AN EXPERIMENTAL COURSE IN MOVEMENT PREPARATION FOR BEGINNING PERFORMERS

THESIS

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By

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This is a course outline for the first semester of movement training for beginning performers in theatre, part of a two-year course of study based on the Becque-Todd method of movement development. Emphasis is on a psychophysiological approach to developing new motor habits.

The introduction presents the history, background, basic premises on which the course is based, and the techniques and tools used. Each subsequent chapter represents a unit of work on a specific problem, each taking one or more class periods.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis describes an experimental course in movement preparation for beginning performers involving the principles and techniques developed and taught by Mabel Elsworth Todd and Don Oscar Becque over a period of more than fifty years, principally in the New York area. These techniques are used to supplement modern classes in acting and movement training now being taught at the university level in drama. This thesis is the result of actual practice over the last few years, in particular, at the International Stage Movement Institute held at Southern Methodist University during the summer of 1971, at workshops such as the one held at Hillsdale School in Cincinnati, Ohio, in the fall of 1973, at lecture-demonstrations before organizations like the Southwest Theater Conference and the American Theatre Association, in private teaching over the last four years in Dallas, Texas, and, most importantly, in classes held at Southern Methodist University during the fall and spring semesters of 1976-77, and at North Texas State University during the fall of 1976.

The Introduction includes the history and background of the Becque-Todd Method, develops the concept of movement as a basis for training actors, compares the Becque-Todd

Method to other techniques in the field, outlines the various teaching techniques utilized within the Becque-Todd Method, and offers a list of tools for teaching the course as outlined in the body of the thesis.

The chapters each present a unit of work which may or may not require more than one class period to complete. The chapters deal successively with the Functional Movement Questionnaire and the Body Image Test, introduction and background to the course for the class, sensing and relating body parts in the Non-Action Position, the use of imagery in the Non-Action Position, the Eight Lines of Action, awakening the pelvis, differentiation of pelvic movements, the study of thigh flexions of the legs, locating the leg movements in the thigh joint, the shoulder harness, head and neck placement, the thorax and breathing, the feet, and a final examination on the semester's work.

Within each chapter are both the material to the covered, and instructions to the teacher of the course. Emphasis in the chapters is on the process of teaching the course rather than on the content of the class.

In addition to the chapters, there are three appendices: Appendix A gives a Framework of Movement Materials which places this course within the full two-year program required by the Becque-Todd Method; Appendix B is a list of books

to be used in developing the conceptual synthesis for the course; and Appendix C covers the teaching practicum at Southern Methodist University and North Texas State University, offers recommendations, and draws conclusions as to the effectiveness of the Becque-Todd Method in an actual teaching situation.

Not only is the work to be covered given in each chapter, but specific teaching techniques are given to aid in implementing the work contained therein. But one word of caution: " . . . it is in the training that the problem of person vis-a-vis role is most poignantly put. To learn the exercises one must study with a teacher, not a book. And your teacher has had to have studied with his teacher; and so on (23, p. 129)." Just as in any other art form, one must have first-hand knowledge of the experience in order to teach others, even though one might not be the most virtuosic performer himself.

Background

The principles and techniques used in this thesis are derived from many fields including kinesiology, education, psychology, dance, as well as theatre. Artists today are the recipients of a vast amount of knowledge from the arts and sciences regarding the creative act (22). For instance, kinesiology, the science of movement of the body, has a long history dating back to Aristotle and relying on many of the

major scientific discoveries of history such as Newton's laws of motion and Vesalius' anatomical analyses (20, pp. 1-22). Pioneers in the field of education like John Dewey and in the field of movement arts like Rudolf Laban have greatly influenced this thesis. And the experiences of artists like Isadora Duncan in dance and Constantin Stanislavski in theatre are primary sources of inspiration.

More particularly, the works of Mabel Elsworth Todd and Don Oscar Becque are the immediate sources of the work described in this thesis. Mabel Todd was a remarkable woman who taught herself to walk after breaking her back as a young woman. She studied with physicians and scientists to learn the principles of movement and developed her theories "empirically through extensive experimentation" during the first half of this century (24, p. 6). She was the first to propose the "psychophysical or psychophysiological" (24, p. 6) concept as a method of teaching movement. Put quite simply, this approach states that the "idea of movement alone suffices to start all movement along its most suitable path (24, p. 6)." Jack Vinten Fenton rephrases it this way:

> It is very important to recognize that the whole crux of this approach is based on the principle that the thought of an action is sufficient to ennervate the muscles which habitually perform it. The mere thought of standing . . . prepared the muscles which habitually help us in this movement. If the movement is faulty, we must, as it were, wipe the slate of

> habit clean, start afresh, choose and develop a new and improved pattern (8, p. 7-8).

Hence, the name of Todd's book is The Thinking Body, in which she explores the anatomy, physiology, mechanics and dynamics of the human body in motion (29).

In addition to this book, Todd wrote articles mainly for medical journals and progressive education magazines (25, 26, 27). She was especially admired by progressive educators like Harold Rugg, one of Dewey's proteges, and he mentions her work in his book American Life and the School Curriculum in the chapter called "A Preface to the Study of the Body as the Basis of Education (21, pp. 374-393)." In it he states that "a mastery of the new 'body mechanics' or 'body engineering' . . . is now being developed," and that Todd is the foremost scientific student and successful practitioner of this new field (21, p. 393) moreso than the better known F. Matthias Alexander (1). Miss Todd, as her pupils called her, taught at Teacher's College, Columbia University, and it was there that most of her students studied with her, including Lulu E. Sweigard and Ida Rolf. In 1929 she published a syllabus entitled, "Balancing of Forces in the Human Being (28)," which was the precursor of her full book, The Thinking Body, published in 1937. This book is the primary text for this course as outlined in this thesis. As Sweigard said in her prefatory

remarks to the reprinting of the book in 1968,

> Thus there has been continued substantiation, both in more recently revealed facts and in research, of Miss Todd's concept of posture and the validity and effectiveness of her method of teaching. This method, however, remains as unorthodox today as it was when The Thinking Body was first published in 1937, which is possibly, an indication that the struggle between indoctrination and imaginative creative thinking is all too often long and arduous, especially in the field of education. (29, p. xi).

Don Oscar Becque developed his own methods and techniques of body and movement arts for professionals and non-professionals predominantly in New York City at the Child Education Foundation, Columbia University, Teacher's College, The Dalton School, Mills College of Education, and New York University. He was a part of such indigenous theatre landmarks as Provincetown, New Playwrights and American Laboratory Theatres. The focus of his activities was his own school in New York City, begun in 1928, where he built courses in the foundation of creative expression, embracing the fields of theatre, dance, expressive movements, body engineering, and aesthetics. He has also introduced body mechanics into industry and business; conducted a unique research program for the New York City Board of Education; appeared extensively as a performer, choreographer, and director in both dance and theatre; and conducted movement-oriented mixed media projects for school dropouts in urban ghetto areas.

As an actor, Becque performed in Twelfth Night, Scarlet Letter, and Sea Woman's Cloak under the direction of Richard Boleslavsky. He worked for three years with the original American Laboratory Theatre with Boleslavsky and Ouspenskaya. He has produced over five hundred solo and group choreographic works, spanning a twenty-five-year period. Many of his works have been performed on concert tours in various parts of the world. During this twenty-five-year period, Don Oscar Becque danced in concerts with his own dance company in this country and abroad, including the presentation of "Command Performances" at the White House during the Roosevelt and Kennedy Administrations. He also served as head of the Federal Dance Project during the New Deal of Roosevelt.

His recent activities have included work with the federal government on projects such as Jobs Corps and Teens-in-Action, and with New York City Youth Board where he worked with gangs of delinquents. He has also given lecture-demonstrations at various colleges and universities including the Dallas Theater Center, Southern Methodist University, Trinity University, the University of Oklahoma, and the University of Toledo.

He is one of the best known body mechanics and movement theorists in the country. He was the foremost student of Mabel Elsworth Todd and studied privately with her for

many years in New York. It was, in fact, his work with children at his own school in New York in which he meshed dance, theatre, gesture, music, and functional movement that drew Todd to him and led to their years of mutual experimentation. Because of his ability to move expressively, Don Oscar Becque has added a new dimension to the basically structural and functional movement work done by Todd, and that dimension was creative movement.

In 1968, Don Oscar Becque came to Dallas, Texas, to write a book on body dynamics, synthesizing his own movement experiences with the pioneering work of Todd. This unpublished work serves as a background for the course outline of this thesis. The author studied with Don Oscar Becque for more than five years and assisted him on many projects including the International Stage Movement Institute at Southern Methodist University in the summer of 1971. He is now teaching in New York City.

Movement as a Basis for Training

The physical preparation of an actor has always been important. With its roots in dance, theatre has used mime and dance as training and still does today. Interest in movement training in theatre schools and universities is intense as evidenced by the flourishing activities of the Stage Movement and Dance Project of the American Theatre Association. For example, in 1972 the Project sponsored a

workshop in international stage movement called, "The Flow of Life: Movement as Synthesis," at San Francisco State College, at which were included the following techniques or approaches to movement training for actors: Structural Integration, Rolf-Aston Structural Patterning in Stillness and Motion, Experiential Learning, Gestalt Awareness, and Motion Potential, Massage and Energy, Improvisation and Chance Choreography, Chinese Theatre and Dance Movement, Mime with Mamako, "Your Own Space" with Noel Parenti, Movement and Music as a Single Expression, Period Movement Styles, and Staged Combat. To quote the promotional literature,

> Inspiration for the Workshop's metaphor comes from Rudolf Laban's statement: "Performance in movement is a synthesis, culminating in the understanding of personality caught up in the ever-changing flow of life." Expertise in performance and a culminating synthesis are lifetime goals. The more modest aim of the five-day Workshop is to provide an environment in which participants will explore with eminent artists a selection of ideas and images which in various combinations may form a synthesis. How well-acquainted are we with advances in the science of movement? What human patterns may be identified in the various integrations of sensation, thought, energy and imagination? Workshop experiences are planned to lead to the individual's self-discovery of his physical and emotional resources for teaching and performance. A heightened awareness of the great variety in the flow of life and the infinite possibilities for making a creative contribution to life's values may result from this guided exploration of movement as synthesis (10).

Today, the concept of movement training for actors is generally accepted in academia, but ten years ago such was not the case. The new wave of theatre as seen in the work of Jerzy Grotowski's Polish Laboratory Theatre and Richard Schechner's Performance Group demanded new ways of preparing performers beyond the traditional dance, mime, combat, and gesture systems such as Delsarte. As Schechner points out, "All performing work begins and ends in the body. When I think of spirit or mind or feelings or psyche, I mean dimensions of the body (23, p. 132)."

Grotowski says, "I believe one must develop a special anatomy of the actor; for instance, find the body's various centres of concentration for different ways of acting, seeking the areas of the body which the actor sometimes feels to be his sources of energy (9, p. 38)." He further views the actor as "a man who works in public with his body, offering it publicly. If this body restricts itself to demonstrating what it is -- something that any average person can do -- then it is not an obedient instrument capable of performing a spiritual act (9, p. 33)." And, he culminates his thesis with the comment, "the body must be freed from all resistance (9, p. 36)." Grotowski lists Dullin's Rhythm Exercises, Delsarte's investigations of extroversive and introversive reactions, Stanislavski's work on "physical actions," Meyerhold's Bio-mechanical

training, Vakhtanghov's synthesis, and various forms of oriental theatre including the Peking Opera, Indian Kathakali, and Japanese No Theatre as the most important influences on his work. He developed his physical exercises and actor preparation out of his own synthesis of these techniques and others (9, p. 16).

Naturally, Rudolf Laban was a great influence on many theatre people in developing movement training, as seen in the reference to his ideas made by the Stage Movement Project of the American Theatre Association quoted earlier. He felt that

> Human Movement with all its physical, emotional and mental implications, is the common denominator of the dynamic art of the theatre. Ideas and sentiments are expressed by the flow of movement, and become visible in gestures, or audible in music and words. The art of the theatre is dynamic, because each phase of the performance fades away almost immediately after it has appeared (15, p. 8).

"The art of movement on the stage," he wrote, "embraces the whole range of bodily expression including speaking, acting, miming, dancing and even musical accompaniment (15, p. 4)." In The Mastery of Movement, Laban said:

> So movement evidently reveals many different things. It is the result of the striving after an object deemed valuable, or of a state of mind. Its shapes and rhythms show the moving person's attitude in a particular situation. It can characterize momentary mood and reaction as well as constant features of personality. Movement may be influenced by the environment or the mover. So, for instance, the milieu in which action takes place will colour the movements of an actor or an actress . . . A character,

> an atmosphere, a state of mind, or a situation cannot be effectively shown on the stage without movement, and its inherent expressiveness. Movements of the body, including the . . . movements of the voice-producing organs, are indispensable to presentation on the stage (15, p. 2).

Many teachers and writers on theatre see the need for movement training, although they do not agree about what it should consist of specifically. George R. Kernodle in Invitation to the Theatre, a widely accepted book, emphasizes the importance of the "discipline of intensive training" of the body and the voice: "The actor must learn to use voice and body together, to use the muscle tone of movement or potential movement to support and shape a speech, " he states (12, p. 396).

Robert L. Benedetti's view of movement is broader than Kernodle's, for he sees movement as not only accompanying the word, but superceding the spoken word in importance on stage: "Playwrights write for the human voice; the human voice is deeply involved in the body's musculature; the body's musculature is deeply involved in our emotional life and thought. The playwright's words and implied actions provide, then, a direct route to a fully living, vivid, and appropriate stage performance (3, p.89)." He goes even further when he states,

> All this indicates that the nonverbal aspects of our performance (the "dance" of the performance) is our primary tool. Furthermore, as we shall see later, the voice itself is only one of the modes of our total bodily expressiveness. For all these reasons, we

> begin our training program by concentrating on the body (3, p. 19).

Other writers on stage movement, like Peter Kline and Nancy Meadors, support Benedetti's position that movement training is the starting point for actor training, helping to increase the flexibility and communicative skills of the body and "thus help the actor to support the vocal and emotional aspects of his art with controlled movement (14, p. 1)." They also see the link between dance and theatre training:

> A strong feeling exists among some students of dance and of drama that no attempt should be made to combine the two media. That is because drama is primarily representational, whereas dance is primarily abstract. Whether or not the two can be effectively combined depends more on the inspiration of creative genius than on preordained laws of the performing arts. Our present concern, however, is the development of flexibility in performance, and this is achieved through the use of many exercises that apply only indirectly to situations that might be performed. The area of common concern to the actor and the dancer is the development of a full understanding of one's own body. The conditioning of it, exploration in space with it, and meaningful use of it are vital to the success of either (14, p. 40).

The connection between dance and theatre has been made before by such pioneers as Isadora Duncan, the mother of Modern Dance. Her influence on theatre through the dance is acknowledged by historians like Emory Lewis in his book Stages: The Fifty-Year Childhood of the American Theatre (16, pp. 13-14), and certainly Don Oscar Becque attributes the source of many of his concepts about movement to her.

Irma Duncan presents Isadora's view when she instructs the student of the Duncan Technique:

> All great art must give the impression of spontaneity and perfect ease of execution -- otherwise we would derive no joy from it and the same holds true for dancing . . . When at last you find your body strong, your movements well balanced and supple, then express yourself to your heart's content. You will then have a perfect instrument to work with and, I hope, inspiration enough to create really beautiful things (6, p. 34).

