

The ALEXANDRIAN

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Editorial by Ron Dennis

This issue of *The Alexandrian* honors the memory of Frank Pierce Jones, whose life and work were dedicated to the Alexander Technique and its establishment as a legitimate discipline of the arts and sciences. We take this opportunity to extend warmest greetings and thanks to Mrs. Helen R. Jones, still teaching in Cambridge, Massachusetts, who gave both encouragement and assistance to the project.

In his introduction to *Body Awareness in Action*, J. McVicker Hunt wrote: "The name of Frank Pierce Jones must now rank right along with that of the originator in the establishment of the Alexander Technique."¹ This is a strong statement, and one that likely cost its author no little deliberation. The question of rank aside, the important thing is that F. M. Alexander (and for that matter, A. R. Alexander) have in fact had successors, in Jones' case a brilliant one, who have not only carried on but have also extended and deepened the understanding and practice of the work. This, indeed, is a main criterion for the greatness of an idea: whether it can sustain growth and development without essential loss of identity in hands other than those of the originator.

The issue is also an occasion to point up the relationship between Alexander and John Dewey, to which Jones devoted virtually his first Alexandrian writing, here reprinted in full.² Jones himself later considered this piece superficial in some respects, but to the present writer it seems to have stood rather better than worse the test of time. Also on the Alexander-Dewey-Jones relationship is Alexander Murray's note on the doctoral dissertation of the late Eric David McCormack, O.S.B.

An article on the significance of Jones' research by Richard A. Brown and a personal memoir by Lester W. (Tommy) Thompson complete the issue. Brown and Thompson were both pupils and colleagues of Jones, and their insights provide a new dimension to the historical record of their mentor.

The Alexandrian gratefully acknowledges the contributions of all the above-mentioned authors, and again of Mrs. Helen Jones, to this memorial issue.

¹p. xvi.

²Apparently the first was "Finding the Whole Person" (Review), *Providence Sunday Journal*, January 11, 1942.

The evidence that I have assembled has been drawn from the careful observation of changes that have taken place in myself and others and a search for mechanisms that would account for them. I believe the evidence fully supports the following hypotheses:

1. The reflex response of the organism to gravity is a fundamental feedback mechanism which integrates other reflex systems.
2. Under civilized conditions this mechanism is commonly interfered with by habitual, learned responses which disturb the tonic relation between head, neck, and trunk.
3. When this interference is perceived kinesthetically, it can be inhibited. By this means the antigravity response is facilitated and its integrative effect on the organism is restored.

*I submit that these hypotheses have face validity and are consistent with established principles of physiology and psychology.**

—Frank Pierce Jones

THE FRANK PIERCE JONES

MEMORIAL ISSUE



1905 - 1975

Biographical Note

Frank Pierce Jones received his B.A. and M.A. degrees in English Literature from Stanford University in 1926 and 1927 respectively, and his Ph.D. in Classics from the University of Wisconsin in 1937. Subsequently, he held humanities appointments at Reed College and at Brown University, through the years publishing articles on participles, metrics, the ghost stories of Montague Rhodes James and Anthony Trollope, and as late as 1968 inventing a binary-octal code for analyzing hexameters to demonstrate the similarities between the metrical patterns in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.

In 1940, accompanied by his wife Helen and their two children, Jones moved to Stow, Massachusetts, to enter the teacher-training course being offered there by F. M. Alexander. And, when the course was transferred to Philadelphia, he was persuaded to follow. He finished the course in June, 1944, and was duly certified. His research in the Alexander Technique was conducted at Tufts University, where he was a Research Associate in the Institute for Psychological Research and also a Lecturer in Classics.

Of lessons in the Alexander Technique, Jones is quoted by his pupil Tommy Thompson as having said, "Watch out, they'll change your life!"

