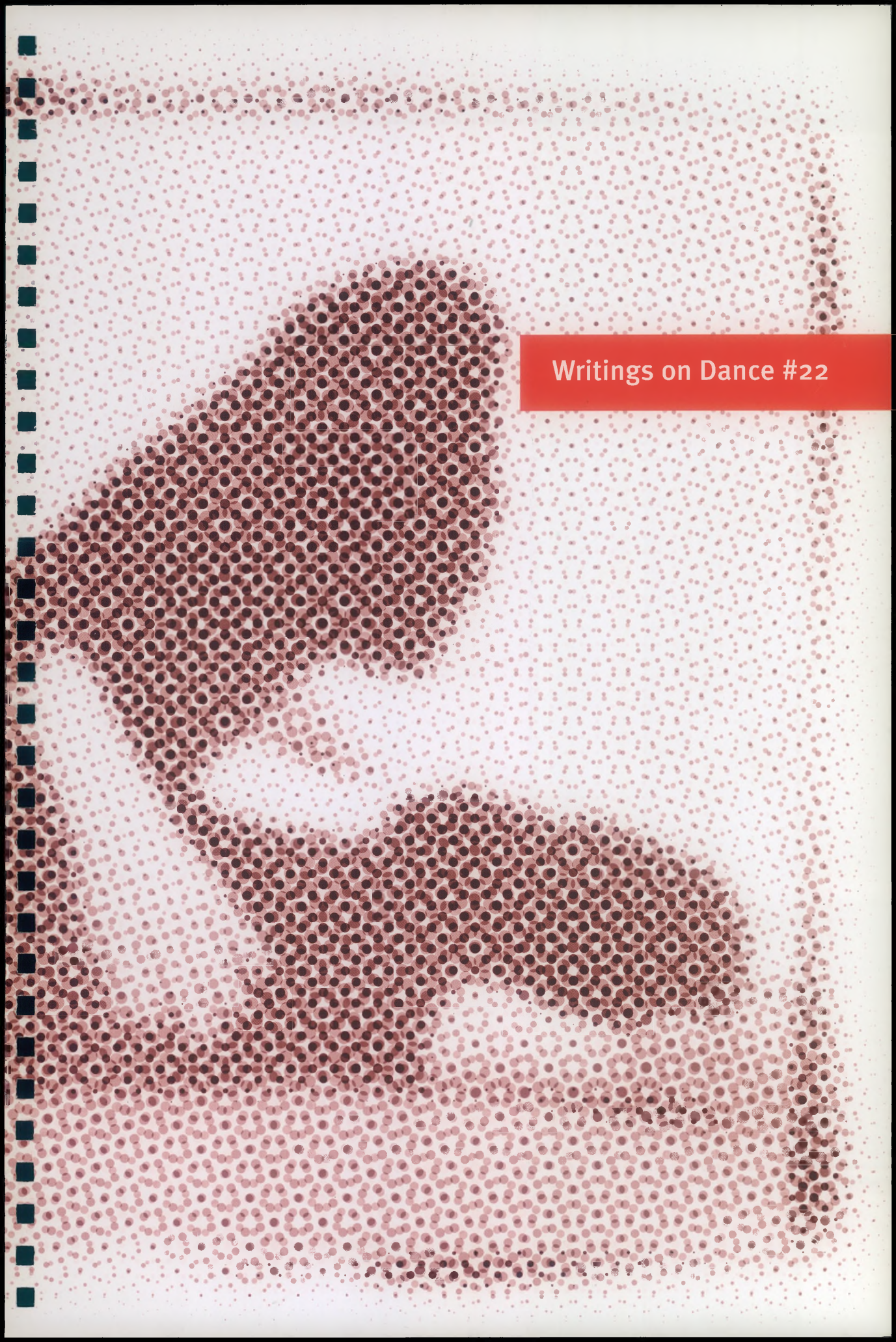
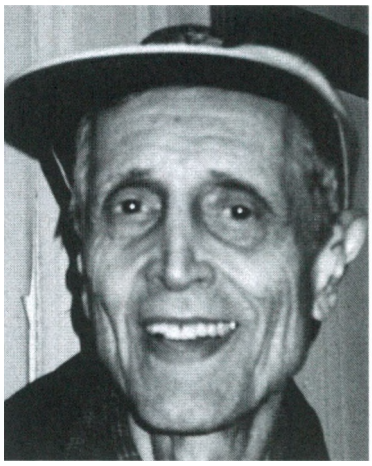

Writings on Dance #22

Inheriting

Writings on Dance #22

Ideokinesis

Summer 2003/04



Andre Bernard. Photo: Jane Refshauge

Preface

This issue of *Writings on Dance* was nearing completion when we received news of the death of Andre Bernard at home in New York City. Andre Bernard was a pre-eminent exponent and gifted teacher of ideokinetic method. He studied with Barbara Clark for ten years and began practising as a teacher under her guidance in the 1950s. Bernard has had a profound impact upon performing artists, especially dancers, not only in New York, where he taught for some fifty years, but also around the world. His presence is palpable in these pages.

Although not all the contributors to this issue have studied directly with Bernard, most have been touched by his work in significant ways. Shona Innes, for example, recalls in interview that her initial exposure to ideokinesis was through listening to tape recordings of classes by Andre Bernard and John Rolland. Important aspects of Bernard's work have been passed on to Australian students through artist/teachers such as Eva Karczag and Jane Refshauge, both of whom studied intensively with Bernard during the 1970s and '80s. We are fortunate to be able to present one of Andre Bernard's classes from this period, transcribed by Jane Refshauge and reproduced with Andre's permission. In this lesson the history, principles and methodology of ideokinesis are all succinctly laid out. With matter-of-fact eloquence Bernard reflects upon how ideokinetic work speaks not only to specialised movement activities, such as dancing, but also to everyday life.

Jane Refshauge is one of the most experienced practitioners of ideokinesis currently working in Australia. In her interview for this issue Refshauge reflects upon the legacy of ideokinetic work and the impact of Bernard's teaching on her practice as a teacher, performer and movement therapist. In Refshauge's view, the transmission of ideokinetic knowledge cannot be codified or formalised; it is a practice that must be taken up on one's own account. Despite the fact that ideokinesis now enjoys quite widespread institutional recognition it continues as a relatively unregulated practice. There is no system of certification, no centralised process of accreditation; there is no academy or school of ideokinesis or Todd alignment. The pedagogic model to which ideokinetic teaching most closely conforms is that of apprenticeship, whereby the student attaches himself or herself to a master teacher. The lineage of the technique can be traced in this way: from Mabel Todd to Barbara Clark and Lulu Sweigard, from Sweigard to Irene Dowd, from Clark to Bernard and later 'apprentices' John Rolland, Pam Matt, Nancy Topf and Mary Fulkerson. However there is an equally strong anti-genealogical or rhizomatic impulse at play in the transmission of ideokinetic method.

Todd and her student Barbara Clark both had a strong commitment to making the ideokinetic method available to anyone who wished to practice it. Recognising that there was something very accessible and direct in a process based upon thinking in images, Clark promoted a non-proprietorial, egalitarian relationship to the method she had helped to develop. Her maxim was *each one, teach one* and in this way ideokinesis spreads and travels through communities of movers.

> A commitment to facilitating ideokinetic practice is also evident in the production and dissemination of practically oriented books and manuals. Texts written by Todd, Clark and their students have become important resources for the transmission and diversification of the technique. Kate Kennedy's review of Pam Matt's *A Kinaesthetic Legacy: the life and work of Barbara Clark* is a testament to the vitality and durability of Clark's writing on body alignment and moving. Clark's imagery, disseminated today through her teaching texts and manuals, continues to communicate powerfully, as it stimulates and intensifies kinaesthetic experience.

Todd's own writing on ideokinesis became more abstract and philosophical as she began to extend her interest in the body to issues of social and cultural inheritance. Todd's major work *The Thinking Body* (1937) describes a body which is always already multiple, a complex intertwining of biology and culture. In her last work *The Hidden You* (1953), Todd begins to articulate an expanded function for ideokinesis. Ideokinesis, which begins as an antidote to deforming social and cultural legacies, is now offered as a creative and critical intervention, one that has the capacity to produce new habits and new cultural formations. The cultural work undertaken through ideokinesis is the subject of Elizabeth Dempster's 'Some notes on the staging of Ideokinesis". Here ideokinesis is drawn into dialogue with psychoanalytic discourse.

> The final essay in this collection, *Gesture and its Perception* by French dance scholar Hubert Godard continues this exploration with a discussion of the ways in which dancers mobilise and subvert their cultural inheritance, as it is manifest in what he terms the "pre-movement" or postural attitude. The pre-movement is "that attitude towards weight or gravity which ... already contains psychological and expressive elements even before there is any intention to move or express something." It is the pre-movement, in Godard's account "the place of history's inscription", that is engaged and challenged by ideokinesis.

The first, very slim, issue of *Writings on Dance* was entitled *Ideokinesis and Dancemaking* and featured a small number of articles by Australian practitioners. Here, almost twenty years later, we revisit a field and a set of practices that have become much more elaborated and diverse. And yet, with a lineage that extends back only eighty years, ideokinesis is still quite young. Jane Refshauge makes the following observation: "When we worked with Andre, he'd say this work has only happened for fifty years, so don't eliminate the possibility you might discover something no-one else has discovered. Now it's been going for about eighty years, or so, if you count it from the 1920s. So I used to encourage all my students ... not to eliminate the possibility they might discover something new. It's an adventure."

Elizabeth Dempster
September 2003

Andre Bernard

Class 1 Semester 1 New York University 29.9.80

Today what I would like to do is to give you an idea of 1) what it is we're doing 2) how we're going to do it (that is what our intention is) and 3) why we're working the way we work; so that you get an understanding of the methodology...

Before we do that I'd like to go into the background of the work. I think it's nice to have an historical connection or perspective on what it is that you are doing. So, let me start off by telling you that the work we're going to be doing is the result of a woman called Mabel Todd.

Todd was a voice teacher who began her career in this work a little bit after the turn of the century. She fell down a flight of stairs around 1917–18 and she injured her back; and the doctors of her day told her that she would never walk again. And she said "I am going to walk again" and her pursuit of that objective forms the basis of our work for this next semester. She worked empirically in the 1920s and into the 1930s and in 1938 she published a book called *The Thinking Body.* That book has been in and out of print many times. I've known the book to sell for $40–50 back in the 1950s when it was out of print. In 1968–69 Dance Horizons re-published it in paperback. It's a valuable book for source material for our work, but not essential for you to get it as I'm not going to be teaching out of the book. I'll refer you to readings in it for your own benefit and information.

Now Todd taught at Columbia University in the early '30s and late '20s, and she made a syllabus, a collection of thoughts and directions, for her students, and this syllabus was re-published last year along with lectures that Todd gave at the New School for Social Research, a place she also lectured at in the thirties, as *Early Papers*. Shortly before her death in the middle '50s she wrote a second book, and she called it *The Hidden You*, also published by Dance Horizons.

This class, conducted by Andre Bernard at New York University in September 1980, was recorded and transcribed by Jane Refshauge. It is reproduced courtesy of Andre Bernard. Image: Andre Bernard c.1993. Generated from a reproduction of a photo by Ursula Stricker.

The book I suggest you get first is *The Thinking Body* that comprises somewhat the basic approach of what she does. In *The Hidden You*, Todd went in the direction she was headed in *The Thinking Body* and indeed in most of her life, after she'd had her accident, which was towards the metaphysical and *The Hidden You* would not be good to read until you've read *The Thinking Body* and understand where she came from.

One of Todd's students was a woman by the name of Lulu Sweigard. Sweigard began working with Todd in the late 1920s and 1930s at Columbia University as a student. And Sweigard preceded me at N.Y.U. She got her doctorate at N.Y.U. in the late '30s and in the '40s she began to teach there and on into the '50s. She retired in the 1950s, before I got there and then she went to Juilliard where she taught until her death. She died in 1974. Before she died Sweigard wrote a book called *Human Movement Potential,* that's published by Harper and Row. It was posthumously published, and that is another book that I suggest you have access to because I'll suggest some readings from that.

Now Lulu Sweigard had been a student of Todd. There was also another woman who figured importantly in the development of the work and her name is Barbara Clark. Clark is still living; she is 92 years old and she is now retired in Illinois. She wrote several books and we did one together – but I won't give you the name of that yet. An example of one of her books is *Body Proportion Needs Depth*. Now that I definitely don't want you to get now, because Clark is a primitive abstractionist. Clark is very direct in an abstract way and very difficult to understand. When I worked with her, and I did for over 10 years – she's my direct source for this work – she communicates and thinks directly in images and she doesn't interpret them and she doesn't want them interpreted.

To give you an example, when I worked with her – and in your introduction to this work it's very difficult to catch on unless you are attuned as a beginner, as many of you are. But, as a beginner I came from a really terrible background – I was a chemical engineer and very highly technical and had not ever been given in my education any indication that there were other possibilities, that there were other realities than this very strict view of the world through chemical engineering, which is a view, and a very valid one, but not the only one. But anyway, Clark would speak and communicate in the language of imagery and if you didn't understand what it was as you were working with her, you just didn't ask her to explain it. It would be like going to Picasso and saying, "explain this painting to me". I'm sure you'd get the same reaction from her as if you'd asked Picasso the question! So, as I say, she is difficult to understand, and later on as you get familiar with this work, and you want to get some of the books she has written I'll be happy to give you a source for that.

Now let me tell you a little bit about the character of the other people that are involved in this work. These are not all the people – I just mention the people that I've been involved with directly or been influenced by.

Todd was a poet, and she spoke as a poet in *The Thinking Body* and *The Hidden You*. That has both its advantages and its disadvantages, because she was essentially writing kinaesthetically, and if you're not into her kinaesthetics you don't understand what it means. People in the academic world never understood what she was talking about. At Columbia she had tremendous problems – they just didn't understand what was going on, because in those days in the 1930s there was not the academic feeling we have now. These days there are more abstract sciences and alternatives available. But in those days that sort of thing just didn't go on at universities.

So Todd was not understood for that reason and had a lot of problems. At the same time, because she wrote in terms of poetry, her book *The Thinking Body* is just unlimited in its lasting ability. Because it has come down from the 1930s and it still remains quite valid. But, you know, there is more truth in poetry than there is in science. It was pointed out to me by a lecturer at Yale that the poetry that has been handed down to us since the recording of time is still true, whereas the science of that era is no longer valid. So, Todd in writing poetically has had problems; but if you can get tuned into her kinetically you will understand what she is talking about. And I think many of you already are.

Sweigard on the other hand was a cut-and-dried scientist. She went down the line on everything, and if she couldn't explain it she didn't want to talk about it, which again has its value. I think both viewpoints have their value. But we do need to bring them together, because the work we're going to be doing is a psycho-physical event. It isn't something you do mechanically. Unless you get the feeling for it and work from your entire being, then you won't get a lot of results. Clark, I've told you about already. So what you'll be getting is a kind of amalgamation of those three ways of working. I think all three ways are valid ways, but in dealing with my work in a university, I've had to make the work more accessible maybe than it should be. I don't know.

You see Clark always maintained that you must discover for yourself and I'm sure that she would criticise me for robbing you of a chance for discovery on your own. But as I have such a short time with you, I do take those short cuts in explaining things you may be better finding for yourself ... also the university wants it.

Now let me talk a little bit about the methodology of what we're doing. I've given you an historical background, so let's think about what it is we're doing. Now that isn't very easy to really define, because what we're doing has a kind of total influence on the organism, physiological and psychological. But if we wanted to take an immediate objective, something that will satisfy the need to know, we could say that it is: **Neuro-muscular re-education** – that is, we're trying to change muscle patterns. However, I would urge you not to put that limited view in your mind as you do the work because much more can and probably will happen. The **methodology** is that of using images or mental pictures. And that's come to be known as **ideo-kinesis**, that's from the two Greek words *ideo*= idea, image and *kinesis*= movement. So what we're saying is the idea, or the image in our case, is the facilitator of movement, or more specifically, in our case, the muscle pattern.

Now under that technique we will use not only images, but thought, concept, intention and desire. All those elements will be employed as part of the technique of ideo-kinesis. Because an image, formally will have that, yes, but an image is more than just an image; an image has a life of its own. And what I have to do is to create that life, help you create that life. So we'll be working in all these areas under this general terminology of ideo-kinesis. Now in order for you to understand why we are using this methodology... You see because if you allow people to think it was just something dreamed up maybe, or that we use it in some way to entertain you and it will be entertaining because you should enjoy the work – it shouldn't be a drudgery – but I want to define movement and then I'll go from there.

If you define voluntary movement, one of the ways would be that it is a neuro-musculo-skeletal-event. What this definition means is this: that all the systems that are alluded to here need to be involved if voluntary movement is going to take place. That is the nervous system, the muscle system and the skeletal system. Each of those systems has its own particular role to play in the event. The nervous system is the messenger, the muscle system is the motor, or the workhorse, and the skeletal system is what is moved. The skeletal system gets the best of the deal, it's just going along for the ride.

Now, to make the transition to where this is going to help you understand why we are doing what we're doing; we have to get to the bottom line of this computation. The bottom line question is: "If the nervous system is the messenger, that is, if the message is going through the nervous system and the muscle system to do its work, what is it that implements the process? What gives the message to the nervous system?"

It is especially the desire or the intention to move that implements the whole process: this is voluntary movement that we are talking about. No matter how much physiology or anatomy you learn, you must never lose sight of that basic principle. People in the martial arts know this very well: they train in terms of the movement and not in terms of the muscles. **The body doesn't know muscles, the body knows movement.** What I'm saying here is that it's your intention to move that causes this message in the nervous system to go to the muscles, to cause them to contract, or whatever, in order for the movement to take place.

Now there is one further step, that is this: the nervous system isn't only a messenger, it's also an organizer. It organizes the muscle pattern that is needed in order for the particular movement you desire to be realized. And it does this on a sub-cortical level – that simply means below the level of consciousness. So, what you are involved with in the study of the skill of movement whether it be dance, sports, the martial arts or whatever, is: "What is the movement?" Because the muscle pattern is not under your voluntary control.

Now, it sometimes seems that it is because you do have voluntary control over the movement; for instance, we know through muscle analysis that if we move the arm away from the body, that's called abduction in kinesiology, we know that a muscle called the deltoid is involved; (it's the muscle that comes down the side of the arm and in weight lifters it's highly developed) you have the desire, the ability to desire to move your arm away from your body and you can carry that intention out; and when you do that the deltoid is going to contract in response to that and is going to help move the arm away from the body. That is what you have voluntary control over. What you don't have voluntary control over is to be able to tell the deltoid to contract so that the arm will move out; it's the other way around. In a way it's a matter of semantics, but it really isn't when you get into a deeper understanding of it, because you see, muscles don't act singly, they act in groups and groups interact with other groups, and muscle analysis is very primitive at this stage. We have some knowledge of muscle analysis but it isn't all that sophisticated. And there is disagreement about what muscles are working in a given movement and which ones should be working in a given movement.

So, this course is not going to be involved in that kind of discussion at all, but rather we are going to be involved more with imagery. We are not going to be doing movement in this class, but I must tell you that I would like you to employ this aspect of what I'm telling you in any kind of movement that you are learning. The work that I'm going to be doing doesn't really have a lot of movement in it.

Let me break down the components of voluntary movement: I've said you have voluntary control over movement so let me break those components down so you'll understand what I'm talking about very specifically. It's the start, end, direction, force and speed. Those are the five voluntary components of movement and I think they are very important.

Five voluntary components

start **end**

direction **force**

speed

The muscle pattern is involuntary and a function of the nervous system, and really should be left at that level; that is to say, you shouldn't interfere with movement by thinking you are going to be able to control the muscle pattern. For instance, if I take a step, it is estimated under analysis that 119 muscles are involved in the simple movement of taking that step. You couldn't think fast enough to organise the patterns, it needs to be done sub-cortically.

I'd like now to make the connection that **the image** is our input into the nervous system to influence the muscle pattern. And we are using the fact that what implements the whole neuro-muscular response is the intention or desire or the thought. So what we are doing is colouring that through the use of the image, so that we can change the muscle pattern. Now if we're not going to be thinking about muscles, what is it that we're going to be thinking about? Well, for the most part, it's about the structure and what is happening to the structure. It's really the principle of movement.

So, we are going to use images that I divide into two classifications: 1) **Abstract imagery** in which you'll be imagining yourself as being something you aren't. 2) **Structural imagery** in which we'll visualise the bones of the body. And what we'll be doing is imagining them having certain relationships, to themselves and sometimes to the environment.

This relationship was described by Lulu Sweigard in a definition that she called postural pattern: "The constant and persistent alignment of the parts of the structure relative to its centrol axis". The **central axis** is simply the line that runs through the centre of the body. Now, later on in the semester I'll give you the more technical or scientific description of what it is.

So, what this definition is saying is that your postural pattern is the constant and persistent relationship of these parts of the structure to the central axis. Now, having defined what a postural pattern is from this technical viewpoint of Sweigard's, let me tell you where this comes from in Todd.

It comes from the idea that Todd had, in the 1930s, in which Todd, being a poet, compared the organization of an individual's body, that is, the structural parts, the bones, to the cosmos. She thought in terms of the cosmos quite often, and this is the way I would interpret her thinking on that: We could take the universe, thinking cosmologically, with the various stars and so on and compare their organization to the organization of the body, but it's a little more convenient to think in microcosm rather than macrocosm, so, let's come down to the microcosm of an element, of a substance such as the bench you are sitting on, or a chair. If we look at this in terms of one of its small components, one of its basic units of matter, we come to the molecule. Now you can go much smaller than the molecule, but we'll just go to the molecular level.

You can think of the molecule as a little sphere. All matter can be reduced down to the molecule, or molecular level. Now these molecules are arranged so that there is space in between them. Furthermore, these molecules are moving, they're vibrating, they have "vibes". This is true of even the hardest substance – rock, metal or whatever. It is true that in what we call a solid substance the space between the molecules is rather small and that the vibrations are not so intense. As you go to liquid level the space gets further apart and the vibrations increase, in gaseous state it gets even more so, more space between and more vibrations.

The point here is that there isn't any such thing as solidity or stillness, everything is always in motion and there's always some space somewhere.

Molecular arrangement

Now, the molecular arrangement of a given substance is always constant and persistent (unless it changes into something else). It's constant and persistent, so that you recognize that substance for what it is by its molecular arrangement. An eraser has a molecular arrangement, so that we see eraser as eraser and not as something else.

Now this is what Todd was comparing your structural organization with. A very poetic and beautiful comparison. She further points out that this organization that we have is something that is identifiable. That is to say, that we often remember loved ones by this total configuration that they present. Whether we realize it or not, husbands, wives, brothers, sisters, lovers, parents, whatever, when you remember them, you remember that part of the recall by the configuration that they present.