The analogy of the human body as an instrument has been made by many of the pioneers and present-day workers in movement training, and it seems to express the flexibility and range of ability necessary for performance. All of the workers in the field seem to be seeking the same thing: a body which has been transformed into instrument, totally responsive to the demands of performance, offering the greatest range of movement possibilities to the artist. Though methods vary considerably, the goal is the same, and it is the job of the teacher of this course to introduce the student to the various techniques available today, if only in a cursory manner. No single approach has all of the answers as evidenced by the shear proliferation of methods being used in theatre training today.

The Becque-Todd Method Compared to Other Techniques

There seems to be as many ways to develop this instrument of the body as there are ideas and practitioners, so what does the Becque-Todd Method possess that makes it different from the others? In addition to the techniques already mentioned there are many others including the Alexander Technique, Tai Chi Ch'uan, Aikido, Sensitivity Training, Delsarte, Laban, Biofeedback, Primal Therapy, and even Zen Buddhism. Some of these approaches are growth-oriented, some result-oriented, but they all strive to produce an individual who is integrated structurally, emotionally responsive, and mentally free of rigidity; they strive to produce an actor who knows himself and is in control of his instrument and who can then express himself through the medium of the theatre in all of its manifestations.

The Becque-Todd Method is a generic technique; that is, it is basic in its approach to movement development, assuming nothing and beginning at the beginning in movement. It develops body awareness and integration through what is called Structural Action, moving on to augment the individual's sense of balance and center by an understanding and experience with Gestural/Postural Action, and culminating in the full expression of movement through space in Shaping

Action (2) (See Appendix A).

These three segments of work, Structural Action, Gestural/Postural Action, and Shaping Action, comprise a two-year course of study for the performer. This course outline deals, primarily, with the first segment, Structural Action, which takes up the first semester of work and is applied to all of the work to follow in the Becque-Todd Method.

What does Structural Action consist of? Harold Rugg, in his book American Life and the School Curriculum gives a good indication when he says:

> Instead of despising the knowledge of the anatomy of the body the new program will be alert to guarantee a mastery of the new "body mechanics," or body engineering, that is now being developed. For example, by such scientific students and successful practitioners as Miss Mabel E. Todd and, to a less scientifically founded extent, by F. Matthias Alexander . . . Teachers will know the chief facts and principles and will be skillful in diagnosing and correcting strains in body management and movement. As Miss Todd says, they will know that "when poor habits throw the bony framework out of alignment it sags and bulges, slackens and totters, just like any other building that is defying engineering principles." Thus the body education of youth will be packed with the acquiring of accurate and useful meanings; youth as well as their teachers will constantly "observe how nature does her engineering . . . whether our purpose be better structural adjustment, better physical health or better voice production." The same principles will apply to the understanding of all other phases of the use of the body (21, pp. 392-93).

Most techniques spend little time on the realignment of bones and muscles to achieve balance. Authors such as Benedetti, Kline and Meadors, Edwin White and Marguerite

Battye in their book Acting and Stage Movement (30), and Nancy King in her book Theatre Movement, the Actor and His Space (13), spend a scant few pages on achieving balance of the structure of the body and do so with general exercises rather than specific breakdowns of the parts of the body and how they work with specific exercises as in the Becque-Todd Method.

The first part of this Becque-Todd Technique deals with individualization of parts, body awareness, body image building, and reeducation of the neuromuscular system. This thorough treatment takes place over a considerable period of time to allow for organic change to occur in the individual at his own rate of growth. As Sweigard points out, "Skeletal alignment and movement performance are completely interdependent. Improvement in the mechanical efficiency of either one automatically leads to improvement in the other (24, p. 5)."

The term "body engineering" or "body mechanics" is used because,

> Mechanically, the human body is a living machine. It operates under the same physical laws and principles as inanimate structures. No study of human locomotion is possible without a knowledge of the laws of mechanics, nor is an evaluation of the efficiency of a movement meaningful unless it takes into consideration the fundamental laws and principles of mechanics (24, p. 16).

It is, in part, this mechanical analysis of human motion that distinguishes the Becque-Todd Method from the others.

A second distinguishing factor is the "psychophysical" or "psychophysiological" process that Mabel Todd developed and validated in her research and teaching. "Movement is, of course, a neuro-musculo-skeletal phenomenon. The method presented here emphasizes its neural aspects; these hold the secret for securing and maintaining neuromuscular efficiency, with all its salutary benefits (24, p. v)." Sweigard elaborates on this point which is a key factor in this technique and differentiates it from most of the other approaches:

> This concept (idea of movement alone suffices to start all movement along its most suitable path) as a method of teaching was first proposed by Todd. Her basic premise was that "concentration upon a picture involving movement results in responses in the neuromusculature as necessary to carry out specific movements with the least effort." She derived this theory empirically, through extensive experimentation. As she said, "It may sound silly, but it works." She considered three factors as being essential for eliciting the proper response from an image to create the conditions for appropriate movement response: exact location of the movement, the direction of the movement, and the desire to move. She identified the process operant in her teaching as psychophysical or psychophysiological . . . Movement techniques of the arts must be fully mastered and performed with minimal physical effort before full attention can be given to the artistic rendition (24, p. 6).

It is the retraining of motor skills through the use of imagery that sets the Becque-Todd Method apart from most of the other techniques, except for the Alexander Technique, which also utilizes imagery to change motor habits. Jack Vinten Fenton, in his book Practical Movement Control,

applied the principles of both the Alexander Technique and Mabel E. Todd in teaching movement skills to children in schools in England with great success. He reiterates the basic premise of this approach:

> The effectiveness of an action, the absence of inappropriate muscular tensions, and the grace and poise with which it is executed are inseparable and are dependent upon the body being well arranged at the beginning and throughout the action . . . Inman (1952) has shown that the longer the resting length of a muscle, the greater the force exerted and the less the electro-myographic activity which accompanies it. The "strength" to maintain adequate postural relationships at rest and during movement does not come from muscle-shortening and over-contraction, but from maintaining a correct equilibrium between the various parts of the body. To attain this equilibrium, the patient needs to be taught to release superfluous muscular tension and return to a resting state in which the muscles are lengthening . . . Unless children and young people start with sound postural habits, exercises can do more harm than good . . . Curiously enough, American educationists who have been greatly influenced by Professor Dewey's advocacy of "learning through doing" have not taken equally close account of his insistence that postural education must be the basis if such learning is to be effective (8, pp. 19-21, 30-31, 8).

Valentina Litvinoff in her book <u>The Use of Stanislavsky Within Modern Dance</u> sees the imagery technique for the development of improved motor skills as what Stanislavsky meant by his "Method of Physical Action":

> The Method of Physical Action is a technique, based on modern studies in neurology and physiology, which served to stimulate the artist's subconscious creativity by conscious means. This technique is therefore an example of that unity of art and science which is envisioned as a goal by the most advanced humanistic and scientific thinking in the U. S. today (18, p. 12).

She refers to Stanislavsky's statement that "External action is indissolubly linked up with internal action, and is a result of it (18, p. 30)" and the evolution of his method towards the end of his life to an emphasis on "The life of the spirit through the life of the body (18, p. 21)." Another way she put it was to take the "Road from the outer to the inner (18, p. 21)":

> The Stanislavsky Method for the theatre is a way of making everything which takes place on the stage believable. To accomplish this end, the System invokes basic human, natural faculties. These faculties and this way of mobilizing them are, first of all, physical. It seems to me, therefore, that the System is charged with profound implications for that basically physical art, the dance (18, p. 3).

Sonia Moore backs up Litvinoff's analysis of Stanislavsky's Method and also links it to the psychophysical technique:

> Having studied the laws that govern human nervous activity, Stanislavski gradually developed a System that permits an actor consciously to control his entire apparatus of experiencing and of incarnating. The System progressed as Stanislavski learned more about the human being, and his greatest discovery, made at the end of his career, was the fact that we behave in life in a psychophysical way. This discovery became the basis of what he called "the method of physical actions" and considered to be the result of his whole life's work and the heart of the System. It is the summary of all his teachings and is the means for stirring the emotions, thoughts, imagination -- all the psychic forces. "I thought before that for a moment of creativity an actor needed this technique and that," he said. "Now I insist that only one inwardly justified physical action is necessary. The method of physical action is the greatest achievment of the System." When you learn to control psychophysical

> behavior, you achieve the concentration of your senses, thoughts, feelings, memory, and body. Your whole spiritual and physical nature is involved then, and you are in a lifelike state on stage (19, p. 6).

Moore goes on to say that the actor must not leave his training only to the preparation of his psychological instrument, but must prepare his apparatus and continue to train it throughout his lifetime (19, p. 7).

The Becque-Todd Method can be seen as a way of giving the actor the command of his instrument that Stanislavsky emphasized late in life; and it is a method that utilizes the psychophysical approach rather than leaving physical training solely in the realm of exercises of one sort or another as do many of the other techniques. It is also a technique that can be continued throughout life, with or without a teacher or group.

Another element that distinguishes the Becque-Todd Method from the other techniques is the development of a new and better self-image through an awareness of structure. Moshe Feldenkrais in his book Awareness Through Movement, explains this philosophy: "A complete self-image would involve full awareness of all the joints in the skeletal structure as well as of the entire surface of the body -- at the back, the sides, between the legs, and so on; this is an ideal condition and hence a rare one (7, p. 21)."

> Many people find it easy to be aware of control of voluntary muscles, thought, and abstraction processes. It is much more difficult, on the other hand, to be aware and in control of the involuntary muscles, senses, emotions, and creative abilities. Despite this difficulty, it is by no means impossible, even though this seems unlikely to many (7, p. 50).

He calls this "harmonious development," not self-compulsion or compulsion from others (7, p. 51). The imagery technique helps the individual to achieve self-control of this most basic kind and is indeed the best way to achieve it since it eliminates tension and holding that more direct methods result in creating.

> The establishment of an initial more or less complete, although approximate, image will make it possible to improve the general dynamics instead of dealing with individual actions piecemeal. This improvement may be likened to correcting playing on an instrument that is not perfectly tuned. Improving the general dynamics of the image becomes the equivalent of tuning the piano itself, as it is much easier to play correctly on an instrument that is in tune than one that is not . . . You will find that awareness of the differentiation between the projected image of a movement and its execution is a means to finer muscular action (7, p. 24, 123).

As one of the foremost proponents of the Alexander Technique, Frank Pierce Jones says, "Awareness is knowledge of what is going on while it is happening -- of what you are doing while you are doing it (11, p. 5)."

> In my view the chief disadvantage of automatic performance is that without awareness it cannot be changed . . . In the Method (Alexander Technique) which I am going to describe, attention instead of being narrowed is expanded to take in certain key relations in the body as well as the activity on which attention is focused (11, pp. 6-7).

What distinguishes the Alexander Technique from the Becque-Todd Method is the emphasis on the head-neck reflex and the use of "educated hands" whereby the teacher manipulates the body of the student, particularly the head-neck area, in order to give the student a new kinesthetic experience. In the Todd Method, touching is used sparingly and the structure is built from the ground up, including the head-neck area.

Awareness is, then one of the chief elements in the Becque-Todd Method and much time is spent training the student to be aware of what he is doing at all times so that he does things purposefully and thinkingly. Out of this constant awareness will come new motor habits that are just as unconscious as the old, poorer ones. This emphasis on awareness is another reason for the title of Todd's book, The Thinking Body, with the emphasis on thinking.

Mabel Todd's pioneering efforts in the psychophysiological technique to change the body has been validated in recent years by the work of the biofeedback researchers like Barbara Brown. The popularity of this concept is growing among educators as well as scientists as the various devices are developed to aid the individual in sensing his inner actions and developing new motor habits. Barbara Brown sounds remarkably like John Dewey, who felt that the controls should never be taken away from the individual and that the

goal of education was the facilitating of the right use of self (5, p. 43) when she says:

> Nearly all formal emphasis has been on emotion and behavior and how to control behavior by external means. It is somewhat terrifying to realize that the bulk of biological and psychological scientific effort has been devoted to learning how to control man's emotion and behavior, yet the reins of control are rarely, if ever, offered to the individual being controlled. The majority of academic, government, and industrial societies embrace varying types of behavior control and cybernetics, and delight in the prospect of automatized man.
>
> Suddenly the technologic ingenuity of the scientist has brought the biomedical researcher face to face with the capabilities of the human psyche. Only now are we learning that if we provide man with accurate and recognizable information about the dynamics of his functioning being as part of his external environment, he can then experience himself. That is, he can verify certain relationships between himself and the internal, nonexternal world, and then interact with himself. The biological phenomenon which underlies this confrontation is the revelation by bio-feedback of the ability of individuals to regulate and control a wide variety of their own physiologic functioning once information of such functioning is presented in a form that can be perceived by that same individual (4, p. 3).

In teaching the Becque-Todd Method, the instructor should avail himself of all possible means for giving the student this feedback about himself and what he is doing with a goal of achieveing awareness of self and control of self. Eventually, the pupil should be independent of the teacher, for he will be his own instructor and therapist. Only then will he know exactly how to make a structural adjustment internally. Normally, the teacher is the biofeedback machine in the classroom, telling the student

what he is doing as opposed to what he only thinks he is doing. This exchange between teacher and pupil wherein the teacher is a mirror for the pupil of his real self, is characteristic of the Becque-Todd Method.

It is, therefore, the combination of the detailed mechanical analysis of structure and movement dynamics, the use of the psychophysiological approach to learning new motor habits, and the emphasis on awareness of self as a means of developing these new patterns of behavior that distinguishes the Becque-Todd Method in large part from the other techniques listed earlier.

In addition, the Becque-Todd Method adds a thorough understanding of movement principles as synthesized by Don Oscar Becque from his experiences with dance, Laban, philosophy, cultural anthropology, physics, and related sciences. This synthesis is unique to Don Oscar Becque and it adds considerably to the principally structural work of Mabel E. Todd.

Teaching Techniques

The Becque-Todd Method is a complex, but clear, technique for developing integrated bodies that move well in a creative setting such as the theatre. This goal of turning mere body into instrument can be achieved by the Becque-Todd Method, only part of which is covered in this course outline due to the limitations in time that the academic

calendar creates.

As already mentioned, the imagery technique is at the core of the Becque-Todd Method and is based in the psycho-physiological hookup that Todd explored scientifically and the biofeedback researchers are exploring. The imagery can be of two kinds: abstract and concrete. Abstract imagery would consist of the anatomical and mechanical information given in class verbally, visually, and through touch. Concrete imagery would consist of analogies and parables, such as the comparison of the human structure to an empty suit of clothes or a rag doll. Imagery is applied constantly, and the images are repeated over and over again, in different contexts to keep the image fresh in the minds of the students. Repetition is important in learning as any teacher knows and particularly to motor learning.

The most important image used is the image of the "universal construct (2)" which is the underlying form of the human body, its structure, its bones and ligaments. Eventually, the student should be able to transfer this image to his own concept of self and see the movements of the joints and functions of the various parts in relation to one another. This is an intense image and relates directly to the development of the self-image Feldenkrais talks about. This image is created through the Structural Action segment of the work which is dealt with in this course.

Secondly, the Becque-Todd Method is an organic approach to body, requiring time and patience on the part of both the teacher and the pupil. The course must be process-oriented rather than result-oriented for this reason. Each student must take the time necessary for his body to change, and this change cannot happen within any predetermined time-frame. It takes time for the bones and muscles to alter their alignment, just as it takes time to have a baby -- it cannot be rushed and steps cannot be skipped along the way. It is a long and fluctuating process of growth with bursts of change occurring at intervals and long dry periods when nothing much seems to be happening. The teacher and the student need to keep in mind that, although nothing is occurring on the conscious level, the unconscious brains are being programmed. With time and patience and persistence results will be felt. One voice teacher puts it well when she says,

> The first step toward freeing the natural voice is to develop an ability to perceive habits and register new experiences. Such ability must be mental and physical, and the perception eventually refined to extreme subtlety in order to observe the minutiae of neuro-muscular behavior that serves the need to communicate. It is fruitless to demand such subtlety in the beginning since few people have immediate capacity for fine psycho-physical awareness; carefully graded steps must be taken to arrive at a state which can be trusted to feed back reliable information (17, p. 19).

