

OF SWEIGARD, BODY EDUCATION,  
AND KINDRED THINGS  
VALENTINA LITVINOFF

SDM/ How do you like it when the dancer stands motionless, does this have meaning?

CW/ Well, this was long ago, the great prize review was in Dance Observer. Paul Taylor, he just stood still like that in number after number. And this prize review . . . There at the top of the page was Paul Taylor, YMHA, and then about six inches of nothing, and then the reviewer's name, Louis Horst. Just blank all the way to the bottom, just nothing. He [Taylor] stood out there as though he were going to do something and did nothing, just trying to tax his audience to use their imaginations. There's a little bit in "Pippin" that's wonderful . . . that trio, they're lovely on TV. Now, "Raisin" looks very exciting. He [Bob Fosse, who did the choreography for "Pippin"] studied with me . . . like the hops, the hops, he always uses them quite a bit.

SDM/ Do you think dancers should be subsidized by the government or do you think this in any way hampers their creativity? Do you think dancers have to starve to be great?

CW/ I don't know what I would have done without the New York State Council. Before, I had to support dancers and pay for everything. Even now I wish I could pay my dancers here for performing because they're having a hard time of it. They dance every Sunday night and they get nothing except wine and cheese and cookies at the end of the performance. My grant is for \$9,500 and for 52 weeks out of the year I receive a salary of \$100 per week and the remainder, about \$2,000 goes for rent. Every year the New York State has given me a grant which means a great deal. Otherwise I wouldn't be sitting here talking to you. I'd be over in Brooklyn doing a master class or something to make some money. If my grant comes through from National, I think it's about \$25,000, I'd be able to pay my dancers. When I go on tour I pay them according to union rule, and even more so. When I come back from a tour, I always have to come back with \$1,000 or more because when you figure things out I don't do tours very well. I don't type myself. I have two typewriters but they're down there in the Village someplace. So I do most of my booking on the phone and all this costs . . . I supply the costumes, I supply everything, I do the best I can but all this money has to come out of the tour. So now what I'm going to do, I'm going to come back from the tours and be in my age group. I've got to think always of my old age which I'm in now.