There was a dance critic at the turn of the century who maintained that he could watch any dancer whose work he'd critiqued come on stage and, no matter how far back in the theatre he was, he'd be able to recognize who they were just by watching them walk in or even see them standing. That is what we are talking about with postural patterns.

I want you to understand it both ways: technically and I want you to experience it. (I want you to experience it with an assignment for next week even more). Now, having defined postural pattern and I think come to some understanding of it, we need to look at what would be the **ideal postural pattern.**

This defined would, if we were consistent in our thinking, follow the laws of mechanical balance. Bear in mind that the human body is unstable by the very nature of its structure. The human body cannot be stable in the upright position. It can be balanced, but it's not stable; in other words, it has to have some outside help or energy or effort in order to maintain the upright position. So either you have to use muscle work or get a friend to hold you up, but the structure will not remain balanced without some outside help, or inside in the case of your own energy.

So the law of the mechanical balance would tell us that the ideal postural pattern would be one in which the parts of the structure are as close to centre as the structure permits, and the centre of gravity as low as the structure permits. Now what we mean by that is that you want these parts as close to centre as the structure permits, meaning simply that you're not going to distort the structure in order to get the parts close to centre.

The ideal postural pattern is somewhat, within the framework of that definition, idiosyncratic. That is, it's individual, it doesn't mean that everyone should fit into an ideal postural pattern mould, and we'll certainly not work that way; it's done through relationships.

So a great deal of this imaging that we're going to be doing has to do with visualising the parts of the structure coming back to centre, that's a little oversimplified, but at least it will give those of you for whom the work seems rather strange at first, something to hang onto for a while until you understand it better through experience.

The nature of the use of images

Images are not just images, they have a life of their own and part of my task is to really assist you through the process of giving life to these images so that they don't remain just a mechanical routine of thoughts that don't reach you kinaesthetically. So I have four things to say about the use of images, four principles.

One: The image should be always in a state of being, that is, it is happening, it did not already happen. So that you are involved with the process and not the end product. For instance, we are going to be imagining ourselves to be an ensemble of clothes. As you're lying on the floor, you're going to be imagining these clothes settling on the floor, as clothes would do if you had an empty jacket or pants or whatever and you laid it on the floor; it would just settle on the floor. The image is that it is *settling* on the floor, not that it's settled on the floor, which is the temptation of most people, to think the end product. That's not what I'm interested in. Just like in the martial arts they're interested in the process, not the product – how you got to where you are. That's the thing, (we are interested also in where you are – but that's later) it's a new way of thinking. What's important is that you're always in a state of being.

Secondly is location. It's specific, it isn't just any old location, it's very specific.

Third principle is the direction or the movement of the image. It's always going somewhere and it's always moving.

Fourth principle is that you are an observer.

Now let me talk about this at more length. There doesn't have to be any voluntary movement in order to facilitate the image, which is a great temptation. Let me give you an example, going back to the image of being an ensemble of clothes: you're lying on the floor and the image is that the clothes settle on the floor. The temptation is to push your bones into the floor to facilitate the image, to help the image along as it were, and it's just the other way around. You want the image to facilitate, in this case, the muscle pattern. Now it's true that as you get skilful at the images (and maybe even today you'll be able to get this experience) that the muscles will change their patterns and release the bony structure so that gravity will simply pull them closer to the floor ... which in most cases is what you want. But it's not to be done the other way around – that is, to voluntarily move yourself into the floor. You'd be complicating the process and actually doing yourself more harm than good. I don't mean harm in the sense that you're going to seriously injure yourself. It's just that it violates the process and you'll be developing muscle patterns that are less desirable.

Also, it isn't good to evaluate the process while you are doing it; after the process is over, evaluate it all you like. Write a PhD on it, anything you want, but you don't do that while you are doing the process. Do you understand why I'm asking you not to do this from what I've said before – why it's not good to evaluate the process while it's going on?

Student: the temptation to manipulate.

Let me explain why I ask your opinions and thoughts. One of the interesting things about human beings .... and for the practice of this work, it is highly individualistic. It doesn't try to fit everyone into the same mould. I don't think it's good to fit everyone into the same mould, that's why I'm attracted to this work so much and what interests me in the work I do at N.Y.U. – I work with dancers and actors – is the ability, or rather the input I have in helping a student to realise his own individuality. And this is one of the most exciting things in the world, the fact that every human being is so unique and brings his or her uniqueness to what he or she is doing. That's why I like to get a viewpoint from each of you to hear how you say the same thing that I'm going to say and the thing somebody else has said. I don't find that boring. I find it stimulating because it comes from a little different space or place. This is one of the things that makes a class and community more viable and information more viable.

One of the things, and I won't diverge on this, I'll just make my statement and get right off it, but what concerns me is that our society in terms of our country (USA) and even the world is becoming homogenized. Everybody is being taught to think alike and do alike. I think this is very dangerous because I think there needs to be a divergence of viewpoint, science or literature. This is what gives it seasoning, interest, viability.

To get back to our question at hand, does anyone have anything further to say?

The thing is that if you're busy evaluating this process, you're feeding extraneous information into the nervous system. And what you succeed in doing is confusing the nervous system. Here again the martial arts people know there is only one thought that you have, that you are going to complete what you intend to do. There is no possibility for anything else to happen. Fighters in general have that straight thinking. For our work, it confuses the nervous system, you're feeding extraneous information into the nervous system and the message that you want to get in there, ostensibly at least, through the use of the image, is cloudy, it doesn't get there. So it makes the process much less efficient. It's clouding up the issue with a lot of debris into the nervous system.

The same would hold as evaluating for specific results, wondering if you're doing right; or trying to feel something; that can interfere with the process. Now, that doesn't mean that you're not to feel anything, certainly go with your experience – I'll try to clarify that each time – it's to let the experience be what it will be; but to try to experience something already is interfering with the process – because you're feeding something extraneous into the process that doesn't need to be there. Aside from that, you know that when you start working on a mental level you will always limit the possibility of what will happen until you really let the process become sub-conscious or sub-cortical.

I want now to show you **constructive rest** and then what we'll do is to give each other tactile aid. To explain tactile aid:

volunteer lying on ground

Now I use foam pads under the head – for the purpose of bringing the cervical spine into alignment. (A relatively free cervical spine doesn't need that much support).

Student: How can you tell he has a relatively free cervical spine?

Well, I can't tell for sure, I know there's a good chance because if he was lying down and his head was tipped severely backward I would suspect that there was a shortening in the muscles along the cervical spine. It could also be structural – I can't be sure. But I have a feeling from his general posture that his cervical spine is relatively free – I'll know more when I give him tactile aid.

The next thing we want to do is bend or flex the knees so that we have about a 90 degree angle at the knee joint.

We have support under the balls of the feet and the reason for that is that it helps release the muscles in the back of the legs, the hamstrings in particular. It's a comfort device that we use to facilitate that.

Now I put a tie around the legs and this tie is for the purpose of keeping the legs, or supporting the legs, in case they tend to turn out. Many of us have what I call an outward rotation pattern, that is the muscles that rotate the legs out, some of the muscles that are involved in rotating the legs out, are constantly held in hypertension. Sometimes this is a learned pattern from dance training, some people just pick it up in growing, whatever. Now if that's the case you wouldn't be able to lie in this position with the legs parallel to each other, which is what we want, unless you used muscle effort to counteract the hypertense muscles that are tending to turn out. Now we don't want to further complicate that outward rotation pattern with another pattern by having you hold a little bit each time to keep your legs in a parallel position. So we put the tie here, and it actually supports the legs and makes unnecessary the work you'd have to do with the other muscles.

In this class, and suffice it to say we'll be working at a basic level and not going into too much depth and detail, but some of you may have been in constructive rest before, and there is a variation on this that I used to use at the beginning of a semester but I don't do it anymore. You can lie with your knees resting against each other, and it's fine. But the reason that I don't do it any more now is that I have such a short time with you that I really want to make everything I do count as much as possible. What I need to do was start everyone off that way and then come to this position and then begin to work on the alignment of the ileo-femoral joint, the joint where the leg joins the pelvis, the thigh joint. Now we want the thigh, knee and ankle joint to be in a plane or rather, we want these joints to be in a position so that if we passed a plane through the centre of any one joint, it would pass through the centre of all three joints.

So, at this time our aim is to get these three joints, knee, ankle and thigh, pretty much in alignment with each other. The importance of that is not in the lying down position, the constructive rest (CR) position, but in the standing position where you have a lot of weight passing through the joints; that weight needs to be flowing through the joints as centrally as possible. Otherwise, there is stress on the joints, going out to one side or the other, and the ligaments are put under a stress, exposing them to strain that could cause trouble at a later time. So this is why I place the legs parallel with a tie right at the beginning. You can vary it in your own practice if you like.

Now, about the arms. You can just balance the arms over the rib-cage, if they will stay there. If that is uncomfortable you can go to the position where the hands just rest easily over the ribs and the elbows are resting on the floor, the arms are resting on the floor.

The reason that I work in this position (and during the class I will work with the arms in different positions – by your side, over your head) but in basic constructive rest the position should be as I've mentioned.

The shoulder girdle is based at the top of the sternum, which is not a kinaesthetic appreciation that many people have. That's called the sterno-clavicular joint and we'll take this up later in a whole session.

The shoulder girdle is based there and we need to develop the kinaesthesia for this and using this position will help. For instance, if you lie down with your arms extended by your side, for long periods of CR there is a tendency for the weight of the shoulders to pull the shoulder girdle behind the plane that would pass through the central line. And that's where we want the shoulders to fall naturally. In this, what we call cardinal-lateral plane, it's the plane that passes through the body's centre line from side to side. If the shoulders are free and relaxed, and not being pulled one way or the other, when you stand up they'll just fall in that line, you don't have to hold them anywhere.

Lying down on the floor in CR there is the tendency for the shoulders to fall a little bit behind that line, and again, in certain parts of the CR I would not like that kinaesthesis to be established. Now I am going to use certain positions that do pull the shoulders back for a purpose later on.

Now the image is not to be taken as an absolute and not to be taken literally. The image is a tool. And we are going to use it as a tool and not let it become something that we are a slave of.

So, that's the constructive rest position.

I will keep reiterating points as we work in class today.

What I would like to do so that we can all get an experience of this position is to have you choose a partner now if you would. And you decide which of the partners will go down into constructive rest first and which will stay up. And the person who stays up will give what we call **tactile aid** (TA). I'd like to explain the tactile aid as we're doing it. So I'll call it off and it will be clear for you.

Constructive rest and tactile aid

So, would you choose a partner of your own choosing and we'll work on one another. Now I don't like people having lights in their eyes – so can we arrange the lights?

Now the next thing I want checked out with your partner is that the head should be along that centre line, if it isn't already to start out. The next thing we look at is the knees, have the flexion about 90 degrees angle between the lower legs and the upper legs, it's about that, it doesn't have to be exact ... within the comfort of your partner.

Then let's see if there is support under the balls of the feet only; as the balls of the feet are higher than the heels and then a very slight support under the head only, not under the neck.

So now once you have the position, let's just be in that position and not do any more voluntary movement (unless you're very uncomfortable and you just want to change for comfort – not to change for better alignment).

The first thing you're going to imagine is that you are an ensemble of clothes and they can be any clothes that you choose. What it should be is something that attracts you, something that you'd like to wear or that you'd like to see worn. A lot of dancers like to wear dance tights, some of you may like to use jeans for the pants part, or regular pants; some people like to wear tuxedos! You can dress anyway you like here in this imaginary trip.

The upper part can also be what you want: coat, jacket, anything you want to – later on as you get more skilful in doing the imagery you can go into particulars of style, shape, colour, fabrics, texture – you can even do that now if you like. It should be something though that you want to be involved with. The first thing that I'll ask you to do with that ensemble that you've chosen is to think about it being light and empty. And it's going to settle on the floor, as it would if you lay empty garments on the floor.

We are going to give now what I call tactile aid.

The first tactile aid is going to be for the pants part. The pants are to be visualized as hanging over a hanger. And they're getting support from above – if you had a bar or a hanger coming down out of the ceiling and you were getting support there, the direction would be up. In other words, the hanger would be supporting you by giving you upward support. And you will give tactile aid indicating that by putting your fingers under your partner's knees where the support is supposed to be and pulling up very gently, keeping that pull up firm and steady, while they imagine the pants are hanging over the hanger and the front of the pants are folding against the back of the pants, as empty pants would do. So let us all just do that now while our partners visualize the imagery.

Now remember as you're using the imagery that you are visualizing your legs as pants, your whole body as the clothes and your leg part as the pants; so it's not your legs really that are hanging over the hanger, the imaginary hanger, but it's the pants that you're imagining. And the pants are soft, and they are passively hanging over and the front is collapsed against the back.

Now we are going to leave this, we could stay and work on this one thing for the rest of our time, but what I want to do is give you a procedure that you can use on your own, not waiting for the maximum results in the class here. Next thing we're going to do is give the tactile aid for the collapsing of the front of the pants against the back, that is, if my leg were the pants and was placed over a hanger, the front would collapse against the back. It would follow the creases at the side, the seams, like bell-bottom trousers. Now the tactile aid for this is to put your hand over your partner's thigh and under it and press gently together, not a lot of pressure, just a little bit so they get a sense of the line of direction.

Go right on down to the lower leg and do the same thing – the lower part of the trouser front folds against the back also.

Always soft, pliable material.

Now we'll go up to the trunk of the body. Here we'll just lightly touch the upper chest. We'll touch all over the chest, but the upper chart is sometimes a key point. If you can begin to get the sense that the upper part of the chest here, as a coat or blouse, is settling on the floor, is empty, it can be the key that will open up the understanding for some of the other images. I'm just putting the weight of my hand here, not forcing down.

Tactile aid is just a means of enhancing an image; it's not a manipulation. After you have touched the top of the sternum, you can come down to the other parts of the rib-cage – just give the idea that all of that is just settling on the floor and you're just watching it happen with no voluntary physical effort to make it happen.

The arms, we mustn't neglect, they are sleeves, so we touch the tops of the arms and the bottom of the arm, pressing the way you did in tactile aid for the legs, very gently. So the partner gets a sense of that image, that line of direction and where it is.

Now we'll take another aspect of the clothes, something else that we'll watch happen to them. The clothes are very dishevelled, they are wrinkled, and today we're going to deal with the horizontal wrinkles across the back. Again specificity is here as I described it. The wrinkles are horizontal, that is they go across the back, all the way through both the coat and the pants all the way down to the heels. What we're going to watch is the wrinkles being smoothed downwards, so the direction is downwards. Again we are interested in the process of the smoothing of the wrinkles not in a smooth coat. I'm not interested in the results, I'm interested in the smoothing.

So the tactile aid for that is to (take your partner's arms and place them as I described before over the rib-cage if they're not already there) smooth from shoulder level on down the back – I don't go completely under the back I just go as far as I can get easily – right on down to the heels. You do that a couple of times to give your partner a sense of location and direction. They are watching the wrinkles be smoothed. Now in this moving tactile aid two or three times is sufficient to get your message into the nervous system. And then they take it on their own.

Now we have another set of wrinkles to deal with, and this has to do with an element of clothing that I didn't describe before. We have a shirt with this ensemble, whatever you are imagining the trunk of your body to be, coat or jacket or whatever, underneath that there is a shirt, the shirt per se we're not concerned with, but we're concerned with the collar of the shirt, that should come out of the coat and occupy roughly the length of your neck. However, this collar that is potentially longer than a regular collar, it's a turtle-neck, and it's so wrinkled that it's shrivelled inside the coat and we're going to watch it being smoothed upwards out of the coat and back to the base of the head. And here it will be this kind of tactile aid: we will move up in contrast to moving down before, we'll be moving up from shoulder level or a little above back to the base of our partner's head. And after you've done that two or three times, then you grasp the head in such a way as to maintain the face being level; and just pull very gently on it and your partner will imagine that image of smoothing the wrinkles up the back.

Let's do that now.

One of the things you can do, or I'll share with you, one of the things I do when I'm getting this kind of tactile aid, I just let go of the wrinkles. You see, I've got the image of the wrinkle and this collar and as my partner's pulling gently on my head, I let go of the wrinkles and that lets me watch the collar lengthening upwards.

Now we'll do one final thing, then we'll reverse positions with our partners. And this is what it is:

We're going to imagine the head being an abstract image also, let's say a ball or preferably even, a balloon. And for this just cup your hands around your partner's ears, and your partner will imagine that the head is a ball, or a balloon and look at the balloon emptying. Keep emptying it out. Keep looking at it becoming empty. Then would you imagine the balloon or ball expanding. The balloon is probably the easiest to conceptualise expanding, with the focus of expansion between what would the ears if the image were anatomical. It expands in all directions but particularly between what would be the ears.

Slowly remove your hands, and you can take the ties off your partner's legs. And partners will then put their arms down by their sides and roll over onto whatever side is expedient and come to standing. This brings up a point I'd like to make as you're doing this: that is, that it's good body mechanics to turn to one side or the other when you're coming up from lying down. It's a weak position to flip up from your back and you possibly could injure your back – particularly if you're not warmed up.

Now exchange places and help your partners into position.

Constructive rest

The chin shouldn't be touching the neck, not tucked under, towards the sternum. The angle of the knee joint should be about 90 degrees. Arms either resting on your chest, no holding, or they could slide down by your side.

Now select the garments that you are going to imagine yourself to be, make them attractive, be clear about them. Now let's imagine those garments being on the floor, light and fluffy, and just wafting down onto the floor, settling onto the floor, not being crushed into the floor or pressed, just settling to the floor. If you see the image completing itself, just let go of the image.

Now let's give some tactile aid for the pants being hung over the hanger. Again you go under the knees with your fingers and just lift up, without actually pulling the weight off the legs entirely, the feet shouldn't come off the ground, just indicated the line of direction.

Now bear in mind that as the pants are hanging over the hanger they're getting a support, an upward support, that's what the tactile aid is there for, to indicate that. The soft material is just hanging over the hanger and the front of the pants just collapses against the back. It's empty.

You just keep renewing the image as you see fit, rather than holding onto it. Now let's work on the tactile aid of touching the top and the bottom of the trouser leg so our partners can get that aspect of the image through tactile aid – so you'll be able to remember the image for when you do it by yourself. You touch the top of the thigh and the bottom of the thigh, and press gently to indicate the direction.

Go down to the lower leg when you finish with the thigh. Then you can move over to the other leg.

The gentle pressing of the hands towards each other will begin to give you a sense of the movement of the pants' legs, the front collapsing towards the back as it settles on the floor.

Let's go up to the torso and just gently put your hand on your partner's chest. The upper chest, that's the key image.

Now take it easy and look at that image now. You're imagining it's just soft cloth or clothing and it's just going to settle on the floor. Then go to the other parts of the torso, take the arms as sleeves, the other parts of the ribcage, whatever is accessible, without causing your partner too much discomfort – you don't want to poke around and get them all out of line. So whatever is accessible there, just the touch to give them all the idea that the front part of the cloth is going to collapse against the back part. We'll deal now with the wrinkles that are horizontal across the back. Now for this you need the arms across the rib-cage simply so that you can get mechanically at the body.

Smooth from shoulders on down to the heels. Do that two or three times; that will be sufficient to give your partner that line of direction and location. Now we'll go to the neck, that's the collar of this imaginary shirt and it's shrivelled up inside the coat – and here we're going to imagine the wrinkles being smoothed upwards. Run your fingers along the back of your partner's neck from the top of the shoulders to the base of the head. Then pull on the head, very gently, as your partner imagines those wrinkles being smoothed.

So you are letting go of the wrinkles in the collar and now the head as a balloon, and cup your hands around the ears, then imagine the head emptying and getting emptier and emptier.

Then it gets to expand. Focus your attention on the expansion in your thought between what would be your ears if the image were anatomical. It's as if the ears are floating apart – as if you released your ears to float outward. Slowly move your hands away from your partner's head, take the ties off your partner's legs and roll over to whatever side you like and slowly come to standing. Another thing I want to mention in conjunction to rolling over to your side: it's always a good idea to make the transition from lying down to coming up to standing when you've been in the prone position for some time – do that reasonably slowly – with a certain amount of deliberateness – don't flip up, because to flip up all of a sudden when the system has slowed down is to put a stress on the system, particularly the cardio-vascular system. This is true even for the young of us here; you don't want to put that stress on the cardio-vascular system.

The assignment is to draw your image of your self, front on and side on.

Barbara Clark

BOOK REVIEW BY Kate Kennedy

A Kinaesthetic Legacy: THE LIFE AND WORKS OF Barbara Clark

Kine-aesthetics

The Kinaesthetic Legacy: The Life and Works of Barbara Clark is a testament to Pamela Matt's close working relationship with Barbara Clark over the last decade of Clark's life. When Clark died in 1982 she left the records of her life's work with Matt. According to Matt, the format of the book, which aligns the development of Clark's writing with the story of her life, gradually emerged in response to Matt's desire to produce 'the most fitting and comprehensive' representation of her friend and mentor's work *The Kinaesthetic Legacy* thus begins with Matt's biography of Clark and is followed by a comprehensive collection of her educational material, including all 'Posture Plays', 'Technique for Movement Lessons', and 'The Manuals'. These materials were compiled and edited by Matt with the guidance and support of Andre Bernard and Joanne Eamons.

The biography begins with Clark's early recollections. Clark identifies her childhood as having had a profound influence on the development of her ideas about the body and movement. Even her early memories are figured somewhat in the form of kinaesthetic parables and the vividness with which these scenes and incidents are evoked suggests to me that these memories represent Clark's original 'images' – the affective source of her lifelong desire for rich kinaesthetic experience. This biography is a duet or two-hander in the sense that Matt gives Clark a lot of space to tell her own story, in the form of direct quotations. In this way we hear Clark's own melding of the more familiar elements of a biography – people, places, events – with her personal 'kine'-aesthetics. At the same time Matt's voice is finely attuned to Clark's. Both have a matter-of-fact eloquence and the clarity and measure of Matt's narration supports in tonal counterpoise the delightful directness with which Clark relates her memories.

