

Authentic Movement

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Creative Expression in Physical Movement is Language without Words¹

Mary Starks Whitehouse

We no longer know it but there was a time when movement was our language. It was long ago and we can't remember, but we were born into an alien world in which the first movement was breathing – that sharp inflation of the lungs that brings the first cry. From then on, we struggled and grew into movement, learning on our own, without being taught, how to stretch out and double up, how to hold up our heads, roll over, sit up, creep, crawl and, one triumphant day, to stand, walk. Our learning was nothing we did on purpose. At first, our movement was random, erratic, but as our eyes focused and our awareness increased, we became able to reach out, grasp and look around us. We were busier moving than anything else in the world, and long before we had words we communicated how we felt through our bodies. Our smiling was total and explosive. When we said 'Yes,' everything in us said 'Yes.' When we said 'No,' everything in us said 'No.' We were undivided.

Where did it all go? What happened? How are we now? Well, for one thing, the teaching which was out of our own selves gave way to being taught. We learned to buy and sell with our behavior, hoping for love, learning disapproval. We learned to curb our instant reactions and we unconsciously imitated the movement around us. We picked up the set of our parents' bodies, absorbing, without knowing it, their attitudes and connections with the body. We succumbed to the requirements of our teachers, their insistence on a certain kind of behavior, requiring, without knowing it, restrictions and limitations. Worst of all, we learned very slowly,

¹ Unpublished paper, date uncertain, c. 1956.

but almost completely by the time we were in our teens, to move for a reason, to isolate our motions. When we were young and looked up into the sky at an airplane, the whole body looked up. (Do it). When we bent over to look at a bug, the whole body bent over – but, gradually, only the eyes, with a restricted movement of the neck, looked. When we reached for something, only the arm reached. When we walked, only the legs walked. The bodily stir, the total action of the whole organism, broke up into separate gestures. The lovely flow of energy, the connectedness, was gone. Our smiling became of the mouth only. Our crying, when we allow it, is held in and kept down. Our anger turns into tension. We may be very efficient and very active but we are physically inexpressive and, therefore, uncreative – our gestures are stereotypes of feeling, limited and unoriginal. We kiss by putting our cheeks together and are angry by being polite. Who can imagine an adult turning his back when he dislikes someone, skipping for fun, or clapping for happiness? By this I mean, who can imagine an adult allowing his own spontaneous creative expression in physical movement?

Once, two adults went for a walk with a child. The child ran on ahead for no reason but the fun of running, while the grown-ups walked themselves along under their talk. After a while they caught up to the little girl. She was sitting on the curb, feet in the street. She looked up at them and called out: 'See me sitting.' What adult feels in the body: see me anything?

But there is more. We were, as little children, put at desks for hours at a time, increasingly, and told to keep still and learn, just as children are today. This is based on the assumption that learning is for the mind, a mind separate from the body, that we grow up, as we acquire ideas and knowledge, by means of words and concepts. The expression of feeling is relegated to a sketchy experience in the arts and the experience of movement is assigned to required gym or athletics. Our major skill, the primary value of our culture, is communication through words. We are a verbal culture. We understand through words. We depend on words for contact with each other. We think in words. We can even talk without listening to ourselves and listen to others without hearing.

Because hearing people, and especially children, is also seeing and feeling what they are saying, and for that one needs a different kind of awareness, a sensitivity to gesture and movement. It is the movement of a child that speaks for him and of him. I have heard grown-ups greet a child by asking 'How are you?' Usually, he has no idea what to answer. One look at the way he stands

and how he holds on to his mother, at his eyes which are down-cast or lifted to meet yours, and the grown-up need not have asked the question.

An adult answers the same question with: 'Fine, thank you.' (Do it.) But a contradiction comes through. What is really being said is often quite different. The body may be saying 'I'm tired' or 'I'm frightened of your questions.' (Do it.) Sometimes we catch on – the handshake in which the hand is a dead fish, the regular tapping of a foot (beating what?), raised shoulders (raised against what?), a drooping chest (apologizing?). We register and we get a feeling from that person which we can't put into words; it influences us without our realizing where it comes from. It comes directly from the movement and gestures – the body does not lie. We are like our movements, for the movement is ourselves living: vital and experiencing or tense and restricted, spontaneous and flowing or controlled and inhibited.