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The Work of F. M. Alexander as an Introduction to Dewey's Philosophy of Education¹ by Frank Pierce Jones

Reprinted from *School & Society*, Jan. 2, 1943

In 1939 Dewey, in describing the way his ideas had in general moved from the abstract to the concrete, wrote:

My theories of mind-body, of the co-ordination of the active elements of the self and of the place of ideas in inhibition and control of overt action required contact with the work of F. M. Alexander and in later years his brother, A.R., to transform them into realities.²

The two Alexanders are Australians who, for many years in England and later in the United States (where they are at present), have been engaged in teaching a basic technique whose purpose is to provide the individual with a means for bringing all of his activity under conscious, reasoned control. It was the older brother, F.M., by whom the technique was first worked out and the books describing it written.³ At his first meeting with Dewey in 1916 the two discovered that their thought had much in common. Soon afterward Dewey began to have lessons in the technique and continued to have them at intervals for many years. During this period he wrote introductions to the first three of Alexander's books, and these, together with the chapter on Habits and Will in *Human Nature and Conduct*, still provide the best general introduction to Alexander's work.

Alexander's approach, in contrast with Dewey's, has always been from the concrete to the abstract. With him practice has preceded theory, and his work may be described as an educational technique which forms the practical counterpart of Dewey's educational philosophy. Where Dewey has mapped out the role that education must play if reflective thought is to be employed for the solution of human problems, Alexander has demonstrated a method by which the individual can learn how to contribute to this end by making intelligence rather than instinct and habit the dominant factor in his own behavior. The success of the method is due to the discovery of a scientific principle which, as Dewey says, "makes whole all scientific discoveries and renders them available not for our undoing but for human use in promoting our constructive growth and happiness."⁴

The difficulty of describing Alexander's work lies in the fact that mastery of the technique brings with it a change in sensory appreciation and makes possible continuously new experiences in the use of the self. A new experience, however, can never be conveyed to another by words alone. To use Dewey's example, it is like trying to describe color to a man who has been blind from birth.⁵ All that can be done is to define the conditions that must be satisfied before the experience can be had, and then invite others to have it for themselves. That is what Alexander has done. Those who have accepted the invitation report that with the new control over themselves they find an increasing simplicity, order, and meaning in the total pattern of their behavior, together with an increasing freedom from "the tyranny of sense stimuli and habit."⁶

The control of the self which Alexander teaches is based upon a true understanding of how the human organism functions as a whole. In the field of comparative anatomy Magnus and his school have shown that the animal is instinctively maintained in a state of muscular equilibrium which provides the maximum of efficiency in activity. The primary control of the mechanism, which consists in the preservation of a certain relativity between the head and the neck, they described as the "tonic neck reflexes."⁷ It was observed that these reflexes, which are always operative in animals, were seldom found in adult man, but so far as I know no explanation was advanced to account for this important difference between man and the other vertebrates. Years before Magnus, however, Alexander had recognized the existence of the primary control, observed its almost

universal misuse, and perfected a method of restoring it to conscious employment. The steps which he followed, satisfying, Dewey said, "the most exacting demands of scientific method,"⁸ are set forth in detail in *The Use of the Self*. And this account of the procedure that led to the discovery provides, next to actual lessons from a competent teacher, the best understanding of what the work is.

Early in a career of speaking and acting, Alexander's voice began to fail him during his professional engagements, though it gave him no trouble at other times. Since the doctors could find nothing organically wrong he decided that what he had done with his voice during the recitation itself caused it to fail, and he set out to watch himself in a mirror in the hope of finding out what he did that was wrong. Gradually he became aware that as he recited tension increased in the muscles of his neck and his head was pulled backward and down. When the pull reached a certain intensity his voice failed him entirely. Later he observed that this downward pull of his head was present in some degree in everything he did, and he concluded that this affected adversely the movement of the organism in general. If this was true, he argued, then what he must do first was to restore and maintain the right relationship between his head and neck. But when he set out to do it he discovered that he did not know what "right" was and that any attempt by direct means to do what he felt was right resulted only in another kind of wrong, for he could see by the mirror that when he felt that he was putting his head up he was actually pulling it further down.

