

Marjorie Barstow, John Dewey and the Alexander Technique: A philosophical constellation, or “Variations of the Teacher’s Art”

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ABSTRACT

This project examines one strand of Alexander Technique¹ pedagogy: the approach pioneered by the noted American Alexander teacher, Marjorie Barstow, the first graduate of F. Matthias Alexander's training course. Barstow's approach is favoured by performers because of its immediate and direct application to real and challenging situations. At the end of her life, from the 1970s to the early 1990s, she attracted thousands of students to her workshops, and many of her long-term students have since become world-renowned teachers themselves.

Barstow's detractors have argued, however, that because her teaching and teacher-training methods varied from mainstream approaches, she neither taught the Alexander Technique nor trained teachers. This opinion assumes a limited and even tendentious approach to interpreting Alexander's legacy. One reason for the contrary opinion is the failure to view Alexander's Technique in a wider intellectual and pedagogical context. I address this problem by situating Barstow's pedagogy in the context of educational and philosophical theories being developed contemporaneously with and in line with Alexander's own discoveries, theory and pedagogy. In particular, Barstow's work is examined in relation to the "pragmatic" turn in philosophy observable in the thought of John Dewey, who involved himself directly with the Alexander Technique and its founder. I consider Barstow, Dewey and F.M. Alexander for the first time as educationalists, practitioners and thinkers who are linked by a common concern with the pragmatic ends of philosophy.

To draw these links I rely on the philosophical method of "constellation research," first developed by Dieter Henrich in the context of German philosophy to connect seemingly disparate strands of thought around a common set of problems and issues. I show that Barstow's interpretation of the Alexander Technique has indeed evolved from the philosophy and methods of the originator of the technique and that this evolution is entirely in keeping with the originator's aims, even if the teaching

¹ For readers unfamiliar with the Alexander Technique, Appendix 1 gives a brief introduction and contains a glossary of terms. For the original and most authoritative description of the process of Alexander's technique, I recommend the first chapter of his book, *The Use of the Self*.

methods may look different on the surface. As I also show, Barstow's teaching is also consistent with several important aspects of Dewey's philosophy.

There is little in the Alexander literature that places Alexander's philosophy and practice—or any other Alexander teacher's philosophy and practice—into a historical, pedagogical or philosophical tradition. This study offers the first detailed historical analysis of what could be called the Barstow School of the Alexander Technique. The thesis also indicates how a teaching practice founded on the principles of Deweyan critical pragmatism may be considered an effective pedagogy in the performing arts. In shedding light on a hitherto under-researched feature of the Alexander Technique—its broader links with pragmatic philosophy—the thesis treads new ground in linking philosophical understanding with artistic practice and performance.

STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

Amanda Jane Cole

CITATION STYLE

This thesis uses the MLA citation style, a style widely used in the humanities, especially language and literature. A citation in MLA style contains “only enough information to enable readers to find the source in the works-cited list, so that interruptions in the reading are kept to a minimum” (MLA 167). Typically, a citation will consist of the author’s last name and a page reference. If the author’s name is mentioned in the text, the page number alone appears in the citation. If there is more than one work by that author in the list of works cited, a shortened version of the title is given. Website addresses are no longer required by MLA style.

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Cole, A (mezzo-soprano), S Crawshaw (piano) and C Madden (musical and dramatic direction) (2009). *Saudade: A Portuguese Songbook*. Recorded in Seattle with the support of Jack Straw Recording Studio Artist in Residence Program. Ode Records, Auckland, New Zealand.

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Cole, A (2015). "Do you really mean that? Towards precise, considered and constructive language in performance teaching." *Australian Journal of Music Education*, 3: 4-15.

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Cole, A (mezzo-soprano) and J Brewer (harpsichord) (2015, 9 May). *Songs of Johann Philipp Krieger*. Cooroy Fusion Festival. Cooroy Butter Factory, Cooroy, Queensland, Australia.

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Cole, A (2012, September). “Critical Pragmatism and the Performing Arts: Alexander, Dewey, Barstow and Madden.” International Alexander Technique and the Performing Arts Conference, Victorian College of the Arts, University of Melbourne.

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Cole, A (2015, 25-27 September). “Do you Really Mean That? Towards Precise, Considered and Constructive Language in Performance Teaching.” ANZARME 37th Conference, Australian Catholic University, Melbourne.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Description and aims

The aim of this research is to evaluate and contextualise one important strand in the evolution of the Alexander Technique (AT): that represented by the teaching of Marjorie Barstow. Barstow's strand has been widely viewed as something other than—and in some cases less than—the Alexander Technique.² Writing as early as 1946, one teacher even described Barstow as having gone “clean off the rails” (Carrington, *TTR* 26). My hypothesis is that Barstow was in fact extremely faithful to the principles Alexander expounded. I demonstrate this by pursuing a philosophical discussion that not only links her work directly back to Alexander, but also examines it in relation to the ideas of the American pragmatist philosopher, John Dewey. Using the lens of pragmatism, I draw links between Alexander, Barstow and Dewey. In doing so, I aim to realign Barstow in the Alexander canon. I also aim to acknowledge and demonstrate that there is variety and diversity in the field of the Alexander Technique and that Barstow's strand is not only orthodox but reflects this diversity. Moreover, the phenomenon of diversity itself is consistent with both pragmatism and Alexander's own philosophy.