A Kinaesthetic Legacy:
The Life and Works of Barbara Clark
Pamela Matt, Tempe, Arizona: CMT Press, 1993
ISBN 1–881914–25–9

Clark speaks of her deep connections with her family. Born on a farm in Vermont a decade before the turn of last century Clark describes herself as receiving the value of independence as a *bodily* inheritance passed from her forebears and 'woven into the waft of my being' by her immediate family. Clark explains how her original experience of interdependence with her extended family, including her grandmother and 'aunts and uncles who were always coming and going', nurtured her capacity for independence such that, as she attests, 'I don't think of myself as 'I' or 'me'. I am a product of those people. They put themselves into me. They loved me, taught me, showed me how to do things on my own' (p. 8).[1]

Clark elaborates further on the particular traits of her family, describing them as 'common sense people' who nevertheless 'had lofty ideals which they would reach inch by inch'. While their conversation was measured – 'like what was usual in Vermont, they only spoke when there was something valuable to say' (p. 9) – her family's common sense included an everyday bodily closeness and care. Contact of this nature was important. As a child Clark experienced a number of health problems that affected her strength and co-ordination. Despite her physical limitations Clark claims she experienced a strong affinity with the movement around her, both the movement she could see and that she could feel. She recalls loving to watch the movement of clouds, animals and birds. She also remembers the feel of '(t)he boggy ground as frost comes out of it in the spring ...You can feel its springiness ... It lets you down and it springs you up'. Her observation of 'the running of water in brooks' led Clark to imagine its source, 'the overflow of the springs high on the hills', and to identify a metaphor or image to describe kinaesthetic experience: 'Movement is like a well-spring. It moves through you, it moves out of you and into you' (p. 10).

Clark's joy in movement wells up as an element that sustains her ongoing interest in kinaesthetic awareness throughout this biography. There is an immanent feel to her sensibility – of restoring the 'senses' to the notion of 'common sense' – and her efforts to represent kinaesthetic ideas in a broadly accessible form indicates the strong social concern at the heart of her project. In her manuals Clark invested the idea of natural ease with the value of an original or given joy associated with the movement inherent to bodily life. In the preamble which accompanies her first manual, this idea takes the form of a genesis statement. She writes,

> Nature never meant movement to be a harsh discipline. As animals run and birds fly, they exhibit such joy and satisfaction in bodily action. Joy in movement should help us in living, as it does for the animals (p. 169).

The Todd Legacy

In 1923 when in Matt's words 'Barbara found Mabel Elsworth Todd', she discovered not only a systematic approach to posture that would significantly improve her health, but the progenitor of the body of kinaesthetic knowledge to which she herself would substantially contribute. It was Todd's finely tuned understanding of 'balance of the structure', that initially met well with Clark who remembers, 'Before Miss Todd, I was always affected by mechanical factors which caused emotional strain'. In the years before their meeting Todd had developed what Matt calls 'a form of therapeutic physical re-education' based on the then radical conception of posture as dynamic rather than static. Rather than achieving a 'correct position', Todd believed optimum postural function should facilitate 'freedom from strains, absence from stress, a readiness for action, a mobility – the opposite of fixity' (p. 15).

As Clark began to work with Todd she also became acquainted with a process known as 'visualisation' – Todd's primary re-educative method. In this process an imaginary idea or 'image' was introduced to the student to suggest, for example, the optimum position for a part of the skeleton, a direction for energy flow, or a quality of muscle tone. The student was then required to imbibe the image in a relaxed physical state, resisting any desire to re-produce the image using muscular effort. As Matt

explains, however, the process of visualisation involved rigorous activity in which '(t)here was a discipline to be mastered in learning to allow, rather than force, a neuro-muscular process' (p. 17).

Matt describes the depth of Clark's engagement with Todd's work in terms of a process of complete re-incarnation wherein,'(e)ngrossed in Todd's imagery, Barbara re-built her body, from the inside, socket by socket' (p. 22). In this prodigious effort Clark also exemplified the philosophic premise of Todd's work – that students would explore the work for themselves. At the same time it seems that Clark's investment in Todd's work was also strongly inspired by her admiration for her teachers. Although Todd was Clark's most important mentor and intellectual predecessor she was also instructed by three other women, Miss Galbraith, Miss Colwell and Mrs Lawson, who taught Todd's methods at her Boston studio.

It is difficult to overlook the presence of women in Clark's life, including her mother and grandmother as well as those connected with Todd's work. However it is the non-stereotypical, yet often detailed nature of Clark's appreciation of these women, based on her representation of them in kinaesthetic terms, which is both illuminating and at times almost disconcerting. For example, Clark describes one of her teachers, Beatrice P. Galbraith, whom she admired for having fully embodied Todd's ideas (and who was in her seventies at the time):

> (Miss Galbraith was) devoted to Miss Todd and a very good example of Todd's principles. Her figure was like a young woman's. Her rib cage was very relaxed and she used her pelvic muscles extremely well. Her shoulder action was beautiful for a woman of her age and her spine was beautifully aligned. She could walk very easily like a bear, which she demonstrated for me. It involves stepping the feet almost into the hands as one walks on all fours (p. 20).

Clark also remembers her mother as someone who enjoyed moving about – 'She made much of the pat-a-cake with the children. And she never seemed to be affected by monotony'. Instead Clark perceived her mother as having to suppress her natural animacy – ' She would frequently start to skip but only for a few steps as though she recalled something she should be doing' (p. 11).

The imagery of Clark

As Clark began to teach Todd's methods herself – initially to children – she developed the notion that an image must work 'consciously as well as unconsciously' to affect kinaesthetic awareness. While continuing to recognise the theoretical importance of Todd's scientific understanding of movement, Clark believed that in her teaching practice Todd tended to over-expose her students to anatomical representations of the body. Of her concerns in this regard Clark writes, '(s)uch imagery was unreal and too complex for many ...You can't get rhythm into a lesson if it's too conscious'. Following which Matt explains, '(b)y characterizing Todd's imagery as 'too conscious', Barbara meant that a well-designed image should speak to kinaesthesia on its own' (p. 10).

What emerges from Matt's account of the evolution of Clark's work is that she came to understand that 'speaking to kinaesthesia on its own' meant understanding it as synergistically related to all the others senses. Clark delineates this holistic approach to kinaesthesia in the introduction to her first manual *'Lets Enjoy Sitting-Standing-Walking'*, explaining that, '(t)he five senses – sight, sound, smell, taste and touch have considerable influence on the body' and adding, 'this manual makes greater use of the tactile sense'. While many of the exercises in the manual do involve some palpation and tracing of different parts of the body, I interpret Clark's statement to mean that she also wanted her images and drawings to 'touch' her readers. Her desire that an image work 'unconsciously' therefore, appears to refer to her understanding that an image can invoke synaesthetic relations between the aural, visual and kinaesthetic senses wherein muscles are 'touched' by speech rhythms and bones can 'feel' the shape and directions of lines on a page. Clark conceives of this approach in terms of a re-integration of sense and concept:

> We absorb knowledge with the entire body as well as through the use of the mind alone ... Somewhat like animals, when we as human beings say we have to feel a thing out ...we mean that we have to use a strong sensory approach ... I am trying to make my written words have a sufficient sensory approach so that they will produce some pattern of kinaesthetic awareness in the body of the reader (p. 61–62).

While the example above refers to language as the conveyor of sensory information, Clark also involved herself in the study of life drawing in order to develop a graphic dimension to her work. The nature of the imagery in the manuals exemplifies the way in which she evolved a minimalist, yet multi-modal approach to education in kinaesthetic awareness. In her manual *The Body is Round –Use all the Radii*, for example, the image 'The hyoid bone floats high in the neck' is introduced in catchphrase style and in large bold type at the top of a page. It is accompanied on the opposite page by two line drawings of the hyoid bone (front and side view) as well as a head of a deer, and a seahorse which are labeled 'Natural Images of the Hyoid Bone'. Clark's commentary, while not dense or over-laden, offers a further series of subtle, anatomically based augmentations of the original image, for example, 'Your hyoid bone lies deep in the neck crease, at the top of your throat and behind your jaw. The hyoid does not attach to other bones. It acts as a floating center for its many muscular attachments which you can think of as flexible radii' (p. 289).

In appraising the nature of Clark's imagery Matt notes Clark's perception that new kinaesthetic experiences are best integrated by the student if introduced in an 'incremental', 'step-by-step' manner. In the same vein, Matt considers Clark's interest in creating 'suitable imagery' in terms of a refinement of Todd's legacy in which 'avoiding mechanical analogies, or purely fanciful metaphors, Barbara developed imagery which was masterfully subtle and peaceful'.[13] At the same time its seems important to reiterate Clark's over-arching commitment to kinaesthetic pleasure. Clark's investment in imagery had evolved, by her own admission, in order to preserve what she perceived to be the most important aspect of Todd's work – kinaesthetic awareness. Emphasising her commitment to developing the extra-therapeutic, life-enhancing aspect of Todd's legacy she writes, ' Kinaesthetic awareness is our guide in the use of the body – the pleasurable experience that makes joy out of movement and movement into art' (p. 45).

Working with the images

In the 1950s, Clark began to work closely with a number of dancers based in New York, most notably Joanne Eamons. Matt includes an abundant list of movement studies that Eamons devised based on Clark's work. These studies highlight not only the complexity of Clark's delineation of embodiment, but the creative possibilities her ideas can engender. The study 'go from a feeling of space within to a feeling of space without' for example, encourages free movement through space and suggests for me openness to the possibility of new perceptions, feelings and ideas (p. 51). Recalling Clark's generative image of movement as a wellspring, I imagine a dancer evolving new forms and ways of moving in response to the flow of her perceptions.

Many of the Eamon's studies, based on Clark's refined understanding of anatomy, also suggest the possibility of moving in ways in which the body is experienced as multiple, or made up of many sensations and sensate parts. Attempting to combine one or a number of the studies such as 'dance with large festoons from ischia to fibula' and 'relate the thigh socket to the opposite arm socket as you move' would be one way of exploring multiplicity in relation to anatomical differentiation. However, I especially like Clark's image, 'Movement begins with a slight stirring of the leaves' because it suggests a kind of innate multiplicity involving the feeling of subtle, continuous intra-body sensations. This image, from the manual '*The Body is Round – Use All the Radii*', is from a sequence in which Clark, invoking our animate relation with gravity, likens the body to a tree's movement in the wind. The 'slight stirring of the leaves' suggests in lyrical terms the kinaesthetic experience of what post-modern dancer Steve Paxton calls our 'small dance' with gravity. To experience our small dance, according to Paxton, involves the practice of

'standing still ... doing absolutely nothing but letting your skeletal muscles hold you upright'. This process can be surprising, producing unpredictable moments of heightened bodily sensation related to the release of habitual muscular tensions and a refinement of one's perceptions to the micro-shift of skeletal poise.[2]

Getting in touch with her kinaesthetic stirrings, a dancer might feel the soft, diffuse quality of the stirring leaves in her muscles and bones – letting herself move. This 'released' physicality also suggests her openness to the nuances of kinaesthetic feeling, and the possibility of experiencing movement as a dynamic process – in which (remembering Clark's association between the kinaesthetic sense and the sense of touch) the dancer touches and is touched inside herself, as she moves and is moved.

Sensitivity to the changing tones and feelings throughout one's kinesphere as one moves could be the basis of evolving a way of moving which foregrounds the kinaesthetic experience as inherently 'multiple'. These are the terms in which dance historian Ann Daly analyses the dancing of Isadora Duncan, the progenitor of modern dance. Daly writes that Duncan was 'extraordinarily sensitive to the dynamic qualities of movement' which produced a range of effects in which Daly includes, 'the sense of intentionality communicated through activated weight and the degree of resolve suggested by relaxed or tense musculature'.[3] Although imagery and metaphorical identification played an important part in Duncan's creative process, Daly also explains that in performance Duncan wanted her movements to speak for themselves, that is, to be open to interpretation based primarily on their kinaesthetic affect.

In the same vein, while Clark's life work involved finding and creating images and metaphors that could speak to kinaesthesia, there is also a gentle insistence in her work that 'space' be left for the joy of kinaesthetic awareness. Her comments from the introduction to '*The Body is Round – Use All the Radii*' that 'the process(es) of exploring body balance' are better conceived of as 'secrets' rather than 'principles' (p. 264) conveys not only a sense of intimacy associated with kinaesthetic experience, but also suggests, perhaps, Clark's pleasurable anticipation of unforeseen (kinaesthetic) discoveries. This kind of investment in embodiment, including her concern to 'leave space' for the evolution of image, meaning and pleasure in movement, connects Clark's kinaesthetic legacy with many dancers working in the tradition of Isadora Duncan. Like Clark, the techniques and ways of moving developed by these dancers embody their desire to 'remain open' to their kinaesthetic stirrings.

Notes

1 Pam Matt (1993) *A Kinaesthetic Legacy,* p. 8.

2 See Peter Hulton (1975) 'In the midst of standing still something else is happening and the name for that is the small dance', *Theatre Papers Series* #1: 1–10

3 Ann Daly (1995) *Done into Dance: Isadora Duncan in America*, Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press. p65.

Jane Refshauge

INTERVIEW BY Elizabeth Dempster

Jane Refshauge:
BETWEEN IDEOKINESIS AND ALEXANDER

Jane Refshauge has a background in dance, movement and theatre. She also has a degree in Psychology. During the 1980s Jane studied intensively with Andre Bernard, both at New York University, where she was undertaking her Masters of Fine Arts, and privately. She was a founding member of the Deborah Hay Dance Company in 1980 in Austin, Texas. On her return to Australia in 1985, Jane was invited to work at the Victorian College of the Arts, School of Dance where she worked in both the secondary and tertiary programs until 2000. At the School of Dance, Jane developed a Kinesiology and Kinetic Awareness curriculum which continued her interest in developing integrated kinaesthetic body awareness skills with the teaching of traditional dance techniques. During this time she undertook training as a teacher of the Alexander Technique. Currently Jane is completing her Masters degree in Psychoanalytic Studies at Monash Medical Centre, Monash University and her diploma in Dance Movement Therapy with the International Dance Movement Therapy Institute of Australia.

What follows is Jane's detailed response to a number of simple questions I posed, concerning her relationship to ideokinesis, and her perception of its legacy in the different fields of practice in which she has been active – performance, education and therapy. Similarities, differences and points of convergence between ideokinesis and Alexander technique are discussed in a reflection on practice which is remarkable for its synthesis of diverse disciplines and knowledges.

JANE With ideokinesis a form of dance that I could do opened up for me. I'd started ballet when I was 4 but I'd had a childhood illness when I was 11, which restricted the amount that I could move. I wasn't actually allowed out. I was allowed to go to school for half a day only and I had very limited time moving around or being active. So that was the end of my childhood dream of a career in ballet. But I still very much wanted to dance and I tried doing modern dance when I got to university but I really didn't like dancing so much to counting. It was very much 'and a one and a two and a three and a four' and it just didn't work for me. I actually found I didn't like my body and having been sick for a long period of time, that was a big issue for me.

In 1976 I was performing in a play with my friend Rika Wedlock and she said one evening "you've got to come and see this dance show", and it was Dance Exchange and I just loved it. I thought, "wow, this is a whole new dance". I don't know how old I was, 23 or 24 – it just opened up something in me, something very intuitive. I don't think there was much thinking about it but I was just drawn to know more about it. There was a workshop in a small studio in Lonsdale Street that I went to. Eva Karczag and Russell Dumas were teaching and in those sessions they did a compilation class which involved ideokinetic constructive rest and imagery, moving into contact improvisation and some Alexander technique input with some of the ball work of Elaine Summers. So for me ideokinesis was always blended in with a whole body of work that was opening out an awareness of the internal space of the body. For me it's always been inter-woven. From that experience I got very interested in ideokinesis and found out from Eva and Russell that they'd learned it from Andre Bernard in New York City.

Meanwhile I'd been involved in theatre in Melbourne. There was a very physical form of theatre with James McCaughey and Theatre Projects and also productions at La Mama Theatre. I'd worked with people like Valerie Kirwin and then later with Sid Clayton; both of them had a very strong physical component to their theatre work. It was really performance art, an integration of movement in theatre. In Theatre Projects Nancy Black gave us voice work and that was Kristin Linklater's work, which comes from New York University. Kristin Linklater wrote *Freeing the Natural Voice*.

I'd also been working as a psychologist. I'd actually done a psychology degree at Melbourne University and I was working part time as a research psychologist at the Marriage Guidance Council, which is now Relationships Australia. I was doing that part time and performing part time and I wanted to do something full time. So I went on my journey. It took me to England and to Dartington College and then I went to New York and I just fell in love with the work I found there. The work was about feeling alive. It was about liking my body. It was something I could do. It gave me a sense of control in my body, in my life. It was an opening, a space inside my body that opened up and it felt so good I wanted more. It was like nourishment and there was a nice warm acceptance about the body and I liked moving. So that's how I got to New York.

I worked with Andre Bernard there and kept a relationship going with Eva particularly and also with Russell at that stage. I did work some exchanges with Russell in New York and he and I did some of Andre's classes together. Eva taught in New York and I did her classes. And there was a whole range of other people in New York as well at that time. I was in New York really from January 1979 right through to the end of 1984, on and off, and really just immersed myself in that body of work. For me it was always in the context of a dance community that was exploring moving in a different way. This period was the tail end of quite a radical shift in dance. There had been a rebellion really in relationship to ballet and the relationship the dancer had to their own body, to the other people on the stage, to the audience and to the material they were performing ... this was all being re-examined. So for me the work always had that sense of a politicisation: it was about being in control of my own body and. not letting somebody else impose something upon me. I did work with Andre Bernard particularly with ideokinesis, and with Ellen Webb, Elizabeth Garren, Diane Madden and Stephen Petronio. Also with Simone Forti. The Trisha Brown Company had regular classes. And then also Elaine Summers and Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen. It was all in together. So that's what I did there.

I had actually gone to New York University to try and find Andre and source the voice work and ended up applying to the Masters in Acting there. I decided to accept a place in the program and so I studied ideokinesis with Andre, both privately (he used to do a Saturday class privately for the general public) and within that Masters course. And in fact the Kristin Linklater's work is linked with Andre's work. She did work with Andre, so that the voice work developed with the knowledge of Andre's work or Mabel Todd's work. So there was a link there for me theatrically as well, through the voice. Andre's work was very integral in the theatre training, with the sense of opening out the body; getting rid of habits and freeing yourself from over used muscles that are inefficient. Freeing up the voice, freeing up the body so then you found a deeper integration from which you could act or from which you spoke or from which you could move. When I came back to Australia Shona Innes introduced me to the Victorian College for the Arts (VCA). She had been working there and she wanted someone to assist her in the ideokinetic kinesiology course in the tertiary program there. So that was my involvement then, in about 1985.

But the whole time I was in New York I would've had a class once a week with Andre either privately on a Saturday or within the course. Once you were in that course, you could go to any of the classes, any of the time. I don't know, I was a junkie really, a bodywork junkie, I just loved it. I was addicted to the feeling and I think my involvement really does come from having a sustained illness, which I was over but it had a profound effect on my body. It was a bit like the aftermath of a bush fire. The bush fire is out but you've still got a lot of nourishing and re-growth to do. It was always within that context for me. I don't think I thought of it that way at the time but looking back it was so. There was a sense that western medicine had saved my life but had done as much as it could. And then it was like "oh now what?" I find the ideokinetic work I do today links into that process of healing. In my private practice I work with a group of people who have illnesses that are "incurable". For some conditions, western medicine can go so far and then it says I can't do anything more for you. There are a number of motor neuron diseases: Parkinson's disease, MS, all sorts of neuralgia and fibro myalgias, chronic fatigue, rheumatic sort of illnesses that affect the neuro-muscular-skeletal system. They can be diagnosed, but there is no completely effective treatment. There is good management, at this point in time. Basically, I don't think we understand the connection between the neurological and the physiological, between the nervous, immune, muscular and skeletal systems; these connections aren't fully understood by medical science or any one really. So there's that territory that ideokinesis links into and which is its origin because Mabel Todd had an injury that no one could solve, as did Alexander. So that process of healing is in the origin of the work.

ELIZABETH Historically there has been some tension between Todd and Alexander's approaches to the body and the views of the medical profession.

JANE I'm not really sure of the legal facts, but it seems that with Todd as well as Alexander there really was almost an attack on their work by the conservative, medical profession of their time. They both went through court cases. There was a demand for them to have to prove it, to scientifically prove the claims that they were making that they could cure certain ailments. Both of them were working so much with the wholeness of the body and that challenges so much conventional medical thinking. The still existing medical model of how muscles work is that they work individually and that each individual muscle has an origin, an insertion and an action. Which is true, but from the perspective of both ideokinesis and Alexander technique it's as if you need to hold two models in mind simultaneously, so that you have an understanding of how the body works as a whole within which that individual muscle acts.

I'm more familiar with this idea within the Alexander Technique. Alexander was very much concerned with the use of the self, all aspects of the self as a psycho-physical unity. He often wrote, 'the body as a whole in process, thinking in activity'. He used to be fairly condemning of people who didn't actually use themselves well. He would say things like "How could a medical doctor who has such a stoop and hunched shoulders actually know anything about the body? So Alexander's technique is very much about an experience of the whole. He did write 100 years ago and he was rather over enthusiastic I think about some of his claims at that time and perhaps he would modify them now. But he worked a lot with people who had polio and TB, and again the medical understanding at that stage was limited. There were

a lot of people with a lot of difficulties in their bodies. They were cured of TB or cured of polio but they had a lot of problems breathing and moving and Alexander was addressing these 'whole of self' problems.

I think it's important too that both Alexander and Todd placed great emphasis on breathing. To understand that freedom of breath is synonymous with psycho-physical unity for Alexander or the ideal postural pattern for Todd. Todd likened the diaphragm to the equator, a dividing line "of two great halves of being", between the conscious and the unconscious, the voluntary and the involuntary, and the visceral and the skeletal. And for both Todd and Alexander physical health is not just about the body. There is this unknowable borderline between the psyche and soma, that is so frustrating to scientific objective research. Andre often referred to Todd as a poet.

ELIZABETH To return for a moment to your own history, how did you come to undertake the Alexander teaching training? I can think of quite a number of dancers in Australia who after some exposure to ideokinetic work have gone on to undertake the Alexander teacher training and I was curious as to why that has occurred.

JANE I can't speak for anyone else but myself, but I certainly know I really did get a lot of inspiration from Eva Karczag and also Elizabeth Garren who were both with Trisha Brown's company when I was living in New York. They'd both done a lot of study with that collection of people in the community I mentioned earlier and both of them re-trained to become Alexander teachers. So that was a model for me. And it was in a sense a compromise, in that one wanted to keep dancing but within the area of dance I was interested in, the future financial security was really limited. So it was a possible career and there was a training in it.

There's no training in ideokinesis and I really respect that. The way Andre lives his life is extraordinarily true to the process and to the understanding that you can only really transfer this work in a tactile tradition. And I felt very much that he handed something to me in a tactile tradition—through the voice and through touch amongst other things. And I think he felt the work (and he would say that Todd felt the work) would be reduced if you actually systemised it or tried to set it out to be taught in any way, as did Alexander. Alexander resisted teaching the Alexander technique to anyone else for a long time and it was only later in his life, when he was 60 and after, that he actually started his first training course. And it was people saying, come on if you don't hand this work to anyone else, it will die out when you die out. With ideokinesis I really appreciate that choice Andre made. The work would be reduced, as I think the Alexander technique can be reduced ... any work can be reduced in this day and age because it becomes a business need ... and business needs need to be met I suppose.