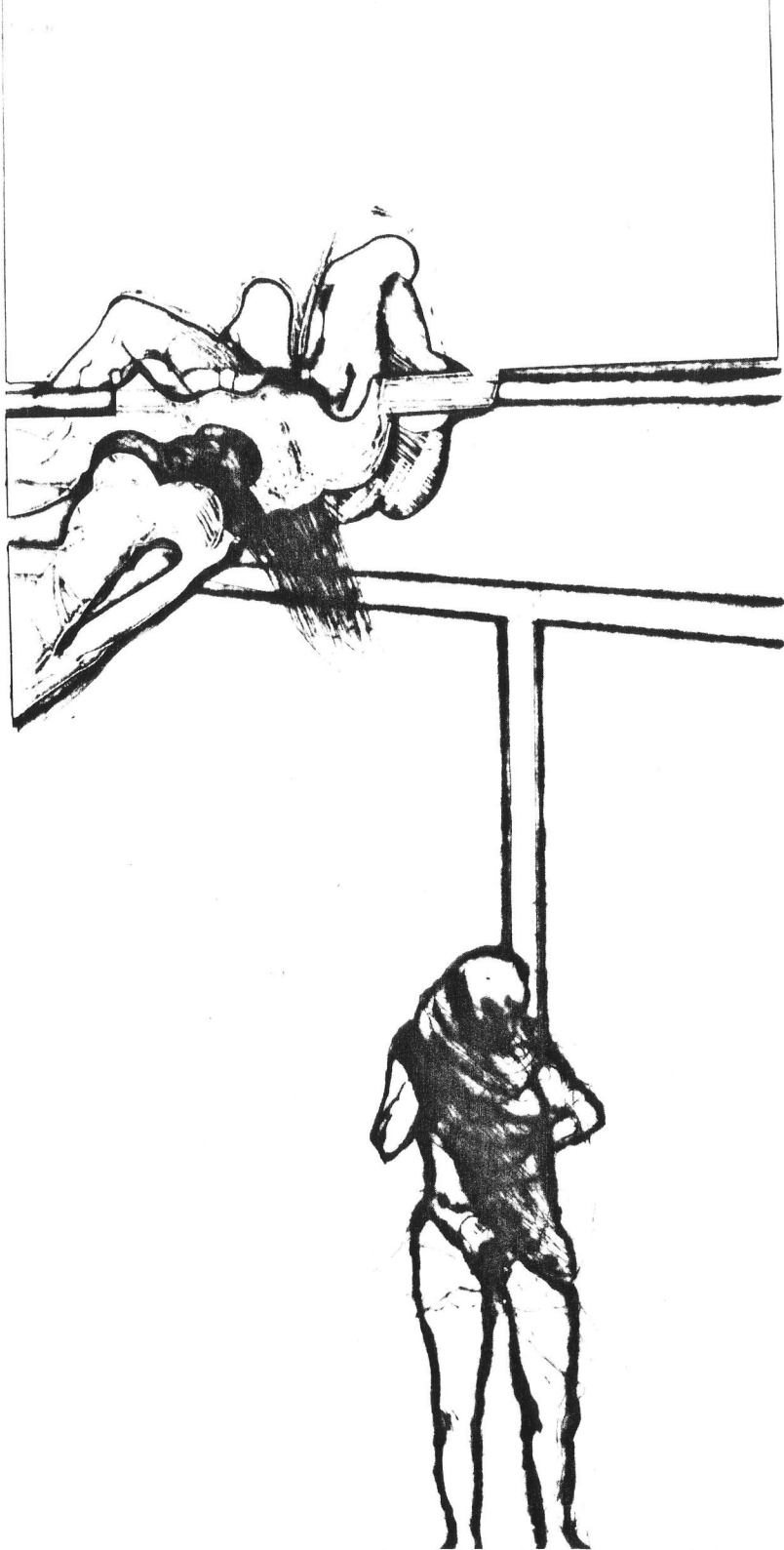


My copy of Lulu Sweigard's book sprouts tissue inserts in a thick fringe, and page after page is decorated with markings, testifying to my interest and involvement. *Human Movement Potential: Its Ideokinetic Facilitation* came out last November. Its publication (Dodd, Mead) culminates a long, vital life-work and is the author's last—alas, last—job of teaching us.

The publication serves to draw attention not only to Dr. Sweigard's own teachings but also to the rest of the field of body education. The present scrutiny, then, will evolve in this larger context. To digress away from Sweigard occasionally toward related but more distant points in the field, will, I hope, enable me to return to her, having gained in insight. I hope also there will be discussion by others, leading to an eventual assessment of Sweigard within the encompassing theme of human body movement. For finally, that is the subject to which thought should be addressed. While much work and literature is devoted to examining separate facets or items of movement, little effort is given to a synthesis or comparison of what we know.

So let us take a look at Sweigard's precedents within the relatively young field of disciplines in body education. Let us consider the salient features of the book and the distinctiveness of the work described therein, and see as well how Sweigard's philosophy and method link with other leading contemporary exponents. Finally I want to note a significance for dance, of studies in body education.

The pioneers in explorations in the use of self mostly worked and made their definitive discoveries near each other in time, mainly between 1910 and the 50's. The early creators worked primarily in Europe: Bess M. Mensendieck, M.D.,<sup>1</sup> formulated a system of "body sculpture" and, although an American, it was Europe where she achieved recognition. Elsa Gindler, whose career was centered in Germany, was the originator of what today is known as "sensory awareness." F. Matthias Alexander<sup>2</sup> was an Australian whose discoveries in dynamics of body alignment at first stayed mostly in England but are today increasingly promulgated in the United States. Mabel Elsworth Todd,<sup>3</sup> an American working in the States, sought to direct not only kinesiologic awarenesses but also concentration upon images, to effect changes in neuromuscular patterns. Dr. Sweigard's association with Todd provided the derivation for her own development.



Among contemporary leaders in the field is Charlotte Selver, who derives from Gindler and whose explorations in Sensory Awareness have sent repercussions into a number of branches in psychology, in education, in theatre, and in other fields grounded upon psychophysical approaches.<sup>4</sup> Also of considerable influence is Moshe Feldenkrais,<sup>5</sup> an Israeli authority who has increasingly been working in American universities; he has invented a method in body orientation which springs out of Yoga and Judo, yet unmythical and rooted in deep considerations of anatomy and physiology. There are other exponents whom I will mention presently; but without attempting to identify everyone.

What connects the diverse approaches is the conscious and ordered use they make of the capacities of the human central nervous system, as each mode stimulates organismic changes and changes in the use of self. Their diverse means for accomplishing the cortical influencing of the sub-cortical brain is primarily what separates the modes. Besides, variances abound in interpretation of neurophysical roles of the moving segments of the body as well as in orientational priorities. Thus while Sweigard places primacy upon the orientation of the pelvis, the Alexander Technique considers the relationship of head and neck as "primary control." Feldenkrais stresses more the reciprocity of head and pelvis. All three views would be irrelevant for Charlotte Selver who would find through a sharpened kinesiologic experience a particular role of a part or any synchrony of parts in the unity of self. Its own logic and character, then, informs each discipline. Differences proliferate in methodologies, in immediate—if not long-range—goals, and in semantics.