Professor Hocking of Harvard once remarked that we are born with the body God gave us, but by the time we are forty we have the body we have created for ourselves. And this body that we have created is less expressive, less alive than it could be, because it is not experienced by most of us. It is 'the body' or 'my body,' conceived as an object, in the way a table or a chair is an object. I use it but I am only dimly aware that it is myself. If it is stiff and unyielding, I am somehow stiff and unyielding; if it is tight and prim, I am tight and prim; if it is sloppy and heavy, there is that in me which is sloppy and heavy. It is an important truth that whether I know these things of myself or not, they are, nevertheless, communicated, especially to children. In many a classroom it is the gestures of the teacher which speak to the child, rather than what she is saying. When the teacher's physical timing is hurried and her gestures are sharp and sudden, no words of encouragement will enable the child to respond and she may well be puzzled, when she offers encouragement, to find that he is balking and sullen. Her body is saying 'I am impatient with you' and he is reacting to that message.

Any change has to come through consciousness, awareness, first of one's actual condition and, second, of the possible meaning of that condition. Physical activities are helpful – gym classes, sports – at least they help us to move. They increase the circulation and improve co-ordination. But they don't connect us with ourselves because they still have a motive external to the experience of ourselves. They still put us in the position of moving our bodies for a purpose, instead of becoming aware of ourselves. You can play golf or tennis until you are expert, but I do not believe your habitual, organized physical attitudes or personal gestures will change one bit.

Let's try an experiment. At this moment you are sitting listening to me in a particular physical way. Let's find out what it is. Please close your eyes. You may feel slightly embarrassed or self-conscious, but since everybody has his eyes closed, the embarrassment is not located on the outside, it is not because someone else is looking but because you are. The looking is an act of attention. Don't move or change your position. Just be where you are. Now, begin with your feet. Where are they? Are they touching the floor, and if so, what part of the foot is pressing on the floor? Are they touching each other? Are they alike or quite separate and different? Wiggle your toes inside your shoes. Can you feel them? Now, travel up to your knees and do the same thing. Are they crossed over each other? Is the back of either one or both touching the chair seat? If not, at what point do the backs of the legs rest on the chair? Travel along underneath and behind yourself. How much of you is touching the chair? What are you sitting on? Go on to your back. Is it rounded or straight? Are you leaning back? Where? Are you sitting more on one side than the other? What are your arms doing? Where is each one? Finally, how does your head feel? Can you feel it or do you just know it is there? Now try to be aware of yourself all at once, of all these things at once, so you can recognize 'I am sitting this way'. Now open your eyes.

It would be surprising if you connected this first time with the total feeling of how you were sitting, but perhaps something about it struck you as familiar – or unfamiliar. If it seemed familiar, I would ask you: 'Do you suppose you sit this way often when you are listening to someone?' If there was something unfamiliar, something strange about it, could it be that you never knew before that your way of sitting was like that? At any rate, your sitting, at the moment you became aware of it, was a statement. You were saying something. How you were sitting was not just an accident but an actual feeling condition. What you were saying would be hard to get into words but would be just as real as words. If the simple act of sitting conveys a feeling, think how much our way of moving and gesturing communicates. Who was it who said 'What you are speaks so loudly, I cannot hear what you say.'?

Becoming aware of movement as a kind of non-verbal language, finding out what and how you are speaking has many surprises in it and is not accomplished all at once. Have you ever had the experience of hearing a tape of your own voice? Was it not a shock? That's the way I sound! Seeing a film of yourself moving would be analogous. Perhaps you have. But neither the tape nor the film would be anything but the initial surprise of finding out.

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Changes, including changes in the voice, take place only in a process of development, the development of your awareness, your capacity to observe, your willingness to feel. It is this process that is the creativity.