So that was the transition. If there had been a training course available in ideokinesis then maybe possibly that's what I would've done, but there are a lot of similarities between the two fields. Todd really did talk about the whole body; she talked about understanding the influences upon the physical body, the internal influences of the organs and other systems, and the external stimuli. It was really Lulu Sweigard in *Human Movement Potential* who wrote the work in the form of the nine lines of movement. To my knowledge that wasn't actually Todd. Todd did keep it much more about each complete action. So in *The Thinking Body* Todd has chapters on breathing, chapters on walking, chapters on balance, rather than a chapter on the foot, a chapter on the leg, a chapter on the pelvis and so on. There's a point though when if you follow through the ideokinetic work as I studied it with Andre, in the final work you look at the synergistic effect and how all those previous eight lines of movement add up to the sum of the ninth, which is everything going up. And that's a natural lead on to the Alexander technique, where essentially the compression images and the tensile images of ideokinesis combine to send everything up, which is like a sum of the down and the up. That's the Alexander technique — suspended poise.

So for me between the Alexander technique and ideokinesis, there's always been an inner tension and cross-referencing. It took a long time for me to work out that the compression images, which are about helping the bones support the weight against being compressed downwards, and the tensile images that are suspending the weight upwards and resisting the downward pull, combine together in that

ninth line of movement up and the up of the Alexander Technique. But the nine lines of movement and the directions in the Alexander Technique of primary control to me are in essence the same, as they have been handed down to me by my teachers. It's one body that's being observed. It's just a different way of writing about it. A different methodology or "means whereby" of bringing this state of balance into being.

What Alexander technique has is an understanding of primary control being a sequenced order of one part of the body in relationship to every other part — that there really is a primary movement that is initiated by the head neck relationship that does initiate the back to lengthen and widen, so that the arms and legs follow in a sequenced order that spreads through one's physical being "one after the other and then all at the same time." And for me that made actually more sense of all the ideokinetic work I'd done. But then the ideokinetic work has informed and expanded my Alexander understanding. It's hard to know though whether that just would've happened anyway with maturity because so often you learn things at a certain age and actually you're always studying a system that's changing, in a changing environment, with your own perceptive system, which is also changing. So the whole concept of subjectivity and scientific evidence really always are coming up against each other. I have to laugh at myself, but I clearly remember being shocked that you breathed below the nostrils, let alone below the rib-case! I had no idea where the air I breathed went. And now I am aware of being breathed from below my feet, cellularly! So my understanding has developed as I have — or at least I hope it has!

But I guess in private practice you do have a repeated experience that certain patterns occur. Todd very much talked about patterns, that life is movement. Life is a movement pattern. She looked a lot at breath and rhythm. Alexander doesn't talk so much about rhythm, but there's an understanding of a spirallic movement through the body. There's a lot of spiralling in Todd also. So I have found that the two reference each other all the time.

There are some issues of contention that have been debated. Pamela Matt in her book *A Kinaesthetic Legacy: the life and works of Barbara Clark* tells that John Dewey, who was a supporter of the Alexander technique, gave a series of lectures at Columbia University, as did Mabel Todd. She records that they actually had quite a heated debate about the notion of visualisation and imagery, as opposed to thinking and directing, and also the notion of conscious constructive control that Alexander talked about and Todd's understanding of the unconscious. I am working to understand the two together, constantly. I'm still exploring that. I think I agree with Todd that you need an understanding of the unconscious to truly undo the musculature.

The notion in the Alexander technique that you don't have in ideokinesis is the notion of inhibition, which is a neurological word meaning that you inhibit or 'stop' an electro-chemical transmission in the brain when a message is sent to say, stand up or sit down. A message is transmitted by electrical or chemical means across a synapse, a junction between two neurones in the brain, to recruit the combination of muscles required to perform an action, and you inhibit it. So with the Alexander technique you're literally wanting to stop an action before you've even thought of it. It's very, very fast. That notion of stopping isn't in the ideokinetic work in the same way although there is still that emphasis on waiting, allowing, listening.

ELIZABETH I'm not using the term technically now, but there is an inhibition of voluntary action in the ideokinetic process isn't there? Perhaps it's not theorised as completely as it is in Alexander.

JANE Yes there is. I think there is the notion of stopping in both ideokinesis and Alexander technique. What I was wanting to get to was in stopping an action before you've actually begun to perform it, you have a choice at that moment. So to stop and choose not to do the habitual reaction, but to choose to give your directions and do something new with more expansion, it's in that moment that I think the psychology comes in. Because in making that choice, you're essentially choosing to re-educate your own musculature, rather than habitually react; and you're making a different choice about who you are as well. Alexander also wasn't just looking at movement; the issue is the use of the self. He would talk about the way you respond to the stimuli of life. So it's how another person affects you. In response to someone you

might tighten your jaw, or maybe pull your chest in or hold your breath; or on meeting someone you haven't met for a while you may leave 'open hearted' and cheerful. It's how you respond to everything around you in your life. It's in those moments that you have a choice. You are confronted you with your habits, which very much gets into your fears and anxieties. Alexander theorised that we often go into a 'startle pattern', a primitive fight-flight reflex pattern, and stop breathing fully, tighten our joints, and pull in with our muscles. I think it's through observing this process with the Alexander Technique, that you access the unconscious, through self-observation of our response to the 'stimulus of life' and use of conscious thinking.

With ideokinesis the process I have experienced is much more about listening to the 'thinking' of the body. Following an image and letting your active imagination, as it were, unfold because the image actually can have a journey. You would imagine, for example, the clavicle widening and you would watch where that image of the clavicle travelled to and you could take that through your imagination or then you could follow it into movement. It could become something entirely different. It was more the unconscious emerging through a felt and moved experience from within and then processing it. For me there is more intuition in the ideokinetic process. Todd I think saw the body, and the memories within it, having a wisdom beyond our conscious control or reasoning.

Both processes are ultimately about 'being'. If you really are mapping a way of being in your body that takes into account where you are in the here and now, what's happening internally and externally, in a way that's a definition of 'being in the moment'. And I guess that's been the appeal for me in performance. But it's also an appeal for reducing the things in your life that really trip you up. It's a tool for learning, it's a tool for self-awareness, for in a way becoming yourself as well as in a bigger picture.

ELIZABETH Both these processes do seem to have an enormous capacity, for the reasons you've just so eloquently described, to bring about very deep shifts in a person, in their identity, which might be exhilarating but also might be experienced as very disturbing, very disorienting. I'm interested in this because these experiences are not much spoken about, and certainly not much written about, in dance related ideokinetic contexts and perhaps there may be a potential there that has not been taken up fully.

JANE Certainly within Andre's work there is recognition that when a release happens there is always a movement and sometimes the movement is a bringing to the surface of something disturbing. He had a list of five tangible things we were working on *not to do* in class that he gave us. Let me think, one was not holding parts of ourselves out of alignment away from centre; two was not holding parts of ourselves in alignment in a fixed static way; three was not locking joints; four was not holding onto a muscle pattern once you'd completed an action — like say the ballet dancer walking in first position once they'd left the studio. And he had a fifth, "the emotional factor"; that for every emotion you experience there is an accompanying muscle pattern. I don't think it's talked about that much. I've certainly worked with it, partly because of my early study of psychology.

Since returning to Australia I've worked more with Authentic Movement and had my own personal psychotherapy and it's from that I really have my own way of working with it. Artistically that comes out in the work too, in the creative process. For me this links into ideokinesis more than the Alexander technique, but that might be just because I did ideokinesis first. It teaches you a creative process, which involves stopping, listening, waiting and waiting and waiting when it seems nothing is happening. Waiting still till something comes up, arises, emerges out of the body, that then you can move with and that would be the source of choreography and the source of dance. To me that's a map or template for any creative process. Ideokinesis really helped me define my own creative process. Whether that's now to write an essay or undertake some study or to replan my garden, or make a dance, it's that same learning to listen for something to come up from that depth. I think accessing the unconscious, at one level, is about a quality of listening. If you really listen in a certain way and keep out the other chatter then that material will come up. I think any discipline of transformation or self-awareness has that notion of bringing the unconscious to the conscious at some level and it is sometimes disturbing.

I often think of the body like a cupboard. It's like a student of mine who was in her sixties and had recently lost her husband. She had a cupboard at home and at first she could clear out a whole lot of stuff and throw things out and give things to people as mementos of her husband. But in this cupboard there are still items of her husband that need to be given away, but it's too painful. And so every anniversary or so she'll get something new out of the cupboard and think, no that's too hard, I'll put it back.

I think the body's a bit like that, so a lot of emotional experiences, some of them traumatic, are in the body —my word is they are dreams that can't be dreamt or it's about trying to speak the unspeakable. Things that can't be spoken about, or thought about, are in the body and sometimes that's because they arrived in the body at a time in life developmentally before one actually could speak.

I was looking up Todd on the unconscious and it's right there in the beginning of her book, page 3 of *The Thinking Body*, where she has this wonderful statement about the unconscious being " the treasure-house and the charnel-house of the creative". She saw the unconscious as the "backbone" of our physiology. In this she does differ from Alexander. She says, "we are told that even in the best human machine only 15 percent of the total energy is available for conscious purpose. 85 percent is used in the vegetative processes and so on, which are unconscious". I don't know if her percentages are true, but I think a lot of what goes on is unconscious. But remember Alexander was born in the 1860s before Freud had written about his understanding of the unconscious. He relied more on the psychologists of his day who wrote more about habit to explain behaviour, like William James. And there's an imprinting that happens on the neurological system and our habits are, if they really are habits, they're in the autonomic nervous system. They are there permanently, in the bedrock.

I think we often think that's it a matter of mind and will, and that we should just stop pulling our shoulder in and make it a clear choice and be a strong person. Be a "good little soldier" and do it. But it doesn't work that way. Once a habit is there, it's there for life and so you have to learn to work with it.

Despite these differences, the Alexander Technique and ideokinesis go so well together because in my experience of the work by keeping the body whole, by always monitoring that the person's body is maintaining a whole integrity, you can work as much as possible to avoid not disturbing someone's integrity. I think if you don't understand that and get carried away with a release or letting go and as a practitioner you're thinking, say "ooh this shoulder's releasing, this shoulder's releasing. I'm really going to go with that release". But you're not noticing that the line of movement of say widening the back of the pelvis or hip-knee-ankle-heel-second toe is still keeping in touch with the whole.

What might be in the shoulder (and I'm just drawing on experience with my own private work) might be more than a learned habit of playing a musical instrument. It may be that you played the violin as a child because there was a lot of conflict between your parents and that was the one place you felt you could have an outlet for your own frustration and pain about that conflict. Or something like if you let go of how you used to hold the violin, you're also letting go of the affirmation and praise you got as a child for playing it so well. Or it could be that you had a difficult delivery at birth and your shoulder was badly squashed at that time. So in letting go of the shoulder, you're actually having to come to terms with the pain of feeling harmed at birth, or of not feeling loved at home or whatever. These are feelings from the past, they may not actually be true, but your shoulder doesn't know that. There's a wonderful psycho-analytic writer B.W. Winnacott who says that the breakdown you fear is the breakdown you've already had and survived. I find this thought very useful when I'm working with people.

That also affected my teaching within tertiary institutions because I felt more and more I was getting deeper and deeper into the body and my quality of listening was also drawing more things up. But the body also reflects culture. One of the images we did holus bolus in the 1970s in New York was thinking the pubic ramae moving in together at the front of the pelvis and we'd plonk our hands on people's pubic symphysis, no problem, for tactile aid. I started teaching that at the VCA and then after a while it was "well we better ask permission". Just get permission from your partner in constructive rest, "is it all right if I give you tactile aid at the public symphysis?" Then after a while a student said, "is this legal?" And I thought

"wow". Now I never teach that image, ever. I just talk about it and I used to give people tactile aid there all the time. Now I don't. Even hip sockets I'm feeling a little bit tentative about. I get students to give themselves tactile aid, but it's not the same. It's actually not; you don't get the same kinaesthetic experiences as someone else touching you.

So there is that relationship culturally as well. When I was at the VCA in the later years there really was a lot of bringing to the surface in the culture and the community of sexual abuse, within institutions such as the church and in the homes that a lot of 'stolen generation' children were sent to, orphanages and so on. Somehow it gave permission for that to come to the surface, I think everywhere. So I was finding that in working with the pelvis you'd often find that students were remembering past experiences that were really traumatic and this was within the context of privatisation and funding cut backs in education at that time. So class sizes were becoming larger. Also it was a compulsory class, you had to do it and this raises the issue about whether you can impose this work on somebody; and I don't think you can. I also think you need back up. You really need to understand that when you bring these disturbing feelings to the surface (and I think it's inevitable that you do) then you really need to have a support structure in place that understands that. Fortunately at the VCA they had a counselling service available to students.

What usually happens in an Alexander training course is it's acknowledged that the work does bring up issues from the past and usually you get your own pals and go and talk about it in a coffee shop. And there's usually a pin board with cards of different counsellors discreetly placed on the board. But it's hard; we're not trained in psychotherapy. We're trained in touch and I think that what comes up to the surface through the body is often the most early primitive feelings and experiences and therefore the hardest to really contain and manage. I don't think that's really been addressed yet, but that's one of my interests very much. It is also one of the things that trips people up the most I think within this work, within body work in general and within Alexander training courses as well. So yes it's something that's always been mentioned. Certainly it's something I've always mentioned because with my own background there was so much in my body that wanted to come up that was quite disturbed – a lot of crying.

When I was in hospital one of the things that was said the most to me was that I was 'a good little soldier'. A good little soldier didn't cry and so you learned not to cry. You learnt to say that quite painful medical procedures didn't hurt, when really they did but you prided yourself on not letting anybody know that it hurt. You learned that it wasn't really affirmed, if you cried or let your distress be heard. And so I think you do things like hold your breath or tighten your armpits or whatever as a way of getting through those experiences and then later on of course they still they come to the surface. All of that's in the body.

The wholeness of both ideokinesis and Alexander techniques looks at how the thinking, how the emotional experiences from the past, how a trauma that doesn't necessarily have to be something that's happened in your own lifetime, are in the body. Sometimes I think it can be in your body but not of you. So it's the fact your parents had traumatic experiences in their life before they immigrated to Australia or whatever. It can be something that's learned, like the violin, like dance or any of the sports. It can be the results of injury; it can be the result of medical intervention, or genetic inheritance... or whatever. So all of that's in the body and I find that within the medium of this work what you work with will tend to be one system or the other. So the systems that Mabel Todd talked about have to be listened to all at once, the many systems in the body working in balance and unison. Is it the thinking, is it the emotion, or is it the musculature? What is the system that is most out of balance?

That links in for me with Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen's work She did work with Andre Bernard and with Todd's work and really took up that notion of each individual system. Todd talked a lot about the endocrine system and the organs and so on. Because I've had the history of working with Bonnie at the same time as working with Andre somehow it's hard to know what comes where. Some people really habitually favour or overwork one system. Some people hold on in the connective tissue, literally holding their weight away from the bones of the skeleton; others may overuse the muscular system, and overwork the superficial muscle layer; and other people strain, say, the fluid system. They hold on so much that they stop the fluids of the body flowing. I have a student who often says, "You've got my juices flowing",

because she often gets a dry mouth and loss of saliva. Others overwork the endocrine system, for example, the adrenal glands, by a lifestyle of rushing and not stopping and eating fast foods.

So you're listening to all of that within the whole and with an understanding of the sequenced order of directions from an Alexander point of view (which in my mind has a parallel with the nine lines of movement of ideokinesis). If you can integrate those parts together then you'll find that the trauma or the emotional disturbance held in the neuro-muscular-skeletal tension somehow begins to dissipate because it's got another support. It's got the support of the whole body. You literally have your feet under you. Usually for me the painful experience comes about because one fears that one will be disintegrated or will fall apart, will break up in some way, shatter. When you get the body having that experience of wholeness and integration then that part of you that fears the disintegration can get support from the integrity of the whole. And it does itself, if you're really "doing the work".

For example, the rib-case is an area a lot of dancers hold tension; they hold the ribs forward and up and hollow in the lower back, push the tail bone down and lock the back of the knees. If they begin to release the ribs "back up and out", encouraging the compression support for the ribs at the joints in the spinal column, without allowing the back of the pelvis to widen and the direction or line of movement of weight flow to move down the leg axis, and out the heels and toes, then the student will resist letting go and tend to feel unsupported and "in pieces", and in fact, I would think they would be. Because the release is a letting go of a holding, a contraction, shortening, a not moving or breathing. When it releases, it begins to move, lengthen, expand and breathe. It needs to move somewhere. It needs to move throughout the whole, strengthening and supporting all the other directions of movement at once.

When a body is connected in the sequenced order of primary control, then when a part of oneself releases, say the rib-case, it does itself, it just moves out expanding and enhancing the whole sequence of directions, or lines of movement, however you choose to think of them. It's like a bridge between what Todd would call the habitual postural pattern and the ideal postural pattern. It's hard to put in words really, but that's my concrete experience of working with it, one on one. You are always working to create more breath, interconnectedness, elasticity and groundedness throughout the whole body, in process. The habitual response will always be a moving away from centredness or wholeness, so by always keeping in mind the body as a whole you safeguard that you're not cooperating with the habit or any splitting of the whole, either physically or emotionally.

Within that I think different people respond to different approaches. Some people are more visual than others. Some people need to take it in through the thinking. Some people can't visualise very well. Some people learn more somatically. They take in through the touch more, so part of my work was always to give the information five ways. I used to say I had to give the same class five times in the one class. Even though it was one content I would give it five ways to try and catch as many of those people's needs.

ELIZABETH Are you talking about a group situation, the classes when you were teaching at the VCA, in a group class?

JANE Yes in a group class at the VCA, for example, I would play around with it, different models of learning I suppose. I would give an experience, a kinaesthetic experience first and then give the thinking and theory later, or give the thinking first and the experience later. Do it by talking through a process or tracing the image with touch and tactile aid, or setting reading homework, or drawing the bony images, or colouring in anatomical drawings, or a movement improvisation and dancing the imagery. Privately you tend to work out very quickly the best way in for someone to learn. Some people literally get their mind in a knot. They say, quite anxiously: — "Oh what do you mean there, is that it, did I get it?" In that case I would tend to start working kinaesthetically, but then later think no, they need to learn to think about it as well. Other people can't get the physical experience until they actually know what you're doing. So they'll say, "what are you doing now, what's happening?" And as soon as you say "well I'm wanting the hip to free and the back to lengthen and widen", they go "oh that's fine, now I can actually

have the somatic experience". Other people have both. I call it the way in and through the voice or touch are two very primitive, primal ways in.

There is one thing I wanted to say which came up when we talked about how I came into the work and also comparisons with ideokinesis and general creative process and Alexander technique. It also links in with dance movement therapy and the movement improvisation that accompanies ideokinesis often. There seems to be a sequence that's common, of firstly having, as it were, a muscle armour or a group of overworking muscles that bunch together and cause your habitual postural pattern. When you begin to let go of that, there's a phase of release and letting go and out of that release comes a deeper integration where all the layers of muscles are sequenced from a central place to the periphery of the body, more the ideal postural pattern. There's a sequencing and an unfolding of those layers, so that the neuro-musculature recruits the muscles that perform an action in a most efficient way. With the ideokinetic work as I learned it with Eva, there seems to be a phase of then being able to take the work into an exploration of action from that deep co-ordinated place. With Andre we took that work into everyday action — sitting, standing, walking, lifting a leg — and that's common with the Alexander technique as well. But Alexander himself in his training course got people to do a fourth year of training where they actually performed a Shakespearean play in front of an audience.

What I found with the ideokinetic work is that to perform a dance that you've choreographed from that source in front of an audience is a profoundly transformative experience. I find next time I go into a studio that the movement vocabulary that's come up out of that preparation for the performance has been cleared. It's like a whole new canvas. I find that being witnessed in that way, performing with an audience who witnesses you quite an amazing moment, which I haven't had enough opportunity to really study. But there's something within both ideokinesis and the Alexander technique that implies a performance of movement in relation to an "other" that I don't think we explore enough.

As you know Alexander was an actor and he lost his voice and his first work was with helping people breathe and perform. There's something about really understanding, having the conscious awareness such that you know where you are in space, you know the lines, you can respond to the other actors, and with Shakespeare you're responding to the audience often as well. You're breathing, you're speaking a line to someone, you've got an aside to the audience and you might have a sword in your hand and be conducting a fight. To be able to do all those things at once is extraordinary. Shakespearian acting is an extraordinary challenge. You're actually performing three dimensionally in space, in the moment, with an internal and external awareness on many dimensions. There is something about the Alexander work that for me is about that experience and it isn't often explored. We don't get people to do Shakespearian plays, although sometimes I've actually put people on the spot in various workshops within Alexander training courses. But also with the ideokinetic work it's often taken into performance where you'll derive a choreographed work from ideokinetic principles and then it's performed. That really does have an enormous impact on you, on the student dancers, the trainee dancers or professional dancers, I think. I don't understand it yet but I think it's very important.

I guess it's the being seen that's important. If the choreographed work you're performing has come up from within you then the performing of it is the being seen of it and it's the being seen and being heard. From a psychological point of view to have yourself reflected back to you through your mother's eyes is a way of knowing yourself — to be "the twinkle in someone's eye". I think performing is one way of knowing yourself, seeing yourself reflected back from the audience's eye. I think we all rework our earliest unresolved experiences over and over again and performing is one way of doing this. This in the culture a little bit, like you know it's interesting to me how the debutante has come back, that ritual of being seen and being presented to the world. There's that sense of being seen. I think there's something there within this work that is quite essential.

And I guess the origin of psychoanalytic theory is observation, infant observation. The origins of ideokinesis were Todd observing that her body expanded roughly on certain lines of movement when she released or visualised things, and Alexander observed that when he spoke he habitually pulled his head back and down. So there is a research, a process of self-observation and investigation in all of this work. I was thinking when we worked with Andre, he'd say this work has only happened for 50 years, so don't eliminate the possibility you might discover something no-one else has discovered. Now it's been going for about 80 years or so, if you count it from the 1920s. From the Alexander point of view it's over 100 years. So I used to encourage all the students at the VCA not to eliminate the possibility they might discover something new. That it's an adventure. You're a discoverer and each of us has to discover our own body and I guess within that, that what you're listening for is in the body. That the body is your teacher in the end and even when I'm working privately it's the body of the person I'm working with that knows what it needs. It's not something I know and am putting into the student, it's a partnership of listening, observing, reflecting, thinking, stopping, directing. You're listening for this body to tell you what it needs to become whole and that's a process that I think is constant in all the work I've mentioned – Alexander, ideokinesis, body mind centring, kinetic awareness, movement improvisation – all of that.