But the landscape of body education is even more complex than the main configurations indicate. It encompasses approaches as vastly different as Dr. Ida Rolf's *Structural Integration* through manipulation of fascia,<sup>6</sup> and the study's new branch of *Patterning*, a system of exercises invented by Judith Aston, as one part of a continually broadening scene, and—at another part of the forest—Joanna Kneeland's application of Newtonian physics to ballet.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, the landscape of studies includes investigations in measuring of physiological effects sparked by particular types of movement, in the laboratory of Valerie Hunt at UCLA;<sup>8</sup> her electromyographic study of effects of emotion on neuromuscular patterns, and exploration by means of Kirlian photography of *Life Energy*. The field encompasses the work of Lucille Nichols<sup>9</sup> at Columbia in measuring a specific detail, that of the verticality of the spine in the performance of the plié. Add also the labors of certain other kinesiologists, as well as certain movement therapists who present particular methods of working psychophysically. The scene is further enriched by Andre Bernard and Don Oscar Becque, who are also exponents of Todd; and by Arthur Lessac, who works at restoring the unity of voice and movement. Among studies with the aim to observe movement rather than promote change in the use of self are Paul Ekman's perspectives on gesture, in his Laboratory for the Study of Human

Interaction.<sup>10</sup>

In a recent Conference, studies which focus upon observation were productively included with studies which foster change—in a Panel on “Recent Research in Body Education and Expressive Motor Behavior.” Because the Panel served as a microcosm of the field it deserves mention here, in lieu of a more exhaustive accounting of the methods. Part of the CORD-SEM (Committee on Research in Dance and Society for Ethnomusicology) Conference of October, 1974, in San Francisco, the Panel, which I had the privilege of organizing and chairing, was conceived as a first step toward a dialogue between the disparate approaches and studies. (A participant in the Panel, Fritz Popken, Sweigard’s co-worker and husband, elucidated her method in a scholarly paper.) An assumption that propelled the proceedings with a special steam of inspiration and was tacitly felt by a large and receptive membership, was that this first step would indeed have consequences; and that fuller dialogue by the disciplines could hold answers to problems of development of technique and of body usage within the art of dance. In fact, an immediate result of the Panel was the formation of a new committee, aegis, CORD: The Committee on Studies in Human Body Movement. Since the perspective and work of The Committee are outside the scope of this article, it is enough to mention The Committee’s presence and promise.

The field as a whole is very likely indebted to Sweigard in that her exposition of theoretical justification for her own work also forms, at several points, a coherent statement of principles which underlie a number of other methods. She establishes the fact of the dynamic work in movement of the feedback between the brain and the rest of the body. She proceeds to use this feedback in an ordered way.

When I first opened *Human Movement Potential* I was tempted to start with the final sections which contain descriptions of the practical work: the distinguishing series of images that have come to be known as Lulu’s stock-in-trade and were familiar to me through my own experience of her work. I resisted the attraction of this final nitty-gritty and turned to the very beginning. Can you imagine not being able to put down what is essentially a text in kinesiology? And one, moreover, that seeks nothing stylistically but exactness and clarity? With little variation in its workmanlike pace, the book, nevertheless, is absorbingly interesting. By virtue of its content which reverberates with the author’s formidable knowledge, integrity and devotion, the reader is drawn, held attentive.

The thrust of her book is to demonstrate that “sub-cortical patterning of muscle action in response to cortical activity must effect the movement essential to change bony relationships” (p. 146). (I wish she had said, ‘relationship of bones.’) Her work in “re-patterning of established conditioned reflexes. . . especially of those which maintain upright equilibrium” (p. 166) is the subject of the book and the aim which, of course, is generally

shared by the field.

In contrast to procedures followed by most treatises on kinesiology, Sweigard—after a discussion of basic concepts—begins with what she deems the key part in favorable alignment: the pelvis. A discussion of the spine follows, then concentration of the femur and the femoral joint; then the rest of the bone and muscle systems are analyzed and their functioning interpreted. At every stage she refers to what she sees as problems of dance practice, besides also relating her explanations to body usage in general. Statements of her credo appear throughout the book.

“Possibly one of the greatest handicaps to efficient motor learning,” she says (p. 169), “is a persistent overemphasis on particular volitional muscular efforts in the performance of a movement or movement pattern.” She urges consideration of “the importance of an adequate concept of movement. . . what is the movement to be performed, not how it is to be performed. The nervous system takes care of the ‘how’ of movement in accordance with a clear concept and mental picture of the movement—the process is ideokinetic” (p. 169).

In discussing the role of the nervous system she points out the teacher’s responsibility, which is to “understand the structural components of movement and have the ability to build clear concepts of movement patterns. He must then be able to locate and to identify accurately deviations or faults in movement performance. . . . He must be able to give cues which challenge the imagination so that it will influence subcortical” functioning in movement (p. 170). Utilization of the earlier-mentioned images is instrumental in “ideokinetic recoordination for better balance and movement.” The controlled, carefully worked out dynamics of the images embody nine “lines-of-movement.” These are concerned with promoting a lengthening of the spine, a widening across the back of the pelvis, a narrowing of the rib-cage,” and other factors in instilling an improved alignment. Each line “influences every other line-of-movement, and together they promote increased efficiency in subcortically controlled neuromuscular coordination” (p. 192). The images are the pivot of her method, her own elaboration of the Todd heritage. (For my part, I can bear witness to the effectiveness of this *modus operandi*, both from personal experience and from observation of others.) The final discussions dealing with this crux of her work, together with ingenious illustrations of the images which manifest the nine lines, are perhaps the most engaging part of this valid and scholarly book.