As mentioned earlier in this Introduction, it is essentail that students work with a teacher who has himself experienced the Becque-Todd Method. Written instructions are not adequate to train someone in this technique, or indeed in any in-depth technique. An external and trustworthy guide is needed to lead the student through the labyrinth of his own experiences, avoiding pitfalls and encouraging breakthroughs. Also, the teacher can go at the pace required by the individuals in the class and begin where they are rather then starting at a fixed point in the work and trudging onward without regard for their individual needs. This course outline is a linear presentation of the Becque-Todd Method. In actual teaching situations, the teacher begins where he determines the most need to be and follows his judgment with regard to the sequence of lessons and the time allotted to them. One lesson may take several sessions to complete and another may not take up a full class period, although this is rare. This flexibility is part of the organic process.

The work is divided into functional and expressive movement. In the first semester of work in the Becque-Todd Method, improvisation is used mostly to gauge the ability of the student and to begin to free him of preconceived movement patterns or movement "baggage" as Don Oscar Becque would call it (2). The use of improvisation, both

solo and follow the leader, movement from inner impulse and from outer impulse, is a vital tool to the teacher in observing the motor skills of the students, establishing the motor set or habitual usage of the body, and in judging the progress of the student throughout the course. Everything "hangs out" when a person moves expressively: habitual patterns of movement, rigidities in body and mind, range of movement, and openness to exposing oneself to others. Therefore, while expressive movement is not emphasized in the first semester of work, it can be used as a tool for developing awareness in the class of each other's structures and for analysis of the individual students by the teacher. Shaping Action is the realm of the expressive and would be treated in the second semester of work.

It is helpful for the students to keep workbooks with notes on classwork, personal experiences, observations on other people in and out of class, comparisons of themselves to others in the class, observations on how this class integrates with other classes and their stage work, and criticisms of the class itself.

Private interviews should be given at the beginning and during the progress of the semester to familiarize the teacher with the students and personalize the teaching. Notes on these meetings should be kept by the instructor.

Tools for Teaching

Certain "props" are required for teaching the Becque-Todd Method and there are certain physical requirements for the setting in which it should be taught.

To develop the conceptual synthesis for the Becque-Todd Method, certain books should be a part of the semester's work. The Thinking Body is required reading and should be read by the end of the semester, but it is neither necessary or desirable for the students to read it at the beginning of the course. The information contained in the book can be assimilated better after the students have had some experience with the techniques and can put the information into the context of the class.

Lulu E. Sweigard's book Human Movement Potential: Its Ideokinetic Facilitation is a complement to Todd's book and should be perused. Other books should be offered on a suggested reading list (see Appendix B); they are drawn from many sources including philosophy, cultural anthropology, psychology, kinesiology, anatomy, voice training, movement training, acting technique, religion, and psychic development.

A skeleton of the human body is also an invaluable tool and is constantly referred to for intensification and clarification of the universal construct image. Real bone skeletons are fragile and chip and break with constant

handling. Also, the individual aberrations of the person whose skeleton is present can cause a faulty image of the universal construct to be developed by the students unconsciously. Plastic skeletons are more sturdy and have the advantage of being without faults in structure.

An enjoyable and instructive game for the students is the assemblage of their own miniature plastic skeletons which can be acquired in kits. Class time can be spent discussing their insights into the skeleton from this experience and answering questions that arise from the game.

Visual tools are helpful. Illustrations should be shown to the students often, to clarify the abstract and concrete imagery. It is important that any illustration used shows integrated structural alignment. When distorted pictures are necessary the teacher should be careful to point out the distortion. Any audio-visual aid that augments the illustrations and increases interest of the students in the class should be utilized.

Other props can include a chain to exemplify the vertebral column; a cotter pin for the ankle joint, a yardstick for use in doing certain exercises like the forward drop, slick magazines for the foot exercises, telephone books for help in the Non-Action Position, and a posture pillow with one side scooped out for placement under the

back of the head in the Non-Action Position. Many more props can be devised for illustrating the various images contained in the course, and some are indicated in the lesson plans in the body of the thesis.

Tapes of the lessons, such as the first overall image, The Empty Suit of Clothes, are helpful, freeing the teacher from reciting the information himself. The teacher should check each student's work while the tape is playing and give him personal crticism.

A large blackboard or sketch pad is needed for the teacher to write upon.

The space required for the class depends upon the size of the group. As a general rule, however, it should be large enough to accomodate the entire class moving together. The ceiling should be high enough so that a jumping person would not hit his arms. The floor should, ideally, be wood without splinters since the classes are conducted on the floor without shoes or socks. The room should conform to a square rather than an octagonal shape. In a square space movement can take round, square, or line formations, but in an octagonal room the tendency is for the space to determine line formations. Since the greatest freedom is desired, the square shape is preferable to the octagon.

Somewhere nearby a large mirror should be available for verification of the correctness of adjustments in structure and to intensify the teacher's comments on the student's motor habits. It should not be visible, however, at all times to the class. A mirror can be a distraction, especially to actors and it can become a crutch for the pupils. Rather than turning inward to their inner sense of movement they can rely too much on their sense of sight.

The room should be clear of furnishings, well lit, and neither hot nor cold since people moving a great deal need a comfortable climate to function at their best.

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CHAPTER I

THE FUNCTIONAL MOVEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE AND THE BODY IMAGE TEST

The first class should be devoted to the administration of both the Functional Movement Questionnaire and the Body Image Test. Each should take approximately one-half hour for the students to complete. There will always be questions about the meaning of some of the questions, particularly with regard to the Body Image Test, so the teacher should be prepared to clarify the meaning of each question on the Test.

These two questionnaires are valuable tools for the teacher in understanding the level of awareness that the student possesses with regard to his body. They also fill in vital information about the student's background in movement and any prior experiences, such as injury, that would affect his ability to do things in class.

At the end of the class the students should sign up for half-hour private sessions with the teacher in which the information on the forms will be discussed as well as the student's expectations for the class. Ideally, each student should have three private sessions with the teacher: at the beginning of work, in the middle, and at the end.

FUNCTIONAL MOVEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE (1)

Name_____ Birth Date_____ Age_____

How do you usually go to and from school/work?_____

_____

What footwear do you usually wear?_____

What clothing do you usually wear?_____

Do you take part regularly each week in any physical activity?_____

From the following, number two in order (1,2) at which you spend most time each day, estimating time allotted:

Standing upright_____
Standing stooped over something_____
Seated_____
Lying down_____
Strolling_____
Kneeling_____
Any other position?_____

The following activities which you do in your normal daily work are to be rated in the appropriate column as regular, occasional and rare or never:

	Reg	Occ	Rare
PUSHING heavy objects			
PULLING heavy objects			
LIFTING heavy objects (a) off ground			
(b) off bench,etc.			
CARRYING heavy objects (a) with 2 hands			
(b) with 1 hand			
(c) on back			
(d) in front			
(e) on shoulder			
BENDING (a) downwards			
(b) sideways			
(c) backwards			
DIGGING, shoveling, etc.			
REACHING upward above the head			
CLIMBING (a) using legs and hands			
(b) using legs only e.g.stairs			
(c) using hands only e.g.rope			
SAWING, hammering, etc.			
Use FINGERS (a) both hands			
(b) one hand			

Use WRISTS (a) both hands
(b) one hand
CYCLING (how long usually)_____
WALKING (how long usually)_____
Any other activity?_____
_____

BODY IMAGE (2)

Name_____Birth Date_____Age_____

1. In general, I (love, like, tolerate, dislike, hate) my body.

2. In general, I find it (easy, somewhat difficult, difficult) to be patient with my body in learning new tasks.

3. The thing I like best about my body is_____.

4. The thing I like least about my body is_____.

5. In general, my body responds (quickly, moderately fast, slowly) to my conscious commands.

6. The most sensitive part of my body to pain is _____
_____.

7. I react to pain in the following manner: _____
_____.

8. The most sensitive part of my body to pleasure of a non-sexual nature is _____.

9. I react to non-sexual pleasure in the following manner:
_____.

10. I react to fear or apprehension in the following manner with my body: _____
_____.

11. When I am nervous I do the following things with my body:_____
_____.

12. I react physically to personal contact with another person who is not close to me in the following manner:

_____.

13. The best features of my body are: _____

_____.

14. The worst features of my body are: _____

_____.

15. Give an example of a person or a representation of a person that you would most like to look like. _____

_____.

16. Why? _____.

17. I am aware of the following area(s) of tension in my body: _____.

18. I am aware of the following area(s) of pain or discomfort in my body: _____.

19. I have had the following physical injuries or problems:

_____

_____

_____.

20. Are you aware of any part of your body in which illness tends to locate consistently? _____

_____.

21. Are you aware of your motivation for taking this course at this time? _____

_____.

22. What prior movement experience(s) have you had? _____

_____.

Comments about yourself that you would like to make to the teacher: _____.

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CHAPTER II

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE COURSE

This first lecture introduces the basic concepts behind the development of the course as outlined in the Introduction. During the course of the lecture the teacher should closely observe the bodies of the students, looking for strengths and weaknesses in the individual structures, preferences for certain positions, clothing worn, areas of holding or tension, relationships with the other students, and attitude towards the class.

After each student introduces himself or herself, giving an account of theatre experience and movement experience, as well as personal data, the teacher should give the history of his or her own involvement in this field of work. It is very important that the students feel at ease with their teacher since he or she will become very close physically and psychologically to them. And it is important that the teacher establish confidence in his or her ability to work with the student's body.

For this first class the students should be allowed to assume any position that they desire, but the group should be sitting on the floor in a circle with their shoes and socks off. This is the basic grouping for most classes.

CHAPTER III

SENSING AND RELATING BODY PARTS IN THE NON-ACTION POSITION

The class is to group in the circle described in the last lesson with their shoes and socks off. The teacher should emphasize the need for comfortable, loose clothing for this class. This will require some students to bring a change of clothes for this class regularly since attire like blue jeans are completely unacceptable for body work. The student needs to be free of restricting clothing so that he can feel his body and not the clothes, and so that his range of movement is not inhibited by his clothes.

First, the students are to lie on their backs in the Non-Action or Constructive Rest Position (1, 3) described below. One of the most important principles of work in this field is that the pupil first <u>does</u> something and the explanation is given afterwards. The principle can be stated first DO, then COMPARE, and then RE-DO with added insight (1). Although the students will be confused about what is to be accomplished in this position, the teacher must get them into the position first and explain the reasons for it while they are experiencing it.

A Non-Action Position (1,5)

Aim: To put the body in an alignment consistent with its overall construction.

Directions for assuming the Non-Action Position are:

1. Lie on the floor. Use the floor because a bed or a cot, even though hard, is not practical. Neither will maintain the levelness needed under your body weight.
2. Lie on your back with knees and thigh joints bent. Place the feet comfortably close to the pelvis.
3. Use a small pillow under the head (not the neck) to prevent your head from rocking backwards on the top of the spine and thus thrusting your chin upward.
4. Rest the arms across your chest in a way so that the elbows rest one on top of the other, or nearly so. The hands hang loosely on either side of the body. If this position requires "holding" to maintain it, put a pillow at either side, under the arms and elbows (because this position musn't be held). Do not rest the arms on the supporting surface.
5. Place your knees in line with the thigh joint.
6. Turn the heels outward to prevent the knees from falling apart because of the pull of tight muscles across the back of the pelvis and the outside of the thighs. If necessary, move your feet farther apart, with the heels turned outward, to maintain the proper position of the knees in line with the thigh joints.
7. Place a roll of blanket, a rug, or a pillow under the balls of the feet (not the whole foot) to prevent tight muscles on the front of the thigh from straightening your knees and thus causing the feet to slide away from the pelvis.
8. Let your entire weight sink (turn-a-loose) into the floor, but do not push to help it.
9. Lie there, closing the eyes, and REST! When you get up, roll over onto your side, and then come to a sitting position. Use your arms to help you as you roll over and sit up. You will thus avoid distorting the proper relationships you have established among the various parts of your trunk while you were lying on the floor.

This Non-Action Position should ideally be maintained for one half hour, the first fifteen minutes being used for settling into the position with the aid of the teacher, and

the next fifteen minutes being used for adjusting the students' bodies by the teacher so that the students can come closer to assuming the ideal alignment of the body.

Most people will be either uncomfortable or in pain somewhere, but it is extremely important that they do not squirm or get up out of the position. Pain is a good indicator of a problem area and should be used as a tool for learning. Also, what seems comfortable to an individual is merely that which is habitual, and the purpose of the first part of the semester will be to re-educate them into new ways of using their bodies, establishing new and better habits. The teacher may seem unsympathetic, but he has to encourage the students to be patient with their bodies and to watch and wait for something to happen to them instead of forcing it to happen. This is a general principle of work.

And it takes time to effect a real change in the neuromuscular habits of an individual. Bones and muscles must change, as well as the individual's thinking about his body. This is where the organic approach to body differs from most techniques. The organism, in this case the human being, must come into contact with itself at its own pace and with its own sequence of events. External manipulation and self-manipulation are contrary to this process. No two people proceed in exactly the same manner or at the

same rate. Time and perseverance are required in an organic process, as for example in the nine-month process of having a baby. Because a real, inner-to-outer change will take place within the organism, it will take a substantial period of time to accomplish such change. This is the long way around, but the individual maintains control of his being instead of placing himself in the hands of some external force which tries to short-cut the process of change. Quite often changes that are affected by external means do not last precisely because the individual does not know how to assimilate the experience and returns to the old habits that created the problem in the first place.

The Non-Action Position is the starting point in this method for three reasons as outlined by Todd: 1. It is the common denominator position from which all other positions unfold in the human adult body; 2. it is an unfamiliar position which intensifies an individual's awareness of his inner sensations, sensing in a new and different way; and, 3. the individual is immobilized and must concentrate on his inner life, undistracted by overt external action or vision (4, p. 175, 245).

While most people find it hard to believe that this is the most economical, least energy-consuming position that the adult body can assume, usually because of his own discomfort in this position, that is indeed the case. A mini-

mum of effort is used to maintain this position when the person is properly aligned. If the body is not properly aligned, then effort must be expended in maintaining this position. True balance, and therefore rest, can be acheived in this position because of the way that the bones relate to each other, assuming their rightful responsibility for support of the body's weight, aided by the force of gravity spread over a broad surface, and opposed by the floor.

While no overt external movement is taking place in this position, a great deal of inner activity is going on. The pupil's awareness of inner activity, or kinesthesia, increases as he practices the Non-Action Position. None of this will be readily apparent to the novice. He must wait for something to happen, trust the process, and do his homework regularly and correctly.

Numbness is also a sign that some part of the body is receiving too much weight. Numbness should be used as a learning tool. By concentrating on what you are doing rather than on how you feel (uncomfortable, in pain, numb) you can forget about these factors and maintain the position longer. This is not the same thing as masochism because the object is not to feel pain but to transcend it and come out on the other side of pain so that you don't have to experience it in the future.

