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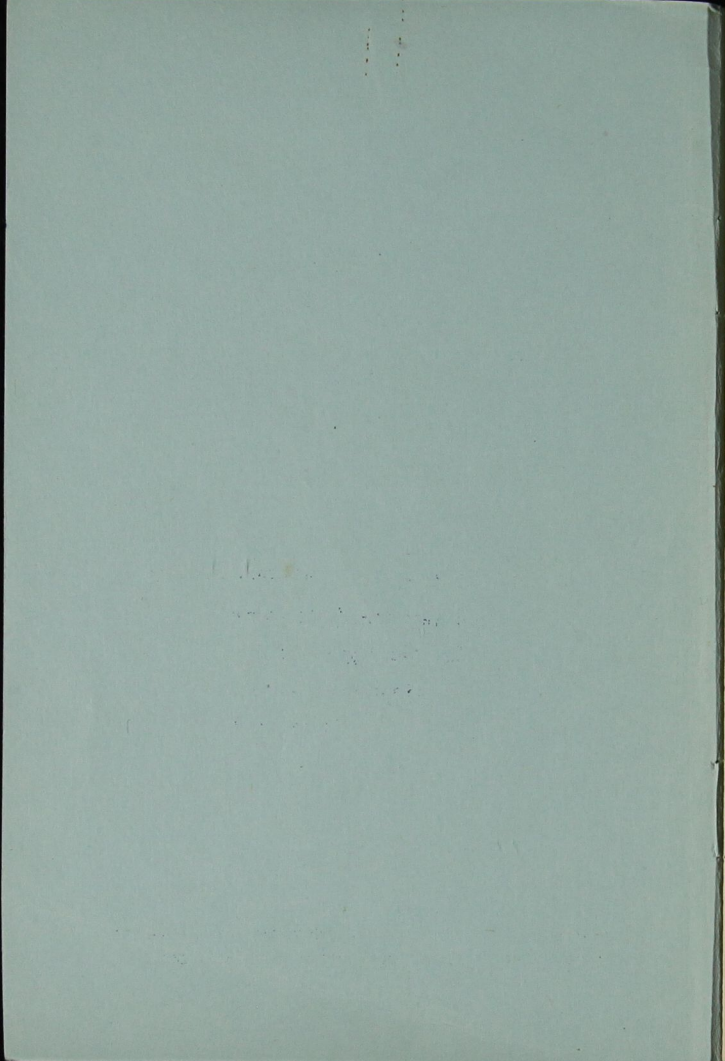
# THE ART OF MOVEMENT

IN

## EDUCATION

## WORK AND

## RECREATION



The Art of Movement  
in  
Education, Work  
and  
Recreation.

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[A new edition of "The Art of Movement in Education, Industry and on the Stage", revised and enlarged.]

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## The Art of Movement in Education, Work and Recreation.

Inasmuch as movement is fundamental to life, so must the study of movement and the activities of human beings be of paramount interest to everybody, and more especially to those responsible for the movement and action of others in the spheres of education, work and recreation.

Everybody realises that the actor and the dancer use movement to present their works of art, but distressingly few people are aware of the important rôle which the principles of the art of movement play in everyday life. For those who are engaged professionally in dealing with people whose activities require mastery of movement, the art of movement is indispensable. Noticeable deficiencies in the mastery of movement are widespread in the world to-day as revealed by lack or loss of equilibrium within certain physical and psychological components of a personality. The re-establishment of this inner balance is an urgent need and calls for teachers and leaders who can recognise in people such signs of serious movement inhibitions and through the technique of the art of movement enable them to recapture something of the instinctive mastery of rhythm of their early childhood days.

The solution to this problem through the art of movement implies no mere mobilisation of joints and strengthening of muscle groups, but an adjustment through an understanding of the effort capacities of each individual. In nurseries, schools, factories and clubs, and in fact in all walks of life,

people at play or at work are making a continual series of efforts. A trained observer of movement will see exaggerations and discords which are due to a one-sided development or an impoverished use of effort by the individual. A clear example can be seen in the case of people who appear to proceed in their tasks in an unnecessarily jerky, hasty manner, continually fighting against time. They have lost the ability to indulge in time even when opportunity presents itself. Others may reveal a markedly cramped attitude, and no longer enjoy the natural full extensions of the body into space.