In the following pages visual artist and writer Chris Crickmay (based in England) and dancer and dance maker Eva Karczag (then based in Arnhem, the Netherlands) describe a three-year collaboration conducted between fall 1999 and spring 2002 through post, email, and occasional visits. Crickmay sent drawings, slides, and objects, and Karczag responded with videos of her movement work. Andreas Burgert contributed camera and video editing assistance for this and some other parts of the project.

The two artists entered the project with a shared interest in sensation, improvisation, and work that both reflects and interacts with its surroundings. The intention of the project was to explore material together rather than work towards a predetermined end result. An exhibition of the accumulated work at Dartington College of Arts in the U.K. concluded the project thus far – further work is planned.

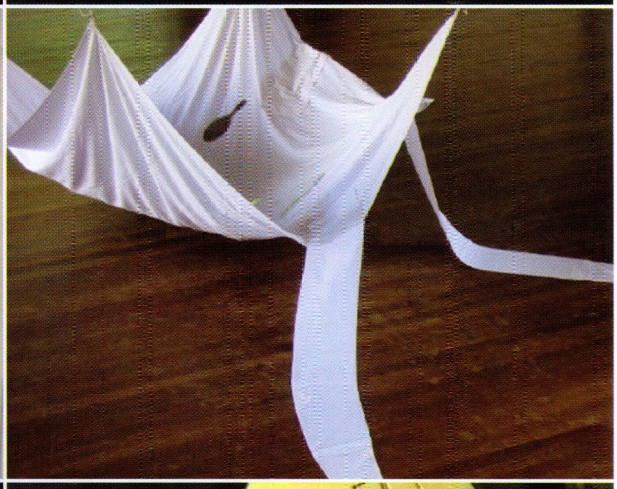
This record of the collaboration was created by Crickmay and Karczag through correspondence via email. A version of the same material is also appearing in the journal Contact Quarterly. The artists thank the editors of CQ and Writings on Dance.

Chris Crickmay
Eva Karczag

Working together Conversationally

A collaboration linking dance and art

1|5



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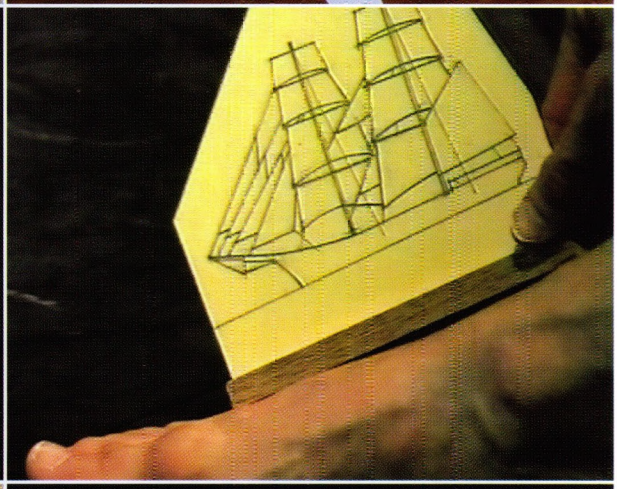

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4|8

[Sept. 1999]
[picture 1]

CHRIS
We begin the project with a few days together in Arnhem. On our first day we agree on a loose format for working that involves us both moving, writing, and drawing – working alternately, so that one observes the other moving, or looks at what he or she has written or made, then responds, either in the same medium or another. Something seems to happen simply through alternating the role of maker and viewer – a sense already of beginning to accumulate material without particularly trying to do so. In starting, we quickly become aware of a shared aesthetic– what one savours, what one delights in – vital for any collaboration.

EVA
1st session: moving, writing, drawing; attending very closely – the way you looked at and spoke about the first drawings we did – a matter of not "good" or "bad" but what was present on the paper – as line, shape, texture, colour, action – corresponding to the way I observe movement.

• • • • • • •

[Nov. 1999]
[picture 2]

CHRIS
Having returned home, I develop the rough drawings I made when we were together. The images seem to include suggestions of a boat at sea; a man in a kind of electrical storm with an upside-down shadow; a landscape that could also be a bear; a rather ordinary bird; a leaf and trees in a wind. I turn the drawings into slides to send to you.

EVA
Moving in slide projection – swimming in a sea of light and shadow. Questions of how to work with these slides. I make the decision to "read" them while being "in" them, moving in front of the wall where I project the slides, allowing my body to respond without needing to know what or why this particular moving is happening. Images and sensations arise spontaneously. I notice them and let them pass in order to be present with what emerges next. There are birds and flight, mountains and mountain slopes – slipping, sliding, careening – curves and jagged edges.

[picture 3]

Andreas, who videos my moving, selects material and puts it together into about 20 minutes of movement video. Whereas each slide forms a single concrete image, I am sending you a stream of consciousness in movement. I'm curious to know what you will make of it.

[Jan. 2000]

CHRIS

To begin with, I find it more difficult to get the feel of your moving on video compared to when we we're together. Interestingly, one thing that helps is the sound – of laughter, of impact, of breath. After repeated viewing over several weeks, I select a few short sequences that particularly catch my interest. This act of selection from the other person's material (which we both do) seems essential – in fact, it marks the beginnings of any response.

I decide to make ingredients for five installations. Installation is my medium because I am interested in the relationships between things as much as in the things themselves. These particular ones will arrive in parts to be assembled, with the addition of some larger things (too big to send), which I know you will have at home. That way, something quite large can emerge out of elements that will travel by post in a small box.

I make up the boxes gradually, letting ingredients build up over days and weeks.

I work without conscious rationale, but some turn out to be more explainable than others. For example, your energetic arm-flinging sequence gives rise to three enormously long sleeves [see photo #6 OR see photo of hanging sheet]. Generally, the images I have made seem to include familiar domestic items, but there are also references to landscape and to a larger geographical scale.

For example, Box 3 contains:
• four gestural abstract drawings on white cotton cloth
• sixteen little drawings – of plants, jugs, sandhills, etc. each on a piece of card with a small wire stand
• four white pillows and four bamboo canes (need to be added).

The whole installation is to be spread out in a long line on the floor. In creating this, I was responding to the part of your video sequence where you fall suddenly from standing and then lie fairly still with small arm and hand movements above your face, seen in closeup.

[picture 4]
[April 2000]

EVA

Boxes arrive by post – five in one day – a day of surprise gifts, beautifully wrapped. I feel excited and overwhelmed. How to approach them? Do I open all? If not all, then which one? I decide to open one at a time, to give myself time and space to absorb what you have given me in each package.

I pick, at random, one of the small boxes. Am amazed at the delicacy, detail, imagery. There are maps, which bring up images of travelling, of my personal history, of many countries, many homes, memories of a life of travel and

movement. Lengths of red cotton thread, which bring memories of my aunt and mother sewing – of hours spent as a child watching them work, helping my mother sew.

Precision, organisation...treasures.

I am confronted with the fact that this is an installation. I'm faced with lack of a space where I can set it up as you instruct. I choose to disassemble it and work with separate elements. The folded brown paper tablecloth and the maps are what catch my immediate attention.

• • • • • • •

[Nov. 1999]
[picture 5]

EVA
The folding of paper creates the "folding dance," where my body jack-knifes as top falls towards legs – also images of quilts and blankets and sleeping come in. I explore what kind of moving happens if I stay only on the small square of paper you've given me – when I place my hands and feet just so, along the edges, and see what the rest of my body does as a response. I play with throwing the paper to see where and how it falls, and what this tossing and falling generates in my body. I watch the maps suspended on their red thread, hanging and gently swinging. Then I hang them from my ears and let them dangle, like earrings, while I crawl. The wheels of the trolley on which Andreas places the camera squeak. I ask Andreas to focus on detail when possible. I am trusting his eyes and ability to see the subtlety of internal movement and to anticipate the direction and flow of the moving.

[Sept. 2000]

CHRIS
I am immediately struck by the clarity and simplicity of what you and Andreas have produced. My eye is drawn to the light in the video images. In one sequence: bright pink, white, blue – light and shadow constantly changing as the maps swing and twist in the air; also, the slow deliberate movement of your body as you crawl a little, then pause, then crawl again. In another sequence, the simple act of dropping and reaching for a piece of paper becomes intriguing through the edited repetitions of the video image – the bounce of your body, a strangely intense detail as arms and trunk drop to the floor. In another sequence, again the sleeves, only partially visible, seem to become infinitely long – an act of endurance to endlessly pull them up.

In spontaneous response to each other's work, the images, words, and movements we produce seem to make sense and connect with the other person's world without any attempt to deliberately make this happen. Always a marvel and a surprise that the mind/body comes up with something that is not random.

[Feb. 2001]

EVA

And then you arrive, so we can see where we stand with the work – three days of working together. Your first words when I meet you at the train station – how amazing to see me, flesh and blood, alive, after having watched me so much on video.

CHRIS

In one of the dance studios, I set up the installations on the first day – I simply want you to see them assembled, and it's the first time I myself have seen them all together. It is strange for me to see all these images from around where I live, transported somewhere else – the little plants from the seaside in South Devon, the ironing board from home. But immediately it's an exhibition, not a space to work in. So we take some bits and work with them separately. Andreas records our activity on video throughout.

Mostly the work is on a small scale, perhaps dictated by the small size, specific imagery, and lightness of most of the objects. The imagery of plants, a boat, a rope, etc., leads us into a suggestion of storytelling.

[picture 6]

EVA

hanging sheet, fragments of drawings –
card game
man's hand
woman's hand
considered action
my move, your move
the dance of life
sailing boat along my body
boat – from Europe to Australia
– body as waterways and continents
ironing board and boat – dream of escape
ironing board split apart – deconstructing domesticity
rope and chair walking – walking a tightrope sideways
rosemary crushing – memory of grandmother with basil between her fingers

[picture 7]
[April 2001]

CHRIS

It is a few months since we last worked. I bring with me to Arnhem several large lengths of cloth, different fabrics and colours, with the intention of wrapping found objects to make larger props than before – closer to or beyond the scale of the body. You and I spend an energetic hour wrapping up whatever is to hand to make a number of eccentric bulging parcels. We ride upon, fall into, lift, carry, struggle with, embrace, these unwieldy packages.

Something in the work is itself getting wilder, less tidy. Andreas creates video material, which we watch and edit. One advantage of working together is that certain fragments of work get usefully rescued along the way – so easy to reject something too quickly when working alone.

EVA
wrapping:
- *chairs*
- *pillows*
- *bugles*
- *monsters and mysteries*
- *a play with shape and weight*

[picture 8]

• • • • • • •

[March 2002]

EVA
A year later, and our fourth meeting in Arnhem; this time for two whole weeks. We take over the rooms at the top of the Dance Academy building.

Using what is:
- *light and shadow*
- *wood*
- *architecture*
- *bricks*
- *walls*
- *doors and windows*
- *chairs*
- *views inward and outward*
- *rooms, windows, paths, corridors*

the small details of space and body that add richness to the whole – a texture of wall, a mark on the floor, a balance of object, a shape, a relationship, a connection

a finger, a breath, a tilt, a shift, a touch, a look

[picture 9]

CHRIS
We start in dust-covered, rubbish-filled rooms. Over several days, we move and arrange objects and furniture in these rather eloquent spaces.

EVA
Focus on detail, with attention also continuing to spread to the whole. Outlining with chalk and charcoal areas of interest in the space as we find it. Then rearranging what is there and eliminating what is not needed, to energise the space. Reworking and reworking.

CHRIS

As we continue to physically change the arrangement of rooms and corridors, I photograph, film, and draw you as a moving figure, located in and responding to chosen settings. It is the first time in our working that I am using the appearance of your moving body as my starting point (perhaps I avoided it before as too obvious a response). I try to make these representations in various media reflect the feel of your movement (an internal bodily sense of it) rather than merely describing it from the outside.

• • • • • • •

[picture 10]

CHRIS

I see you now from within a darkened room, poised by a window, in silhouette against the bleached-out branches of a tree and part of a building outside – head resting on hand, foot up on the windowsill. You say you chose to place yourself there because it reminds you of where you lived in Hungary.

EVA

My dance involves several levels of attention:

1 – physical kinesthetic

2 – reading of space/environment

3 – immediate memory of your dance, which I have just witnessed

4 – memory of my own personal history

[picture 11]

CHRIS

We transform the four rooms and a corridor into a set of linked installations. Even the still and inanimate objects – chairs, ropes, doors, timber constructions – seem to evoke a sense of the living body. Video and slides made over the two weeks now become projected images, moving figures brought back into the spaces they came from, but located differently and at oblique angles to the walls, floors, ceilings of these rooms.

EVA

rolling slides
ceiling flying
corner jump
elongated jump
elongated dive
sea and sky
fresco and views from a plane

[picture 12]

CHRIS

For a day, we open these rooms for viewing to the dance students (who use the lower floors of this building).

EVA

For me, this particular part of our working process was the most satisfying – to be able to work in an unusual space, with history and atmosphere; to have time, daily, to return to what was generated the day before; to have immediate feedback; to have the luxury of trying out lots of ideas, and looking many times and in different ways at things that caught our interest. All this was a gift.

It felt important, at this point, to open the space to an audience and receive feedback from outside.

[picture 13]

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[May 2002]

CHRIS

Finally, we move on to the exhibition in Dartington, U.K. For this, you edit the videos and I make a place for them: an installation with slides, much enlarged drawings of your moving figure, and disassembled furniture.

A key consideration is the way in which the space, though enclosed, also suggests spaces beyond and outside it, views to the outside world and views into miniature architectural spaces – no boundary without a sense of boundary crossing. Also, sparked off from something you said, I imagine the work as things (bodies, furniture) that have come apart and seem to be trying to find a new way of coming back together. Splashes of sunlight enter the dim barnlike space of the (modified) Dartington Gallery. Illumination fluctuates in the course of a day.

[picture 14]
[picture 15]

EVA

I arrive in Dartington on the day of the opening with three videos. One is a composite tape, a "history" of our working process. This is presented in the small entry space where the five boxes and photo documentation are set up. The second video, the "door" sequence, is where I work with long pieces of wood lying stacked against a wall and where my moving is pedestrian, rough, and clunky. I have edited it in such a way that the flow of movement is intermittently frozen for periods ranging from a few seconds to a minute. It is projected larger than life onto one wall. The third video is the "window" sequence, which is shown on a small monitor.

EVA

For me, our project has been about:
movement – a shared interest;
listening – to each other, to the materials, to what emerged through and between us – a dialogue, a conversation;
and travel – thoughts travelling by email, responses travelling through the post, you travelling to Arnhem, me travelling to Dartington.

I am travelling as I respond to your writing – travelling as both a state of movement and a time of suspension from the everyday world, where responsibilities are shed and one can be in touch with one's immediate internal state...

CHRIS

Looking back, it strikes me that none of the work I produced would have appeared had I worked alone. Furthermore, I feel that the sense of authorship became blurred as we went along – each bit of work becoming neither wholly yours nor mine, but somehow, as you say, between. The body sense that is evoked in visual work made through an art/dance collaboration is particularly interesting to me and, I suppose, was my main aesthetic motivation (it was also the area in which I feel I made most discoveries). But, more generally, I felt released and enlivened by the act of the exchange, a shifting to and fro of responsibility that gave a lightness, unexpectedness, and humour to all that happened.

A crucial feature of this kind of work is that the "conversation" – unlike a conversation in purely social terms – is mediated through, and takes place within, material forms and metaphoric modes of expression. This means, as you've implied, it is not just a two-way but a multi-way conversation: with materials, with the body, with places, with memories, and later with others who encounter the work.

Photo Credits
photos 1, 2, 4, 6, 9, 13–15: Chris Crickmay
photos 10, 11, 12: stills from video by Chris Crickmay
photos 3, 5, 7, 8: stills from video by Andreas Burger

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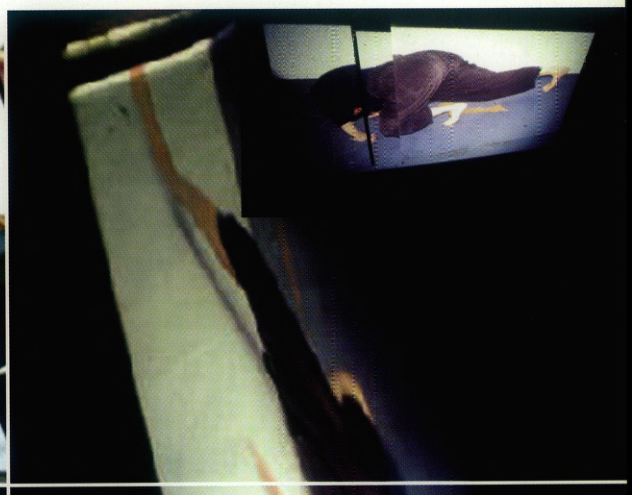

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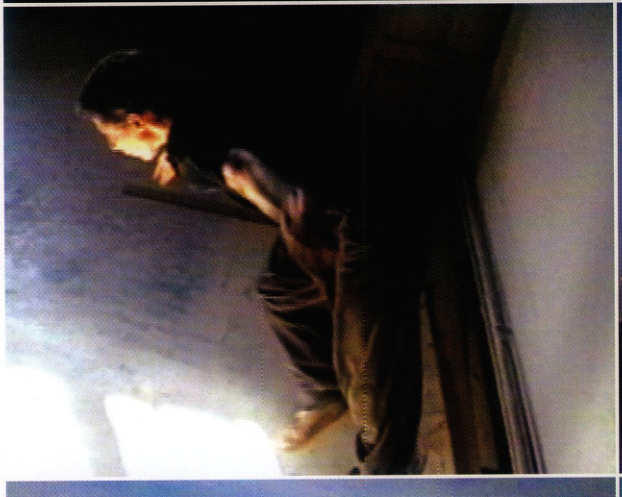

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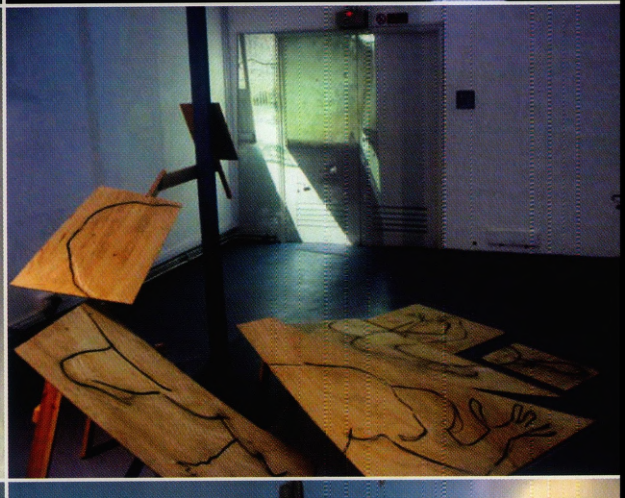

12|15

Elizabeth Dempster

Some notes on the staging of Ideokinesis

Dance artist Eva Karczag has been involved in the practice of ideokinesis since the early 1970s. She is also a certified teacher of the Alexander Technique. Her work as a teacher and performer is based on a synthesis of ideokinesis/release, improvisation and body awareness techniques. Currently based at Bennington College, Vermont, Karczag regularly visits Australia to conduct workshops and perform and in the following text reference is made to a workshop conducted at *Dancehouse*, Melbourne in 1994. I have selected some key elements of ideokinetic method as points of departure for an analysis of Karczag's Release dance practice. These elements are examined in the following order: the formation and transmission of images through the teacher's touch and voice, the horizontal plane of instruction, and the practice of 'non-doing' or inaction.[1]

Touching and being touched

'What is communicated through your hands is what is happening in your own body', writes Alexander teacher Walter Carrington. He goes on to state that the quality of the Alexander teacher's touch must be receptive and not active:

> You have got to feel what is happening in the student without trying to do anything about it. Because you are trying to feel, any attempt at doing – you know, waggling the head about or something like that – will make it impossible to you to feel what is going on in the student. You cannot do and feel at the same time. Refined feeling and observation are only possible when you are not doing anything (1994:103).

Photograph of Eva Karczag by Lois Greenfield

Karczag's classes encompass a range of styles of touching, directed towards different ends – from manipulation and demonstration, to assisting movement, to massage-like stimulation of the skin, to whole body contact. Karczag's knowledge of 'hands on' is drawn from several sources, the Alexander technique being perhaps her most concentrated and sustained context of practice. According to Karczag, her Alexander 'hands on' knowledge allows her to impart 'a subtle energetic quality of touch and the concept of non-doing' to the dance students with whom she works (in Dempster 1996:50). In the Alexander context, touch is both diagnostic and a means of instruction. As Carrington suggests above, touching is sensing the state of the other.

The 'tactile aid' partner work developed by Andre Bernard is another important influence upon Karczag's teaching practice. Tactile aid is a practice developed from the table work of Mabel Todd who was explicit about the purpose of teacher touch. She writes: 'This work is not manipulation. The purpose of the finger touch is to bring consciousness to the pupil, to make him respond and become active in readjusting the structure' (in Matt 1993:17). But touch also has a dialogic dimension: 'When we touch someone they touch us equally', Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen observes (1993:6). In the 'hands on' pedagogical encounter the teacher/partner is touching but also being touched. She is experiencing and apprehending the energetic state of the student's body in and through her own body. Theatre theorist David Williams has succinctly described the reciprocity of touch as it is experienced in another field of contemporary dance practice, Contact Improvisation. He writes: 'both self and other participate and are implicated at the point of con()tact; both toucher and touched experience the dialogics of being both toucher and touched' (1996:31).

Karczag employs this dialogic aspect of touch communication in her application of Alexander and Todd methods to dance training. In Release work, touch is a way of placing images into the body, making the ideokinetic experience 'very tangible, very real' (in Dempster 1996:45). For Karczag, the teacher is not actively *doing*, she is not adjusting or manipulating the student's body, but she is communicating precise sensory and kinetic information through body-to-body contact. In this practice, touch is a form of the teacher's body; it is a means by which her understanding goes into the body of the student. This kind of transmission of precise kinaesthetic experience through touch is fundamental to many long established dance and martial art traditions of Japan, Bali and India though unusual in Western dance pedagogy.[2] However the intention and therefore the effect of touch alters according to context; and in the workshop setting Karczag makes a distinction between different uses or applications of hands on practice.

In Awareness work, hands on supports a process of structural clarification or 'fine tuning' of the body, consistent with the aims of table work as articulated by Todd. Karczag has also developed a more exploratory approach to hands on practice where touch precipitates movement exploration and play. At the time of the Melbourne workshop Karczag had just completed a full-length performance work developed from a complex creative exploration of 'hands on' practice with students at the EDDC. Elements of this research were brought to bear upon different phases of the partner work during the Dancehouse workshop.[3] Here Karczag describes the starting point for the dance work *Horizon*:

> What we did was just put hands on and the idea that we started out with, the focus, was to be attentive to the moment and to try to give the person whatever you felt they needed at that moment. You would look at the person (they would be lying down) and you'd look at the body and you'd think well, what they need is a little bit more energy here, or a little bit of touch here and each person would go to a different place (in Dempster 1996: 43)

Karczag has noted that although she is an Alexander teacher (and this is where the term 'hands on' arises), the mode of touch that was the pivot point of the performance development was not an Alexander kind of touch. She writes: 'Rather than being 'directed' (i.e. the toucher knowing what the optimal direction for moving is for the one being touched – head forward and up, back lengthening and widening, knees away), this touch was more about opening space and providing energy for the one being touched to use in whatever way was immediately relevant'.[4] Hands on, in this instance being touched with precision

and care by many hands, invoked sensory experiences which were taken up and transformed in dancing. In the Melbourne workshop discussed here, both aspects of Karzcag's hands on practice, the directive and the exploratory, are taken up.