After the first fifteen minutes of dwelling in the NAP, the teacher should make adjustments in the alignment of the students, pointing out to each one his or her areas of tension, poor alignment, or good Structural Action. The posture pillow is commonly placed under the neck, but it should be placed so that the edge of the scooped out part of the pillow fits under the roundations of the occiput of the skull. The cervical spine cannot shallow its curve, thereby assuming a better position for balance, if the pillow is jammed up under the neck.

Those pupils who have difficulty keeping their knees two to three inches apart without holding should place a book under the balls of the feet and turn out the heels. This contributes to the proper alignment of the thigh bone in the hip socket which is the major joint of locomotion. The misalignment of the lower leg and feet can be dealt with later once the major joint has been realigned. In the beginning the pupil must settle for what he can do and not concentrate on what he cannot do. Comparison with other people in the class at this point is negative.

The arms should be resting lightly on top of the chest, not pressing down on it constricting breathing and causing tightness in the front muscles of the neck, restricting swallowing. Many people do not have sufficient "give" in the muscles of the upper back, and the arms must be held in

place. The instructor must be sure that the pupil is aware that he is holding and that this is causing even more of a feeling of pressure in his chest and neck. Circling the arms above the body at a ninety degree angle to the floor and then letting them drop of their weight across the chest is one good way of releasing tension.

Four large areas of weight should become apparent to the pupil in NAP: the head, the thorax, the pelvis, and the legs. These four chunks of weight relate to each other in very specific ways bonily, muscularly, and in relation to the forces of gravity, momentum, and inertia. The way that they relate is called the Eight Lines of Action which will be covered extensively in later lessons.

Particular attention should be given to the bi-lateral symmetry of the body. The two halves of the body should be as even as possible. Everyone favors one side of the body over the other, some people having very complex ways of distorting bi-laterality. The teacher should point out to the student any imbalances that he observes. The instructor is the objective mirror for the pupil whose awareness of what he does with his body has been deadened by bad motor habits.

In trying to help the pupil re-align his body, the teacher should take care not to touch the pupil too much. This can develop into too much reliance on the teacher for

external kinetic cues, just as a dancer can become too dependent on a mirror in a studio and can't reproduce the correct movement on stage because his kinetic cues are outer-oriented, not inner-oriented as they should be. Touching should be a tool for awakening a dead area and must be reinforced with information about what is being done and why. The manual realignment of the pupil's structure by the teacher is at best gross and serves only to give the pupil a basis for comparison with what he was doing previously. This brings up another basic principle of work: it is only after a change has taken place that one can know what it was that one was doing before that change occurred (2, p. 121). Using the sense of touch as a kinetic cue, a temporary one, is very different from yanking and pulling someone into proper alignment. The teacher does not want to establish violence as a way of working with the body. Force and release are at opposite ends of the spectrum of body usage.

The student needs to learn to allow his body to do the work for itself. Instead of thinking that he has to do a whole lot of new things to himself, the truth is that he has to learn to stop doing the things that are keeping him from being aligned. He needs to think of shedding bad habits so that the innate structure can do its work efficiently and without holding.

It should be emphasized that a new, perfect, fixed posture is not the goal sought in this technique. Todd made a great point of the fact that "Complete relaxation would be death. In complete balance the human structure would be devoid of activity. Living we shall never attain either . . . Our object is that of preserving the fine bodily 'instability' . . . where available energy hangs in the balance, ready to be converted at an instant into its working form, movement (4, p. 262)." Since the term "posture" connotes fixity and holding, teachers of this technique should not use that term. Balance and mobility are the goals. All holds are barred (4, p. 62).

After the first attempt to use the NAP to settle, sense, and related body parts, the pupils should sit up as described in the outline. They should take a moment to check out how they feel inside. Out of these sensations should come a question and answer period. The feedback that the teacher gets from the students at this time will be the first indication of just how aware of their bodies the students are at this stage. The instructor should already be aware of each student's major problems structurally and areas of tension. This knowledge of each individual body will become more refined in time.

Very small releases cannot be seen by the teacher and only the individual knows if something is taking place.

Some questions to be asked by the teacher are:

1. How do you feel?
2. Is sitting up easier?
3. Do you feel taller in the torso?
4. Where do you hurt or feel uncomfortable?
5. Did any part become numb?
6. What areas were you most aware of?
7. Did you feel tension anywhere?
8. Did you feel a release of tension anywhere?

The class should share their experiences with each other at this time, but the teacher need not necessarily comment on all of these experiences. This is a time for getting to know each other. Each student will receive individual attention from the teacher during the semester. This personal treatment is an essential part of the organic experience.

At the end of the class the teacher should recommend that the students lie in the NAP every day for at least fifteen minutes. Work in class is not sufficient to change the neuromuscular system, which requires special concentration. The best time to lie in the NAP is just before going to sleep or the first thing on awakening in the morning. Since many pupils will not practice in the beginning on their own, the teacher must continually encourage them to do so.

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5. The term Non-Action Position will be abbreviated to NAP in the body of the thesis corresponding to its abbreviated form in class.

CHAPTER IV

THE USE OF IMAGERY IN THE NON-ACTION POSITION

Having experienced the NAP in the previous session, the students are now able to utilize the technique of having imagery effect changes in the body. The use of imagery is central to Todd's psychophysical approach as discussed in the introduction. The imagery of the Empty Suit of Clothes is one of several overall images that tie the various parts of the body together. The imagery is carefully chosen to effect the correct change in the body and must, therefore, be anatomically accurate.

The following imagery should be recorded on audio tape so that the teacher is free to check each student and make adjustments while they are lying in the NAP.

Sensing and Relating Body Parts in the Non-Action Position by Means of the Use of Imagery of the Empty Suit of Clothes (1)

Aim: To learn to use the imagery of the Empty Suit of Clothes while in the NAP. This imaginary suit is a grown-up version of the snow suit children wear in winter. When using any imagery for the purpose of changing the way msucles and bones are working together, it is essential that the individual should give no voluntary aid. Concentrate on watching the action without trying to aid it.

The following are the actions to be visualized and watched in a concentrated manner in the Empty Suit of Clothes which is YOU:

1. Think of the legs being supported at the knees by an imaginary string dropped from the ceiling.
2. Both legs now collapse to the floor, pulling the string down with them.
3. The angle, or bend at the thigh joint, sinks slowly into the empty seat of the suit.
4. The feet hang as tassels from the ends of the legs. An imaginary binding string around the top of the tassel (at the ankle joint) tightens on the inside to hold the tassel more firmly. Perhaps the string is elastic.
5. Imaginary wrinkles are smoothed out of the seat of the suit -- the action of smoothing being from the center seam outward and sideways in either direction.
6. A zipper, probably rusty, is then moved slowly up the front of the suit from the pubic bone to the breast bone. Hold the zipper.
7. The fairly wide waistband around the suit sinks to rest on the floor. Hold the zipper.
8. The front of the garment sinks, in all parts, against its back on the floor. Hold the zipper.
9. Imaginary wrinkles are smoothed out of the entire length of the back of the suit, the direction of the smoothing being downward toward the feet. Hold the zipper.
10. The sleeves collapse together as if no body were between them and sink down with the upper part of the suit on the floor. Hold the zipper.
11. The bend at the shoulder joint, formed by the sleeves being folded across the front, sinks to the floor. Hold the zipper.
12. The back of the suit, at the region of the shoulders is smoothed sideways, outward, in either direction from the center. Hold the zipper.
13. The zipper is now closed slowly in the direction of the head. The entire body can now be felt to sink more and more into the floor to exert no pressure upwards against the zipper at any place.
14. A soft collar belonging to the shirt inside the suit collapses finally into the floor. The back of the collar should be smoothed, or rather gently pulled upwards to remove wrinkles.
15. The head is empty. It is wide between the ears. It is made of papier mache. Therefore, it is light in weight.

The above is the general order of the use of the imagery of the Empty Suit of Clothes. However, each image should be reviewed repeatedly. After all images have been used once in order, in a concentrated

way, their order may be changed according to need.

> Practice every night before going to bed or in the early morning just after awakening. The more one practices the imagery, as if running a scale in music, the more quickly the imagery will sink into the subconscious and better moving habits can be built. Work in class alone will not give sufficient progress nor produce changes in your neuromuscular action. Only you can do this yourself, for only you are with your body twenty-four hours a day (1).

The instructor must emphasize that the concentrated thinking will itself produce a change in the body without forcing and yanking the body into realignment. Conscious manipulation will only cause tension, getting in the way of balance. This is the reason for using imagery to bypass the conscious brain. We are trying to retrain the proprioceptive system which has three general types of sensations grouped under it: 1. kinesthesia, or the feeling of movement; 2. feelings of position in space; and 3. impression from internal organs or visceral areas (3, p. 27). The proprioceptive system can be said to be that part of the nervous system orienting the individual to his inner perception of self. It cannot be reached through the conscious brain processes, hence the use of imagery.

A correct kinetic cue needs to be established whereby the individual can quickly produce the desired adjustment just by thinking about the image. Actors are used to the concept of cues since this is how they learn their lines and blocking. By this method the student can work on

reprogramming his proprioceptive system while he is on his own, twenty-four hours a day. Todd used to say that one should "exercise while you work"(3, p. 294).

Imagery was the preferred teaching method of Christ, particularly the parable. Socrates used the dialectic argument in the framework of stories. And then, there are Aesop's fables, and Mother Goose tales. It is a very efficient way of learning since it can elicit a response without a detailed intellectual understanding of what's involved. Hence, this technique can be taught to children, mentally ill people, retarded people, as well as normal individuals. The concrete images, such as the Empty Suit of Clothes, can be affecting changes in the individual's neuromuscular system and the abstract images of anatomy can be fed to him along the way, refining his knowledge as it intensifies his inner concept of self.

Most pupils are unaware of what they do with their bodies, so they must rely on the teacher, as mentioned earlier, to tell them when they are "straight" or crooked, tense, etc. Some people won't believe the teacher because their bad habits have distorted their judgement. Argumentation is wasteful of time and energy, so the teacher must point out the inequity, perhaps ask another pupil to confirm his observation, and rely on repetition of the corrected position to convince the student. It is easy for

a class to degenerate into a discussion rather than a working experience, and it is up to the teacher to see that it stays on track.

The teacher should constantly question each pupil about the inner sensations that he is feeling, adjust the pupil, and repeat the questions. By sharing their experiences at the end of the session, the pupils reinforce those experiences and begin looking at one another in a more concentrated way. They learn from each other as much as they do from the instructor.

Once a pupil has been placed in an improved position by the teacher, he may flip-back into his old position, either by fidgeting or by loosing concentration. The class must remain as still as possible with the eyes closed. No talking amongst the students is permitted until the final discussion. At that time they are free to comment on the new sensations they are experiencing in the upright posture as a result of lying in NAP and programming the imagery.

The principle behind this technique of avoiding flip-back is "first place, then hold, and, if necessary, turn-a-loose (1)." Muscles soon tire of holding and a release will occur if the student stays in the position long enough and watches what is happening rather than forcing it to occur.

Repetition is at the heart of the psychophysical technique, based on the Pavlovian principle of reflex action.

But, a reminder given every time by the teacher is less effective than an occasional reminder as Joseph B. Oxendine affirms in his book Psychology of Motor Learning:

> Nevertheless, partial or occasional reinforcement is still sufficient to keep the learner interested and working at the task . . . teachers should keep in mind, therefore, that reinforcement may be effective even if it is not given every time the response is emitted . . . Habits which have been developed with partial reinforcement certainly seem more difficult to break than habits learned under the full reinforcement conditions (2, pp. 66-67).

Students have spent at least eighteen years acquiring their old, poor habits and they must take some time to change them into new, better motor habits. Until the new habit is established, the pupil will have to become super sensitive to how he moves and how it feels to move. For a while he will become obsessed with his body, but in a healthy way. The duration of this period is dependent on the individual's ability, perseverance, and personal experiences.

The object of the Empty Suit of Clothes imagery is to center and lower weights, an efficient way of handling weights (3, p. 204). Centering involves the Axial skeleton by shallowing the four normal physiological curves of the spine: the cervical, the thoracic, the lumbar, and the pelvic which is made up of the sacral and coccygeal sections (3, p. 85). These curves shallow to come closer to the straight line of gravity which is always vertical. Lowering

has to do with the downward thrust of gravity, involving the appendicular skeleton, the shoulder harness and pelvic girdle, as well as the axial skeleton, all of which lengthen down. This lengthening downwards results in better balancing of weights, and therefore, greater ease and efficiency in moving through space.

One further note for the teacher: it is important to minimize the use of sight in changing body habits. We are a visual society and rely too much on outer stimuli. Most people watch what they do rather than feel it. For this reason, the eyes must remain closed except when needed to reinforce the teacher's observations or when comparing pupils. Sight should be used as a tool, not a crutch.

Every class should, ideally, begin with a few minutes of NAP using imagery.

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CHAPTER V

THE EIGHT LINES OF ACTION: LINES OF ACTION ONE THROUGH FOUR

Don Oscar Becque has distilled the integration of body parts into what he calls the Eight Lines of Action (1). Other pupils of Mabel Todd have different numbers of lines of action, as for example Sweigard who has nine (2). Because constant reference will be made to these Eight Lines of Action throughout the semester, the students must memorize them at the outset.

Again, this class begins in the NAP, and, after a short period of settling with the eyes closed, the following should be played on audio tape for the class with the teacher going around to each of the pupils as before:

The Eight Lines of Action: Part One

Aim: Knowledge of the Lines of Action and use of images to produce these Lines of Action in the NAP.

A Line of Action may produce various changes in the neuromuscular action of the body and hence changes the relationship of skeletal parts (bones), depending on its location and direction of action. For this reason, each Line of Action is named according to the change it produces in the body. Some Lines of Action lengthen distances between skeletal parts, others shorten distances.

There are Eight Lines of Action, which, according to experimental study, are needed to effect a better "posture" of all so-called normal individuals. However, these vary according to individual differences. Hence, as the group becomes more skilled in the work of changing "posture," individual directions will be given as needed.

I. Line of Action to LENGTHEN DOWN THE BACK. In general, this Line of Action releases tightness in the long muscles of the back, thus allowing the pelvis to change into a better position to support the spinal column.

Images:

1. A heavy chain, at first resting on the floor at the center of the back, then seen in movement down the center of the back running along downward to the heels.
2. The spine growing longer, as if becoming a third leg under the back-center of the pelvis in contrast to the two legs in front. Think of a three-legged stool, with the back, imaginary leg being slightly shorter than the two real legs in front. The pelvis is the top of the stool.

II. Line of Action ACROSS THE BACK OF THE PELVIS TO WIDEN BETWEEN THE GREAT TROCHANTERS OF THE THIGHS. In general, this Line of Action releases tightness in muscles across the back of the pelvis, thus allowing the thighs to assume a better position of support of the pelvis and its superimposed weights. Overcontraction in the cross-wise muscles on the back of the pelvis produces a bulging hip line; it also plays a strong part in the individual's tendency to toe-out in standing and walking.

Images:

1. Visualize the back of the pelvis, where it rests on the floor, as thin pancake batter separating at center as it flows outward to either side.
2. See the buttocks as soft loaves of dough settling of their own weight to spread on the floor as they flatten out.

III. Line of Action FROM THE CENTER OF THE KNEE JOINT TO THE CENTER OF THE THIGH JOINT. In general, this Line of Action balances muscle action around the thigh bone and the thigh joint. It also promotes better control of the thigh at the thigh joint instead of at the knee. This Line of Action, as well as the two

former ones, contributes to a better position of the thighs for support of the pelvis and the structures above it; the muscle control which it promotes gradually prevents the knees from falling apart in the Non-Action Position and in the sitting position.