One might muse on whether the term “imagined movement” is right semantically, for the imagery deals not with the movement of the body as such but with the movement of fantasized substitutes: accordion pleats, hanging chains, or empty trousers. It is the Alexander Technique which—*sans* concrete images and employing only the most rudimentary reference to anatomy—truly involves imagined movement in the body itself. But this cavil does not, of course, affect her essential thought.

When Sweigard says, "all voluntary contribution to a movement must be reduced to a minimum to lessen interference by established neuromuscular habits" (p. 6), she echoes Alexander. It is for this reason that the Alexander practitioner will, at certain points, move the student's bones while the student 'merely thinks.' Sweigard differs from Alexander when she avers that the efficacy of "imagined movement" is contingent "upon a thorough knowledge of the universal laws of mechanics, the skeletal structure and the principles of muscular and neurological function" (p. 7). Alexander, in contrast to Sweigard, Feldenkrais, et al., neither had a "thorough knowledge" of kinesiology and anatomy nor did he demand it of his pupils and followers. Instead he worked intuitively, and proposed but a few essential fundamentals in practice.

Make no mistake: I am not out to argue for ignorance of available knowledge. This day is different from Alexander's and study of the body is a necessity; neither is such study today conducted as mechanically as in the past. It is equally necessary, however, to defend the Alexander work from erroneous demerits by those who, mistrusting its original empiricism, criticize Alexander approaches on the basis of their essential simplicity.

Despite much common ground, Sweigard misunderstands Alexander. "Some misguided techniques . . .," she takes a potshot, "begin realignment of the body at the head. This training cannot be supported by either anatomy or mechanics" (p. 287). The Alexander technique with head and neck, however, is less concerned with immediate "alignment" of the particular area than with affecting the *entire organism* in particular ways. The Alexander primary pattern initiates a directive which triggers a stream of consequences throughout the self (the directive being a cortical one, implemented by the subcortical brain and the central nervous system). The pattern, in effect, prepares the organism for receiving ensuing modifications. Besides, the head, as a rule, is not dealt with separately but in combination with techniques for the pelvis, the spine, et cetera. Furthermore, as many exponents in body education realize, it often makes pedagogic sense to begin work indirectly, circumventing the center of the trouble which much of the time is indeed in the pelvis. Clearly, in Alexander, to work on the head is to work on the pelvis. Feldenkrais, incidentally, also promulgates (in his *Body and Mature Behavior*) the lead of the head and the body's upper part in walking and in other activities.

When Sweigard suggests cultivating the kind of coordination exemplified by a cat who can leap with a kitten in its teeth without biting it, she is discussing precisely that orientation which the Alexander primary pattern strives to invoke. The head-neck pattern instills a physical sensibility of the distinction between the function of the head (and the upper part of the body) and legs (and the lower part). So it must follow that the pattern is more basic, pervasive and decisive in its influence upon the entire organism than may be assumed at a superficial examination. Credentials for Alexander practices, moreover, provided by scientific substantiation, corroboration

what we've learned through sheer experience. (This is akin to Sweigard herself, who has sought to show that Todd's findings—originally reached empirically—are founded on the biofeedback and sensory motor control reflexes which only subsequently came to be better understood.) Frank Pierce Jones, in experiments at Tufts, by means of electromyography and multiple-image photography, has supplied validation for the Alexander primary pattern.<sup>11</sup> Objective and scholarly support for Alexander practices has also been recently provided by no less a scientist than Nikolaas Tinbergen, the Nobel prize winner,<sup>12</sup> as well as by Wilfred Barlow, M.D.<sup>13</sup> The two scientists discuss the same intricate interaction between the brain and other components of the body, upon which Sweigard's practices are predicated. If the definitive elaboration by neurophysiology concerning matters of motor cortex or sensory motor control of muscle spindles still leaves the processes of change imprecisely described, this does not detract from the soundness of a number of approaches in body education. The more exact sciences will, no doubt, catch up later!

Meanwhile we may recognize congruences between disciplines as detailed and complex in organization as Sweigard's and those that seem comparatively ingenuous. They must achieve a degree of profundity nonetheless, if they are to attempt performing that "major surgery upon the entire personality," referred to by Feldenkrais and which is the purport of true change.