It is a well-known fact that our senses deceive us about external nature, but Alexander was the first to discover the extent to which they deceive us about the use of ourselves. And as in other sciences no progress was made until investigators ceased to rely upon sense data alone, so Alexander got nowhere until he gave up trying to do what "felt right" to him. In his case, he argued, every example of "doing" was associated with wrong use and unreliable sensation. Hence, for discovering a new use, any procedure that involved doing what he felt to be right must be worthless and could result only in what was already known. The only possible way out of the maze was by "not-doing." If he could check his immediate response to any stimulus by refusing to pull his head down and if he could maintain this refusal in activity, a new use would take its place. And so it proved. Using infinite patience and determination in the face of continued disappointment, he eventually worked out a technique by which he could inhibit the impulse to pull his head down. When he had succeeded, a new use (the tonic neck reflexes of Magnus) took its place; and this proved to be the mechanism conditioning all other reflexes and thus controlling psycho-physical activity. As the new use became familiar, bad habits and functional disorders associated with the old use gradually disappeared.

When he came to teach others what he had learned he discovered that the misuse of the primary control had in varying degrees become universal among civilized men and in the process had engendered an infinity of faults and ailments. His system differs from all other systems, either educational or therapeutic, in that it calls primarily for the prevention of the wrong done in the use of the self and is not aimed at teaching specific skills or curing specific defects. All improvement is indirect, a by-product, as it were, of the change in general use. And the primary means by which the change is effected is prevention through inhibition. Now, the word "inhibition" carries unfortunate connotations to many people, who make it synonymous with "taboos" and "suppression." In Alexander's Technique, however, inhibition is simply "the postponement of immediate action upon desire until observation and judgment have intervened"; which Dewey has called the "crucial educational problem."⁹ When the individual has mastered it he is freed from dependence upon the habitual and familiar and is provided with reliable means which lead to new sensory experiences in the solving of new problems.

The prestige of Dewey's name has attracted to the work many who might otherwise not have heard of Alexander. But it is not generally

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A Note on E. D. McCormack's Frederick Matthias Alexander and John Dewey: A Neglected Influence by Alexander Murray

A Professor of Classics, engaged in research in an Institute for Applied Experimental Psychology, cooperates with a Benedictine Father to investigate the twenty-five-year-long connection between America's most influential secular philosopher and an Australian actor-turned-teacher.

Not the synopsis of an Agatha Christie novel, but the story of eighteen months of painstaking detective work amassing hitherto unavailable evidence, presented before a distinguished committee of twelve scholars at the University of Toronto in October 1958. It was pronounced worthy of a Ph.D.

Those familiar with the Alexander Technique will be aware of the diversity of interests which it brings together. It is indeed fortunate that Father Eric McCormack was encouraged to complete his thesis on Alexander and Dewey, and that his mentor was Frank Pierce Jones.

Helen Jones has made available to me the working correspondence of the two men for which I am extremely grateful. Their humility and sincerity is everywhere apparent. Frank Pierce Jones' article in *School and Society* which stimulated the interest of Father McCormack, was judged "superficial" by its author. Jones wrote: "At that time [1943] I did not fully understand the significance of Alexander's discovery, and though Dewey read and approved of my article, my knowledge of his writings was very limited."

Of his thesis (submitted at the last minute—half-an-hour before the deadline) Father McCormack wrote: "If I weren't about to do the thing over again from the bottom up, I'd be pretty discouraged with the result."

Unhappily he died in 1963 before he was able to produce a work which he considered did justice to the subject. Fortunately others do not share his own negative evaluation of the thesis and it is hoped that in the foreseeable future it will be published with the support of the Center for Dewey Studies in Carbondale.

Many of the problems facing Father McCormack in 1958 have been eliminated in the last two decades. John Dewey is well served by the Dewey Center, a mine of information and material. Frank Pierce Jones' account of his own work, *Body Awareness in Action* which appeared in 1976, one year after his death, contains the key to many of Father McCormack's perplexities.

In spite of the latter's reticence in allowing others to examine his thesis (he withheld it from Inter-Library Loan for three years following its completion) it has not been without influence, witness a recently published paper by Don Dixon, "The Place of Habit in the Control of Action" (*Journal for the Theory of Social Behavior*, 10, 3), which I strongly recommend to those interested in the interaction of John Dewey and F. M. Alexander.

The following excerpts from the abstract of Father McCormack's thesis, which give an indication of its significance, are published by kind permission of Saint Vincent Archabbey, Latrobe, Pennsylvania, his literary executors:

"In his eightieth year John Dewey said that he owed the concrete form of certain of his ideas to contact with the work of F. M. Alexander and his brother, A. R. Alexander. These ideas, previously held abstractly, were his 'theories of mind-body, of the coordination of the elements of the self and of the place of ideas in inhibition and control of overt action.' . . .