It always strikes me as a commentary on the lack of this awareness in our time that men and women have to sign up to come to my studio for a weekend workshop in the experience of movement when the truth is that we are alive because we move and we move because we are alive. In the deepest sense, movement is the flow of energy that belongs to all livingness. We move twenty-four hours a day and, because we do, because it is natural for us to move, we can discover a great deal about ourselves. We can explore sensations and feelings that we did not know we had. We can extend the range and freedom of our physical gestures. We can learn to trust and express our own spontaneous reactions. We can allow our movement to be creative.

How deep the experience goes, of relating to ourselves, moving, is illustrated by the fact that very frequently in my private work people moving about in the space for the first time find themselves emotionally stirred in a way that surprises them. It is a feeling of wanting to cry or suddenly feeling sad, and both men and women experience it. I believe it is a spontaneous nostalgia for an earlier time when walking about, skipping, stretching the arms up to the sky or bending over were all natural impulses freely allowed. Something has come alive and no matter how one disapproves or says 'Isn't that silly,' one has been touched, one is moved from within, not only physically. The body has become real, it is ourselves feeling.

There is a major, and general, symptomatic condition in the body which I would like to describe to you because I think you will recognize it instantly. People in our time are mostly highly verbal; they mostly run their lives with their heads. There is a great emphasis on reason, thinking and understanding, knowing in an intellectual way, explaining, controlling. The heart and the guts are often left out. This is physically visible in almost everyone who comes to me. It takes the form of a head which is always held on to, which moves very little, creating neck tension, which creates shoulder tension. The head is not a part of the body, moving easily with the rest of one's self, but somehow different and separate.

I remember one young woman who had a very wide range of movement, flexible and varied. She was dancing to music. It looked marvelous but there was something wrong; it was not free, no matter how much she moved. I looked and looked and, finally, I caught it. She was like a marionette — the arms and legs lifted, fell; the torso bent over and back. She crouched down,

sprang up, but there she was, sitting up in her head, manipulating everything else, with the result that the head and neck hardly moved. (Do it).

It's as if the body belongs to the head, instead of the head belonging to the body. Did you know that the average head on an adult weighs sixteen pounds? Imagine the work you are doing with your neck to hold all that up the whole time.

Let's try one more experiment. Place both feet on the floor, straight ahead. Now set the hips back against the chair seat so that you are on your sitting bones, not on your spine. Now sit up gently and lean against the chair back, putting your hands at your sides. Drop your head forward on your chest – only your head. Now close your eyes and imagine a small sandbag on the top of your head. It is pulling at your neck, it is so heavy. Let go of your shoulders, they want to follow your head. Can you feel your back rounding? Let the weight pull you forward and down, just follow it, letting the arms slide forward and hang down too. Feel how the back of the neck and the back stretches? Now, very slowly, begin at the lowest point where your back is touching the chair and start climbing the ladder of your spine from below, one vertebra, one inch at a time. Press your back up like building a tower. When you get to your ribs, lift them and let your shoulders drop into place and your head will come up and balance. Was it not a long journey? And the head belonged to the back. This can be done standing too, folding downward until you are hanging from your hips. It is the movement that stretches, not any effort you make.

Two of the simplest words in the language are the trickiest. We all have occasion to use 'Yes' and 'No' many times each day. Say 'Yes' with your head, say it inside and mean it while you nod. Make it bigger, emphatic. Now say 'No', shake your head – remember when you were a child and you said, 'I won't!'? Really say it – not politely – 'No, no, no!'

That's another condition. We often say 'Yes' when we want to say 'No' or 'No' when we are afraid to say 'Yes', with the result that we stiffen and are not convincing. Our bodies do not go along with our game, they pay us back in tension because we are not sincere – that is, our real feeling is not expressed.

It is possible to find a total way of saying 'Yes' that is using the whole body and a total way of saying 'No' which would mean that we really know what we were saying and felt it. I often work on this experience in weekend workshops. As people become freer in finding ways to move these words, we add the sound of ourselves saying them out loud. One night a man got going across the floor, shouting and stamping 'No,' and there came a change in his

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(Do it).

...belonging to
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body which indicated that he was really saying 'Yes,' although his voice
...continued to say 'No.' The contradiction was so clear that everyone
...broke into laughter at the recognition.