Take the work of Charlotte Selver. What would the consummate scholar Sweigard think of Selver's way of evoking change? No guidance of images, no guidance of 'recipes' or exercises, no guidance of structured movement or of special positions; nor any guidance from the available knowledge of physiology; only the attention to sensing, only the stimulation of kinesthetic perceptions, only the deepened actuality of the lived moment and of inner imperatives—and lo, all body systems respond, and not to the exclusion of the psychological, emotional, and intellectual aspects of "the entire personality." Yes, not only kinships then, but also differences among the approaches, become telling. If the above discussion concerned primarily differences in *procedures*, later on we shall be mentioning characteristic differences in *substance*. (In actuality the concepts of substance and procedure cannot finally be separated.)

Dancers and teachers, even if not in significant numbers, have been familiarizing themselves with this or that approach. Students at certain universities have had courses in one of the disciplines. Interest is increasing. This and my own experience of work with Charlotte Selver, my experience in the Alexander Technique both as student and teacher, together with my more limited experience with the Sweigard work, besides other explorations, convince me that the time is ripe to pose certain questions. No, not the query as to which system is 'the best'; this would lead to an irrelevant and fruitless pursuit—but rather: What particular phenomena in neuropsychophysical experience distinguish each approach? And in what details



of the participant's experience do the different approaches coincide? Or diverge?

Impossible to answer? Can no language pinpoint the nonverbally lived moments of the organism's fuller breathing, of more dynamic play with gravity, of release, of greater awakedness, of a myriad of perceptions—all testifying to a flood of occurrences? True, none really can. But an attempt at descriptions is worth making, nonetheless, because even stumbling, halting and not quite accurate accounts of the actual experiences can lead us to comprehend just how each of these modes summons the capacities of that mysterious energy within us that tends invariably toward better balance (despite the assorted interferences we impose). We might, moreover, learn something about the involvement of the individual's imagination and of the engagement of intellect, psyche, and total background in the fleeting experience. We need data not only of objective nature but also of the subjective. Such contributions to our understanding may be objectified by larger viewpoints which synthesize seemingly separate facets. Or the subjective experience may be verified through analysis; and this may include the utilization of instruments such as the Motion Analyzer or electromyography.

The process of assessment might also have to toil through inaccuracies, discrepancies or silence on the part of some of the practitioners. "Matthias was a genius," Patrick MacDonald, director of the British Alexander Foundation, with whom I studied in London, would tell me. "But he could not really analyze his discoveries, nor rationalize his teaching technique." By the same token, the late Joseph Pilates could loose a torrent of vitality in his pupils through his work with equipment of his own invention but he was lost for any theory to support his practice. "Rejuvenation," Joe would mutter, and let it go at that. Those of us who became addicted to his machines for their very liberating aftermath never bothered to find out what made the work tick. We did not have the knowledge with which to proceed to questions.

But now questions must be formulated. Redefinitions might be in order. As an example, let us juxtapose one of Sweigard's main themes to other propositions in the same context.

Her insistence on the freedom of the femur in the femoral joint is not a new concept, but nevertheless is today much ignored. Look around most dance studios: constricted pelvises are the rule and the head of the femur is 'sat upon' in the insufficiently moveable joint. Yet as far back as 1820, Carlo Blasis started off instructions to dancers in his *An Elementary Treatise Upon the Theory and Practice of the Art of Dancing*<sup>14</sup> with the statement, "Strive after suppleness in the hips in order that the thigh movements shall be free and the knees well turned out" (p. 11). He presaged Sweigard's interpretation—which she most vividly enforces with her image of the fishing pole, controlled at the handle (in the joint). Blasis goes on: "The movement of the hips controls that of the knees and insteps and it would be impossible for

these latter to move without the hips turning first" (p. 12). The word "turning" rather than "beginning" may be the translator's doing. Further on as Blasis talks of *pas* in which the ostensible movement is precisely in the legs and feet rather than the pelvis, his meaning is clear enough: the flexibility in the femoral joint as well as the action of the pelvis are key in the work of the legs. That these factors are also key in the orientation of the torso has recently been demonstrated in a project of Lucille Nichols: employing the Vanguard Motion Analyzer, her work in progress indicates that the flexibility of the femoral joint—rather than the amount of actual dance training—influences the verticality of the spine.

Sweigard would, I am sure, have been gratified to hear the opinion of Kirov's Gabriella Komleva, an artist possessed of tremendous technical resources. Last July in Leningrad I had the pleasure of a long discussion with Komleva, in the course of which she affirmed that she considers the placement of the pelvis primary and begins the barre with its careful orientation. "Then, from the pelvis all goes either upward or downward," she concluded, clarifying with a gesture. Komleva, of course, is an outcome of developments accrued from Vaganova—who, in turn, arrived at her innovations by studying original sources, chief among them, Blasis. We've come a full circle, and Sweigard's conclusions come alive in the best of ballet art. But to see these principles in the relationship of pelvis and legs flower most fully, one must observe Asian forms rather than ballet. In Chinese theatre movement, for example, the freedom of the leg in the pelvis takes on a dimension unseen in Western dance. The start of the leg movement in the femoral joint becomes a natural, uncontrived part of the synergy of the whole dance. At all events, Sweigard's essential premise appears authoritatively borne out both in old literature and in contemporary thought.