Strange though it may appear, there is a startling relationship between the discoveries made in the electronic field and the revelations which the study of human effort can bring us. In stating very briefly the essentials of these discoveries, one is led to the conclusion that the matter of which the tangible universe consists is comprised of motion of an electronic nature. Life in human beings is likewise engendered by motion. Unconscious motion is always active in the human body and without it the body ceases to be alive. Conscious movement is, however, the element that gives variety and colour to life. It is, in fact, by observation of movement, whether consciously or unconsciously performed, that the real nature of each individual personality can be distinguished. Ability to use one's efforts rightly is decisive of the work and play in which each person can best indulge, just as in the different actions of the various chemical elements the number and the flow of the motion of the electrons decides the particular element and makes us able to distinguish it from others.

If then, it is as easy to distinguish people as it is to recognise the elements, and in distinguishing people to determine their abilities, why has not the science of human

effort been used in the field of human endeavour to provide man with the facility to choose occupations and recreations more suited to him as an individual than is now the case? In the realm of pure science human effort as a whole has had far less attention than the atomic bomb.

Speed, spatial extension and energy or weight have been studied to some extent, but more often as separate factors, whereas what is perhaps the most important, the quality of flow has been, for the most part, disregarded. The splitting of the atom is brought about by releasing electrons from the bound flow in their orbits around the nucleus and permitting their release into free flow. From the repetitive and regular rhythm of their orbital path they are freed to go where they will and the evidence of this change in control is shattering.

Although man's movement is something quite different from inorganic motion it is nevertheless true that the bound flow of many workers' actions when released can convert his constricted life into a wider and fuller one and can add vastly to his potentialities. This can undoubtedly be done by giving opportunity to experience all the richness of a full range in movement, but we want to tackle the problem from the beginning and not only when the damage has been done. It is for this reason, to retain and strengthen the spontaneous enjoyment and mastery of effort, that the introduction of movement study into the school curriculum is essential.

In the art of movement we find the common denominator of all human expression. It is movement which is the basis of poetry, drama, music, dance and the other arts. Through dance, which is the natural flowering of the study of movement, the child is given opportunity for a refreshing swim in the "flow of movement". The flow of movement permeates all our functions and actions, releasing us from damaging

inner tensions; it is a means of communication between people, since all our forms of expression, speaking, writing, singing, are carried by the flow of movement.

To-day, after years of suffering resulting from regimentation of the people, the call for the means to restore individuality sounds clear. Teachers of many nationalities who have studied the art of movement confirm both the need and hope that future improvement in human relationship might and could be promoted by introducing its study into schools. We do not aim in the school at artistic perfection or the creation and performance of sensational dances, but the beneficial effect of the creative activity of dancing upon the personality of the pupil. But this is not all.

**The Art of Movement in Education** The art of movement in Education provides a simple and efficacious means of assessment, both of the children's capacities and progress, as well as of the teacher's activities. The teacher can learn to use a nice balance of efforts, giving the class opportunities to experiment with and increase their effort experiences. The teacher who has acquired a working knowledge of the study of movement and has applied it to himself, is then in a position to understand more fully the spirit of the class he teaches. In the past his adjustments have often been intuitive or at the most the result of a vague and haphazard method of observation. For example, many teachers attempt to stimulate an apathetic class by assuming a cheerful voice and superficially brisk manner. The student of the art of movement will realise that this is not sufficient to help the children. They must learn to adopt a more active attitude towards movement and effort. In the case of an excitable class the reverse procedure is needed. The same principle applies to the individual child who may unjustly be termed lazy by the teacher unschooled in effort assessment. Because



the child tends to indulge in time, he must be helped to take up an active approach to it by experiencing such efforts as slashing, thrusting, dabbing and flicking, which develop quickness. This will prove much more expedient than continual nagging, reproaches and injunctions to hurry, or not to waste time.