Images:

1. Hanging the knee to the ceiling.
2. Visualizing the thigh as a standing ashtray, weighted at the base which is where the thigh joins the pelvis.
3. Thinking of the whole thigh bone as an empty vacuum tube with the suction coming from the pelvis and sucking the thigh and the whole leg into the pelvis.

IV. Line of Action TO NARROW THE RIB-CASE. In general, this Line of Action releases the tight muscles which keep the flexibility of the 110 joints of the ribcase and the shoulder girdle. Flexible ribs and shoulders are essential for progress toward a better posture and a better balance of the spinal column which must support their weight.

Images:

1. The ribs closing in to press against a short inside cross-bar at the level of the armpits.
2. The ribcase as a deflating balloon becoming smaller and smaller in circumference.
3. A flag waving on a flagpole, and, as the wind subsides, the flag drops, and, as it does so, the flag winds around the pole which is the spine.

After listening to the first four Lines of Action, the students can sit up and discuss their feelings while in NAP and the basic concepts of the Eight Lines of Action. The Lines of Action knit the structure of the human body together each following the other in sequence. They have been put in this order because of the necessity for building on the previous action before it can work its effect.

Line of Action I is the most basic of the Lines of Action because it deals directly with the Axial skeleton and the centering and lowering of weights. Since all of

the weights of the body, the head, the shoulder harness, the pelvic girdle, and the legs, are attached directly or indirectly to the vertebral column and are dependent on it for their ability to deal with the upright posture, this Line of Action must come first. By allowing the force of gravity to work along the entire surface of the body in the NAP, pushing the weights into the floor instead of their being held up fighting this downward thrust of gravity, the four normal physiological curves of the spine can shallow. It is impossible to destroy these curves, so the student need not concern himself with that; rather they need to conern themselves with the shallowing of the curves so that they come closer the the straight line of gravity.

The first three Lines of Action form a unit, as mentioned in the working unit; they form the columnar support for the entabulature above to borrow from architecture. Without this solid and flexible foundation, no vertical structure can fight gravity and remain upright. The upright position that man has chosen demands that weights be handled efficiently; they should balance one on top of the other just like a set of building blocks that a child plays with. Instability and inefficiency result when weights have to be held in place by muscles instead of bones balancing one on top of the other. Bones support weight, muscles move bones (3, pp.10-13).

Each pupil should be given a large triangular piece of cloth in the shape of a diaper. First, they should bring the two long sides around the pelvis and tie them in front, smoothing the cloth from the center back of the pelvis around to the front; next, they should bring the third corner up under their pubic bone between their legs and tie it to the other two corners. This diaper image is a good way of graphically demonstrating the knitting action in the pelvis of Lines of Action I, II and III. Line of Action V will also be involved in the next class.

Once the base has been build, the upper half can be treated. Line of Action IV begins the action of bringing the two halves of the body together, and it forms a unit with Line of Action VII in the next class. The "strained high chest" (3, pp. 163-169) not only destroys mechanical balance, but adversely affects breathing which is extremely important to an actor. Todd spends a great deal of time examining the action in this area both from a mechanical point of view and in reference to breathing.

Hissing through the teeth without taking in a deep breath helps to drop the breadth of the ribcase from side to side, shallowing the thoracic curve of the spine and allowing the chest to expand on the next intake of breath in other areas which are more capable of expanding. Hissing also activates the diaphragm's up and down action (3, p.283).

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CHAPTER VI

THE EIGHT LINES OF ACTION: LINES OF ACTION FIVE THROUGH EIGHT

The next four Lines of Action complete the work on the Eight Lines of Action. Again, the class should begin with a short period spent in NAP, allowing time to settle, sense, and relate body parts through imagery.

The Eight Lines of Action: Part Two

Aim: Knowledge of the Lines of Action and use of images to produce these Lines of Action in the NAP.

V. Line of Action TO NARROW ACROSS THE FRONT OF THE PELVIS. In general, this Line of Action promotes a pattern of increased action in those muscles which must work to keep the thighs in good position in relation to the pelvis and the lumbar spine. With the release of tightness of muscles on the back of the trunk and thigh joints, there must be increased action in muscles in front in order to maintain the balance of the body.

Images:

1. Visualize the pelvis as an accordian with its handles on the sides. Watch the accordian close in across the front. The image of its widening across the back belongs to a previous Line of Action.
2. Visualize a wide, elastic band across the front of the thigh joints, extending between the great trochanters of the thighs. The strength of this elastic band draws the great trochanters closer together across the front.

VI. Line of Action TO SHORTEN FROM THE BIG TOE TO THE INSIDE OF THE HEEL. In general, this Line of Action

promotes a coordination of muscles of the foot and leg to balance the ankle joint and raise the long arch of the foot.

Images:

1. Watch the big toe as a turtle crawling straight back into the heel.
2. Watch the inner ankle bone move cross-wise toward the outside to press against the outer ankle bone.

VII. Line of Action TO SHORTEN FROM THE MID-FRONT OF THE PELVIS TO THE TOP OF THE LUMBAR CURVE. In general this Line of Action promotes a pattern of increased action in those muscles which must work to keep the pelvis in a good position for the support of the spinal column. It influences the relative positions of the thighs, the pelvis and the lumbar spine which are of basic importance to good posture and rhythmic, graceful movement.

Images:

1. Visualize two strong coil springs fastened at one end to the front of the 12th thoracic vertebra, and at the other end to the front rim of the pelvis on either side at the region of the thigh joints. The strength of these springs draws the front of the pelvis towards the front of the lumbar spine.
2. Visualize the pelvis as a ring, something like the rim of a basketball basket. Watch the front part of this ring move closer to the breast-bone.

VIII. Line of Action FROM THE TOP OF THE BREAST BONE TO THE TOP OF THE SPINAL COLUMN. In general, this Line of Action re-coordinates muscle action in the region of the cervical spine (neck), upper back and ribcase. It promotes a better balance of the upper spine, and hence, a better position of the head and ribcase. It is of the utmost importance in decreasing the so called "dowager's hump" at the base of the neck.

Images:

1. Watch the breast bone move up in front along the front of the neck, parallel to the floor.
2. Visualize the breast bone as a slide ruler. Watch this ruler lengthen in the direction of the head.

NOTE: The Eight Lines of Action have been presented in this order, and, in general, should be presented in this order whenever practicing. However, the order

> of the first four Lines of Action may be changed as long as they precede the second four Lines of Action. In any period of practice, especially the first, you may find yourself tightening one part of the body as you use imagery in another part. This must be discouraged by using imagery immediately to release the tightened part, then returning to the part of the body in which you were working.

Once again, the students should get up to a sitting position slowly and begin a discussion of their sensations, what images worked and what images did not work. If in this initial phase of work there seems to be little overt activity, the students should be reassured that larger, external movements will follow in their turn once the structure has been prepared for moving. It's knowing <u>how</u> to do something that counts and then one can apply it to the stage, dance, or any movement form.

Just as the first four Lines of Action are related, so the second four interdigitate. Lines of Action IV and VII bring the two halves of the body together. Lines of Action I and VIII form a unit by taking advantage of the downward thrust of gravity as handled by the compression members of the back and the upward thrust of the anti-gravity muscles, the tensile members in front. One, therefore, thinks down the back and up the front (2, p. 255). As Todd observes, if the breast bone and the pubic bone were joined there would be no need for a thinking body since the problems of balancing in the upright position would be eliminated and so would the flexibility of our movements.

Line of Action VIII contributes to good speech and is of the utmost importance to the performer. Its action frees the vocal mechanism for speech, contributes to deep breathing, allows the voice to use the spine and its appendages for resonating sound, as well as completing the action of balancing the structure. The carriage of the head is also aided by Line of Action VIII by freeing the anti-gravity muscles in the front of the neck and allowing the head to balance on top of the first and second cervical vertebrae. Line of Action VIII is also involved in the use of the eyes.

Obviously, many of the students will not know where the parts of the body referred to are located. Todd recounts the trick she used to play on doctors in hospitals and anatomists: she would ask them to go along with her and quickly, without thinking, place their thumbs on their hip joints. Responses varied anywhere from the crests of the ilia to the outer part of the great trochanter portion of the thigh bone. Even these anatomically educated individuals did not let the intellectual knowledge of anatomy that they possessed seep down into their unconscious use of their bodies. The hip joints are actually six to seven inches apart and much closer to the front of the pelvis than most people realize. (2, p.178) A teacher must point out where these areas are and how they are shaped,

how they move and what their relationship to other parts is. Illustrations are of great help, as is the use of a skeleton and various props that duplicate the actions of the joints. The students will acquire during the course of the semester quite a bit of anatomical information to reinforce their concrete images. Eventually, they will be able to picture themselves from the inside-out and will not need to use the concrete images to feel a release or change a part. "A complete self-image," writes Feldenkrais, "would involve full awareness of all of the joints in the skeletal structure as well as of the entire surface of the body -- at the back, the sides, between the legs, and so on, this is an ideal condition and hence a rare one (1, p. 21)."

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CHAPTER VII

AWAKENING THE PELVIS

> I believe one must develop a special anatomy of the actor; for instance, find the body's various centres of concentration for different ways of acting, seeking the areas of the body which the actor sometimes feels to be his source of energy. The lumbar region, the abdomen and the area around the solar plexus often function as a source (2, p. 38).

Grotowski's comment conforms to scientific knowledge of the body and its energy centers and it is interesting to note that artists who have attempted to analyse the source of their movement picked these areas, for example, Isadora Duncan's solar plexus (1, p. 11). Richard Schechner located five body energy terminals: the base of the neck, the base of the spine, the navel, the anus, and the genitals (3, p. 135). Todd emphasized the importance of the pelvis (4, p. 672; 5, p. 160) as the base of support of the structures above, the source of locomotion and the base of connection and support for the breathing mechanisms.

In order to lengthen down the lumbar curve, two techniques can be used. First, in the NAP, the students lift their legs and rock slowly from side to side, inching down with the back wall of the pelvis and shallowing the curve at the small of the back. Slowly they should lower their legs, taking special care that they do not allow it to flip

up and deepen. This shallowing can be tested by each student himself by placing the hands palm down on the floor and sliding then under the small of the back. If more than half of the length of the fingers slips under the back, the spine is not sufficiently shallowed and the rocking can be repeated.

Todd has an excellent exercise in The Thinking Body that begins to sensitize an individual to his pelvis, an area that is dead in most people. In the NAP the students are to:

> . . . place the right foot on the left knee, keeping the legs as nearly parallel as possible. Flex the ankle a few times. The weight of the right leg should then be felt to travel through the hip-joint so that the leg seems to sink into the body. Lift the right foot, extending the leg as straight as possible in the air. Move it about in large circles, rotating at the hip-joint and reduce the radius gradually, as you did with the arm. Shake the leg gently, like a palsy, initiating the movement deep in the thigh-joint, until the location of this joint becomes a reality in consciousness (5, pp. 178-179).

The students should then stand up, and with one leg straight and the other leg bent at the knee with the toes touching the floor, they should place their middle finger in the crease between the leg and the pelvis, about three inches from the center of the pubic bone. They should be able to feel the ligaments above the hip joint. The teacher will constantly be reminding the students to move from the thigh joint. As Todd points out, "Motions of the body as a whole are mainly controlled by the lumbar and

deep pelvic muscles (5, p. 238)." She calls the thigh joints "the hub of the universe" of one's personal world (5, p. 207).

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CHAPTER VIII

DIFFERENTIATION OF PELVIC MOVEMENTS

The instructor will need a stick that is straight and approximately four feet long for this class. He will also need a handkerchief. The students will each take turns doing a forward drop over the stick which will be held by two students on either side. The teacher should set up the exercise by explaining that the stick is really a fence and that the student does not want to pull away from his fence, utilizing the principle that efficiency is greater when you get close to your work. The motivation for bending at the thigh joint is to pick up the handkerchief which is dropped on the floor in front of the stick which is being held at the crease between the legs and the pelvis and <u>not waist high</u>.

One by one, the teacher should check each student's ability to bend at the thigh joint and not with the upper back which should be straight, or lengthened. They should not veer away from the "fence" and the legs should form a ninety degree angle to the floor. Also, the teacher can check for torsion in the spine since one side will be closer to the fence than the other, the upper back will be higher on one side than the other, or the entire body will lean to

one side with most of the weight on one foot, if torsion is present. The student should be asked to repeat the forward drop (commonly called touching your toes) until he improves the movement.

In order for the forward drop to be done correctly, the insides of the feet must be parallel with the legs several inches apart. Gripping with the toes is one of the most common signs of misplaced weight. Many people are afraid that they will fall forward if they do not grip with their toes because they do not possess the proper stretch and strength in the back and legs. The teacher should encourage the pupils to <u>think</u> about the give in the back of the pelvis and the legs with the weight mostly falling into the heels.

Also, the teacher should point out any areas where the student is holding himself. The arms, the head and chin, and the lower part of the front of the chest, which indicates that they are holding their breath, are common areas of tension. The students should be asked to turn loose of the holding since they do not need to hold these areas to move at the hip joint. The students need to learn to individualize parts and relax parts of their bodies that are not involved in the movement. To do this it is necessary to locate the origin of a movement, in this case the thigh joint (2, p. 279).

The second half of the class should be devoted to pelvic rotations as described in Feldenkrais' Awareness Through Movement (1, pp. 115-22), which seem to be very effective in sensitizing people to the pelvic region. They should be done slowly, thoughtfully, with constant help from the teacher. Particular attention should be paid to areas of tension while the pelvic rotations are being done. The head should imitate the circles that the pelvis is making and if it is not doing so, or if the chin is tight and the neck muscles are popping, the pupil is holding and should be reminded to let go in those areas.

These pelvic rotations usually take more than one session to complete, so the teacher should let them spill over into another class.

When the students stand up, they should be asked how they feel. A greater sense of moving from the pelvis should be established. They should be reminded to keep the back of the knees slightly loose and the weight falling into the heels primarily. Some students will feel dizzy or very tense because this is very hard work, and they should be encouraged to repeat the exercise on their own. The teacher cannot be too sympathetic at this stage because feeling bad is often a way of avoiding change. Nothing that is done in class can hurt the student if he follows the teacher's instructions.

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CHAPTER IX

THE LEGS: THE STUDY OF THIGH FLEXIONS

In this lesson the teacher will be introducing the students to the lower half of their bodies, their "understanding" as Becque calls it (1). By now the student has been prepared for work on the legs by the previous classes on the spine and the pelvis. Use of illustrations and the skeleton is very helpful in working on the legs since the shapes of the bones are not straight, but the action of the force of gravity follows a straight line from the center of the thigh joint to the center of the knee joint to the center of the ankle joint. Since the shortest distance between two points is a straight line, a well known principle of mathematics, the body has risen on its two feet and swung the legs directly forward in a straight line from the pelvis in moving. All sorts of deviations from this efficient path can be observed, particularly the ex-centered pelvis which allows the legs to spread and the feet to look like a duck's (2, p. 79; 3, p. 65; 4, p. 205).

This ex-centering is not natural, but the effect of cultural training. Walking pigeon-toed is the opposite fault. Both are wrong. Both take their toll on the structure all the way up the body.

Thigh flexions are a good way to locate the thigh in its socket and to eliminate interference from unnecessary muscles (1).

The Study of Thigh Flexions

Aim: A study of thigh flexions as a movement to promote greater neuromuscular efficiency and, hence, better posture.