"Dewey encountered F. M. Alexander and his teachings at a moment in his life which was critical both personally and doctrinally. In Alexander's terms, he was badly coordinated physically, and he had undergone a personal crisis in connection with his views on

World War I. Doctrinally he was at a turning point in his philosophical development. The newer physiological psychologies, especially the behaviorist movement initiated by John B. Watson, the new social psychology, and the ethical issues connected with and following upon World War I were among the influences which caused Dewey to re-think his philosophical position at this time. This turning point, which has been noted by Ratner and Allport, the thesis places between the years 1915 and 1919, the period of Dewey's first meeting and early association with F. M. Alexander. . . .

"In the fifth and final chapter the importance of some aspects of Alexander's doctrine for Dewey's philosophy is taken up. Particular attention is given to two basic theses of Alexander which, if scientifically warranted, would have far-reaching implications for the whole of Dewey's thought. These are (1) that all or most of the civilized world suffers from faulty and deceptive 'sensory appreciation,' and (2) that there exists in man a basic integrating mechanism which normally would coordinate all bodily activities, and which Alexander discovered, described, and employed in his technique. . . .

"In some of his writings Dewey inclines to support Alexander's assertion that unless modern man rectifies his sensory appreciations and brings his actions under conscious control, civilization cannot survive. Yet Dewey shows sustained interest in having the incidence of these sensory defects investigated by traditional scientific techniques. Likewise, he is cautious about committing himself to the existence of the 'primary control' until men of accepted scientific status connect it with the laboratory researches of Magnus which showed a similar mechanism in lower animals. It is probable that Dewey's enlistment of orthodox scientific resources was in the interest of promoting the communicability and development of the technique, rather than for the purpose of demonstrating its validity.

"Especially from 1923 onward, Dewey insisted on the strictly scientific validity of Alexander's discovery and method. In declaring the technique scientific, he appears to mean no more than that it satisfies the 'five steps' characteristic of any valid inquiry. Stressing the necessity of direct (i.e., sensory) observation, he points out that scientists themselves can perform no reliable observation if their sensory appreciation is unreliable. Hence there is need for universal application of Alexander's principles, which 'bear the same relation to education that education [itself] bears to all other human activities.'

"Knowledge itself seems to be under grave challenge if Alexander's thesis about sensation is correct. One dilemma that appears is that if knowledge is tested by consequences, it must be tested in terms of knowledge already acquired. What then is the test of these habits? If one asks what warrants the antecedent conditions of knowledge as Alexander states them, the reply that consequences do this seems no adequate answer, since it is the meaning of the consequences that is in question. When Dewey's view of the social character of knowledge and science is recalled, the dilemma appears more serious.

"The incommunicability in words of the new type of sense experience involved in Alexander's technique constitutes a further difficulty, which not only retards the spread of the method, but also its acceptance as scientific. Dewey acknowledged this incommunicability, and also asserted that the method was scientific. It is suggested that the apparent discrepancy between these two statements accounts in part for Dewey's hesitation to commit himself more completely to Alexander's theories in his books, and accounts also for his constant efforts to establish scientific communication about the technique, and to have it linked with the relevant body of established scientific knowledge."

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On the Significance of the Research of Frank Pierce Jones

by Richard A. Brown, Ph.D.

In his book, *Body Awareness in Action*, Frank Jones quotes Galileo: "At times also I have been put to confusion and driven to despair of ever explaining something for which I could not account but which my senses told me to be true." Galileo was tried for heresy, because the experimental evidence obtained with his telescope contradicted the established authority of the church. As an example of the conflict between argument by authority and argument by empirical evidence, his case is a landmark in the history of science.

At a trial in South Africa in 1948, medical authorities, including several Nobel prize-winning scientists, testified regarding the validity of the Alexander Technique. Some of these authorities had had no direct experience with the Alexander Technique. Reliance on the testimony of such authorities misses the point that scientific proof depends upon reproducible demonstrations, not famous names.