Yet seemingly dissonant opinions regarding the movement of the limb in its connection at the torso are voiced by some of the authorities in the field of body education. I think of Dr. Richard Demmerle, a leading exponent of the Rolf work (and Ida Rolf's son). He explains that it is at the distal end of the bone where the action should begin that will lead the bone out of the socket. He likens the process to the articulation of a puppet. Thus the knee leads the femur out; and the elbow guides the upper arm in its movement in the shoulder joint. Some kinesiologists support this view. Also close to this interpretation is the Alexander Technique, in its orientation of thrusting the knee out in directing the movement of the leg. In dance this view seems graphically illustrated in the art of Indonesian, particularly Balinese, dance. Contrast this with Sweigard's belief that "Power to move the upper extremity should be initiated at the most proximal part of the shoulder girdle-arm complex, just as power is applied at the handle of a whip or lariat to produce its movement" (p. 107). The differences of viewpoint now concern the very substance of the practitioner's interpretation of body movement itself. Surely, a core question: how does

an arm or a leg begin to move?

Just to complicate things further, a good case can be built for allowing the movement of a limb to be initiated at its very extreme end: that is, leading the arm out by the hand. Observe how in Karate, the strength of the breath may be focused on the jabbing hand or foot; recall how in Bharata Nattiyam, the vitality of movement and meaning may be expressed in the gesture of the distal part, and how the entire arm is led by the hand in delineating the design in space!

For myself, experimenting with each of these orientations, I have found each productive and useful in its own way. The kinesiologist Doroty Vislocky agrees with me, saying she "can prove it anatomically." Could it be that the various dicta ought to be regarded only in the context of a specific Physical Action in the body?<sup>15</sup> And that all, therefore, hold true? As Niels Bohr once said, "The opposite of a correct statement is a false statement. But the opposite of a profound truth may well be another profound truth."

What an area for questions, discussion and experimentation by dancers and exponents of disciplines of body education!

There are other areas of ambiguity. Among them, the act of walking: a completely unanimous configuration does not seem to appear. Sweigard suggests that the arms "swing freely" (p. 255), while Demmerle, with more basic balance and momentum in mind, once told me that "when arms swing in walking it's a sign something is wrong." I tend to agree with him. Could we edit Sweigard to say, "allow the arms to *hang* freely?" Now, Demmerle, by the way, frowns at turn-out: here's where dancers will, en masse, edit him!

My main reservation about Sweigard, however, concerns her numerous repetitions of the word "machine" in qualifying the body. This is not applicable. The overreliance on expressions such as "mechanically efficient" finally makes us wonder whether *purely* mechanical efficiency actually exists. Is it tenable to isolate the concept, mechanical efficiency, from a more embracing view of efficiency—which might include a harmonious interacting of additional elements, among them the tenuous faculty of sensory responsiveness, the evanescent one of mental-emotional participation, besides the little-examined interplay of inner organismic life and the body's outer shapes, all coordinated with the adaptation to gravity-environment and to the activity? How can one deal with the elusive phenomena of neuropsychophysical nature—as Sweigard is actually doing in her work of modifying habits in use of self—and still consider the human being a machine?

Her semantics in this regard are symptomatic of a view which has been called 'reductionism' and represents the type of scientific thinking which seeks to investigate and manage our world by segmenting its complexities into smaller and smaller parts. This view is mechanistic, for it presupposes that the whole is no more than the sum of its parts. No wonder

reductionist thought is increasingly militated against by the more imaginative members of the scientific community, those who dare pose hypotheses which can be tested experimentally only eventually or are verifiable only empirically—that is, through life experience rather than controlled experiment. When Lulu Sweigard tends to harness her own work to a mechanistic concept that upon examination is found actually not to fit the most valid of her theories or practices, she is doing her own innovative labor a disservice. One is then reminded of the archeologist-writer Jacquetta Hawkes' recently published lecture, *Nothing But or Something More*.<sup>16</sup> To paraphrase her intriguing title, is human body movement "nothing but" a result of mechanical play of weights and forces? Or is there "something more?" It seems to me that we are continually encountering that something more, whatever our approach to movement.