1. Flex the thigh to raise the foot slightly from the floor as a hanging weight or as a tassel. While resting, note the pressure of the back of the trunk on the floor, especially at the region of the back of the pelvis.
2. Flex the left thigh and note whether there is a change in the pressure on the pelvis on the floor. Repeat with the right thigh.
3. With the right hand on the hamstrings of the right thigh, note whether there is a change in the tone of the muscles as you flex the left thigh. Rest.
4. With the left hand resting lightly on the abdomen right arm over the chest, flex the left thigh and note whether there is a change of tone in the abdominal muscles and also whether they bulge under your hand. Repeat several times. Rest.
5. Place your right hand on your right hamstrings, your right hand on the abdomen. Flex the left thigh and note the muscular reaction under the hands. Repeat several times. Rest.
6. With the arms across the chest, place the right heel on the left knee with the right knee directly over the right thigh joint. Flex the left thigh. Note the change of pressure on the pelvis on the floor.
7. Repeat with the right thigh flexion in order. Rest.

Ask yourself the following question: Which thigh flexion seemed to require the most work and why?

Efficient thigh flexion is performed as follows:
1. When working on the left thigh flexion, the right hamstrings do not work; they are fully relaxed and the abdominal muscles increase their tone, but they do not bulge upward.
2. Pressure on the pelvis may increase on the left, but the area of pressure does not change.
3. Ideally, effort put forth in the flexion of each

thigh joint should be the same.
4. Work first for thigh flexion of each thigh joint without the use of the hamstrings of the opposite thigh, no matter how much the abdominal region bulges or the pelvis changes its pressure on the floor. After succeeding in eliminating the hamstrings, work next on the abdominal region and then on the pressure on the pelvis.
5. To aid in eliminating the use of the hamstrings, use the image of the empty trouser leg hung from the ceiling. Work for ease in the resting thigh first. Then try to retain that ease while you flex the other thigh.

Aim: To improve your ability to flex the thigh efficiently in order to improve posture, as before.

If you have not learned to flex the thigh with the hamstrings relaxed in the resting thigh, continue to practice before continuing.

The next step in progress is flexion of the thigh without distortion of the trunk . But, first, work with images for each Line of Action to secure ease in the entire body before you start. Adjust your body for comfort as you need to at any time before you start, but avoid aiding the action of any image that you use.

1. Visualize a shiny, smooth piece of plexiglass in the trunk, halfway from the front to the back and parallel to the floor. At the center of the plexiglass is a large marble which will roll off of the glass is the levelness is not maintained. The marble is located on and about, and perhaps a little above, the navel. Try flexing the thigh while you concentrate on the image of the plexiglass and the marble. You will need to try thigh flexion many times, stopping your action almost as soon as it started because each effort will start to roll the marble off the plexiglass. Be sure to rest between each effort to flex the thigh. Also remember to lift the foot only slightly off the floor. The aim is better coordination of the working muscles, elimination of work in as many muscles as possible or individualization of parts. The aim is quality of movement. When you return the foot to the floor after the flexion, it's the heel that comes down first and a little bit in towards the ischia instead of out from the ischia. This gives you a better feeling of not rolling the marble off.

2. Sitting with your feet supported in a position so that the center of the knee is slightly above the level of the center of the thigh joint, flex the thigh. The knees should be in line with the thigh joints. The hamstrings will tend to work just as they did in the NAP on the floor. If the left thigh is flexed, there will be an increased pressure either of the right thigh on the supporting surface or the right foot on the floor. This should be avoided as much as possible. Sit as much as you can on the ischia's tuberosities. Use the image of the plexiglass and the marble, but the plexiglass is in a vertical position now, balanced on its very narrow, lower edge like a picture frame. A pole extends upward from the center of the top of the plexiglass and the head rests on this pole. The shoulder girdle hangs easily as a pair of earrings from the mastoid bones of the head. Watch the marble move forward through a central hole in the plexiglass to bulge on its front. Watch the front and back of your trunk fade into the plexiglass so that the front and back of your trunk become one with the plexiglass. A great space exists between the plexiglass and the shoulder girdle. Now try flexing the thigh to lift the foot as a hanging weight only slightly from the floor. Concnetrate on the plexiglass, so that it does not change in any manner and the shoulders continue to hang easily. Repeat, slowly. Rest. Reverse sides.

Once again, the teacher should be going around the room checking out each individual student and recommending adjustments. Areas of tension should be pointed out to them as well as incorrect origination of the movement. Work done on the thigh flexions will be very helpful in learning to walk later in the course. Students should be encouraged to check each other out and discuss their feelings when the stand up at the end of the class. These flexions will probably take more than one session to complete, especially since they must be done slowly and thoughtfully.

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CHAPTER X

LOCATING LEG MOVEMENT IN THE THIGH JOINT

In this session the work done previously on thigh flexions will be reinforced and additional exercises given so that the pupils can practice more correctly on their own. By this time they will be anxious to get up off the floor and move, or at the very least they will want to do something that at least looks like an exercise. The work done in this class should satisfy this need (1).

The teacher might point out that there is no difference between the action of the legs in the thigh joints of the two sexes. One common misconception in our culture is that men should spread their legs to appear more masculine and women should keep their legs together to look more feminine. Unfortunately, this cultural imagery is not anatomically accurate, as is often the case with cultural concepts of the body. Individuals must give up these notions in order to develop better moving habits, but it is a long, hard task since these images are not only ingrained in one's thinking, but also ingrained in the neuromuscular system. Time and the steady application of the principles and techniques being learned in this course will eventually overcome this cultural programming.

In the NAP, the students should perform the following thigh/knee flexions utilizing the imagery introduced in the last session:

1. With the knee still bent, bring the thigh to the chest. Do this slowly so that you can feel the pull in the lower back muscles. Do not allow the abdominal muscles to bunch up and form a hard ball for the thigh to fold up against. Do this on both sides. Rest.

2. Using the image of the entire length of the leg as being only a stub, bring the leg, fully extended, up to as close to a ninety degree angle to the floor as possible. Once again feel the give in the lower back muscles and do not allow the abdominal muscles to tense creating a tight ball on top which resists the fold at the hip joint. Also, be sure to leave the spine in its lengthened down position on the floor and don't lift the tip of the coccyx up to gain more distance. Settle for quality in the movement and don't concentrate on how far you get. Distance will be increased as the movement is improved in initiation at source or point of origin, in this case the hip joint.

3. Flex the heel a few times and feel the increased amount of stretch in the back muscles of the leg and lower back. Make sure that the leg is maintaining the center of the thigh to the center of the knee to the center of the ankle joint relationship mentioned in earlier classes. Don't let it swing out to the side. Check out your pelvis to see if you are lifting the side of the pelvis that corresponds to the lifted leg. Let it drop back onto the floor. Also check for tension in the arms, chin, shoulders, chest. Turn loose of this tension.

4. Slowly lower the leg until it lies flat on the floor. Do not let the pelvis flip up and increase the lumbar curve. Keep using the image of the leg as a stub and locate control of the movement in the hip joint. Eliminate bulging in the abdominal muscles. Repeat several times, slowly. Rest. Reverse legs.

5. Now, do the above sequence of movements with both legs at the same time. Rest. Return to NAP with the legs bent at the knee. Scan the body for tension.

6. Raise the leg in the extended position and let it rest at a ninety degree angle to the floor (or as closely as possible). To the count of thirty, slowly lower the leg, thinking of it as a stub, one inch at a time. This is a popular physical education exercise. However, use the imagery of the stub and locate the source of the movement in the hip joint. Look for holding in other parts of the body. Once again, do not let the abdominal muscles bulge. Think of the back muscles as controlling the movement rather than the top front muscles. Rest. Reverse sides.

7. Raise both legs together and lower them to the count of thirty as in number six above. This will be much harder than the individual legs. Some pupils will not be able to control the movement all of the way down, but encourage them to stay with it. They usually can tolerate it longer than they think they can. Some of them will shake quite a bit, but that is all right for the time being. As control is placed more and more specifically in the joint, the shaking will disappear. Rest.

While the legs are raised together before lowering them to the floor, ask the students to open their eyes and see which leg is longer looking than the other. Also, if they were to lift themselves up between their legs, which leg would they hit? The difference in the two legs is due to one or more factors, such as torsion in the lower spine, bending of the spine to one side, or not allowing the thigh bone to sink into the hip socket. The teacher should check each student for these faults and help the student through touch, explanation, or illustrations to adjust into a better alignment. They should feel the weight in the back wall of the pelvis more evenly distributed after the adjustment.

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CHAPTER XI

THE SHOULDER HARNESS

How is the shoulder harness attached to the vertebral column? Let the students take some time to answer this question before showing them on diagrams or on a skeleton. The shoulder harness is not directly attached to the column, as are the ribs, but indirectly attached bonily through the sternum which is connected to the spinal column by means of the ribs (1, p. 143). "The whole design is such as to enable the arms to move freely and powerfully in a wide range without bringing any pressure to bear on the upper part of the chest where the heart and lungs are situated (1, p. 144)."

Todd used the image of the Hollander's yoke used to carry water pails to clarify the shoulder harness(1, p.156). The arms swing freely in their sockets in line with the crests of the ilia, moved by the wheel-like arrangement of muscles reaching all the way down into the abdomen and lower back. The proper alignment of the shoulder harness also aids in stabilizing the head, allowing for greater freedom and protection for the functioning of blood vessels, and freeing the apices of the lungs (1, p. 156-157).

The old maxim, "shoulders back, chest out, stomach in" is still being used today as an exhortation to good posture, but it is not good anatomy. Actually, with proper shoulder placement, the arms hang more to the front of the body than is generally thought, giving the appearance of an ape. They hang from their ball and socket joint which is attached to the clavicle and the tip of the shoulder blade and move more freely than any other joint in the body because of the action of the wheel-like muscles that move them.

The shoulder blades should lie flat around the back and not stick out. Have the students check one another by placing their flattened palms on the shoulder blades and having the other student raise and lower his arm. The blades should not poke out at any stage of the movement. Also, the shoulders should not lift when moving the arm, but rather, the arms should articulate in their ball and socket joint leaving the shoulders down. The neck muscles should not bulge and the lower ribcage should not stick out, deepening the thoracic curve of the spine. Check the students one by one for these and other misuses.

While standing, the students should raise and lower their shoulder so that they seem to be drawn up to the ears by strings and dropped down without control. The instructor should be sure that they are not tensing the arms, hands, neck or altering the placement of the head while doing this.

Next, the students should lie on their backs with their knee up, but instead of folding the arms over the chest, they should raise the arms so that they are at a ninety degree angle to the floor. Be sure that they are at exactly ninety degrees. Now, they should slowly circle their arms from the joint, gradually diminishing the circles until only a tiny little circle remains. This should give them a sensation of moving at the joint.

Also in this position, they should place their arms at their sides with the palms down. Slowly, they should raise their arms creating a half circle in the air until the arm is raised over their heads parallel to the body. They should then slowly raise their arms an inch or so off of the floor. With the other arm they should test for popping of the pectoral muscles in the crease of the arm. It should feel like cotton or a marshmallow. Gradually, they should try to eliminate this popping until the arm can be raised off the floor easily with a feeling of a very small amount of energy being used and it being located in the joint.

The shoulder blades should not be digging into the floor or moving while the arm is being raised. This is the principle of individualization of parts once again. Engaging the shoulder blades in moving the arms habitually is a misunderstanding of their role in the action of the

arm. The pupil should sit up and take a partner, one facing the back of the other and test the involvement of the blades in raising the arms again. The arms should not swing out to the sides but move forward and up until they are at a 180 degree angle to the floor. Some people will not be able to raise their arms this high, and certainly not without lifting the shoulders and moving the blades. Once again, the teacher should remind the students of the importance of the quality of the movement and not the distance achieved when moving.

The following sequence of movements are designed to isolate the action of the arm in its socket and help to eliminate the interference of the shoulder blades: test the action by sitting up, then quickly join your hands in back as you would if you were zipping up a dress, with one hand bending over the back and the other bending down the back.

1. The structure prepares totally for the action of the part. Do not lock the breath.

2. Begin with the weaker arm. Bend it at the elbow toward the spine. The back of the hand stays as far away from the back of the ribs as possible.

3. The lower arm bends upward in back toward the head, as far away from the torso as possible.

4. The hand points to the ceiling. The elbow is as far from the chest as possible. Let the back of the hand

brush the back like a butterfly.

5. Let the lower part of the upper arm reach in a floating motion down to meet the other hand.

6. The grasp of the two hands comes at the end of the action. Both hands reach. (2)

After the students have done this quickly, unthinkingly, have them take the action apart slowly. Sequence of movement is very important in this action. Watch that they do not destroy Line of Action I which would hinder the action by increasing the distance that the arms must reach in back. Also, watch that the base of the neck gets out of the way of the action by allowing the seventh cervical vertebra to sink into the neck at the base of the curve as opposed to popping out and creating a "dowager's hump" for the arms to bend around.

This exercise should be repeated several times and the partners should check each other out, pointing out where the sequence of actions is disrupted and catching the exact point at which the blades interfere, the neck bends or the spine curves.

To end the class, the teacher should ask the pupils to fold their arms across their chests while standing up and then to quickly reverse the fold. One way will seem comfortable and the other odd, so recommend that they fold the unfamiliar arm over the top for the next few weeks.

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CHAPTER XII

HEAD AND NECK PLACEMENT

The correct balancing of the head on top of the vertetral column is the most complicated and important balancing act that goes on in the human body. It is of special importance to the actor because it effects his voice, as well as his vision. This is also an area that gets tense under pressure, and as Jack Vinten Fenton notes,

> Muscle strain, if continued over a period, can have serious effects, not only because of the pain and discomfort that it causes, but because the muscles themselves become chemically injured by the piling up of lactic acid within their tissue. They may eventually become incapable of responding to nervous impulses. They may become over-tense and unable to relax, or they may lose tone and become flabby. In either case, the condition is a serious one, which may take time to overcome. If everyday movements were more generally performed correctly much unnecessary fatigue, weariness and often pain would be avoided (3, pp. 19-21).

Strain in the head/neck area is serious because it affects the vocal mechanism adversely and can cause loss of voice. Kristin Linklater points out that "you will find that the efficiency of the vocal apparatus depends on the alignment of the body and the economy with which it functions (5, p. 20)." She emphasizes that

> To free the voice is to free the person, and each person is individually mind and body. Since the sound of the voice is generated by physical processes, the

> inner muscles of the body must be free to receive the sensitive impulses from the brain that create speech . . . Obstacles are psycho-physical in nature (5, p. 2).

As mentioned in the introduction to the course outline, the Alexander Technique has always placed special emphasis on the head/neck area (2). The head/neck/torso reflex is called the "primary control" and is defined as "a certain use of the head and neck in relation to the rest of the body (4, p. 12)." In one of his monographs written for singers, Frank Pierce Jones states,

> Elsewhere I have advanced the view that the physiological mechanism which makes these effects possible is the head-neck reflexes, which integrate and modulate the response of the organism to gravity. Briefly, release of neck-muscle tension, allowing surface muscles in the neck to lengthen, increases the antigravity response in postural muscles; shortening the same muscles decreases the strength of the response (4, p. 9).

The Becque-Todd Method places a great deal of importance on the head/neck area. The head is the center of the sense of balance because in it are housed the three semicircular canals and inner ear mechanisms which tell you how you relate to space. The sense of balance can be affected by improper alignment of the head on the first and second cervical vertebrae. Sight is located in the head, with its bifocality orienting us to our environment. The central nervous system is chiefly resident in the head, regulating our actions and sensations. The proprioceptive system is located here in the two old brains, the thalamus and

cerebellum. When the balance of the head is disturbed, the entire organism suffers.