Karczag does not give any special instructions as to how people should place their hands on their partners, other than that the touch should be 'light'. Some information concerning the nature of the touch is communicated in the details of a particular lesson – for example, the parts of the body being worked with, bony landmarks to feel for, etcetera. This relative lack of instruction may reflect an assumption of a certain level of understanding and experience of hands on work in this group of advanced students, but it also follows from Karczag's belief in the efficacy of demonstration, example and experience. You learn how to touch by being touched and skill and subtlety in touching is most effectively developed by direct, body to body contact with a teacher who has mastered it.

Despite the absence of explicit instruction, what does evolve however is respect for the other, for their separateness which is nonetheless permeable, available to change through touch, through contact with an other. As I watch and participate in these classes I am moved by the attention, care and love that is apparent in the partner work. In this exchange, intimacy is coupled with a quality that I can only describe as detachment or disinterestedness. Within the context of the Release/new dance community these interactions, which paradoxically seem both intimate *and* impersonal, have become somewhat taken for granted. Hands on, of various kinds, has become normal practice and part of a whole approach to working with the body. The terms which define partner work in alignment and Release have tended to focus upon a single aspect of what in practice is a highly complex intersubjective process. For example, Todd emphasised the *mise en scène* – table work; Bernard focuses upon the teacher/partner's role – tactile aid; and Joan Skinner defines her touch practice as inscription – partner graphics. However, the experience common to all these body disciplines, of touching and being touched with *intent,* is much richer than these simple descriptive names imply, and much more ambiguous, multi-directional and risky.

What is going on when one person has their hands on another in this Release dance context? Many things, but one that tends to remain rather unspoken is the release and expression of emotion. Emotional feeling arises in the hands on work and this response is related to the simple fact of being in physical contact with someone, and to being touched with care and attention. However minimally it might be defined, and however provisional, there is relationship and connection in that moment of tactile exchange.

Karczag has referred to this aspect of Alexander and Release work, and her exploration of it, in the development of *Horizon.*[5] Another account of the impact of inter-personal touch is David Williams' article, cited above. In "Working (In) the In-between: Contact Improvisation as an ethical practice", Williams offers an insightful and moving commentary on the ethics of touch as exemplified in the practice of Contact Improvisation. Drawing upon the work of philosophers Emmanuel Levinas and Luce Irigaray, Williams describes Contact touch as an expression of love, as a caress. In the following passage Williams elucidates Levinas's notion of the caress as foundation and exemplification of the ethical relation:

> Levinas ... privileges the tactile over the visual, locating the primordial proximity of the touch or 'caress' as one exemplary manifestation of ethical inter-subjectivity. For the caress actualises a con( )tact with an-other that can neither overwhelm nor fuse with alterity, but can reveal the diffusion and vulnerability of the self-in-relation. For touch, the first sense to develop in the human foetus, is 'an expression of love that cannot tell it' (1996:32).

When touch is employed as a pedagogical instrument, its effects, and affects, move in (at least) two directions, changing the bodies of both toucher and touched. 'Where does it come from? From both. It flows between. Not held back by a source. The source already rises from the two caressing,' writes Luce Irigaray (1992:15).

In an extended reflection on the relationship between touch and emotion in her teaching practice, Karczag differentiates between two different contexts of tactile communication (in Dempster 1996: 43–47). In the context of Awareness work, touch facilitates the student's experience of their physicality in very specific, clearly defined anatomical terms. The feeling and emotion which arises in hands on practice in Awareness work, is thus harnessed to the task of 'fine tuning' the student body (45). But what is 'emotion'?

In *Imagination* (1963), a book that has been a key reference text for many Release practitioners, Harold Rugg synthesises a vast body of psychological and neurological research towards a theory of the creative act. In a section of the book entitled "Motor Determinants of Meaning", Rugg discusses the motor attitude theory of emotion, drawing upon a number of theorists including William James and Nina Bull. Rugg begins by defining what is meant by the bodily basis or 'motor determinants of meaning':

> Our meanings are operational in character: weight means tendency to fall, volume to expand, a ceiling presses down, a floor up, a line seems to have a direction, attraction means pulling, repulsion pushing ... The concept of love means going out to; hate, turning away from. Each of these meanings is expressed in action terms, as verb, not noun, and the basic gathering together of the total organism is always motor (1963:64).

He continues by noting that the subtle inner movements of the body constitute an important instrument by which we respond with meaning to the world. These incipient bodily movements take the form of 'anticipatory sets' or 'motor attitudes'. Rugg concludes: 'the consensus taken from diverse schools of thought states that a man's characteristic attitudes determine how he behaves, and still more basically, what he feels and thinks' (65). This 'set' or attitude is not to be construed as a fixed physical structure, but a pattern, a habitual distribution of energies, which gives characteristic style to a person's comportment, movement and modes of expressive response. The term 'anticipatory set' describes a priming of the neuro-musculature. Rugg then defines emotion as a specific form of motor attitude. He cites Nina Bull's research:

> It is not generally appreciated that all action predicates attitude, since every kind of bodily movement requires some preliminary postural preparation. Some portion of the organism must always be stabilized to form a fulcrum from which the movement can take place – as when the shoulder joint is relatively fixed in order to permit a measured movement of the forearm ... Similarly, the chest of an angry person must be fixed to form a base of operation from which the arms can strike effectively (in Rugg 1963:67).

According to Bull, emotional feeling is entirely dependent on preparatory motor attitude; indeed emotion *is* a postural set. She states that once the incipient movement (the set) gives way to overt movement, the feeling of anger, sorrow, or whatever, subsides.

This somewhat lengthy digression has been necessary to clarify one of the fundamentals of ideokinetic practice. Ideokinetic method does not entail learning and mastering an established corpus of movements and gestures; it seeks to address the generative core of movement expression. To borrow Rugg's terminology, ideokinesis addresses the motor attitude of a person, their 'anticipatory set', their *habitus*, and it is this which is engaged and affected by the touch of an other.

In the less technical language of Release practice, emotion is conceptualised as a force in the body, which is either bound or free flowing. In its bound or repressed form, emotion masks and constrains motion. Freeing muscular or postural sets liberates kinaesthetic sensation or feeling, and also emotion. In Awareness work, the emotion that rises and 'flows between' the two partners is channelled in certain pre-determined directions or lines of support. In Karczag's more open-ended exploration of hands on practice as a generative context for improvisation, the emotion that arises is not directed through pre-determined pathways but allowed to play out in dancing.

The teacher's voice: Karczag's language of moving

During the improvisations Karczag sits to one side of the room watching the dancing and maintaining an almost constant flow of speech. Many different activities, points of focus, sensations and physical states are articulated within a seamless web of speech. Karczag describes the effect of this immersion in speech-sound as promoting change and movement. Her intention is to keep the dancer's awareness very mobile as his/her consciousness is shifted through and around the body. The constant flow of speech also addresses a problem specific to solo improvisation – that of self-criticism. The teacher's speech closes off the voice of judgement; there is no space for it.

Karczag's immersive style of speech practice is not characteristic of the ideokinetic genre overall. A contrasting approach is that of Lulu Sweigard who has outlined a detailed set of procedures for the verbal presentation of images within the context of the ideokinetic 'posture laboratory'. The importance of the voice as a pedagogical instrument is emphasised by Sweigard. She notes that 'imagined movement does not lend itself to demonstration by the teacher since it is not actually performed' (1974:224). As the reader will recall, the ideokinetic approach to movement re-education entails the suspension of voluntary action and the active imagining of movement. In the absence of overt physical demonstration, the teacher's ability to verbally communicate images which will stimulate the student's own imaginative response is critical. Sweigard's account of principles for the presentation of imagined movement in the posture laboratory, or ideokinetic classroom, includes detailed information regarding the content, duration and delivery of the lesson.

> While teaching, talk with the voice free from strain and without urgency, and especially avoid all imperious exhortations to complete the task. Thinking does not proceed on command, nor does it follow a rhythmic count. The voice should be low, resonant, well-modulated in tone, and varied in inflection. It should never be monotonous or hypnotic.
>
> Use as few words as possible in any description. Talking too much interferes with the student's concentration on the action to be imagined.
>
> Be clear and precise in the description of movement to be imagined and proceed slowly enough to allow a student time to locate and visualize in his body what is being described. In presenting an imagined movement, use the present participle of verbs to emphasize movement in progress, as in 'watch the accordion closing or being closed'. Always emphasize forces in action (1974:229).

Karczag's approach is consistent with some aspects of Sweigard's prescription, especially with respect to her use of the present participle, her slowness and repetition and her avoidance of 'imperious exhortation'. But she is guilty perhaps of using too many words and to moments of imprecision in her description of movement to be imagined. Karczag's verbal style has a precursor in that of Bill Williams, Karczag's first Alexander teacher. To participate in an Alexander lesson with Bill Williams was to be enveloped in sound, flooded with words. Williams maintained an almost constant flow of speech as he introduced the Alexander directions to your body through the hands on practice. Much about Karczag's class reflects Williams's teaching practice – her focus on resting, inhibition, dropping of social role, immersion in a form of verbal instruction which is not instruction. 'Nothing to get right', he would say. 'If it feels wrong, let it be wrong'. His voice, and Karczag's, chants and sings new bodies into being.

Feminist film theorist Kaja Silverman has developed a provocative, psychoanalytically informed critique of the role and function of the female voice in cinema which may offer some insight into the kinds of transactions put into play through Karczag's distinctive style of pedagogic practice. Silverman notes that feminist analysis of the sonic or aural dimension of film is rather undeveloped, relative to the extensive critique of visual representation. Her project in *The Acoustic Mirror* (1988) is to redress that imbalance. The book first details the operation of the fantasy of the maternal voice in Hollywood cinema and then considers the function of the female voice in selected examples of experimental feminist cinema. Silverman's analysis of cinematic representations of the female voice is grounded in a close analysis

of the role of the auditory sphere – sound, speech and language, in the constitution of subjectivity. Critically engaging Lacanian psychoanalytic theory, she notes that even before the mirror stage and the child's entry into language, the maternal voice plays an important role in the child's perceptual development.

> Since the subject lacks boundaries it does not yet have anything resembling an interiority. However, the foundations for what will later function as identity are marked out by these primitive encounters with the outer world, encounters which occur along the axis of the mother's voice (1988:80).

As the infant matures, the mother's voice functions as an acoustic mirror in which the child gradually discovers its identity and its own voice. Silverman develops her theorisation through a close reading of a number of Julia Kristeva's texts, focusing specifically upon Kristeva's notion of the *chora*. Kristeva adopts the term *chora* (in Greek, meaning receptacle or enclosed space, womb) from Plato's *Timaeus*, where it is defined as 'an invisible and formless being, which receives all things and in some mysterious way partakes of the intelligible, and is most incomprehensible' (in Kristeva 1980:20). The *chora* in Kristeva's formulation is associated with the maternal body and the pre-oedipal, or what Kristeva terms the semiotic. The *chora* denotes something 'indifferent to language, enigmatic ... rhythmic, unfettered, irreducible to its intelligible verbal translation; it is musical, anterior to judgement' (Kristeva 1984:29).

According to Silverman, the representation of the mother's voice as a 'sonorous envelope' is associated with the '*choric* fantasy', that is the fantasy of plenitude, of merging of infant and mother in corporeal harmony. This fantasy of immersion is motivated by a desire to retreat from the symbolic, from the order of language, states Silverman, but, she reminds us, the *chora* is a fantasy, a retrospective construction. Silverman works to construct a theory of the maternal voice which is not conflated with the pre-symbolic. She observes that it is the maternal voice that first ruptures plenitude and introduces difference. It is the mother's voice which first maps and names the world for the infant subject, and 'which itself provides the first axis of Otherness' (1988: 96). Silverman concludes:

> The mother performs a crucial role during the subject's early history. She is traditionally the first language teacher, commentator and storyteller ... the one who first organises the world linguistically for the child and first presents it to the Other. The maternal voice also plays a crucial part during the mirror stage, defining and interpreting the reflected image, and 'fitting' it to the child. Finally it provides the acoustic mirror in which the child first hears 'itself' (100).

I am beginning to suggest that in the context of ideokinetic practice and Release dance the teacher's voice and speech function as kind of acoustic mirror in which the student dancer re-envisions herself. This acoustic mirror has two aspects or phases: in the first, the teacher's voice invokes a *choric* fantasy, a space of non-differentiation where the student/infant is enveloped and held in the embrace of a loving maternal voice. In the second phase, the teacher's voice begins to induct the student into a subtle, but quite highly elaborated, 'body language' or 'language of moving' in which parts of the body become differentiated from one another. Karczag's scores, for example, guide the student-dancer towards an experience of her body 'coming into parts'. Dance theorist Marianne Goldberg has described the experience of working with Karczag as a process of 'unsuturing', which allowed her to sense the parts of her body in both their difference from one another, and their relatedness to a whole dynamic structure (1996:54).

In the transcribed texts from the workshop, as well as in additional teaching scores supplied by Karczag, there is a notable absence of a subject, an avoidance of direct, instrumental language. The lack of shifters and the preponderance of the gerund, the present participle of the verb (*covering* space, *allowing* movement), leads to a masking or erasure of individual agency. It is as if movement is always already happening. 'It moves through you, it moves out of you and it moves into you', writes Barbara Clark (in Matt 1993:10). Consistent with Alexander and Todd's understanding of the relationship between intention and action, attention is paid to establishing certain conditions of possibility for dancing. Karczag's focus is upon facilitating and stimulating mobility. She creates an atmosphere where students can deconstruct or

suspend their body-identities, and introduces a practice whereby they might gradually reconstitute themselves in and through (bodily) language. One of Karczag's methods is to move language around the body; as language moves, so does attention and awareness.

In the penultimate session of the workshop, Karczag's image score, excerpts of which are reproduced below, evokes a highly detailed and complex sensuous geography of a moving body. Many points of entry into a state of dancing are articulated. Her spoken text draws out a rich compendium of images encompassing bones, organs and energetic connections between body parts, and the score integrates the different forms and representations of body alluded to in earlier Awareness classes – body as energy field, body as anatomical image and the tangible body constituted through the touch of another.

Lying down, observe the effect of your moving. Energy streaming – this is movement, movement of energy in the body; there are many energies in the body...
Taking your attention to your feet. Feet are soft, squishy, spreading; feet that know their jointedness as they touch the ground.
Feel the support of the arch as you move up into your body, your moving body. Perhaps even into the articulation of your moving torso.
As you move find a connection from your mouth to your anus. This is a connection that passes through the articulation of your middle torso...
You may want to find times of moving into and out of the floor; and as you move into and out of the floor articulating your weight, articulating your way.
A continuity of thought and action; articulating your way into and out of the floor.
If you wish, return to any of the previous thoughts:
Articulation of the middle torso.
Does this create articulate moving into and out of the floor?
Soft, squishy, spreading feet that know their jointedness as they touch the floor, as they support your body weight.
Using the support of the arches, arches of the feet.
Finding a connection between your mouth and your anus.
In resting, returning to your weight, the weight of your body, to the weight of the parts; returning to your breath – the movement of breath in your body – full and empty, weighted and light. feeling how your breath can fill your back with roundedness and expansiveness.
Feeling how breath can soften the whole front of your body, including your sternum.
Feeling how your feet can open and spread, across the floor like your back, lengthening and widening.
Feeling how the palms of your hands can soften and open.
Feeling how your whole spine can drop into the back half of your body, the forward curve of your lumbar and neck spine just touching your centre line.
Feeling how your tail, the very end of your spine, can hang between two widening sit bones.
Feeling how your head can find a light and delicate balance on the other end of your spine.
The spine is strong and flexible, a series of lengthening curves.
Feeling how your breath can flow out, lengthening out through your limbs, lengthening out through fingers and toes, in resting and in moving.
Finding a soft depth under your armpits,
a soft hollow under your jaw.
If you lightly touch the roof of your mouth with your tongue you can sense the dome of your skull expanding.
Finding support from the feet, up through the middle torso, into the dome of your diaphragm; all the way up into the expanding dome of your skull.
Centre supporting your extremities. Your extremities supporting back into centre.

Karczag's voice calls the student's body into moving and she names this experience 'dancing'. This act of naming is significant because it asserts that the experience of dissolution and reconstitution of the body undergone in ideokinetic practice, although it is challenging to the dominant representational economy of dance, does not lie completely outside its meaning. Ideokinesis constitutes another relation, aural, tactile and 'sensible', to dance language.

The horizontal plane of instruction – lying down and doing nothing (with attention)

In *The Thinking Body* Todd outlines the pedagogical value of what she terms 'unsocialised positions'. She argues that when a person places herself in an unfamiliar position, lying down or supported on all fours, the moral and aesthetic considerations which might normally obtain in a social setting are suspended. The potentially transformative encounter between the teacher and the student is supported by avoidance of the familiar postures of everyday social interaction. The deeply habituated patterns of comportment and movement, constitutive of the self and practiced daily in the vertical plane of social interaction must be dislocated if new patterns are to be established.

Todd's focus is upon the negative or critical function of lying down – what is avoided through the conscious assumption of 'unsocialised' positions. For Todd, it would seem, certain postures and placements of the body are unmarked by social inscription. Of equal, if more problematic, importance is what I might term the *positive* effects of lying down, that is, what lying down invokes and produces as well as what it avoids. The horizontal can function both as an empty category (where nothing happens) and as one which is dense with cultural association. In lying down or supporting herself on hands and knees the student surrenders her social self and her location in perspectival space. She is disarmed as she allows herself to enter a state of vulnerability and of openness to suggestion. This state may be experienced as one of great freedom. The teacher's presence supports this posture of surrender.

Luce Irigaray's account of the 'staging' of the analytic encounter is striking for its resonances with Todd's descriptions of the function and effects of table work. In "Gesture and Psychoanalysis", Irigaray reflects upon key aspects of psychoanalytic practice beginning with a description of certain 'movements and actions that occur in every analytic session':

> Let me start with two essential positions taken up on the analytic stage that analysis took over from hypnosis: *one person (originally the woman) is lying down, the other person is sitting down, and facing the back of the first person's head.* These two parameters – sitting at someone's back and lying down – disobey not only social convention but also the relations of signs to language ... This stage is set for *remembering*
>
> Freud placed the patient, originally a woman, in a situation of *immersion* insofar as language and relations of known exchanges are concerned. From the onset of the session or sessions the patient was dislocated from his habit as a speaking subject, from his system of representational, social, and familial relations ... He is not really hypnotized but immersed in language and in his own history, which changes into something both other and like himself (1993b:92 Emphasis in original).

Irigaray observes that lying down may provoke anxiety or irritation in the patient and this is due to 'the impossibility of producing an exact word or meaning *that relates to the here and now*' (92). The postural axes of social discourse are disrupted and in this setting 'the identity of the speaker and the person spoken to, of the world, or even of the subject ... have not been fixed' (92). In Todd's table work and in later formulations, such as the Constructive Rest Position (CRP),[6] the stage is also set for remembering; and what is remembered is something that was never consciously known. Lying down and resting in a semi-supine posture suspends the operation of everyday habitus and facilitates the student's immersion in sensation and his own bodily (kinaesthetic and kinetic) history. What is it that remembers and forgets?

Sweigard has spoken of the 'innate wisdom' of the nervous system, which re-members neuro-muscular pathways and 'automatically chooses' the most effective for a desired movement goal, 'if given the chance'.[7]

In order for the re-membering of integrated action to occur, everyday habitus must be disrupted, forgotten and set aside. The student's future health and integration is conditional upon the suspension of established modes of bodily competence and gestural coherence. Speaking of the important and deconstructive force of the 'postures' of the psychoanalytic session, Irigaray notes,

> The position (of lying down) is necessary if the patient is to cross back into his language ... Analysis forbids the patient to simulate normalcy, assuming that exists. The patient is held still so that his speech can be reconstituted in another way. And in speech I include gestures. Obviously this is not a question of teaching the subject a new code, doctrine etc. but of helping him or her to structure a new house of language (92).

Irigaray's emphatic articulation of the necessity of 'lying down', as a pre-condition of new co-ordinations and patterns of meaning, resonates with ideokinetic theory and practice. In ideokinesis, the renunciation of habit occurs through the practice of Constructive Rest Position. Todd's recognition of the necessity of destabilising and renouncing old habits is reflected in many of Karczag's image scores. Here is an example from a score entitled "Coming into parts – separating each part from each part":

> *Have to give up something before something new can enter*
> *– have to give up old way of support before you can experience a new way of support*
> *Receiving support of floor that rises up to meet body*
> *letting go of control ... support is there if we can accept it*

'Trying is only emphasising the thing we know already', observes F.M. Alexander (1990:12). This observation has been reiterated, many times over, by ideokinetic practitioners. John Rolland stresses the importance of non-interference in the re-patterning of movement which occurs at the subcortical level (1984:10). In her paper "The Use of Imagery in Dance Training", Nancy Udow also notes the critical role of a receptive attitude to processes of bodily change: 'After giving the body a directive or pattern in the form of an image, the dancer must allow the body to work in the way that it best 'knows' how' (1978:27). As I allow my body to work as it 'knows how' I am re-membering my body history as something both 'other and like' myself. My Alexander teacher Bill Williams would repeat, over and over again, 'Nothing to get right ... If it feels wrong, let it be wrong. If it feels strange, let it be strange'. Bodily semiosis, the relation of sign to language, is subject to disruption in these stagings of remembering. The student of ideokinesis is 'held still' so that her body 'speech' might be reconstituted.

Stillness, rest and a stance of inaction, have thus come to play productive and positive roles in the evolution of the Release dance aesthetic. In Release work, the practice of Constructive Rest Position has several functions. One of its functions is to facilitate the assimilation of experience at the conclusion of a lesson, but it may also mark the point of departure for creative exploration of movement. Mary Fulkerson, who has developed a highly refined and rigorous approach to the extension of ideokinetic method into areas of dance improvisation and composition, describes stillness as a *practice*. In her Release classes, students are guided through Constructive Rest to an experience of resting in stillness, of waiting without expectation. 'Let the stillness have you', she says.