Sweigard's remarks apropos dance, interspersed throughout her book, are obviously based on her experience with ballet and ballet-influenced modern *alone*. Thus she reduces a world of dance to that narrow bit of it with which she is familiar through her teaching at Juilliard but which cannot be considered as a microcosm of the whole. (Again we are faced with detail or item at the expense of a network of relationships and dynamics characterizing the real macrocosm.) In terms of the here-and-now New York scene of dance training, many of her remarks pertain and her advice is appropriate; while some seems already dated in its relevance even to the immediate sphere she knew. All in all, it's revelatory nonetheless: When she asks the choreographer to arrange "the dance so that the body can move in conformity with physical laws, *at least some of the time*" (italics mine—p. 271), we can fathom the extent of sins committed against the human organism in the name of dance training in our tiny bit of the dance world! She also tactfully discusses forced stretching (p. 302), teaching a turn-out of the feet (p. 65), pulling up at the knee and concomitant pain (p. 82), or recommends assuming fifth position with straight, rather than bent, knees (p. 83).

Were she acquainted with a greater scope of dance, she could have pointed out alternative usages within the art of dance itself. Thus, in discussing problems of stretch reflex in "the dance" (p. 137), she does not realize that procedures she mentions do not exist in much of the world's dance. There is no need for them: in folk dance, for example, too-stretched a body is a detriment. She warns that "in lateral curves of the spine, the vertebrae and discs involved experience bending stress which, if persistent, ultimately results in change in their form" (p. 19); and she would have, I am sure, felt relieved to know that in most ethnic and folk forms little use is made of lateral bending of the spine. Had she been more familiar with body usages in Spanish dance, European folk forms, in Asian forms, she would not have said, "the dance, where patterns of movement are often contradictory to those that are natural to the human body" (p. 71), but would have formulated a more specific reference.

It is now up to us to continue learning from Sweigard. But an allegiance to her *oeuvre* ought to lead to pursuits of a larger dimension. At the beginning of this essay I suggested further examination of Sweigard's work in the context of similar studies, in fact an assessment of studies in body education. I reiterate this now. It also is fitting now to assert that I see as our common task *an assessment of body usages in dance* (and I don't mean *only* the ballet or modern) *in terms of the enlightenment offered by the field of body education.*

Is this task worth the bother? Perhaps the following is evident: that it is not at all strange that usages in contemporary dance—as Sweigard and heterogeneous authorities show—are often out of joint. At a time when so much of our life is antihuman, this quality will extend to dance too. Yet, today's new humanism is struggling to pervade areas of living, of science and art. So must it also provide its counter-influence within developments in dance. The use of the dance instrument is intimately tied to other facets in dance, such as choreography. And efforts to humanize this use would have positive repercussions throughout our art. Examples of more human ways, of "conformity with physical laws" demanded by Sweigard, are to be found in many forms and styles. These examples could serve as inspiration for contemporary departures.

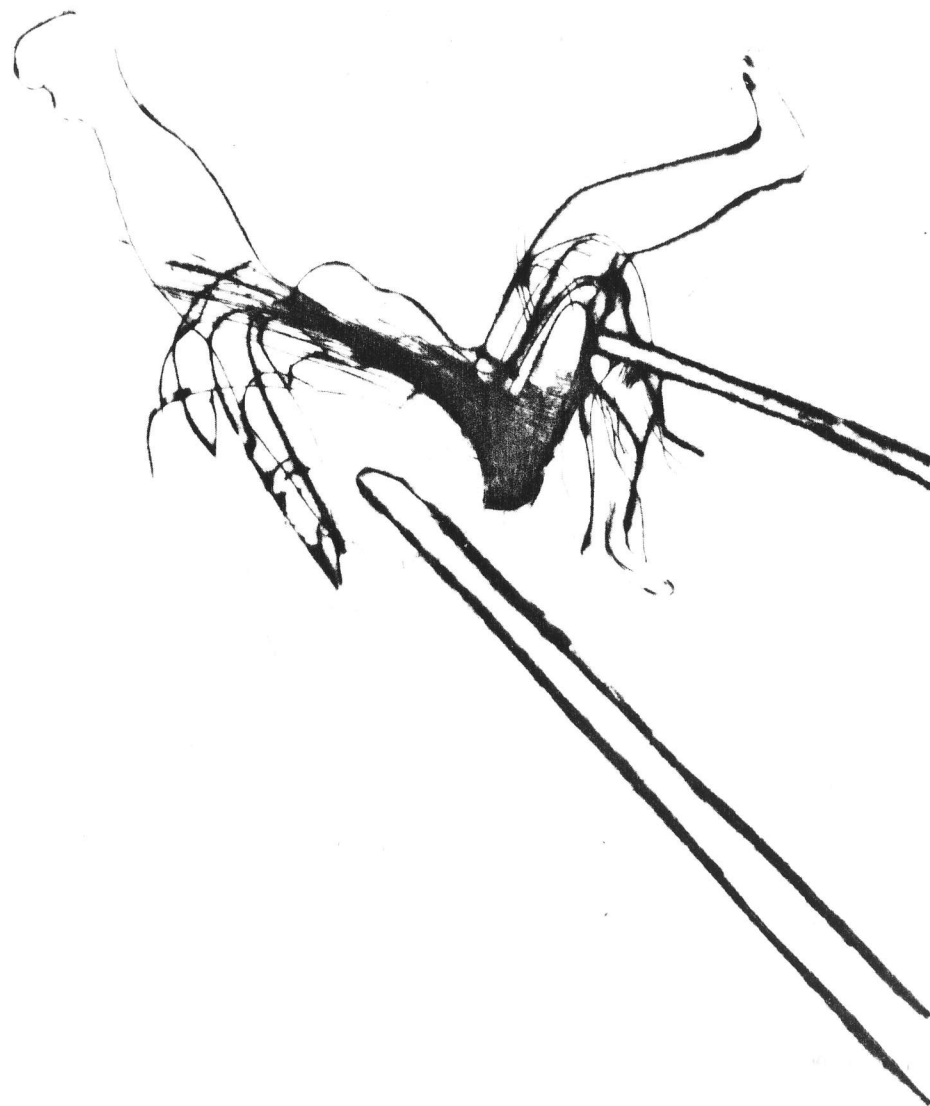
Some of the more specific aspects of this thinking have been elaborated in my earlier articles, particularly in a piece for *Dance Research Monograph One*.<sup>17</sup> Here I merely want to affirm that the initiation of a dialogue by exponents of a number of disciplines, suggested some pages back, could serve also as a preamble to the process of collaborative, objective assessment of body usages in dance. Tentative steps toward a comprehensive dialogue have already taken place, and this fact has also been referred to: the CORD Panel at San Francisco, followed by the formation of The Committee on Studies in Human Body Movement. Interest on the part of dancers and scholars can encourage further developments. Pertinent to this, a few years ago, I devoted an issue of my column in the *American Dance Guild Newsletter* to urging the necessity for a conference of scholars and practitioners. In the course of a give-and-take, divergence and consensus in viewpoints could be identified; besides, the disciplines themselves could become more clearly identifiable as a particular area of scientific activity. The column concluded a mention of questions which might be considered by a conference, with the query, "How could the field of body education even at this point, when mutualities and differences are merely stated but not yet dealt with—offer guidance to modern dance . . . in this art's continual and creative developments in movement and technique?"