Very few teachers of to-day are able to observe actions in themselves or in others with sufficient accuracy to understand or assess them. Preconceived opinions frequently distract them from what they really see. They look at the result of an effort and judge it according to its productive, destructive or communicative effects. It is important for the teacher to be able to describe observed movements without prejudice or criticism. Conflicting movement habits of an individual can be changed into more harmonious combinations, thus reducing their harmful effects.

The teacher must also learn to adjust his own effort habits to the children he teaches. If, for instance, to take an extreme case, a teacher is so unbalanced as to reveal only the thrusting, slashing type of effort, in which he is continually fighting time and weight, he may well find that the children in his class react with a similar quality or that they become repressed and their attitude sullen or cowed. In another case a teacher may reveal his nervousness by light, tentative and hesitating movements. Children have a natural perception of efforts and respond very quickly to the visible outward signs of their teacher's inner moods. In this particular case, the teacher may find that he fails to control the class in a natural, easy manner and becomes over-anxious and strained. By practising sustained movements such as pressing and gliding as well as those in which the weight is exerted quickly and yet firmly as in thrusting, this teacher would be able to counteract his fussy and uncertain movement habits and gain additional composure combined with firmness.

Only a teacher who is able to observe his own efforts, and modify and develop them where necessary, will be able to use movement tuition to ensure a healthy development of the efforts of his pupils. It should also be realised that this increased power of movement observation will be of untold value in all manual activities in the school such as handwork, gardening, carpentry, games, cookery, etc. The teacher who assists in dramatic productions will be able to use the full range of efforts to increase the significance of the gestures and actions of the players, and thus contribute not only to a better and more sensible dramatic performance, but also to the natural growth of the personality of the children in question.

**The Art of Movement in Industry** In considering the rôle of effort and movement study in industry it should be realised that the term industry is here intended to include all types of work and applies equally to the operator in a factory, the farm worker, the housewife in her home and many other activities. In the pre-industrial epoch of our civilisation, craftsmen or peasants had a rich effort life. In all their occupations, the whole body and mind was engaged at various times in the widely different activities which each man had to perform. They had to think, because each man was the organiser of his own business. Procuring raw material, buying, transporting, the production process itself and finally selling was done by one man. Not only does the industrial worker of to-day specialise in one of these jobs, but in a particular function of a job, frequently in one relatively simple movement sequence which he has to perform from morning to night. He has to think, but within a very restricted sphere of interest. His leisure time is inadequately filled with pleasures lacking that integration of mental interest which in former times arose from the complexity of a craftsman's activity.

The work of modern man centres in the fabrication and distribution of goods. Mining, forestry and agriculture, which supply the raw materials, differ from other processes of industry, in that much more manual labour is still used in these jobs. The efforts used in driving and controlling machines are different from those used in manual labour, but in every case the miner, forester or farmer must be selected and trained in a similar way to the factory worker so that they may be able to make full use of their potentialities and become efficient and contented in their activities.

Most successful foremen, supervisors and managers think involuntarily in terms of effort, but many of them are blinded by the ordinary conception of the task which must be accomplished, and they fail to study how it is done. Clumsy methods may be continued because work has been done in this way or that for years and those responsible unconsciously shirk the fight against difficult conditions and circumstances. Someone who is able to visualise the rhythm of the efforts used in a job is often confronted by a spectacle which is, to him, grotesque.

During experimental investigations in a saw mill, the loading of a van with small staves was once witnessed. The workers employed in this job were a dozen heavily clad, strong men, whose ordinary job was the transport of heavy trees from the forest to the gantry, where they discharged their lorries, piling up the tree trunks in gigantic heaps and balancing on them with remarkable acrobatic skill. Delegated to the loading of the small staves which were piled up for drying under a shed, they formed a solid row from the piles to the van and passed on, one to another, a voluminous bundle of staves during which process a considerable number of staves fell to the ground. The two men in the van had great trouble in heaping the irregular bundles of staves inside

the vehicle, with the result that many of them were broken and the loading space could not be used to its full capacity. Replacing the twelve men by five girls, three of whom were standing equally spaced between the stacks and the van, while one collected the staves one at a time from the piles and another arranged them in the vehicle, the task was performed in half the time by less than half the number of workers and the van was filled to its complete capacity without breakages. The men disliked the work and grumbled when asked to do it, while the girls enjoyed the large swinging movements by which the staves were picked up, passed from hand to hand, and restacked in the van.