But not everyone can take movement workshops. What can be done for
...by ourselves? How can we become more aware of our own
...movement? How can we begin to allow our own naturalness? I would like to
...several seemingly small things you can try. At least once a day, turn
...attention to the actuality of your body attitude at that moment. It can be
...anytime, anywhere. You may be driving a car, doing the dishes, making a bed
...reading a book. Simply focus your attention on what that action feels like
...and, in much the same way as we worked on your way of sitting, explore
...yourself doing something. Do not criticize, nor assume that you ought to be
...doing it differently, just notice how you are doing it. At the moment of really
...noticing, if you can then allow even the smallest change, the body itself will
...give you the impression that it knows what it wants. For instance, if you are
...standing at the sink and you discover that you are bearing down heavily on
...one leg, so that your back feels thrown into a curve which is slightly
...uncomfortable, you will become aware of an impulse to center the weight
...over both legs. If you find this difficult to believe, close your eyes and
...deliberately stand heavily on that one leg until the impulse comes. (Do it.)

In the same way, when you discover that you are tightly gripping the
...steering wheel while driving, don't close your eyes but see the involuntary
...change that will loosen the hands as a result of your noticing. Practice this
...little moment of finding out more and more frequently and you will begin to
...see what habits of straining and slumping you have unwittingly acquired.

Treat this experience as genuine adventure, bring to it curiosity, allow
...yourself to become conscious of yourself. In addition, when you are working
...on something which makes use of very restricted movement, as in typing or
...writing, become aware of any aches or tensions – they usually center in the
...shoulders – and give yourself the gift of stopping what you are doing,
...standing up, reaching over your head as far as you can, then shrug the
...shoulders, nod the head, even clap the hands, and sit down again. (Do it.) In
...the morning, when you wake up, instead of forcing yourself out of bed with
...your eyes tightly shut, take a moment to feel yourself waking up, roll over,
...stretch, yawn, pull yourself up to a sitting position, letting your legs hang
...over the edge of the bed, and, when you are ready, stand up. Most of us
...stagger like zombies until we have had our first cup of coffee. There is no real
...awakening.

understanding, take the place of another quite different awareness of himself and others.

Two things about physical movement are striking. One is that movement is non-verbal and yet it communicates – that is, says something. Our impressions of people are gathered fully as much from physical attitudes and gestures as from words and clothes. Nervousness often shows itself in little extra movements of hands, feet and face; tension, in raised shoulders as well as voice; depression in downward drooping lines of the whole body; fear in limited and carefully controlled movement; and so on indefinitely. They are all communicated to us by others and by us to others, whether we know it and can describe it in words or not. Often, other people are more aware of our condition than we are able to be ourselves. Which brings me to the second thing. The body does not, I would almost say cannot, lie. The human being, as he actually exists at any moment, cannot be hidden, by words, by clothes, least of all by wishes. No matter what he is doing or saying, he has his own way of doing or saying it and it is the way that reveals what he is like. The physical condition is, in some way, also the psychological one. We do not know in what way the psyche is the body and the body is the psyche but we do know that one does not exist without the other. And I would go so far as to suggest that just as the body changes in the course of working with the psyche, so the psyche changes in the course of working with the body. We would do well to remember that the two are not separate entities but mysteriously a totality.

It is difficult to know where to begin. What I want to do is to describe, and, later on, to let you see, some of the ways in which movement can become direct, subjective experience and to suggest certain kinds of self-knowledge which are available through it. I am confronted by the necessity of talking about something which is essentially inaccessible to words, but I will try. I have an approach, not a method, much less a theory. In fact, I often feel that the serious and deep things which take place in this way of working with the body happen much more out of what I do not know than out of what I do. Perhaps the fact that they happen is what is important. I well remember my initiation into this truth. I had only reluctantly begun individual appointments. A woman stood alone in the center of the studio. It was her third or fourth appointment. We had been working very simply with stretching, bending, standing and walking. Her movement in general existed in a cloud over her head – the face and eyes nearly always turned up to the ceiling, the arms and hands repeatedly extended overhead, the weight lifted

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up on the toes, everything going up, nothing down, everything going out, nothing held. I suggested she clench her fists and bring them up from her index in front of her. The first time, the hands closed but there was very little tension in the muscles of the arm, they still floated. The second time, she waited longer and pulled harder. Very slowly the arms bent at the elbows, closing upward in front of her body. As the fists approached her face, her expression became one of intense sorrow and strain and, at the point of almost touching her own mouth and cheeks, the whole body turned and pitched downward onto the floor in a violent fall and she burst into long sobs. A barrier had been pierced, a dam broken, her body had pitched her into feeling.