> In my experience very much is happening in stillness, anatomical change and redirection being just one of many states of being to explore ...
>
> Stillness is my starting point. I remain still for a period of time and then allow thoughts to emerge from stillness. In emerging thoughts are made up of both movements and ideas. There is no separation of movement and idea within this process as both are known together in a state of being (1999: 5).

Stillness facilitates imaging and there is a correlation between the time spent in stillness and the amount of imaginative activity resulting. Evidence from psychologist B.R. Bugelski also supports the choice of a resting position for the process of imaging. He writes, 'As motor activity drops off, for example, in day dreaming, the amount of imaginal activity increases, and with further decreases of motor involvement, imagery becomes more and more prominent' (1971:55).

This points to what may appear to be an anomaly, or difficulty in procedure. If imaging ability decreases with motor activity, how do images stimulate or proceed into movement? There are two responses to this question that have some currency within contemporary Release practice. First, the moment of bridging, image to action, is like other phases of the ideokinetic process, amenable to training. From stillness, where the image is strong, a transition into movement is made through simple, 'easy actions'.[8] Simple movement such as rolling, crawling and walking has a developmental basis and requires minimal conscious direction. Taking images into movement can be practised through these patterns. Gradually, the ability to maintain an image within complex movement is developed, though it is perhaps more accurate to say that this ability emerges, often unexpectedly and accompanied by a great sense of discovery, after some period of deep engagement in the practice. 'It happens' as Todd has described the experience of an integration that is prepared for, but cannot be willed.

Secondly, the Release dancer learns to rely on kinaesthetic memory. In stillness, she experiences subtle changes of sensation. This kinaesthetic response can be remembered, re-found. The nature of the image changes; rather than *seeing* the image, the *feeling* of its action is recalled. Moving out of stillness, calls for delicate and highly discriminating kinaesthetic perception. These perceptual skills, integral to the image-based training systems, are strengthened by repeated engagement in the imaging process.

Images and their effects

'The facts do not matter', asserts Mary Fulkerson, 'By thinking of greater length through the centre of the body, it happens' (1982:10). Movement patterns are directed by strategies or ideas, and a single thought or image can stimulate and co-ordinate a complex action. The fundamental principle, underlying all ideokinetic and Release practice, is that thoughts directly affect muscular patterns. The effectiveness or otherwise of a particular thought is not, finally, a matter of verifiable 'fact', but of belief and practice.

The pedagogical problem addressed by images, (and it is this 'problem' that determines their selection), is how to stimulate change in deeply established patterns of bodily use. Barbara Clark devoted considerable energy to the task of developing 'suitable imagery'. It was not enough that an image be factually true, it had to be effective. Images must be attractive to act as a 'hook' or lure for the nervous system as Andre Bernard describes it (1997:31). According to Bernard, Clark's special gift was the capacity to generate evocative imagery.

The term 'image' has developed a specialised meaning in ideokinetic and Release work. It is not exclusively visual. The following image, recorded in Barbara Clark's notebooks affords some insight into the flexibility and poetry of Mabel Todd's application of anatomical knowledge.

> For the week think about mass consciousness. Lower body is a living active mass. Holding to it two other masses – the legs. Resting on it another mass – the upper body. Think of molecular freedom all through the mass ... Think of sun shining through particles, separating them. Get more separation between particles. Mass consciousness instead of line consciousness. November 19th, 1923 (in Matt 1993:303).

Some of the images that are commonly used to suggest kinaesthetic sensation are anatomically based and they point towards particular physical realisation (Fulkerson 1982). One such image is that of a central vertical axis or thinking length through centre. Images that integrate sensory information from more than one perceptual system seem particularly effective. An example, which engages visual and tactile perception, is the image of a long braid, visualised dropping down the mid line of your back. *Watch as the*

braid unravels from base of the skull to the base of the spine at the coccyx. Another example: Imagine a stream of water flowing down your spine. In partner work, the images tend to be simpler. The partner's hand provides tactile stimulus. The image is 'placed' in the body, given a location and reality, through the partner's touch. There is also a range of images which are not anatomical but which induce particular sensations or states of feeling: *In rest position, imagine the floor rising to meet and support your falling body*. This image constitutes the environment as animate; the floor senses and takes the form of your body as it softens to receive its falling weight. Some images promote specific kinds of spatial experience: *the air has substance and density – as you move through space, imagine your body forming an impression on the air*.

Images are both 'real' and 'imaginary'. They may describe and refer to physical structures, but they may equally invoke virtual entities, such as the line of gravity in the body, which has *effects*, but no location. The centre line is not a material structure but an idea around which a body may mobilise its energies. The anatomy that ideokinesis works upon and through is an *imaginary* anatomy, that is, the libidinally invested body schema. Thinking in images is a mode of thinking through the body, and images, in the context of ideokinetic practice, are emotionally invested thoughts. It is this aspect of images that is the key to their effectiveness in stimulating and supporting habit change. As Nancy Udow has stated: 'The image is not merely thinking about a perception, but is rather a re-enactment of that experience with the accompanying movement response. Thought produces action' (1978:36).

For Udow, imagery is not only a functional support for the dancer's technique or for movement exploration. Referring to Paul Schilder's book *The image and appearance of the human body* (1950) she suggests the value of ideokinesis as a means through which a dancer might cultivate a 'workable body concept' for herself (Udow 1978: 29). The ideokinetic understanding of images and their function is related to Schilder's notion of body image or schema, with its emphasis on the constitutive role of motion, rather than the later, visually dominated concept of *imago* as developed in Lacanian psychoanalytic theory.

The ideokinetic image is, in large measure, non-specular. Mabel Todd reminds the student of ideokinesis that images are to be incorporated – think *through* the body, not along the outside, she writes. Similarly, Andre Bernard encourages his students to 'become the image' (in Rosen 1997:35). In ideokinetic practice there is no distance between body and image, and one is not working towards a singular or unified body image but a proliferation of images. Ideokinetic practice suggests the possibility of a reconfiguration of the spatiality of the image-self relation. Unlike the mirror-image as elaborated by Lacan, the ideokinetic image is not held outside and at a distance from the body, so that a subject may take a perspective upon herself. As my discussion of the key elements of ideokinetic method has indicated, with its emphasis upon the tactile, aural and kinaesthetic, ideokinetic/Release pedagogy constitutes a distinctively different dancer. The Release dancer is not 'seeing' herself as others 'see' her, indeed, she may not be 'seeing' an image at all, but hearing it and feeling it, as she is prompted by verbal description. With its focus upon images experienced through the body, ideokinetic and Release practice intensifies a haptic sensibility towards space; space is experienced as co-extensive with the body.

Notes

1 These 'notes' are drawn from a larger project detailing the development of ideokinetic and Release pedagogy and its impact upon contemporary dance practice.

2 In the Balinese dance forms of Legong and Baris, for example, the student body is danced by the master teacher; the dance is put into the body of the student through the body of the teacher.

3 The hands on element of the work, entitled *Horizon*, which was developed with a group of students at the European Dance Development Centre is discussed by Karczag in interview with the author. See *Writings on Dance# 14* (1996).

4 Statement from Karczag's unpublished description of the Complex Movement Workshop, EEDC. January 1993. This workshop functioned as the preliminary, development phase of the later performance work, *Horizon*.

5 See "An Interview with Eva Karczag" in *Writings on Dance* #14. Summer 1996

6 The Constructive Rest Position – lying on the back, knees bent up to an angle of 90 degrees, feet flat on the floor – is a resting position which requires minimal muscle effort to maintain. The effect of gravity, and a relative positioning of body parts which encourages mechanical balance throughout the skeleton, act together to assist release of excessive muscle tension.

7 Sweigard: 'Fortunately there resides within the nervous system a good deal of innate wisdom which automatically chooses, if given the chance, the neuro-muscular pathways best suited to reach a given goal in movement. It is particularly important that this wisdom be trusted and affirmed in the teaching of movement' (1974:3)

8 A term adopted by Fulkerson in her first manual *The Language of the Axis* (1977)

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Shona Innes is a teacher and performer in the area of movement theatre and dance. She has taught Functional Anatomy, Improvisation, Movement Fundamentals and Ideokinesis for many years, principally within tertiary dance and performance programs. Specialising in the use of imagery and imagined action as a creative and therapeutic tool, Shona works in private practice as a movement and directorial consultant. She is also a teacher of the Alexander technique. In the following interview I speak with Shona about her developing interest in field of rehabilitation and how her long engagement with dancing and improvisation is informing this new context of movement practice.

INTERVIEW BY Elizabeth Dempster

A CONVERSATION WITH Shona Innes

ELIZABETH DEMPSTER *Ideokinesis may be only a small part of the experience and information that you are bringing to bear on your practice today, so I thought we could begin by talking a little about the different contexts in which you work. You currently teach movement in a university based performance studies program, you have private clients and there is the work you're doing in the nursing home. How did you come to work in that situation anyway?*

SHONA INNES Right OK. How come I'm working there? It is a nursing home but it's in a transition between being just a pure nursing home, like an aged care facility, and a unit which also works with people who need a slow stream rehabilitation approach, long term rehabilitation. It's Gardenview House that I'm working in, which is part of Melbourne Extended Care and Rehabilitation Service in Parkville. There are about 20 residents at Gardenview and about half of them are there on a rehabilitation program for periods of up to two years. The other half of the residents have been there for a very long time and have got serious, complex medical needs and they probably won't leave the unit. The Allied Health team works with all the residents, but particularly the residents on the rehabilitation program.

Who is in the team?

There's a physiotherapist, an occupational therapist, and a speech pathologist. I'm called an Allied Health Assistant and I assist the occupational therapist and the physiotherapist to implement their programs with individual people. The therapists work with the individual people and so do I. Sometimes I work with the therapist and the client and sometimes when the therapists aren't there, I work with them alone. And then on the speech side, there's a speech Allied Health assistant as well, so she assists everything to do with communication and specifics like swallowing. I'm there 19 hours a week.

And why did you go into that field of work?

There are a few different reasons I think. The primary one is to do with the fact that having done the Alexander training I find that the circumstances around teaching Alexander technique mean that most Alexander teachers are only having a few, a very few, number of students and it's not possible to survive on the income from teaching. It's really just pocket money and keeping the work alive in oneself. I think many of the teachers in Melbourne are probably teaching a handful, literally a handful of people and that's even teachers who have been teaching for twenty odd years. So the circumstances for Alexander technique have

changed quite a lot from say the '80s when a teacher could graduate and maybe be teaching fifteen to twenty lessons a week. That's not the case now. I'm speculating that the growth of all sorts of disciplines to do with the body, body and mind, are providing a lot of real competition for the Alexander Technique and many of those disciplines and practices are not educational in the way that Alexander and Feldenkrais are. I can't see this situation changing radically.

So my main motivation was to find a job where I could be working with individual people and their moving, which would also provide me with a constant income. The university work drops in and out and I've been doing performances and that's always ... it's just the itinerant situation I've been in for a long time and I just wanted to be where I felt like what I had to offer was being used. Up until very recently I felt like what I know about movement wasn't being taken up and it wasn't been taken up by people who really needed it. I really enjoy teaching the students at Victoria University for example, but they don't perceive a need for the work that I do... it's just something, it's a new thing and it's great, fabulous, but they could take it or leave it a lot of the time.

The people that I'm working with in the nursing home, they've never heard of ideokinesis or Alexander. They don't even know what I'm doing, but I can work with them and it's as if they are just soaking up the whole thing because it's exactly the right thing for them. It's working at a level and in a way that is right for their learning, so I feel like everything that I've got to offer is just being taken up. It's as if they are sponges for what I've got to offer and it's not only just on a physical level. It's an approach and an understanding about learning, about the learning of movement, about perception. So I feel that because they're highly sensitised – because of their injuries they become highly sensitised – you can work with the tiniest, tiniest things because they can perceive that quite often, not all of them, but a significant number of people can perceive the tiniest sensation or movement or movement intention.

Could you give an example of this process?

Well I became interested in one person there because I could see that he could understand everything I was saying to him... at least it appeared as if he could understand everything that I was saying to him and I thought okay, I'm going to see what can happen here. So I started working with him... he has tension patterns in his arms, which cause him to flex strongly and so to extend his arm is a major endeavour for him. I thought, well since he can think and since he notices things, maybe it's possible for him to direct his own activity and learn to let go of the spasticity to some extent. I'd seen him spontaneously extend his arm to push a lift button and things like that and I'd talked to his carers and they'd say 'oh yeah, he can do that when we're out'. If there was a real need, he would unfold his arm and do the action ... but when he wants to consciously initiate something it's very difficult. If he voluntarily wants to initiate an action and it's not an automatic response, then that's where the difficulty comes in. So I'm working with his ability to consciously unfold his arm, by releasing and softening.

What's happened just lately is that because we've been working together for a while now, I'm saying less in terms of talking him through the detail of the action. Because he knows what we are working on now, words tend to get in the way. So I'm not saying too much, just waiting for his body to respond to a gentle indication through tactile input. Just recently what's working well is that I'm asking him to think of a quality of lightness, his arm being light and floating up, and it's just incredible, he just gets it and his body gets it and he unfolds his arm and the whole thing starts to come together. I can feel his arm working as a whole and he gets a release of his breath; he looks at me and his eyes widen and I feel that he's recognised that something has happened.

So you are making suggestions about a particular quality of movement?

Yes, rather than talking to him about movement mechanics or joints and body parts ... because he knows what the movement is now and what we're doing, it's *how* he's doing it and how he can initiate it that's becoming the focus. So I think I'm working with him on initiating movement by thinking of a quality like floating or lightness as a way of getting him to use less energy when he moves. I'm learning a lot from working with him.

With another resident, I've been working with her sensing of movement, especially using the touch sensation to inform her of where she is in the movement. She likes to do her own makeup so I've been coaching her through that process and focusing on her sensing the touch of her finger tips or brush on her own face. The movement of bringing her hands towards her face is difficult because of her physical restrictions, but putting her awareness on something other than the mechanics of the movement allows more freedom and ease within her limitations. I've also been working with her on modifying the movement itself ...so instead of her moving the lipstick across her lips, we've been working on her keeping the lipstick still while she slides her lips across it, which is really a movement of her head turning.

There has been a lot of learning and letting go of old movement patterns in this process (she has been doing her own makeup for about 50 years) and especially the sense of using less energy, not trying so hard, the 'less is more' sort of approach. It's very involving, very stimulating ... because I can work at that very minute level with people and take the time, and my job gives me the time to do it. The nurses don't have that time and quite often the therapists don't have the time either to really slow down.

When you describe those responses, it sounds as if very intricate exchanges are occurring within a situation that is highly complex, and that has a highly complex history. In your account of these therapeutic exchanges I can hear traces of your own history of engagement in dancing. Perhaps now we could move back to mapping some of your personal history. You have been involved in dancing since you were a child, and you have thought very rigorously about what kinds of possibilities and limits that early exposure to dance training may have established for you. In your writing you have also addressed broader questions of the kind of cultural possibilities that are facilitated or closed down by that background (see Innes in *Writings on Dance 3*, 1988*). Later you became involved in modern dance practice, but when did you come across the ideokinetic work? I'm not intending to set that up as the starting place for what you're doing now but ...*

It was a big moment. I was in Sydney, a few of us – Eleanor Brickhill, me, Felicity McDonald was around a little bit – were working at Black Wattle Studios in Glebe Point Road, right down the end. It was a great studio and people there were trying to get something happening and classes were taught. Stephanie St Clair taught classes there and it was a tiny, little group of people, but you know, something was cooking. Anyway I think Nanette Hassall came and taught a class there one day and she mentioned the book *The Thinking Body* (Todd 1937/1972). Well you know, just the title nearly blew me over...

When was that?

This was about 1980, I think, 1981, somewhere round there. And then I wanted to work with Russell Dumas and I did do that and that was really the point where I took the work on. DanceLink had organised workshops with Pam Matt and John Rolland during that period, around the early '80s. I remember that studio in Sydney and then Russell went away with Steven Richardson and Keith March and they were touring *Mulamban Beach*. They were going to be away for a month tour and Russell said "Shona just have the studio, just come in", which was perfect for me.

I think that was 1983 and I spent a month in his studio in Clarence Street. I was there six days a week. I had just had a relationship breakup which was just totally devastating to me and all that I seemed to be able to do was this work, do this ideokinetic work and go through Russell's tapes and read the books and roll around on the floor. I devised all these little exercises for myself. Like I'd close my eyes and walk up and down the studio for half an hour just to see what happened and this went on for about a month. The day Russell came back from touring I was in the studio. He was just totally knocked out; he just couldn't believe it. I was standing up in the middle of the room at the time and he said "Shona, you're on your legs" and my whole hip joint balance had changed radically, among other things, and it was huge...

You were just working in a self-directed way with books, manuals, and tapes?

Yes, Russell had lots of things there, including tapes of Andre Bernard teaching long ideokinetic sessions – 45 minutes. I tried to do one of these at the beginning and end of every day there. I was having

cups of tea and having a sleep and then getting up and getting a tape or a book out and you know, I really did it as a discipline just to give myself some structure too, I really needed that. But the work was totally involving and it was a fabulous opportunity to get stuck into something. And so I worked with Russell for the following year and I think I came to Melbourne in March of 1984, because I'd met Anne Thompson in Sydney and she said "look, come and take this job". She was teaching ideokinesis and other things at the dance and drama schools at the Victorian College of the Arts (VCA). She didn't want to continue in the dance school so she introduced me to Anne Woolliams and it went from there. I taught Ideokinesis and Todd Alignment for three or four hours a week. There was a lot of ballet going on there at that time. And I was there for another twelve years doing that.

You went from this period of intense absorption in what we might call the re-making of your own body into a situation where there was a demand to apply it to dancing and performing. Then in quite a short space of time you have to make sense of it in a teaching context, communicating this new body of knowledge to young dancers. That seems like a lot of change in a very short space of time, with very different demands being made upon your understanding of the ideokinetic work. I'm wondering how you negotiated all that.

I was so involved in it, I just taught it very purely because I was still learning it myself. And I kept something that Anne Thompson had said about teaching as a constant reminder – which was to teach only what you "know", meaning an embodied sense of knowing. So especially in the beginning, I followed that advice quite religiously and it really let me off the hook from having to know absolutely everything about the subject.

But I could feel that there was a sort of inherent conflict in the dance school because what I was saying and what the students were being told in their other classes were quite often completely contradictory. I think I tried different ways of dealing with this in the beginning but in the end I steered away from saying anything directly; I thought, "I'll just teach this and they have to make sense of it themselves, I can't do that". And through all the early period I was really still studying and moving and working with the material. I was studying every week before going to the VCA to teach and I think I was teaching a little bit at Beth Shelton's and Geoff Hooke's studio that year too, doing those classes outside of the VCA (it was in Punt Road, remember the little hall there?).

I think I was doing my own practice as well, because I didn't really have much paid work and I was still in a state of emotional distress. So I'd go once or twice a week to work in the studio by myself, and if there was any studio time at the VCA I would just hang around and roll around and do whatever I did as well. So I was still working very much with myself, and the teaching was really about me working with myself, as it always is really. And I thought I was teaching very well then and I think that even if the students didn't fully understand what it was about, they were getting a very clear *something*, I could feel that much.

Also at that time there was a teaching course running at the dance school. There were people training to be teachers of dance. It was a very rigorous course and those students were highly intelligent, so I worked with them as well and they soaked it up; they were very challenged by it but I got a lot of stimulation and feedback from those people. I gradually got better at being able to communicate things in ways that seemed a little bit more applied, like applied to a dancer's situation, though that's never completely possible with the ideokinetic work...and that's what's not understood really, you can't apply it directly, it's an indirect approach. So I did do some good teaching, but I think the last three years I was there I shouldn't have been really, because I could see the writing on the wall and that nothing was really going to change quickly enough for me. And I was beginning to see where this work sat in relation to mainstream dance culture; it was becoming clearer to me. And I was changing. On a personal level I didn't need that approach or I wasn't working purely in that approach anymore, other things were happening. So I think I finally decided that it was time to stop doing that.

So when was that?

It was around about '95/'96, somewhere in there. Not that long ago. So that meant that in '94, '95 and '96 I think I should have gone, but you know, the security thing.

Were you teaching in the tertiary program?

Yes it was in the tertiary program. I never wanted to teach in the secondary program because in some ways I think it would be a waste of time and completely difficult, because the Todd Alignment and Ideokinetic approach is quite sophisticated stuff really – just too difficult for me I think and probably very inappropriate for the students. Jane Refshauge did teach in the secondary school but I'm pretty sure she would have used the ideokinetic work in a minimal or very modified way. Wendy Smith took over my job when I left in the dance school and she's still there.

And she works with Skinner Releasing?

Skinner and I think she does a bit of ideokinetic work as well.

And through all this time you were still involved in performing? Mainly improvisational work?

Yes. I was still interested in spontaneous composition I suppose. It's an ongoing interest and I was working with people on their projects, which is something I really enjoy. I have done some good things with people, different people – Jude Walton, Ros Warby, Bryan Smith and Claire Heywood. Claire and I did *About Face* directed by Rinske Ginsberg, which was a culmination of a lot of different personal historical dance things coming together and *The Last Gasp* with Rinske Ginsberg and Nancy Black directed by Anne Thompson. That was hilarious, a wonderful thing; and then Ros Warby's *Original Home* with Graham Leake, that was the beginning of '99 I think. Then I worked on a project of Cazerine Barry's at the beginning of 2000 and that was the last thing I've done performance wise.

When and why did you begin the Alexander training?

The Alexander training I did from 1995 through to 1998, so I must have applied for a retraining grant at the Australia Council in '94 and I got that, and then I started the training in '95. I think the motivation for that was that the ideokinetic work is just a ... I can't think of the words to describe what it is in the culture, but on a simple level I knew I couldn't earn any money from it. I was completely devoted to it and I had been for years and just loved it, but it just wasn't going to put bread and butter on the table. So I thought the only thing that's related to this, which has got some sort of public profile and history that is recognised by the general public, is the Alexander Technique. Plus I'd had a wonderful experience of it with Jane Refshauge and one of her teachers. The third year Alexander trainees get people to come in so they can practice and when Jane was training in the third year she asked if I wanted to come in and I said "yes". So I went in and she was doing some table work with me, and her teacher John Nichols came in to see how it was going. He put his hand under my scapula to show her something and it was just a totally mind bending experience. I could feel his hand as if it was my own skin and it was an incredible connection and my whole shoulder sort of moved out and away. It was very wonderful and I thought, "Well that's definitely something I don't know about". That was in the 1980s some time.

The hands on aspect of the Alexander Technique was the thing that I felt that I could really gain a lot from and it was something that wasn't emphasised in the ideokinetic training, though it does naturally go with it, but it wasn't a focus. So that was the other more technical thing that I wanted to learn. And I wanted to work with individuals and that was the big thing because I'd done a lot of work with groups, and I'm not fantastic with groups; it's not my preferred mode and hadn't been for years. I've wanted to work with individual people for twenty years and now it's happening and it just feels totally right. That was one of the reasons for the Alexander study too, that if I was going to work with movement and you know, people's *being*, I really wanted to do it on a one-to-one basis.