In this context, in the late 1940's, Frank Jones found himself gradually propelled toward making a scientific investigation of the Alexander Technique. He was given strong encouragement by John Dewey. Dewey had argued that Alexander's work was "scientific in the strictest sense of the word," and that he had "never carried his formulation beyond the point of demonstrated facts." Although Alexander demonstrated a scientific attitude in his description of his discoveries and in conducting lessons, he resisted Dewey's idea of a study in which modern technologies were used to investigate the technique. Dewey felt that Alexander's work was based on a demonstrable psychophysical principle and that this separated him from the "miracle-mongers" who point to testimonials of specific cures and develop large cult followings. Jones' mission was not to demonstrate loyalty to Alexander but to demonstrate the mechanisms responsible for Alexander's findings in a fashion acceptable to the scientific community. To do this he utilized (and in some cases developed) an impressive variety of instruments and techniques.

In addition to John Dewey, Frank Jones received the support of numerous other colleagues in the academic community. These included psychologists Harold Schlosberg and J. McVicker Hunt, his colleagues at Brown University, and neurophysiologist Greyson McCouch of the University of Pennsylvania. For a time, it looked as if Jones was going to work in the medical establishment. He took courses at the Harvard Medical School, including physiology with Paul Chatfield and anatomy with Don Fawcett. He consulted well-known Harvard physicians, including Arlie Bock, G. Stanley Cobb, and D. Denny-Brown. When plans for an investigation at the Massachusetts General Hospital failed to work out, Jones ultimately found his niche at Tufts University, in the Institute for Applied Experimental Psychology.

Tufts provided Jones with a setting for establishing the Alexander Technique within the context of psychology. With the support of John Hanson, Mason Crook, and other colleagues, and funded by the Carnegie Corporation and the U.S. Public Health Service, Jones began a career as a researcher. In a series of over 30 publications, he described the Alexander Technique in a language acceptable to the scientific community, using operational terms such as "set," "inhibition," and "postural reflexes."

One of the most remarkable things about Jones' research at Tufts was the diversity of instruments and techniques that he used for documenting the effects of the Alexander Technique. Through extensive reading, he kept abreast of current knowledge, and he was always open to trying creative, new approaches. Perhaps because of its creativity, Jones' research was difficult to categorize. He was fond of

quoting Aldous Huxley, who said the university needs more people who are not stuck in any one academic pigeonhole but are free to run along the woodwork between the pigeonholes. Dr. John Hanson, Jones' long-time collaborator at Tufts, reports that the inability to pigeonhole Jones' work was sometimes a problem when grant review committees were selected to evaluate research grant proposals for funding.

Some of the approaches which Jones drew on included sensory and perceptual psychology, psychophysiology, photography, human factors engineering, and physics. To characterize the kinesthetic sense of lightness, Jones used an adjective checklist that he developed with advice from Harold Schlosberg. To quantify effort judgments, he used the method of magnitude estimation, a procedure borrowed from sensory psychophysics. From perceptual psychology he employed procedures for measuring subjective eye level.

He made extensive use of psychophysiological recording of activity from the muscles, heart, brain, etc. His first study showed a reduction in neck muscle activity using the Alexander Technique. Although he never documented effects of the Alexander Technique on other indices, he published a paper on heart-rate and small postural changes.

One of Jones' most creative achievements was his use of photography to quantify movement patterns. While watching dancers at the Roxy Theatre in New York, he was struck with the inspiration for color-coding multiple-image photographs by rotating colored filters in front of the camera lens. This ultimately led to coverage in *Life* and *Science* magazines, and a fascinating article in a photography journal tracing the history of the multiple-image technique. By using this technique to analyze velocity, acceleration, and trajectory data, he was able to find physical correlates to the experience of smooth and coordinated movement reported on the adjective checklist.

In a full-scale statistical study at Tufts Dental School and in several small-scale ones, Jones used X-ray photography to document anatomical changes with the Alexander Technique. These included a forward movement of the center of gravity of the head and an increase in intervertebral distance.

The inspiration for the strain-gauge force-platform came from a client who used a large industrial scale to look at the quality of the sit-to-stand movement. James O'Leary, a Tufts University engineer, came up with a simple design that could be used to record changes in force on a polygraph. Along with photographic and physiological recording techniques, this made possible a multidimensional analysis of movement patterns.