The head is a heavy weight precariously perched on top of the spinal column, but fortunately the human body has evolved the mechanism of the specially adapted first and second cervical vertebrae, the atlas and the axis (1, pp. 41-42). The up-and-down, and side-to-side movements of the head are due to this mechanism. It is important to emphasize to the students in this class that the head rests on the first and second cervical vertebrae and does not have to be held or braced to keep from falling off.

The line of gravity does not fall through the center of the head, but slightly behind the center. Students should not confuse bonal shape with weight. The thick heavy mass of bone at the back of the cranium is balanced by the length of the lighter, cavernous bones in the front of the head exemplifying a Class I Bony Lever (6, pp. 22-24). In working on the head and neck placement, the teacher should take special care to demonstrate the bonal mechanisms on the skeleton and in the illustrations.

The eyes are of little help in readjusting the head. They have gotten used to whatever imbalances the individual has acquired and do not tell the truth to the body about its real state of alignment and relation to its surroundings. As mentioned before, reliance on sight is a poor way to

retrain the proprioceptive system. However, a mirror check can be helpful if used judiciously to test the correctness of an adjustment after it has been made by the pupil. In this way the student has both the teacher and mirror as external validation of his developing motor skills.

Students should attempt to align their heads with the rest of their bodies with their eyes closed in the NAP. The teacher should adjust the head placement with special care being given to the bilateral balance of the head, and any bending of the head to one side. The sense of touch is most helpful in the discovery of proper head/neck placement. There are three ways to use touch in adjusting the head: 1. place the extended, touching fingers under the cheek bones and test for bending to one side or torsion; 2. place the index fingers pointing towards the face on either side of the bridge of the nose and test for bending or torsion; 3. place the extended thumbs, one on each side of the jaw bone and test for evenness. The class should be able to sense imbalances in their own head/neck placement with varying degrees of success.

The following is an exercise to awaken the head/neck area.

> 1. Lift the head without lengthening the front of the trunk (individualization of parts).
> 2. Rock the head to bring the chin as close to the front of the neck as possible. Continue doing this little rocking, swaying, rhythmic motion and when you finish a series of small rocks, leave your chin

down so that the facial angle is accurate.

3. Having placed the chin and the facial angle through the rhythmic rocking, lift the head slightly without letting the chin move. Keep a hand on your neck muscles in front to make sure that they are not lifting. Lifting is done with the back of the neck.

4. Use images of the chest sinking such as the bird-cage image and accompany them with hissing through the teeth.

The following distortions tend to occur with the movement: the rib case moves up a little bit lengthening the front of the trunk and shortening the back; the pectoralis major muscles tighten; the front neck muscles tighten; the chin grips; or, the shoulders are locked into a fixed position.

Warnings: if you raise the head more than slightly you will bend in the region of the seventh cervical vertebra, thus increasing the "dowager's hump". If the head lifting is done correctly, it will aid in decreasing the "dowager's hump." If the front neck muscles and the chin muscles tighten and are held long enough over a period of time you will get a double chin.

What you are really lifting is bone -- the weight of the head, scooped out at the base of the skull and fitting onto the projected curve of the first cervical vertebra, like a round cap fits on the head of a baseball player (8).

After this exercise is completed, the class should sit up and take a moment to sense their head/neck placement. In the sitting position they can again rock their heads up-and-down using the image of a china doll whose head is nodding ever so slightly and finally comes to rest at a point of balance. Then, they should move their heads very slowly from side to side so that they can feel the turning of the head on the second cervical vertebra.

When the cervical spine is shallowed, decreasing the "dowager's hump", the antigravity in the front of the neck are freed and the chin is relaxed and slightly open.

A relaxed chin neither juts out nor pulls in, and is away from the breastplate and naturally behind the forehead. This releases the windpipe and the larynx for breathing and voice production, both of which are of paramount interest to the performer. The student can test this by trying to talk with the chin jutting out, pulled in, and slightly loose. Remind the students that it is not the chin that is initiating the head/neck adjustment, but the centering of the cervical in the neck (shallowing of the cervical curve), and the balancing of the head on the first and second cervical vertebrae. The chin follows the action of the spine and the head. No tension should be felt in the swallowing muscles if proper alignment has taken place. The teacher should be quick to point out that a distal part should never move a base area is efficient movement is desired.

An excellent image to use in achieving good head/neck placement is that of hanging from the ceiling by a hook that goes from side-to-side just behind the median point on the top of the head (7, p. 212). This image can be used while walking, sitting, standing, or moving in any upright position with the head.

Once this initial exploration of head/neck placement is over, the students can observe each other and discuss impressions, but they should not attempt to place the head

of another pupil. This should be done by the teacher alone so that the students do not receive conflicting stimuli and cloud their newly acquired sensations.

Lines of Action I and VIII work together to promote proper placement of the head by shallowing the cervical spine (as well as all of the other curves), centering the weight of the head, and releasing the antigravity muscles in the front of the neck thereby freeing the voice.

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CHAPTER XIII

THE THORAX AND BREATHING

Mabel Todd observes that three things developed together in the human race: mechanical balance, locomotion, and breathing (2, p. 10). The activity of breathing affects structure, particular in the thorax, and conversely, the arrangement of the structure affects breathing. The two cannot be separated. Todd links the two in her discussion of true "deep breathing" when she says,

> In deep breathing, its action is up and down, like a piston in a cylinder, deepening the chest cavity instead of broadening it, with every inhalation. The balanced thorax, with freedom of ribs and intercostals, will release the diaphragm, and deep breathing which requires not breadth of chest from side to side, but depth from top to bottom and from front to back, will result. This increases the vertical rather than the transverse diameter of the chest (2, p. 180).

The following exercise is designed to help achieve true deep breathing:

Breathing (1)

Aim: To learn to use breathing to promote a better posture pattern.

All of the muscles of breathing fasten to the skeletal framework, directly or indirectly. Hence, when there is poor alignment of the structural framework there are poor breathing habits. The typical poor alignment, with its increased distance from the end of the breastbone and the front of the pelvis, indicates that the front part of the diaphragm is used in breathing more than the back part.

Ideal breathing is of a cylindrical, or tubular, type, with even use of all the muscles around the trunk and even use of the diaphragm. The action of the diaphragm is then somewhat like the movement of a piston in a cylinder. The result is that one can take a very deep breath without its being noticed in any distortion of the trunk and especially without distortion of the abdominal wall and the lower ribs at the front.

Try hissing through your teeth in the NAP. Do not inhale deeply before hissing. Exhale until all of the air is out of the air passage, remembering that there is plenty of residual air in the lungs. Hold your breath a moment and on the next inhalation eliminate the pumping out of the lower ribs in front. Shift the breath to the top of the rib cage from front to back (LA VIII).

Try buzzing the lips in the NAP and compare the results with hissing through the teeth. Both can be used as you concentrate on images in various parts of the body to produce needed neuro-muscular changes. Hissing as long as possible on one breath tends to bring the little used deep muscles of the rib case into action, thus contributing to the release of muscular strain, which limits the flexibility of the rib case in its 104 joints. When hissing is used with movement, it tends to give greater stability to the alignment of the trunk, in addition to that gained through images which anchor the parts of the trunk together (LA IV and VII).

Position: NAP

BREATHING THROUGH A CENTER: Watch air go through a central small circle at the level of the twelfth thoracic vertebra. To locate this center, visualize one rod extending from mid-front to mid-back of the thorax. The center exists at the crossing of the rods.

As you breath in, watch the air go through the central circle in the direction of the pelvis. As you breath out, it goes through the central circle in the direction of the head. Concentrate on the flow of air only at the central circle. Do not try to regulate the rhythm of your breathing in any way.

BREATHING DOWN THE BACK: The purpose of this is to promote greater use of the back half of the diaphragm -- a need indicated by the typically poor postural alignment of most people. First, watch the ribs

> close on a crossbar. During breathing, try to keep the ribs closed in this manner. As you inhale, watch the air-stream go down the back all the way to the tuberosities of the ischia, where you visualize it continuing its progress towards the heels to extend the tuberosities like long, slender balloons. Use any image you can remember to avoid: 1. widening the rib case; 2. moving the lower rib case forward; and, 3. bulging the abdominal wall.
>
> Warnings: Too many deep breaths in succession will disturb the oxygen content of the blood and make you dizzy. Rest and use imagery between your efforts to take a deep breath in the manner described.

Students can intensify this experience by placing their spread hands on their abdomens and lower rib cages to test the activity in those regions. The teacher should check each pupil and encourage them to keep trying to find the right placement of the breath stream.

Change positions after the class has done the exercise in the NAP. Have the students kneel and bend over so that they are folded up with their rear ends sticking up in the air, or have them stand up and bend over in a forward drop. This change in position will reverse the muscular effort of inhalation and exhalation, making the inhalation long and the exhalation short. Normally, we speak in the long, extended exhale of breath, but in this position it is more difficult. The students can feel the freedom of the floating ribs in the back more precisely in this position. The students can take turns placing their spread hands on the floating ribs in the back to intensify the sensation of breathing down the back.

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CHAPTER XIV

THE FEET

Feet are part of one's "understanding" to use a pun. They obviously play a key role in locomotion and in balancing the structure in an upright position. They show the lack of proper placement of weights from above in their knots, and bulging veins, and bony prominence.

The foot acts as a direction signal for locomotion, but it is definitely a follower and not a leader. The thigh joint is the initiator of locomotion and the foot follows through with the movement, absorbing the shock of the weight fall and passing it on back up the structure.

Line of Action VI deals specifically with the foot, but much more work should be done on the foot. A series of foot exercises gives the pupils an idea of the parts of the foot and their role in moving the foot. The exercises will be assistive, active, and resistive. Magazines with slick covers should be provided.

First, the pupils should locate the three major tendons on the top of the foot. These three tendons are incorrectly used to move the foot by most people. The tendons become like cords and pop out because they are assuming responsibilities they were not made to assume. These cords

should be buried, to give to top of the foot a smooth appearance. The arch and the muscles on the bottom of the foot should do the work when the weight is placed properly.

The exercises are as follows. (1)

1. Toe-in and point the foot to the ceiling to locate the tibialis anterior which is the inversion/eversion tendon. This is a large, long tendon that is closest to the inside of the foot.

2. Toe-out and point the toes to the ceiling leaving the big toe on the floor, to locate the extensor longus digitorum, which moves the small toes.

3. Leave the small toes on the floor and lift the big toe to locate the extensor longus hallucis, which moves the big toe.

4. Now, toe-in without using any of these tendons.

5. Toe-out without using any of them, too. None of these tendons needs to be used to move the foot. They are of secondary importance in these movements. The muscles on the bottom of the foot should do the work. This takes concentrated thinking and should be done slowly.

6. Lift the front of the foot and think of the image of a sharpened heel bone becoming a small point of a pencil.

Having located the three major tendons on the top of the foot and attempting to rule them out in inverting, everting, and lifting the foot, the class will work on the fall

of weight through the heel in standing and walking. Gravity causes weight to fall through the center of the thigh joint, through the center of the knee, through the center of the ankle joint. The weight is then diffused throughout the foot's many bones. The point of pressure is the heel bone and not the toes. The toes are an area of pressure. The class can practice swaying back and forth until they find the exact point at which the knees are slightly loose, and the weight is falling more strongly into the heel than the toes.

There are many exercises to strengthen the feet and the following are good examples.

1. Spread the toes on the slick magazine which has been powdered, without lifting them off the floor. Cotton can be used between the toes. The big toe should be straight, so that the inside of the foot is straight.

2. Cross one leg over the other and pick up a handkerchief with the toes, alternately knuckling and unknuckling the toes. Assist this activity with the hand by folding it around the toes and squeezing them into a fist, finally pulling them up and out. Look for as much action as is possible in the joints of the toes. Try to increase the bend at these joints.

3. Rotate the foot at the ankle joint in half circles, then three-quarter circles, and finally, full circles; first,

go clockwise, and then counterclockwise. The action should glide as smoothly and slowly as possible, without skipping any part of the circle. Watch for protest from the tendons on the top of the foot. Eliminate as much popping of these tendons as is possible.

4. Contract the longitudinal muscles on the bottom of the foot in the long arch. This is the turtle image in Line of Action VI. The big toe should slide back as a result of the action of this contraction on the bottom of the foot, deepening the arch.

These exercises develop stretch and strength on the bottom of the foot and eliminate protest on the top of the foot.

Now, the teacher should have the pupils stand up and lift, successively, their toes, their heels and their leg off the ground. The pupil should look for differences in his balance as a result of this shift. Then, the students should walk backwards and forwards. True dynamic mobility in the upright posture is dependent upon the lever/fulcrum relationship of the heels and toes, which relationship shifts with the reversal of movement from forward to back.

Constant experimentation with the feet is possible since they are inconspicuous a good part of the time. The pupils should be encouraged to play with their feet.

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CHAPTER XV

FINAL EXAM

The final examination covers the required reading, namely Mabel Todd's The Thinking Body, and deals with information acquired in class from the teacher.

The students should have been tested during the last week of class through improvisations and functional movements on their improvement in Structural Action. Since achievement in Structural Action is difficult to gauge, it is up to the teacher to make a subjective judgment about the students' effort and progress. More importance is ascribed to effort in a developmental course like this one, than to the attainment of specific goals. Due to the organic nature of this Method, some of the pupils will not yet show signs of change in their neuromuscular habits, while others will demonstrate dramatic changes. Students should not compare themselves to others in the class, but should compete with themselves.

The final examination is deliberately detailed, so that the teacher can determine if the pupils read the book, and if they kept their notes on class work. A thorough reading of the text is necessary to achieve a high grade on this examination. The teacher also can impress upon the class

the vast knowledge that validates this Method of training.

FINAL EXAM

1. List the Eight Lines of Action. Be sure to indicate whether it shortens or increases distances between two points. _____

2. What are the three dimensions of space?_____

3. What are the three body needs? _____

4. What are the three body possibilities? _____

5. Why do we use the Non-Action Position? There are three basic reasons. _____

6. What is the "motive power" or unit of the body which determines organized movement? _____

7. "The intelligence of an individual may be determined by the _____ with which he orients himself to a new situation," observes Dr. Jesse Feiring Williams.

8. Circle one:
   Function precedes Structure
   Structure precedes Function

9. The following percentage of total body energy is available for conscious purposes: (circle one)
   5% 15% 30% 45% 60% 75% 90%

10. What metal can bone be likened to? _____

11. What are the four primary functions of bones?_____

12. What three things developed simultaneously in the human being throughout evolution? _____

13. What are some of the things that man gained by assuming an upright posture?_____

14. "The _____ is the power center, the protective center and the coordinating center for both structural and organic rhythms, " Todd reports.

15. What is the most important force acting on the human structure? _____

16. What other forces are important? _____

17. What did Thomas Huxley call "the physical basis of life" ? _____

18. The _____ part of the nervous system orients the individual to his inner perception of self.

19. _____ is the term applied to the three-fold nervous process of the receipt of a sensation, the transmission of it to a center, and the acting upon it by means of a motor impulse conveyed from the center to a muscle or viscus.

20. Which is more fatiguing, standing or walking? Why? _____

21. Can physical exercise alone correct muscle hypertension or hypotension? Yes No

22. The prime mechanical function of the bony skeleton is _____.

23. The prime function of muscles is _____.

24. Define compression stress. _____

25. Define tensile stress. _____

26. What three stresses, in addition to the axial stresses of compression and tensility may be set up which involve the axis in some way or another, if the forces of pushing and pulling are combined, or if they are directed in such a way as to interfere with the axis?

27. Which of these stresses is most serious and hardest to counter? _____

28. The direction of forces in the compression members is _____ while the direction of the forces in the tensile members is _____.