The core of the movement experience is the sensation of moving and being moved. There are many implications in putting it like this. Ideally, both are present in the same instant, and it may be literally an instant. It is a moment of total awareness, the coming together of what I am doing and what is happening to me. It cannot be anticipated, explained, specifically worked for, nor repeated exactly.

In order that it may happen, one must have a bodily awareness of movement. It is astonishing how many people are almost completely unaware of themselves physically. Our personal ways of sitting, standing, moving, eating, smoking, talking are so habitual as to seem natural and hardly worth noticing. The wonderful joy in movement, which children have, has been lost. Movement has become a means to an end, usually a rational and purposeful end, and takes place automatically in response to hundreds and hundreds of mental images of going someplace and doing something. To be sure, first parents, and then friends have always commented freely on our faulty posture and lack of grace – 'Pull in your stomach,' 'Stand up straight,' 'Don't slouch' – and, sometimes, when we catch an unexpected glimpse of ourselves in a mirror, there is the vague beginning of a realization of something not satisfactory, not alive, but it is gone again even as it comes. After all, this is what we look like and no amount of trying will change it. This latter, incidentally, is accurate since 'trying' seldom changes anything basic – only becoming something different changes what was. It never occurs to us that we have unwittingly lost the body by not experiencing its truth and that, to the extent that it does not and cannot move easily, freely and totally, it is dead; for movement is the life of the body. This life includes the life of the mind but it is not limited to it.

the upper part of my body – what a terrible feeling – I am only half a person but to know I'm only half a person was not a small thing to me. I had visions of my legs moving like my arms do – so I sat down on the floor and decided I was going to work with my legs. It may take a while I thought but the vision of moving in space as a whole thing seemed worth working for. My gosh, my legs felt like two pieces of sticks sticking out of my body. I had found a way for my hands to talk and tell me things, perhaps I could get my legs to do the same. I began to move the legs letting them do whatever they wanted to do, being sure it was only the legs doing it. It was amazing to see how little they could do – they were so helpless that I was desperately sorry for them. They needed to be cared for like a child. To do this I needed my hands. Now, another thought came to me. I had to find my hands first so I could take hold of my legs and help them out of the earth. Something inside of me jumped for joy when I discovered I have something to work with instead of something working with me.

And from another woman:

I feel most of the time a head and shoulders supported by legs that begin just south of my rib cage. Feeling of nothing in the middle has persisted through five different physical culture courses of one kind or another...

She went on to speak of her husband as a natural born dancer, I quote again:

...rhythm, flow, light, beautiful, sensitive. Me, all these [things] inside but not connected up with the body. Infuriating to us both as I do feel it as keenly as he does...he knows it and I do but it just can't get out. I know why. It is because I haven't a body. It is that something in the middle that's lacking... Bad balance and awkwardness I used to blame on feet. Now [I] realize it's imbalance inside, and [I] am convinced recently it is something missing in the middle.

The kinesthetic sense can be awakened and developed in using any and all kinds of movement, but I believe it becomes conscious only when the inner – that is, the subjective – connection is found, the sensation of what it feels like to the individual, whether it is swinging, stretching, bending, turning, twisting or whatever. People can learn movement in a variety of ways. They are not necessarily enabled to feel it when they do so. It is the concrete, specific awareness of one's own act of moving which is so satisfying. The physical culture courses of which our friend spoke, work with the body as object, not as subject, and while a general release takes place, there is no

I am only half a
thing to me. I
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corresponding experience of the personal identity, its quality and its movement. This seems to mean that something more is needed than simply body mechanics, that the feelings hidden in the body, the source of all its movement, must be involved. People in general are not very interested in abdominal muscles, the diaphragm, the shoulder girdle and the pelvis, but they care deeply about the world in which they must find a way to live and about themselves who must do the living.