The piece ended,

In posing these questions and in attempting to answer them, exponents of body education would take a step toward placing their achievements on a new level. At the same time, dance—as well as theatre, education, psychology and other endeavors dealing with

human body movement—could be influenced by this dialogue to the extent that their own usages would be modified. Very likely the genesis of new patternings in movement and of improved orientations in the use of the self both in art and in life could be thus stimulated.

And in this way, too, Lulu Sweigard's teachings could reach even a fuller significance.



1. Bess M. Mensendieck, *Look Better, Feel Better*, Harper, 1954.
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## FROM BALLET TO BALLROOM: DANCE IN THE REVOLUTIONARY ERA

### SHIRLEY WYNNE

France was the center of high fashion in Europe and America from the late 17th to the middle of the 19th century. England accepted the French styles, with some ill-humored disapproval, while resolutely perpetuating indigenous tradition. From 1650, the English had been dancing the country dances in John Playford's books, *The English Dancing Master*, published first in 1651 and in many successive, revised editions to 1726. The dances were of strictly English character and directed toward a general public, not a restricted elite. Beginning in 1700, the French dance style was defined in many treatises of dance instruction, notated ball dances and ballets. The French dances were those of the court salon and the professional dancer in the court ballet and opera. The significant French manuals and choreographies were translated into English within a few years of their appearance in Paris. The English immediately absorbed the new literature and accelerated the practice, begun in the Restoration, of importing French dancing masters to teach French step techniques and the latest dances from Paris. In 1706 the Paris school of dancing masters and notators began to record the new fashion in dancing, the contredanse, a progressive longways form, most elements of which were probably modelled upon the English country dance longways. Fortunately, the notators kept abreast of the fashion and diligently published yearly records of dances until the 1720's. In these *Recueils*, the growing favor of the contredanse and cotillon is duly recorded. Soame Jenyns says in 1729:

The Dancer here no more requires a Guide,  
To no strict Steps his nimble Feet are ty'd:  
The Muse's Precepts here wou'd useless be,  
Where all is fancy'd unconfin'd, and free.<sup>1</sup>

Toward the middle of the century, indecisiveness, even conflict, grew between the conservation of old customs—the formalities and intricacies of the French couple dance—and the new, more easily accessible walking, figure dances. "Correct" ballroom practice in this transitional period was serving a rapidly growing middle class with some education and significantly less leisure time. The old controls of rigid social proprieties by the cluster of gentry surrounding Louis XIV at Versailles had been relaxing since before his death in 1715. The couple dance (in the 18th century couple dance, partners rarely touched each other, and then, only the hands delicately engaged) was a social statement of personal brilliance in what was thought then to be a fine art. The art of the dance was an integral part of