In this example attention is drawn to the simple swinging movements in contrast to the complicated and cramped efforts of gathering and transmitting haphazardly formed bundles. The sight of the over-crowded row of men working with bound flow immediately generated in the mind of the trained observer the contrasting desirable vision of a light and simple free flow of material. The employment of a lesser number of more flexible operators was the natural outcome of this vision.

To emphasise still further the application of the vision of flow in work a second example out of a vast number of experiences may be quoted. In this case it concerned workers in an orchard. Complaints of customers called attention to the fact that the lower layers of cherries collected in the baskets were ripe while the upper layers were unripe. Carelessness on the part of the Land Army girls, who did the job, was assumed to be the cause. Observation of the flow of their operational movements showed however, that those movements, which were at first quite determined and relatively regular, afterwards became erratic and undecided. It turned out that after a time they could no longer discern

the red colour of the ripe cherries from the yellow unripe ones. The cause of the disturbing irregularity was detected by the observation of the changes of efforts which resulted finally in movements characteristic of blind people. This increasing hesitation and restless way of working was obviously due to eye-strain. In staring at the small spots of colour among the green foliage fluttering in the wind, the operators soon lost the power to discern the colour of the cherries. Red and green are complementary colours which are confused naturally by colour-blind people. The remedy for the temporary colour-blindness consisted in short relaxations of the eye-muscles by looking at a spot of neutral colour or shutting the eye for a moment. The result was not only baskets full of ripe cherries but a much quicker filling of the baskets.

The rhythm of man in his work and in his whole life should achieve the adaptation of the flow of material to the dance of life, benefiting the producer and worker as well as the consumer, and avoiding many disturbances of an industrial civilisation. The re-discovery of the meaning of rhythm can contribute towards a solution of the purely human problems arising where many people work for long hours together in a common task.

Every one has a natural gift for discerning rhythm in movement and sound. Few people however, realise that what they discern is, in reality, effort. They hear the variations in the accents of a tune, which are produced by the varying efforts of the musician. They can at the same time see these efforts. Should they look at a musician playing on a screen, and supposing the sound track should fail, they can still tell whether the tune is vivid or languid, gay or sad. In the same way they can discern the rhythm produced by the efforts of a working person. If the

efforts are strong, direct and quick, the impression will be quite different from that in which they are light, flexible and sustained.

Innumerable examples could be quoted to show how trained observers have been able to assess certain jobs in factories in effort terms, and subsequently assist in the selection of suitable people whose effort capacities coincide with or nearly approach the jobs in which they are employed. This refers in the same way to the efforts of office personnel or administrators, since the same efforts can be seen or heard in all intellectual exertions as can be observed in bodily work. In many cases, as a result of observations, working persons can be helped not only by the introduction of effort training to develop either a finer touch or perhaps a greater capacity for sustainment or strength in their work, but also by an improvement in their mental effort habits.

**The Art of Movement in the Theatre** Another field of activity in which the art of movement has much to contribute is stage-craft. Man uses his body in various ways.

The arms are used continually in everyday actions for gripping things, gathering them for some useful purpose or repulsing or scattering them if unwanted. The legs are used for steps or leaps to approach the objects. Most animals grip food with their mouths or jaws, while some use arms and hands for this purpose. Snakes, having neither arms nor legs, wind their whole body round their prey. Although at first glance, it may seem a far cry from stage-craft, much can be learned from the observation of animal habits and movements. It appears that the effort capacities of man are much more varied than those of animals. One meets people with cat-like or ferret-like movements, but one never meets a horse or a ferret or a cat with human-like movements. Animals are perfect in the efficient use of the

restricted habits which they possess. Man is less efficient in the use of the more numerous efforts which are potentially possible for him, than are animals in the use of their restricted effort scale. A cat-like animal obviously indulges mostly in free flow, even in exaggerated free flow, and this to the detriment of bound flow, which seldom appears in a cat's movements. But it is not only the flow which is typical. A jumping cat will be relaxed and flexible in its movements. A horse or a deer will fly wonderfully through the air but its body will be more tense and direct during the jump than that of a cat. The attitude towards weight and space is varied with different species and so also is their attitude towards time. The utter laziness, exaggerated indulgence in time, of the sloth has become proverbial.