Given that you were steeped in the ideokinetic practices and principles, were there conflicts or tensions in how bodies and moving are conceived and practiced in those two disciplines? Perhaps the Alexander training was so absorbing that any difference in emphasis really wasn't an issue for you?

Yes, when I was doing the Alexander training I didn't think about the relationship between the two disciplines much at all. People did ask me about it though. Duncan Woodcock, the director of training, was really interested in anything I might be noticing about the differences and similarities between the two disciplines. I suppose consciously I was not thinking about it. I did feel that in order to enter fully into the Alexander Technique training and get the most out of it, I needed to (for a while at least) really let go of what I knew and what I thought I knew in order to experience the Technique as freshly as possible.

In some ways I needed to take this approach because I had already done so much work with my body/movement/self. Other students who had not done much work prior to beginning the course were naturally starting from a more naïve position. The main thing I'd say about it is that the way that I had worked with ideokinetic work was that I tended to work with parts of the body and I didn't work enough with integrating all of those thoughts. But that was part of my take on it, and not necessarily how the work is presented. On an emotional level I don't think I could cope with a sense of the whole of myself, I was still baby-stepping at that stage.

What the Alexander work did was talk more generally. It doesn't talk about specifics, even though it may sound like it does because it has "directions" – let your head go forward and up, so that your back can lengthen and widen etc. These thoughts are very general thoughts and there are not many of them, so that released me from thinking about my bits, my parts, my-this-relating-to-that. It became more about getting myself to a point where I could allow the natural wisdom of the wholeness of myself to manifest. The Technique really does that very well, so I found it a very integrating experience... it brought me together, it connected everything up without me having to think about it too much. It was a sensory experience.

Now when I look back at John Rolland's book (*Inside Motion: An Ideokinetic Basis for Movement Education*), I see that it's all there; he's asking you to think, he never asks you to think of *one* thing, you always bring it back to a more holistic sense, but it is still another thought. There's a series of thoughts, you know, spine is lengthening, while something else is happening, whereas in Alexander you're not really thinking of that sort of specific kind of anatomical detail. You might just let your back soften because of the feeling of the teacher's hand there; you can just feel your way through it really, and a lot of people learn that way and they're fantastic, easy to work with as well.

So there's my particular mental acuity that I had and it caused me go in a certain direction and that was great but the darker side of it was I think it kept me in a mental mode a little bit too much and so I tended to... I could fragment quite easily. So I don't think there's a real conflict there (between Alexander and Ideokinesis) particularly; it's my history with them I think.

So how does that insight influence the teaching you're doing now. Presumably it must be changing how you approach the business of working with ideokinesis in a group situation.

It has changed a lot. There are a few different factors there. At the university the groups of people I'm working with are very large. That's influencing what I'm doing. Also I'm getting older, they stay the same age. I think though ...especially this year, working with these big groups, I have been thinking "I have to work with bigger concepts, I have to work with a bigger thought here, about the whole, you know, (very cliched now) the "whole person". I'm thinking more about movement experiences and sensory experiences and the ideokinetic work is just sliding in here and there. I may actually change the whole focus of these classes I think and just de-emphasise the use of ideokinesis. I think it's great for people to experience thinking of an action without doing it ... but it takes a lot of exposure to that experience to really make an impression to the point where the person has a kind of "ah ha" experience you know, a light bulb goes off.

So the thing that I find in the university teaching is that I'm quite happy when people fail my subject in first year, because then they come back in third year and they walk in and they do one class with me and they say "oh wow, this is great to do this again"... They've had so much work in between time that they just get 100% more out of it than when they first meet it. And I don't think it helps... I mean I could try and just do forty-five minutes of ideokinesis but I'd have to send them out after that, they wouldn't get through it in the first place.

I could do a sort of Andre Bernard class; lie down for forty-five minutes and let's do the suitcoat imagery etc ... just do imagery for forty-five minutes. This is what I did when I trained myself. It's extremely rigorous and I do it really easily. I love working this way, but there are not many people who can do that. I think the thing is, you can't do it unless you've made the connection to the sensory result of an image. If it's still just imagery to you, just a mental event, then you don't know why you're doing it. If you can't feel that you're having a sensation, something's changing in you, in your being, as you think of this image or after the image is gone or whenever, then it makes no sense to you.

So until the students have made the connection to their sensory being, and made that connection between thinking and sensing, then it's very complex work for many of them; it doesn't make terribly much sense. There is the occasional person for whom it does make immediate sense, but they're in the minority. Still, it's good for people to have exposure to it, so I'm still doing it.

This year I also did some contact improvisation work. I've emphasised the hands on work, working with other people and working with gross motor actions. I still work with the developmental path material, which I've always taught in conjunction with the Todd Alignment work. It's very helpful in breaking down movement habits, which are constraining for people. I'm doing a lot more moving and a lot less stillness and thinking.

> *I think the process of ideokinesis* can *work for anyone, but for some people it will involve major immersion in the process (and a lot of time) before any significant change happens. And there is always that question of how the transition from imaging to moving is to be made. Mary Fulkerson, whose interest is in using ideokinesis as a facilitator of moving, for dancing, was exploring this moment of transition in her teaching during the 1980s. She used to say, "well you just move, you just do it, and you don't worry about it". And occasionally, occasionally, you couldn't help yourself but move, but that was quite rare because when you're lying like that in constructive rest there's not much impulse to move; you've actually set yourself in a position where the body is stabilised.*

Yes, it's an experience of equilibrium and among other things that's what you're looking for. With the Alexander Technique it happens often when people lie on the table and they just don't want to get up. I work with them for ten or fifteen minutes on the table and they never want to leave. The same sometimes happens when people are doing the movement classes here at university. There's an activity we do where one person stands, their partner gently 'kneads' their body from top to toe, then brushes down over all of their skin surface and at the end of that they look like they could stand there for two hours, no problems. Many of the students feel like they just can't move and they've almost forgotten how to walk. But then, you know, that's only a tiny window for them to see into a whole world of bodily experience. They want that experience to continue and they don't know how they can possibly have that experience when they're moving about. Because it seems that once you start moving then you've lost it, but you know, it takes a bit of work and repeated exposure to understand some of what's going on here.

There's a lot of things, mature aspects of the work, that I sometimes touch on, or it will just come up because someone's having a difficulty, but I really never get around to talking about the process of thinking and imagery and letting go and picking it up and involving yourself in an atmosphere – questions like what does 'engagement' mean, and what's this thing called 'concentration' and the actual manner in which one does ideokinesis or how one thinks. I rarely get a chance to really educate people on that level and that's a bit frustrating. Occasionally questions will come up that can't be answered except by doing the work for extended periods of time. Maybe then you can put ideas about the connection between your knee and your hip, for example, into a bigger context.

Part of the way to do that, I think, is to have the atmosphere in which one thinks and experiences that thought; it's not in isolation, it's within... well the only thing I get to say really in these group classes is about setting up the circumstances by which something else might happen, and you never really know what that thing might be. But when I read the students' writing, what I see is that they've gone into

mechanisation ... you know, if I do this, then I will correct my posture, and if I think of lengthening my spine then something very specific will happen. And I think, "Did I say that?"

I guess you have to recognise that that instrumental approach to the body is very dominant culturally. It's a very common way of describing a person's mobility, that is, in terms of efficiency, and perhaps there is something about the language of ideokinesis that tends to encourage that view.

We began by talking about the specialised therapeutic work you're doing in the nursing home and how in that context you maintain a connection with an artistic elaboration of body work (ideokinesis and Alexander) and with dancing. I imagine that your work is effective partly because your perspective is a distinctive one, formed by another history and environment. I get the impression that you don't particularly share the frameworks and definitions (medical, therapeutic whatever...) of others working within the nursing home/rehabilitation context and it is your difference from them which makes your interventions effective.

Yes, I think that's happened. I have a good rapport with the Gardenview physiotherapist that I work with. We work very well together. It's largely because she's very open-minded and has been really happy to have a new input on the work we're doing. "Whatever works – that's what we're doing" is her attitude. She's not particularly phased by something completely new and unknown to her. She has said, "It's great to have someone to come in and see things really differently". Well really I didn't know that I was doing that particularly, but she has been getting a lot from the way that I talk or the things that I notice. I think she feels that there are different ways to go about what we are doing there.

I did try dancing with a woman there. We were doing tangos and things up and down, which requires a lot of complex co-ordination and for someone who's had a brain injury to turn their body and turn their head in another direction is extremely difficult. But see, she was doing it a lot more easily because we were doing a dance.

It was funny and we did some balancing things and some mirroring things and just movements, just movements that didn't mean anything in particular, but she was really enjoying them you know. We were doing this elbow swinging one, you know that exercise from contact improvisation and she said, "oh I like this, I like this, it's like a washing machine". I'm going "yes, yes" and we did a lot of (what the physios call) good balance work. So that question of "what is dancing?" has suddenly become very pertinent. It was a real moment for me, just thinking "hey, dancing, what's that?" It's not automatic and it might be reflex; it's another paradigm, different from the other movement rehabilitation work we do.

I run what they call an exercise group once a week, which is quite difficult and again, it's the same problem, when the group is small, it's much, much better. Once it gets over about three or four people, it just turns into physical jerks and it becomes something else. I really see people getting a lot more out of what I'm doing when there's less of them and I can just direct them and suggest things and they get to work then. It's like they actually get to meet it, something in themselves encounters what I'm offering and sometimes there's a real meeting there, rather than them being moved around or having something done to them. It's a different orientation.

What I'm doing isn't spectacular, but I feel like I'm moving towards a different way of working with the residents, which involves more respect and more just looking. I think that's probably what I've brought to it; I can see things in people that other people can't see. The potential of either their attention, their consciousness, the potential to move, I can either feel it if I've got my hands on them or I can just sense it. And my sensing of people is different from other staff there. So I think that's making a qualitative difference in how I relate to them and that's maybe influencing how other people are relating to them too a little.

Hubert Godard

Gesture and its Perception

The perception of a gesture functions by a global apprehension and only with difficulty allows us to distinguish the elements and stages which ground, for the actor as much as for the observer, the expressive charge of that gesture. Each individual, each social group in relation with its environment, creates and is subject to mythologies of the body in motion. In turn, these fashion the shifting, conscious or unconscious, but always active, frames of perception. Dance is the pre-eminent site for making visible the disturbances where these forces of cultural evolution meet and conflict – forces which tend to produce and at the same time to regulate or even to censor new attitudes of self-expression and perception of others. Hence, gesture and its visual apprehension function on the basis of an infinite variety of phenomena that preclude any hope of exact reproduction.

Classical ballet, codified by Beauchamp in the XVII century, does not escape this problematic: in spite of the apparent conservation of its forms – arabesque, attitude, rond de jambe – the way these gestures are produced and perceived varies profoundly from one era to another. The slightest variation in body part initiating the movement, the flows of intensity organising it, the way that the dancer has of anticipating and visualising the movement she/he is going to perform, all these mean that the same form will not necessarily produce the same meaning (sens). Thus the appearance or shape of a gesture helps us very little to understand its execution and still less its perception by the dancer and the spectator. Confronted with this difficulty, the temptation is then to be satisfied with classifying dances by historical periods, geographical origins, social categories, musical preferences, by aesthetics of costume or scenic design, by shaping of body segments. In fact, all these parameters marvellously describe the container but they do not come near to the richly meaningful internal dynamics of gesture. We can, however, note certain constants, not in individuals nor the forms they transmit, but in the processes that operate movement and its visual interpretation.

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Pre-movement, or the unconscious language of posture

As Rudolf Laban, Erwin Strauss and others have brought to our notice, the erect posture, over and above the mechanical problem of locomotion, already contains psychological and expressive elements even before there is any intention to move or express something. The relationship to one's weight, that is to gravity, already contains a temperament or intention towards the world. It is each individual's organisation of her/his weight which makes us recognise without fail a familiar person climbing the stairs, even if we only hear them. Conversely, in situations of weightlessness as astronauts have shown us, expressivity is radically different because the fundamental marker that permits us to make sense of a gesture is profoundly changed. We will call 'pre-movement' that attitude towards weight or gravity which, simply because we are standing, already exists before we move, and will produce the expressive charge of the movement we are going to make. The same gestural form – an arabesque, for example – can be charged with different meanings according to the quality of the pre-movement which can vary greatly even while the same form endures. The pre-movement determines the state of tension of the body and defines the quality, the specific colour of each gesture. It acts on the gravitational organisation, that is, on the way the subject organises her/his posture to stand upright, and it responds to the law of gravity in that position. A whole system of gravitational muscles, whose action for the most part eludes conscious attention and will, is responsible for assuring our posture: these muscles maintain our equilibrium and permit us to stand without having to think about it. It so happens that these muscles are also those which register the changes in our affective and emotional state. Thus, every modification of our posture will intersect with our emotional state, and reciprocally, every affective charge will bring with it a modification, however imperceptible, in our posture.

Because their job is to maintain equilibrium, these gravitational muscles anticipate our every gesture: for example, if I want to extend my arm in front of me the first muscle to activate, even before my arm moves, is the calf muscle as it anticipates the destabilisation that the forward weight of the arm will cause. It is the pre-movement, invisible and imperceptible even to the subject her/himself, which sets in play both the mechanical and the affective levels of organisation of the subject. According to our mood and imagination the contraction of the calf muscle which, without our being aware of it, prepares the arm movement, will be more or less strong and will thus change the way it is perceived. A dancer's culture, her/his history and way of sensing a situation and of interpreting it will create a 'postural musicality' that will accompany and support, or belie, any conscious gestures. The effects of this affective state which gives each gesture its quality, and whose mechanisms are still hardly understood, cannot be controlled by intention alone. This is what constitutes the complexity of the dancer's work and that of the observer.

In Vincente Minelli's *Ziegfeld Follies* (1945) Fred Astaire and Gene Kelly perform a duet in precise unison. The effect produced from each of the dancers, however, is radically different. How can this difference be explained? In stop-frame the film shows us that in spite of their intention to produce the same movements, the anticipation of attack – the pre-movement – is the opposite for each: Gene Kelly first establishes his connection with the ground by a movement of the legs and by gathering himself together concentrically, then orients himself in space visually or with his arms and launches into movement by pushing off and then extending into the chosen direction. He organises his relationship to gravity from bottom to top, from inside out. Astaire, by contrast, always begins with a movement of orientation in space, with eyes, head or arms: this brings about, first, an extension, a suspension (which is excentric), then a disequilibrium which is subsequently stabilised by a movement of the legs towards the ground. He organises his relation to gravity from top to bottom, and from outside to in. Seen in slow motion Gene Kelly always takes off just a little later but arrives first, so much does this anticipatory concentration give him an explosive quality which is particular to the feline character of his movement. Astaire's style is more sustained in time thanks to his inimitable suspension. This flux of gravitational organisation which is in play before the attack will profoundly modify the quality of gesture and will colour it with nuances which 'jump out' at us without us knowing why. Thus we can distinguish 'movement', understood as a phenomenon relating strict displacements of different body segments – in the way a machine produces a movement – and 'gesture', which

writes itself in the space between this movement and the tonic and gravitational background of the subject, that is, the pre-movement in all its affective and projective dimensions. This is where the expressivity of human movement resides and which the machine lacks.

Heinrich von Kleist has described this phenomenon perfectly in a fundamental text, *Les Marionnettes,* where a *premier danseur* of the ballet and a member of the audience are talking. The dancer expresses a passion for marionettes: the dancer who wanted to perfect his dance could learn all sorts of things from them, he says, and explains: 'for we are affected, you know, when the soul is not where the centre of gravity of the movement is'. The dancer defines 'grace' as that state where there is no displacement between the centre of gravity and the centre of movement. The marionette is, in a way, the bearer of a pure sign simply because it does not manage its own weight: because it is suspended from the top of its body instead of standing on the ground its body parts obey a strictly mechanical law. In whatever manner the marionette is launched into space, the trajectory that its limbs describe around the centre of gravity is a perfect parabola. In contrast to man, the marionette is not subject to that affective hesitation which creates a distance between the centre of gravity and the centre of movement, the kinetic imperfection generated by the interference of affect(s). It is in this spacing between the motive centre of movement and the centre of gravity, in this tension, that the expressive charge of gesture lies. Kleist's dancer, critical of the mannerism of his time, turns to the signifying radicality of the marionette. In this case expressivity belongs with the puppeteer who creates the impulses of the centre of gravity, the puppet being a superb technician with whom these impulses do not interfere. The internal resistances to disequilibrium, which are organised by the system of gravitational muscles, will induce the quality and affective charge of the gesture. The psychic apparatus expresses itself through this gravitational system. It is through its investments that it charges movement with meaning, modulates and colours it with desire, inhibition and emotion. The resistant tonus of the gravity system is induced even before the gesture, from the moment an action is projected, and this happens unknown to the subject, being upstream of her/his conscious awareness. This is why movement professionals, dancers in particular, know that in order to improve, change or diversify the quality of their gesture, it is necessary to reach all of its dimensions including the pre-movement which can only be affected through the imaginary. It is this mastery of gravitational organisation and its modulations, proper to the work of dance, which permits Pina Bausch's dancers to radically dissociate two levels of expression, for example, to deliver a text while developing movement that bears a signifying charge opposed to what is being said. This distortion between vocal and gestural expressivity would be very difficult for an actor to attain because they seek a transparency between word, text and body attitude.

Postural attitudes as the place of history's inscription

What determines the gravitational organisation of an individual is a complex mixture of phylogenetic, cultural and individual parameters. It is a question as much of the trace of the passage from quadropedia to verticality in the history of humanity, as of an individual history embedded in a cultural environment. For the individual, apprenticeship in language parallel with an apprenticeship in walking organises her/his autonomy in the world – taking into account the complex risks in separating from the mother... Nothing less, finally, than the symbolic relation which will connect for the individual the postural attitude, affectivity and expressivity under the changing pressures of her/his milieu. Any change in the environment will bring about a change in the gravitational organisation of the subject or the group concerned. The body mythologies circulating in a social group write themselves in the postural system and reciprocally, the corporeal attitude of individuals makes itself the medium of this mythology. A certain representation of the body which appears today on all film and television screens participates in the constitution of this mythology. Architecture, urbanisation, spatiality, the milieu in which the subject evolves, will equally have a determining influence in her/his gestural comportment.

In Germany in the 1930s, interest in verticality and the conquest of new territories found two opposing outcomes. With Mary Wigman the emotive and prayerful attitude marks the affirmation of an ascending axial tension, which is however continuously linked to the exploration of an imaginative interior space contradicting this ascension in a perpetual redefinition of the boundaries of her own body. At the same moment, with the rise of the Nazis, another body writes itself around a solid axis: an armoured body whose fixed boundaries, leaving no opening for the variation of inner borders, will conquer other territories around the forces of another 'axis'. In terms of this power Wigman is decreed degenerate.

These two conceptions, one stimulating the imaginary, the other constraining it by an ideology, inflects the tonico-gravitational organisation which anticipates and accompanies each gesture, each corporeal attitude. Today, Leni Riefenstahl's films (*Gods of the Stadium* about the 1936 Munich Olympic Games), and those of Wigman, carry the trace of these oppositions in 'bodies-of-ideas'.

Dancers, who share the communal experience of the social group to which they belong, will work with this experience as a substratum of which their dance will be either the expression or the instrument of its questioning. The meaning attached to the modulations of weight exerting itself on the gravitational axis permits us to locate profound evolutions in the history of dance. For example, the development of the aesthetic of the Romantic ballet is tied irrevocably to a quest for elevation which is expressed in dancing on point, machines which carry the dancers into the air, and above all in a evolution of technique which over the years has elongated the body to the extent characteristic of the Balanchine ballerina (whose gravitational organisation is close to that which we have described for Fred Astaire, even though the gestural signs are different). By contrast, modern dance marks the return to weight, to the fall and bare feet. Nuances are then introduced in the transfer of weight which will become the centre of attention of Doris Humphrey or Mary Wigman for example.

There is no linear rule which would permit us to imagine that each disturbance of the social space immediately brings with it a visible and chartable change in choreographic production. Rather, we can observe periods of accumulation of aesthetic tension which can only find artistic expression much later, in the same way that a social explosion is the fruit of accumulations of tensions which one day attain a threshold which forces their expression.

Perception and the weightless regard

It is the complex phenomena of perception which, holding the reins of movement, also allow us to comprehend processes at work in watching dance. The other's movement puts into play the experience of the spectator's own movement: visual information generates for the spectator an immediate kinaesthetic experience, the changes and the intensities of corporeal space of the dancer finding their resonance in the body of the spectator. Since the visible and the kinaesthetic are totally indissoluble the production of meaning within a visual event does not leave the state of the body of the observer untouched. What I see produces what I feel, and reciprocally my corporeal state, without me being aware of it, (in)forms the interpretation of what I see.

It is the sensation of our own weight that enables us not to confound ourselves with the spectacle of the world. When a train begins to depart, it happens that we don't know if it is our train that is moving or the one next to us. In the case of a dance performance the eminently subjective distance which separates the observer from the dancer can vary singularly (who is *really* moving?) provoking in this way a certain effect of being transported. Transported by the dance, having lost certainty of/in her/his own weight the spectator becomes in part the weight of the other.

We have seen to what extent this management of weight modifies expression and we now see to what extent, for the spectator, it also changes her/his impressions. In the same way that weight organises the before of movement, it also organises the before of perception of the external world. When, by being transported, the look is less constrained by a weighted stability, it travels differently. This is what we might call kinaesthetic empathy or gravitational contagion.

This is a question of something fundamental: in the body of the dancer, in her/his rapport with other dancers a political adventure (a territorial sharing) is being played out. A new given of space and the tensions which inhabit it will interrogate the spaces and the tensions proper to the spectator. It is the nature of this transport that organises the perception of the spectator. It is thus impossible to speak of dance or more generally of the other's movement without recalling that it is a question of a particular perception and that the meaning of movement plays out as much in the body of the dancer as in that of the spectator. Thus the complex network of inheritances, apprenticeships and reflexes which determine the particularity of each individual's movement equally determines her/his manner of perceiving the movement of others.

[Trans. Sally Gardner]

Contributors

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Chris Crickmay is a writer and artist specialising in mixed-media installations with reference to the body. He originally trained as an architect, but has worked primarily in visual art and art education. He was head of Art and Design at Dartington College of Arts, Devon, England, throughout the 1980s. In 1990 he co-wrote *Body Space Image: Notes Towards Performance and Improvisation* in collaboration with dancer and dance maker Miranda Tufnell. Their new book (published 2003 in the UK by Dance Books) is *A Widening Field: Journeys in Body and Imagination*.

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