As new technologies became available Jones found ways of applying them in his research. His last published experimental study used the voice print or sound spectrograph technique to show improvements in the voice quality of a singer. When the Psychology Department obtained videotape equipment, he made use of it in his classes. Two techniques which remained "works in progress" were a procedure for recording patterns of pressure on the soles of the shoes and a device for recording subtle hand pressures. The former procedure was inspired by the observation that the soles of his shoes had to be replaced less often. A strain-gauge hand pressure device was built but never perfected or used in experiments.

A modest man, Frank Jones was an inspiration to those faculty and students who made his acquaintance. Under his supervision, five graduate students conducted master's thesis and doctoral dissertation research on kinesthetic perception. Marshall Narva collaborated in the first multiple-image photography study and used a variety of other human performance measures in his master's thesis. John Hanson looked at developmental changes in movement patterns in his doctoral dissertation. In her master's thesis in the Department of Education, Helen R. Jones examined postural patterns in reading and writing. My

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The Teaching of Frank Pierce Jones: A Personal Memoir

by Lester W. Thompson, M.A.

"... for we are not to imagine or suppose but to discover what nature does or may be made to do."

Francis Bacon
"The Advancement of Learning"

The Alexandrian has kindly asked me to write a personal memoir on my teacher, and former colleague at Tufts University, Dr. Frank Pierce Jones. I think of this memoir as a footnote to Frank's book, *Body Awareness in Action*. Frank's preference for the book's title shortly before his illness was "Freedom to Choose." His publishers no doubt felt that the infinitive left vague exactly what was to be chosen. And, admittedly, *Body Awareness in Action* is not an altogether misleading title; in fact, it probably attracts more readers than the one discarded. However, it was Frank's recognition of having available to him for the first time the freedom to make choices unencumbered by habit that persuaded him to continue having lessons. Subsequently, his realization of the implications of using that freedom as a means of expanding the whole range of human potential, learning and interaction led him to teach the work. Had he not realized almost immediately in his lessons with both the Alexander brothers the extent to which his very perception was governed by unconscious patterns of use, perhaps he would never have made such a commitment.

Frank likened his condition prior to lessons to the "monkey-trap," the self-inflicted predicament brought on by the instinctual refusal to let go, to hold on for dear life to whatever you feel is good for you, even though your motivating desires are principally governed by untrustworthy sensory appreciation. But the primal life force of self-preservation is deceptively strong, so the monkey sees the fruit inside the bottle, grabs hold of this life-sustaining, pleasure-giving fruit, and thus cannot remove his paw from the bottle of captivity: because he refuses to let go. Absurdly, the bottle defines the perimeters of his perceptive existence. And with no knowledge of how to change his situation, he remains trapped until a way out is discovered. Or else someone happens by and offers the solution. Clearly, the monkey could use a lesson from a qualified teacher.

Frank's illustration was not without application, for daily we find ourselves party and prey to the monkey-trap. And to escape, we can have lesson after lesson in the seemingly never-ending contest with our reactive patterns of unconscious behavior. Although, along the way, at some point Frank thought it was really up to us to accept the full brunt of responsibility for the freedom from habit the work offers us: to go on from there, and solve our own problems. For though we might have little control over the events in our lives, we certainly have control over our experience of those events, our responses to them, and how we allow them to affect us. Once lessons offer the freedom to choose a better course of action than the one habitually taken, we truly encounter the depth of our own commitment, not just to the work, but to ourselves and to those around us.

Frank suggested early in lessons that I make conscious use of my kinesthetic sense, the "muscle sense" that registers tension within the body, and which tells us about changes in tension that accompany physical effort, movement, and variations in our mental and emotional state, to discriminate between what was a constructive level of tension and what was not. He explained that we become accustomed through habit to gauging all our effort and corresponding thoughts and feelings by whatever faulty sensory standard we've allowed to occur. Yet, because it is what we know, and it "feels" right, we continue to perform the daily acts of our lives with unnecessary and disproportionate effort and energy. By making the kinesthetic sense reliable, we learn to recognize unwanted patterns of behavior, previously unavailable to individual conscious control. So, I listened with my yet uncharted "muscle sense" while he guided me through lesson after lesson. For a full year, I barely said a word. When at last I did begin to question,