Young animals learn to select their efforts in play. Playing animals, especially young ones, perform all kinds of imitative activities, which resemble very strongly their real actions with which they provide for the necessities of their future life. Hunting, fighting, biting seem to be in their minds, but they do not actually hunt, fight and bite, at least not with the obvious aim of search for food. We call similar activity in children playing, but in adults we call it dancing. During play, efforts are tried out and sifted and chosen as the most suitable ones, say for an efficient hunt or fight. Play is, in fact, the great master of growing effort capacities and their regulation. Nothing would prevent us from calling this play dramatic acting, if we did not reserve the words acting and drama for man's conscious performance of life situations on the stage. The stage performance asks for spectators to whom the actor addresses himself, but the playing kitten or puppy does not care whether there is an audience or not.

While in play, efforts are inter-mingled in almost casual and irregular mixtures, in dances or stage movements they

are usually selected and worked out according to a definite aim to convey ideas to a spectator. In dance, regular repetitions of efforts form rhythmical phrases which are exactly repeated.

It is a well-known fact that the plays and dances of primitive tribes arise not only from a conscious but also a conscientious endeavour to become aware of certain selected effort combinations. The repeated exercising of effort configurations which prevail in the mental make-up of a community, leads to the creation of tribal or national dances. They express the average or main efforts cultivated by social groups localised in a definite climate and under special living conditions. The languid, dream-like dances of the Oriental people, the proud dances of the Spaniards, the temperamental dances of the Southern tribes and the well-measured round, danced in the Anglo-Saxon countries, are examples of effort manifestations of social units. They have selected and fostered these effort attitudes during long periods of their history until they became representative of their whole mentality.

In religious dances man represented those superhuman powers which, he assumed, directed the happenings of his personal and tribal fate. Many dances of natives of Africa, Asia, Polynesia and America show the features of gliding in their dance rituals. The strangling gods of death and violence are figures of thrusting, piercing and compressing efforts. The glittering divinities of joy, surprise and of the unaccountable variety of apparitions are characterised in racial dances showing flickering and fluttering efforts.

Human civilisation to-day is a manifestation of the evolution of the efforts of man, enabling him to use his hands and arms to create machinery, buildings and works of art. The arms and hands are also used by man for communication



with other people by significant gestures. In the Eastern countries more especially, the arms and hands are a means of a special kind of expression in dance. In other countries, the European countries included, more emphasis is laid on the expressive dance movements performed by the legs. The words and phrases of the poetry of movement thus created have, however, no conventional meaning which could be translated into spoken language. It is an emotional language similar to music, and although the two arts, dance and music, are frequently fused together, dance has its own independent vocabulary based on the fundamental possibilities of bodily effort. Bodily movement is the fundamental means of scenic expression. Visible efforts appear in gestures and audible efforts in sounds and words. It is essential therefore, that all those who direct stage productions, whether in drama or dance, should understand fully the underlying principles of movement study, for then only will they be fully capable of analysing the actions of the characters of the plays which they have to produce. The dancer and actor himself will find the best form of training in the observation and practice of human effort.

**The Art of Movement in Recreation** Dancing as a means of recreation nowadays takes the form either of passive enjoyment as a spectator at a theatrical entertainment, or of more active participation in the couple dancing to which, during the last thirty to forty years, ballroom dancing has become almost exclusively confined.

Dancing in larger groups has ceased to exist as a means of recreation, except in a few isolated instances where country dances have been preserved or revived, or where, in recent years, square dancing has become popular.

But neither the ethereal beauty and feats of technical skill displayed in the theatre, nor the insistent rhythms and

endless duets of the ballroom are sufficient for man's recreational needs. Dancing is fundamentally a social activity, just as man is fundamentally gregarious. Dance in its origins was neither a spectacle to be looked at from the outside, nor was it solely a duet performed by one man and one woman; it was a universal source of experience and means of expression and communication, in which all joined.

The art of movement has here something of great value to offer to modern man, and this is choral, or group dancing.