You will remember that much earlier I spoke of the ideal moment as the coming together of myself moving and myself being moved. There seem to be two extremes of people. I could describe them psychologically as those who are overwhelmed by the unconscious and those who are cut off from it. Physically, it seems to take the form, in the first instance, of general, overall movement vague in outline, a kind of swimming of the arms and hands particularly, a groping, floating quality, curiously disembodied and unreal. In watching it you have the feeling that it is happening by itself, that no one or almost no one is there doing it. This is strange, too, because later, as the physical awareness grows, one is quite unable to say what has changed. Much of the movement is similar but it becomes indefinitely real, three-dimensional and, somehow, in the body. These people are most at ease when allowed to improvise freely. They do not like form or pattern or any different timing than the one they habitually use and can only do a specific exercise at first if not required to be exact. In the early stages they seem to experience difficulty in connecting with any given part of the body — you have the impression that a message sent to the feet to move, for example, has to travel a long distance and that the foot responds like an alien thing, slowly, and with surprise at being asked.

At the other end of the scale are the people who cannot imagine a movement which they do not consciously initiate, on purpose, so to speak. They lay great emphasis on understanding exactly what they are doing and are happiest in exercises, patterns and forms. Sitting or lying quietly with their attention turned inward on their breathing affects them as boring and when they try to do it, their bodies jerk, their hands place and replace themselves, their shoulders twitch and they give the impression of being thoroughly miserable, restless and ill at ease. Freedom to move as they please terrifies them because they 'do not know what they are supposed to do' and even if they do move, they are apt to feel self-consciousness more than the movement.

When both kinds of people are in a group situation, it presents something of a challenge to the leader. The work has to include a given form for those who are unable to find a form of their own, at the same time that they need to be encouraged to find the feeling potential of any movement. This is usually done by description of what the movement is like, of the sensation that belongs to it, and, since no one image works for everyone, several must be tried. On the other hand, for the people who can only find the form through their feelings, descriptions of recognizable objects or actions provide a form into which the feeling can flow so that it takes an actual shape. Sometimes, when both needs are met, the room is suddenly full of real people doing real movement, fully focused and alive.

For the people to whom movement just happens, through whom it pours without any consciousness of the ego's part in it, the liberating experience would be the discovery that 'I am moving.' Not long ago a young woman arrived in a state of utter confusion, lostness and depression. She asked if she could talk and I suggested that if it came to her to say something while she moved, so that it was part of her movement, part of the ritual of moving for herself, and not a conversation with me, it would then be movement too. But it proved to be unnecessary. She went over and sat down on the rug. We used no music or other accompaniment. There followed what I can only describe as a quite miraculous birth of an actual body. There was a half-smile on her face, which appeared very near the beginning and lasted all the way through. She stretched, twisted, touched her own feet and legs, stood up from a sitting position easily and without uncertainty, and went on stretching and bending through all her limbs and torso, finally taking, for her, firm steps on the whole foot into the space around her. When it was over, she opened her eyes and looking at me with the most complete and joyous amazement, said: 'Do you know what happened? As I sat down, I thought – if I had a body – and then I did.'

For the people who are convinced that they do it all, the liberating experience would be the discovery that 'something moves me – I did not do it.' The members of a class were improvising one night, individually but all at the same time. Suddenly, one girl who had been working very close to the floor bounded to her feet and spun around with great rapidity. She was heavy and the movement was totally out of keeping with any I had ever seen her do – if I had asked her to turn in that way, she could not have done it. Afterward, she told me that it was one of the most shocking things that had ever

When people are in a group situation, it presents something different. The work has to include a given form for those who have no form of their own, at the same time that they need to have the feeling potential of any movement. This is usually something that the movement is like, of the sensation that the image works for everyone, several must be able to find the people who can only find the form through recognizable objects or actions provide a form for the movement so that it takes an actual shape. Sometimes, the room is suddenly full of real people doing real movement.