invariably I would use myself in such a way that I would disturb the tensional balance of my head and neck which Frank had so skillfully restored two seconds earlier. No better off than the monkey in the bottle, I too, for lack of acceptance of a better way, remained in my own way. Frank's hands provided the necessary point of reference sufficient to allow me the freedom to reason a more integrative way of continuing to speak. Whether or not I chose to do so, however, was left to me. This availability of choice outside one's habitual realm of patterned behavior, and what one did with that freedom, intrigued Frank. It intrigued me as well. Still it made no sense to me how he was able to perceive when the directions were present and operable in contrast to my unconscious interference, and whether that condition was in any way responsible for extending the boundaries of my performance. That awareness I thought necessary if one was to trust the absence of what he customarily felt as a legitimate basis for choice.

Frank explained that neither F.M. nor A.R. "showed" him how to "use" his hands. A.R., in fact, remarked that since Frank was fully capable of using himself, he was certainly capable of using his hands. "But where do I put them?" quizzed Frank. "Put them where they're needed," replied A.R. Two years into the work, and I seemed to be missing something essential. Frank could not "show" me the answer since apparently one's hands were "used" in proportion to the depth of their own "use." But that was a subjective experience. I had encountered other Alexander teachers whose "use" of their hands enabled them to be skillful at conveying the working mechanism commonly associated with the Technique. Their lives, however, did not appear to be inhibitive of reactive response, certainly not in the sense F.M. considered essential to understanding his work. The ball appeared to be in my court. I needed life situations apart from lessons for determining whether there was a measurable difference in my behavior when I allowed the directions to be ongoing in contrast to when I interfered with them. Only then could I trust the absence of what I customarily felt to represent a better condition of use. Alexander anticipated my quandary, writing in *The Universal Constant in Living*, "This experience of passing from a 'known' to an 'unknown' manner of use of the self is the basic need in making a fundamental change in the control of man's reaction. . . ."

So I bought a seventeen-foot kayak. And for a period of four months from May through August in 1974, I would paddle several miles out into open ocean from Marblehead harbor, far enough away from land, and into swells large enough so there was always the clear and present reality of not returning safely unless I consistently made demonstrably effective choices. I found when I focused solely on gripping the paddle without being attentive to letting my head and neck retain optimal tensional balance with respect to the torso, that this invariably impeded my ability to sense much movement beyond what I could see. Though, when I had a sense of the presence of my head and neck, and consciously refrained from fixing them in place while I gripped the paddle, I perceived a movement of the ocean much deeper than the visible waves. Inhibiting what "felt" like the right move to make when I had no clear sense of the directional movement beneath me freed me to reason the most appropriate response, among many possible, to that one clear undercurrent of movement that was not likely to change course by the time I determined which direction to initiate with my paddle. That way, I could let pass the lesser force, while taking advantage of the greater, surfacing one. The latter proved time and again to be the measurably more appropriate one.

There were times when I thought myself mad, and I consoled myself thinking if I did join the "many brave hearts asleep in the deep," it would be nobody's use but my own that put me there. However, after four months I concurred with Frank, whose notes for the unconcluded fifteenth chapter of his book stated, "Some people read F. M. Alexander's books or have a few demonstration lessons and are fired with enthusiasm for a vague, general idea of 'non-doing' or 'end-gaining' which they deduce from their experience. Others close their minds to the possibility of a new experience and refuse to see anything in the work but a kind of posture training. . . . Both

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recognized that Alexander, in turn, can provide a unique introduction to the philosophy of Dewey. With a knowledge of the technique a person will experience a change in his manner of thinking similar to the change experienced by Dewey himself since he first came into contact with Alexander in 1916. As a result, certain of Dewey's basic concepts will have a meaning that they would not ordinarily carry, inasmuch as they need not be accepted merely as ideas but may be tested by reference to an experience that is mutually shared. Dewey's concept of "mind-body," for example, may seem perfectly reasonable and convincing to a student, and he may accept it as an article of belief; but he has no way of knowing whether it means to him what it means to Dewey. To one who has mastered Alexander's technique, on the other hand, the concept of mind-body carries with it a concrete reality, since he has learned the use of the actual mechanism that controls both "physical" and "mental" activity. In other words, mind-body to him is not an abstraction but has a meaning derived from knowledge of how mind and body operate as a unit. In the same way such terms as "habit," "inhibition," "thinking in activity," and "education as growth" are not merely ideas but realities whose meaning has been verified in operation, so that not only are the conditions under which they can occur understood but also the consequences to which they lead.¹⁰