Groups may vary in size, from three to several hundred; dances are not set, a pre-arranged pattern to be learnt and performed, nor are the separate movement-sequences invariably fixed. The dance is built up with the material available, depending on such factors as the number of people participating, their movement experience, the size and shape of the room, the presence or absence of musical accompaniment, and so on. The dancers are both creators and performers; opportunity for improvisation within a given theme occurs. Technical proficiency is not the aim; each does as he is able.

The actual movement content is of great richness and variety. It is not, as in other forms of dancing, limited mainly to foot and leg movements, but the whole body actively participates. Moreover the dancer is aware of the whole space around him, so that the body becomes a plastic shape in space, and not merely a weaver of floor patterns.

Satisfaction and harmony are achieved both in the component movement sequences of the dance, and in group relationships, resulting in a fusion of the personalities within the group without loss of individuality. Thus, participation in a modern movement-choir is not only enjoyable, but truly re-creational.

**The Therapeutic Use of the Art of Movement** The principles governing the use of the art of movement for therapeutic purposes are similar to those used in education, but are applied with a bias in various directions to suit people who show a personality imbalance.

Among these people symptoms such as these are to be found:—inability to concentrate; exaggerated fear without a known cause; acute depression; anxiety; uncontrollable excitement or aggression; obsessional ideas; feelings of unreality; or inability to express overwhelming emotion. Many of these people find it very difficult to live in harmony with the group of people at their work or in their homes, and many are out of harmony with themselves. These symptoms show themselves in movements which have, perhaps, an exaggerated attitude towards one or other of the elements of effort, and which frequently lack flow. These abnormalities become apparent in dance movements, working actions and shadow movements. Experience in the observation of movement, the analysis of movement in working actions, and movement as a creative art is thus a great help to anyone dealing with people suffering from psychological difficulties.

Any creative and expressive activity demands the sustained effort of the whole personality, imposes its own discipline, and in turn re-creates the artist. It is not an easy task to apply the re-habilitating power of creative activity for remedial purposes, but attempts have been made, with promising results. Teaching must be adapted to the special needs of the participants. Use can be made of pure dance, or of dance-mime which supply a training in emotional control and self-discipline, and the opportunity to experience changes in mood. A sense of responsibility to the work of the group helps to develop the social sense, and teaches the patient to appreciate his own values in relation to other people.

Individually, a patient's attitude to the elements of movement, and so to life, can be re-trained. Everyone has a tendency to select certain ways of moving which permeate his whole behaviour. This unconscious choice of often quite a limited range of movements indicates an inner attitude. If certain qualities are exaggerated while others are limited a harmonious balance can be restored by using dance exercises involving transitions between the over-developed faculty and the neglected one. Such movement sequences or dances may be created by patient help from the teacher, who should encourage the individual's inherent capacity for finding his own effort balance, and help him to recover some of the instinctive and spontaneous flow of movement of his youth.

The knowledge that movement has power to influence mood, and even ways of thinking and behaviour, has been used consciously and unconsciously at all times, and still to-day people can go to a recreational dance class weary and dispirited, and feel refreshed and invigorated afterwards. Awareness of this two-way interplay and relationship between movement and inner attitude and feelings is the basis of the remedial trainer's work. He must observe all the external signs objectively and without prejudice, and adapt his teaching to each patient's needs.

Knowledge of the patient's history and the reasons for his lack of psychological balance is not essential to the movement teacher. His particular contribution is to assess the patient as he sees him, and to help him to find an inner balance through developing his latent capacities.

The art of movement offers a wide field of research to the psycho-therapist, psychologist, and psychiatrist in the discovery of personal problems through effort assessment, and in the observation of symptomatic behaviour. The occupational therapist will find a knowledge of the art of movement a valuable help in the rehabilitation of skills.

The art of movement applied in education, recreation work, stage-craft and rehabilitation follows similar principles since the efforts underlying all movements are actually the same, no matter for which practical purpose they are used. The knowledge of man's effort life not only throws a new light upon the actions and characteristics of human beings but is a valuable means of training and selection. There is a large field of exploration and practical application extending beyond the domains here discussed.

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(in preparation)