29. What are the three principle units of weight in the human body? _____

30. What are the three ways in which weight may be supported in any structure? _____

31. The Axial skeleton is made up of the following parts:

_____

32. The Appendicular skeleton is made up of the following parts: _____

33. Is a hollow shaft stronger or weaker than a solid shaft

_____

34. There are several ways to describe the functional relationship of pairs of skeletal muscles. Give one.

35. What are the four curves of the spinal cloumn and the five sections of the vertebrae? Include the number of vertebrae in each section, adding up to the 33 or 34 vertebrae in the entire column.

36. Is the arm directly connected to the spine? _____

37. What Line(s) of Action contribute to producing the "desirable high chest" Todd talks about? _____

38. Which is easier, to carry a side-load or a top-load?

39. A body is in stable equilibrium when any movement from its position will raise / lower its center of gravity.

40. True or false:
The more nearly the line of gravity and the parallel axis of the spine by which the weight is controlled approximate to each other, and the lower the center of gravity of the whole, the greater the economy in carrying and controlling the load.

41. True or false:
Think up the back and down the front.

42. The _____is the largest joint in the body.

43. The spine can lengthen its axis only downward / upward.

44. True or false:
Expiration is longer than inspiration.

45. The action of the diaphragm is _____.

46. Motions of the body as a whole are mainly controlled by the _____muscles.

47. About 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 per cent of our movements are considered to be under our direct control.

48. Emphasis should be laid in reconditioning on the inspiration / expiration phase of breathing.

49. True or false:
The importance to health is not the amount of oxygen taken into the lungs, but the amount and extent of gas exchange made in the muscle cells of the body. Therefore, the number of muscles employed is more important than the amount of air inspired.

50. Does Todd desire complete relaxation and complete balance?

51. When a conditioned reflex "decays" through disuse it will take less / more time to reestablish it than if it had never been registered.

52. What are the two parts of the nervous system?_____

53. In learning consciously to employ the "motivating picture" to create the conditions for appropriate movement responses, one must have cognizance of three things: _____

54. Do you think that there is such a thing as a gesture that can be understood by everyone, a "universal gesture" as Isadora Duncan called it, or do you agree with Ray L. Birdwhistell that no gesture has been proven to be understood by all human beings? Apply your answer to the theatre.

APPENDIX A

FRAMEWORK OF MOVEMENT MATERIALS

The following Framework of Movement Materials outlines the content of a two-year course in the Becque-Todd Method. The portion of the outline covered in the first semester of work which is covered in this thesis is marked with an asterisk.

BASICS (to be applied to all work)

- * STRUCTURAL ACTION (SA)
- * GESTURAL/POSTURAL ACTION (GPA)
- * FIVE BODY POSITIONS
  - Lie, Squat, Kneel, Sit, Stand
- * THREE ANATOMICAL POSSIBILITIES
  - Bend, Stretch, Twist or Torsion
- * THREE NEEDS OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
  - Strength, Flexibility, Nimbleness or Agility
- SHAPING ACTION (SHA)
  - Weight/Space/Time per Laban
  - Eight Efforts per Laban
    - Punch, Slash, Dab, Press
    - Float, Glide, Wring, Flick
  - Three Space Dimensions
    - Vertical, Sagittal, Horizontal
  - Monotony -- Ebb and Flow -- Rhythm

DWELLING IN POSITIONS

- * NON-ACTION POSITION (NAP)
- * FLOOR PATTERNS
- * EXERCISES
- PAD, PENCIL AND FLASHLIGHT TECHNIQUE

IMPROVISATION

* GENERAL IMPROVISATION
    - Solo
    - Follow the Leader
    - Movement from Inner Impulse
    - Movement from Outer Impulse

COMPOSITIONAL IMPROVISATION
- Changes made in
    - Position, Gesture, Posture
- Levels
    - Low, Middle, High
- Mix with
    - Dwelling in Positions
    - Structural Action
    - Shaping Action

PROBLEM OF THE DAY (such as Change of Focus)

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

PHYSICAL LIFE OF THE CHARACTER
- Apply Basics
    - Structural Action, Gestural/Postural Action, Shaping Action
- Observations from life recorded
    - Notebook
    - Audio-Visual Aids
- Analysis of Text

IMPROVISATION

SPATIAL RELATIONSHIPS EXPLORED

DYNAMICS OF PRODUCTION

APPENDIX B

RECOMMENDED BOOK LIST

The following list of recommended books could serve as sources and resources for the mind and the body.

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APPENDIX C

TEACHING PRACTICUM AND CONCLUSIONS

This course outline was used as the basis for actual classes, in particular a two semester course in Stage Movement at Southern Methodist University taught during the fall and spring semesters of 1976-77, and, a one semester course taught in conjunction with an Acting Laboratory at North Texas State University taught during the fall semester of 1976. The class at Southern Methodist University met three times a week for one hour and the class at North Texas State University met once a week for one hour.

The amount of material covered in the two classes varied considerably due to the difference in time allotted to the course at each school. The class at Southern Methodist University completed most of the material in this course outline and were prepared for the second semester work in creative movement and its application to the stage. The class at North Texas State University was arranged differently due to the time limitations and the termination of the course at the end of the semester. Material from the first and second semesters taught at Southern Methodist University was telescoped into the one semester, once-a-week class at North Texas State University.

More time was spent on Structural Action at Southern Methodist University than at North Texas State University because of the arrangement of the classes. Because of these differences in scheduling, the class at Southern Methodist University achieved more results in developing their self-image, becoming aware of quality of movement both in themselves and others, and evolving new and better motor habits. On the whole, the class at Southern Methodist University showed a marked improvement in their Structural Action and a greater range of movement was possible than when the class commenced.

Progress made by the students at North Texas State University was in the realm of awareness of their bodies as instruments for acting and an introduction to the various new approaches to mind/body relationships. Only minor changes in their structures were observed with most of the changes occurring in the area of functional movements like walking and standing.

Both classes took the Body Image Test and filled out the Functional Movement Questionnaire at the beginning of the semester. The class at Southern Methodist University repeated the Body Image Test at the end of the semester. Both classes demonstrated poor knowledge of structural action and vague self-image on the tests at the beginning of the semester. For example, many students commented

that they did not know how they reacted to certain stimuli such as the presence of an unfamiliar person. Answers to the same questions were much more detailed and accurate on the second test demonstrating an increased awareness of self.

A shifting set of values was also demonstrated by the changes in the Body Image Test from the beginning of the semester to the end of the semester. In answer to questions like "The thing I like least about my body is . . .," most of the class responded on the first exam with: look prettier or more handsome, lose weight, poor complexion, flabby stomach muscles, small bust or chest, or weakness in arms. On the second test the same students emphasized a desire for better balance, equalizing the two halves of the body, acheiving greater control over their actions, and becoming more flexible.

One typical response to the second test by a student at Southern Methodist University was

> Above all else I've become so much more aware of "myself" this semester and despite my attitude of dread I did get something out of the Todd work. I can visualize my inner structure better now. The images really do help. One of my biggest struggles is my fluctuating desire. It's sort of nebulous right now. I'm changing some old, crippling bad ideas for stronger, healthier ones. I'm more aware now of my structure and how it looks. I sense it as belonging to me -- and I'm working on changing.

This attitude was quite different from the same girl's attitude shown on the first test. She had a hazy concept

of how she looked to others and what she did in relation to them, as well as no real awareness of her inner life. The Body Image Test was a good gauge of the changes that took place in the class members over the course of the semester's work.

Both classes had individual sessions with the teacher in conjunction with the Body Image Test and the Functional Movement Questionnaire. The private interviews were held at the beginning and end of the semester so that the teacher could judge background, attitude to the class, and self-image. This proved to be an important part of the course since it gave the teacher personal knowledge of the students, individualized the instruction, and gave the student access to the teacher on a one-to-one basis. Greater rapport was developed between teacher and pupil. Notes were made on each student by the teacher during the interview with regard to the student's prior experiences, problems in health both mental and physical, motivation for learning, philosophy of body/mind relationship, and, most important of all, the teacher's observations of the structural action of the student at that time. This record proved most helpful to the teacher in dealing with the individual students and served as a gauge of change during the course of the semester. It is recommended that these private interviews be given regularly throughout the course's

progress, but at least at the beginning and end of the semester. An example of the kinds of things put in the teacher's notes would be the following points written about a male student at Southern Methodist University:

> Doesn't like body because it won't do what he wants; self-image derived from ballet dancing; very confident of ability in ballet, but poor execution; back problem treated by chiropractor; gets dizzy easily; wears corrective shoes; ex-centering at the thigh joint marked; poor flexibility in lower back; tense in chin and neck area; looks awkward when moving expressively due to arm holding; tends to talk around a problem rather than working it out in practice.

Both classes expressed a desire for more personal attention, but there was little opportunity to do this within the academic schedule. Students stayed after class quite often, or met with the teacher at pre-arranged times another day. This is one of the problems in teaching an organic course like this one. Ideally, more time each day should be devoted to developmental courses like body and voice training before the students goes on to specific movement forms like stage combat, period styles, and dance. However, it was deemed that enough progress was made in both classes to warrant placing this course in the academic schedule.

This course should always occur at the start of the actor's training so that he can approach his acting with an already prepared body and mind. Some of the pupils at

Southern Methodist University were transfer students and had already taken courses in stage movement elsewhere. Several of them had extensive backgrounds in dance of one kind or another. Experience in acting ranged from very experienced to beginners. It was easier, on the whole, for the inexperienced students to implement the Becque-Todd Method than the experienced students because they had no firmly established habits in another system to unlearn before learning the new process. It is better to begin with a "tabula rasa" where this course is concerned so that time does not have to be spent on undoing old habits of mind and body before progress can be made. Emphasis should be on development rather than on therapy.

The class at Southern Methodist University, because of the more intense and detailed work done on structure in the first semester, showed greater progress with some of the pupils showing marked differences by the end of the first term. The same movements were executed throughout the semester such as the forward drop. Students were asked to perform certain exercises for the teacher the last week of term to test their improvement. This included walking, standing, sitting, dwelling in the floor patterns, NAP, swaying from side to side, and some improvisations. More strength, flexibility, and nimbleness were acquired by most of the students as demonstrated in the above mentioned

exercises. They executed actions with more ease, less tension, and greater efficiency displaying an improved sense of individualization of parts, movement from source, direction of movement, and general awareness of the imagery technique as applied to movement.

Unfortunately, not enough time in class was devoted to practice. Many of the students did not heed the warning that work in class alone would not be sufficient to change their neuro-muscular habits. Practice on their own was spotty despite the teacher's constant reminders. This is, of course, a typical problem in education and this class was no exception. As the students moved into the second semester of work in which the Structural Action they had learned first semester was applied to the stage, motivation for practice increased. The teacher needs to be patient and continue programming the students to work on their own.

Also, much of the detail in the lessons will be forgotten, so emphasis should be on developing the process of working on the body per the Becque-Todd Method. Both of the classes had trouble remembering the specific information contained in the lessons. Repetition of the details was not possible because of the time limitations.

For this and other reasons, a workbook was kept by each student at Southern Methodist University. It was reviewed by the teacher at the end of the semester. In it

were notes on class material, personal observations on themselves and their fellow students, notes on how the work applied to their other classes and acting, book reviews, illustrations drawn by themselves, and recommendations to the teacher. This proved to be a valuable tool for both pupil and teacher. It allowed the teacher to judge the student's comprehension of the work, his progress in class, particularly on the conceptual synthesis segment of the work, and, it afforded the student the opportunity to voice his true feelings about the class. It served as a record of the class factually and personally. The personal observations were especially important for the pupil to keep and review at some future time. He should see where he was at the time in the work and compare that self to his present self. The requirement to keep the notebook on a daily basis also reinforced the note-taking process in class which can get lost along the way.

The workbooks ranged in quality from poor to excellent. Some of the students obviously did not keep the notes on a regular basis, and attempts to fill in the gaps were apparent. Both the detail of information and clarity of observation were missing in those workbooks. When the notebooks were kept regularly, they displayed personal growth and recorded class work in detail. Quite often, the

teacher's performance was commented upon and this was a good learning experience for the instructor. This progressive critique let the teacher see what sections of the course were most effective at the time and what sections needed polishing. The workbooks also allowed the pupils to compliment and/or criticize the teacher's presentation of the material giving further insights into the teaching process.

The class at North Texas State University was introduced to the applications of the Structural Action work to the stage after only a brief review of the material covered in this course. The students ended the semester with the performance of scenes. The problem chosen was the selection of a character that did not fit the actor's present image of himself and that he did not think he would be cast in a play as that character. The Southern Methodist University class did not do this exercise until the end of the second semester. Both classes were anxious to apply the movement work that they had learned in class to acting.

Each student met with the teacher for private coaching. Emphasis was on the physical life of the character rather than the voice or emotional life of the character. The student analysed the character's Structural Action, his movement patterns based on his structure, and his relationship to his space. The students discovered their own

abilities and shortcomings when it came to creating the character's physical life. They were aware of the difference between their own personalities as expressed in body and movement, and the personality of their character. The gap between the desire to do something and the ability to do it also became apparent to them. Quite often the student would comment on his own inability to execute a particular action or to coordinate the various components of his characterization. The need for more physical development was brought home to them at those times, increasing their motivation to develop their bodies as instruments.

Since the class at North Texas State University did not have as complete a grounding in the Becque-Todd Method, they did not have as much success with their characterizations as the class at Southern Methodist University. Their physical apparati were not as well developed, and hence, their characters were more like themselves than the characters of the Southern Methodist University group. In fact, due to the limited amount of time spent on body image, the class at North Texas State University had trouble picking their characters and spent much less time working on the physical life of the character. They placed emphasis on showing their best attributes on stage rather than on sublimating their own personalities to the character's personality. The final examination for this class was the performance of

their scenes for each other.

The final examination for the class at Southern Methodist University is included in the body of the course outline. It dealt primarily with Structural Action. The results of the test showed that most of the students had absorbed a good deal of the factual information contained in the course. The test was geared to judging their knowledge of Mabel Todd's book The Thinking Body and the content of the course rather than to judging their progress in moving skills. The highest grade was A+ graded on a curve, with no one pupil answering more than seventy-five percent of the questions correctly. The lowest grade was D, received by the one pupil who was the least motivated throughout the semester.

The progress of the students in both classes was judged by the teacher on the basis of her knowledge of Structural Action and movement principles. Students were analysed by the teacher in class and in their private interviews as to their present condition and the teacher's notes and perceptions served as the foundation of the judgment that change had taken place in most of the students. The amount of change varied widely among individuals. One student, in particular, from Southern Methodist University showed a remarkable difference in his spine and therefore his sense of balance was much improved. Another student

released tension in the area of his lower ribcage and showed improvement in his breathing and voice work. Some students found it easier to prepare for their acting on stage by utilizing the relaxation techniques taught, and used the NAP and other dwelling positions to warm up.

On the whole, both classes seemed to acquire new and improved motor habits. Both classes indicated approval to the teacher in their discussions and workbooks of the Becque-Todd Method as a means of acquiring new habits. The class at Southern Methodist University demonstrated more achievement in acquiring these new motor habits. This was due to the amount of time spent on the Becque-Todd Method in the first semester, as compared to the small amount of time given to the Becque-Todd Method at North Texas State University. Also, the Southern Methodist University students saw the implications of the Becque-Todd Method to the art of acting more clearly than the class at North Texas State University for the same scheduling reasons. It was obvious that more time and energy needed to be expanded on developing the body than was allotted the North Texas State University class.

For theatre people, further experimentation may prove helpful in applying the Becque-Todd Method to stage work.

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