No philosopher has ever held out so high a hope as John Dewey of the future greatness of man. Not that he is a believer in gradual and inevitable betterment by a kind of moral evolution. On the contrary, no one has described so accurately as he the danger that faces us if our present method of solving our problems is not changed. But, though under no illusions about human nature, he has understood better than any one else what man might become if his potentialities for good were only realized; and he has inspired a whole generation by his insistence that the problems of human relations can be solved by the same method that is successfully solving the problems of external nature. In the past, philosophy has had a bad name with the general public because it has never provided a sure bridge from theory to practice. And attempts to make use of philosophical precepts in daily living have resulted too often in cynical disillusionment. Unlike other philosophers, however, Dewey has in the technique of Alexander a method for translating his philosophy into experience. And the student has a reliable means for knowing, in spite of the gloom of the contemporary scene, that Dewey's premises are sound and that man has within him the key to his own salvation.

¹In a letter to the author, Dr. Dewey approved of this article and of its publication in *School and Society*.

²"Biography of John Dewey" in *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, Northwestern Univ., Evanston & Chicago, 1939, pp. 44-5.

³*Man's Supreme Inheritance* (1910; rev. ed. 1918); *Constructive Conscious Control of the Individual* (1923); *The Use of the Self* (1932); *The Universal Constant in Living* (1941).

⁴*Constructive Conscious Control*, Introduction, p. xxxii.

⁵"Experience, Knowledge and Value" in *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, p. 547.

⁶Cf. *How We Think*, p. 200: "The prime necessity for scientific thought is that the thinker be freed from the tyranny of sense stimuli and habit, and this emancipation is also the necessary condition of progress."

⁷Their work is published only in German, but there is a good summary by J. G. Dusser de Barenne in *A Handbook of General Experimental Psychology*, Worcester: Clark Univ. Press, 1934, pp. 204-46.

⁸*Constructive Conscious Control*, p. xxvi.

⁹*Experience and Education*, p. 81.

¹⁰Cf. John L. Childs on the "meaning of events" in "The Educational Philosophy of John Dewey," *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, p. 425.

*The form of Jones' original footnotes has been modified along the lines of current citational practice, i.e., book titles are italicized rather than enclosed in quotation marks; the actual text is unchanged.—Ed.

Brown (continued from p. 4)

own master's thesis looked at the effect of the Alexander Technique on response to experimental pain. In my doctoral dissertation, I employed several mood scales, as well as a scale based on Jones' adjective checklist, to evaluate the effects of the Alexander Technique and manipulations of expectations. In another Tufts thesis, presented to the Music Department, Joe Armstrong used videotapes to assess the stress of concert pianists during their performances, as well as the use of the Alexander Technique in alleviating this stress.

The legacy of Jones' 26 years of research is now on deposit at the archives of the Tufts University Library. The collection includes published and unpublished research reports, photographic materials, and a reprint collection. An Alexander Technique Association of New England has been established to foster dissemination of this information, and to encourage further research.

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interpretations miss the significance of the work completely. You can be wrong about something in a great variety of ways. There are also a great variety of ways in which you can be 'right.' . . . What is more important to me, however, is the possibility of change in moral and mental attitudes and the extension of the range within which free choice and free will operate." Perhaps it is fitting that when Frank first sanctioned my teaching it was to work with the U.S.A. Olympic Rowing Team. Shortly after the Marblehead experience, Frank encouraged me to carry on his teaching, charging, "I think you can do it, don't you?" The choice was clearly mine—only to have made the choice carried with it an ever-widening responsibility.

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The Alexander Technique Association of New England

To foster teaching and research, and to encourage use of materials in the FRANK PIERCE JONES COLLECTION in the Archives of the Wessel Library at Tufts University, Medford, Massachusetts 02155

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