Movement just happens, through whom it pours itself. It is the group's part in it, the liberating experience of 'being in moving.' Not long ago a young woman came to me with sadness and depression. She asked if she could come to her to say something while she moved. I agreed, part of the ritual of moving for her. I thought it would then be movement too. But she came and sat down on the rug. We used to follow what I can only describe as 'her body.' There was a half-smile on her face as she moved and lasted all the way through. She moved her arms and legs, stood up from a sitting position and went on stretching and bending. When she was over, for her, firm steps on the rug. She was over, she opened her eyes with a look of amazement, said: 'Do you think if I had a body – and

could do it all, the liberating experience moves me – I did not do it individually but all at once, very close to the individuality. She was heavy and had never seen her do it. Afterward, she said that had ever

happened to her, she was completely unprepared, she did not know how it happened nor have any image of its happening – 'it did it itself.'

A word about what this way of working with the body requires. There is necessarily an attitude of inner openness, a kind of capacity for listening to one's self that I would call honesty. It is made possible only by concentration and patience. In allowing the body to move in its way, not in a way that would look nice or that one thinks it should; in waiting patiently for the inner impulse, in letting the reactions come up exactly as they occur on any given evening – bear in mind that the reactions *are* the movement – new capacities appear, new modes of behavior are possible, and the awareness gained in the specialized situation goes over into a new sense of one's self driving the car or stooping with the vacuum cleaner or shaking hands with a friend. I know one woman who had never found it possible to talk back to her husband. As she discovered what it felt like to carry her body from the ground up, lifted in the middle, the legs firmly beneath her, instead of caved in, the shoulders and the head dropped forward to protect a retreating chest, she found she could no longer avoid speaking up for herself, even when it meant disagreement. She is not, incidentally, in analysis, so the connection is direct, without benefit of dreams.

It would take another paper to go into the question of dance – what it is and how these experiences are related to it – and still another to describe the use of movement as an adjunct to psychotherapy – where it becomes a method of active imagination in which there is the possibility of dancing a dream situation and finding out, directly and inescapably, since it happens in the real – that is, the physical – world, which is more primary than words and even than painting, a truth about that situation or a change in it or a further possibility that one had not known.

I am often asked whether what I am doing is therapy and, sometimes, whether this is psychology or body training or dance or what, and why don't I choose one and stick to it. To which I can only answer that any means to self-knowledge is therapy. If that is begging the question, I would be willing to say that I am engaged in professional therapy only insofar as my life, including my training, fits me to mediate experience which is therapeutic to the individual and not otherwise available to him. But it is not my experience and I do not do it. It is done in and by the body, strange as that sounds. As for the question of choice, the whole attempt is concerned with the connections between body and psyche or between physical movement which is outer and psychic events which are inner. I have ceased, very recently I must admit,

plaguing myself with labels and explanations. I was enormously aided in this by two sentences from the foreword to the *I Ching*. There C.G. Jung (1949) says:

Probably in no other field [psychotherapy] do we have to reckon with so many unknown quantities, and nowhere else do we become more accustomed to adopting methods that work even though for a long time we may not know why they work. [...] The irrational fullness of life has taught me never to discard anything, even when it goes against all our theories [...] or otherwise admits of no immediate explanation. (p.XXXIV)

There are many other questions which cannot be touched in this space. What is the difference, if any, in a man's experience of his body and a woman's? How much interpretation by the leader or observer is desirable or necessary? Can any correlation be made between the basic concepts of Jungian psychology (persona, ego, shadow, anima, animus, the self, the personal and the collective layer of the unconscious) and human movement? When an analysand is also working in movement, what exchange of information and material would be helpful and would this require at least an introductory experience of his own movement on the part of the analyst? These things and many others wait to be investigated. One cannot even guess at the answers but that there are answers I feel sure, and that they can help to increase our understanding of what man, in his totality, really is, seems equally certain.

And the Tao of the body? As an ancient sage said: 'Gravity is the root of lightness; and stillness is the ruler of movement.'

References

- Jung, C.G. (1949) Foreword. In *I Ching* (translation by Richard Wilhelm) Bollingen Series (1967). Princeton: Princeton University Press.