The debate about Barstow's teaching has been carried on for decades within the narrow framework of what F.M. Alexander said, wrote and did, and what his teachings mean for later generations of teachers. This thesis situates Barstow's approach in a wider philosophical, cultural and educational context. That context is provided by John Dewey, not least because it was Dewey on whom Alexander leaned for endorsements of his work, its scientific validity and philosophical credibility. This project extrapolates from the connection between Alexander and Dewey. Arguing that Barstow was in fact a faithful adherent to Alexander's mission, I also examine how her pedagogy developed in ways that suggest Dewey's influence.

I argue that another factor making the choice of Dewey and pragmatism relevant to such a discussion about Alexander are the elements of pragmatism in Alexander's

² *For strong points of view on different aspects of the issue, see Chance (“Editorial”), Weed (Festschrift), and White (“An appellation approach”).*

work. Marjorie Barstow deepened the emphasis on the critically pragmatic aspects of the Alexander Technique, sharpening the AT's philosophical, scientific and educational focus. This thesis therefore examines a process of evolution in the teaching of the Alexander Technique, something that Alexander might have commended as a "variation of the teacher's art" (Whittaker, "England" 27).

The connections between Alexander, Barstow and Dewey will be examined as part of a philosophical *Konstellation*, defined by Martin Mulsow in his essay "Zum Methodenprofil der Konstellationsforschung" as "a dense connection of people, ideas, theories, problems or documents that mutually affect one another and in such a way that only the analysis of this connection, not its component parts in isolation, makes it plausible to talk about a philosophical relationship and development between these people, ideas and theories (in the first place)" [translation mine] (74). This thesis views Dewey, Alexander and Barstow as constituting a "constellation" in precisely this way. My aim is to establish the main features of this philosophical constellation. In doing so, I hope to identify other significant members of the constellation and/or point to those who played some part in contributing to the philosophical discussion the constellation sought to progress.

The project undertaking is focussed on a main research question and three sub-questions. The main research question is:

In what ways do the ideas and practices of Dewey and Barstow, two Alexander "practitioners," correspond?

The research sub-questions are:

1. How did the connection between Dewey and Barstow come about, and how, with reference to Alexander, did it come to constitute a constellation?
2. Who are the other practitioners or philosophers in the constellation who can be associated or credited with, or responsible for, the connection?
3. What are some of the possible ramifications for Barstow's approach of an association with Dewey's philosophy?

Key Figures and Systems

The construction of the constellation requires familiarity with several key figures and the systems they created and worked within. Because of the familiarity required, my first task is to introduce these people and their fields before I present the research question and its justification.

The Alexanders and the Alexander Technique

In this thesis, Frederick Matthias Alexander (1869–1955) is called “Alexander,” “F.M. Alexander” or “FMA;” while his brother, Albert Redden (1873–1947), is referred to as “A.R. Alexander” or “ARA.” When used alone the surname refers to F.M. Alexander. He was—and is still—known as “Mr Alexander,” “F.M.” or simply “F.” Albert Redden was known as “A.R.” The Alexander Technique was called “the work” by FMA. It is also frequently referred to as “Alexander’s discoveries.” All three names are used in this thesis.

F.M. Alexander was an Australian actor. In his early twenties he began to suffer vocal problems during recitations. Dissatisfied with prescriptions of rest from medical practitioners and voice specialists, he set out to observe his “manner of doing.” So successful was he in his analysis and modification of his “use of self,” as evidenced by the changes in his voice, that by the mid-1890s Alexander had a flourishing teaching practice in Melbourne and had trained both his sister Amy, his brother ARA and Lilian Twycross, a Melbourne contralto and singing teacher, to teach the work.

He moved to Sydney in 1900 and then to London in 1904, where his teaching practice developed rapidly. During the First World War, Alexander introduced his work to the United States and soon FMA and ARA were dividing their time between the two continents. In London, FMA established a school for children based on his principles and introduced a training course for those wishing to teach the technique. He published four books (in 1910, 1923, 1932, 1941) and many articles on his work, which eventually became known as “the Alexander Technique.” He died in 1955, leaving a significant number of “first generation teachers” to carry on his work throughout the world. In Alexander parlance a “first generation teacher” is generally held to mean someone who trained with one or both the Alexander brothers, although the term is open to hair-splitting debate and interpretation (see Weed, *Festschrift*). In

this thesis I adopt the generally held definition of “first generation teacher” as anyone who received their teacher training directly from the Alexanders. The last surviving member of that generation who went on to teach died in 2013. This was Elisabeth Walker, who was 98 years old, “still living by herself, and still giving Alexander lessons” (Chance, “Goodbye”).

Even F.M. Alexander found it difficult to describe his technique without demonstration or lengthy discussion. He was frequently criticised for his wordy prose. And yet he also came up with the occasional aphorism, such as, “We are giving Nature her opportunity” (Trevelyan 73). This description is not only pithy and comprehensive, but also, as Trevelyan describes, allows “for change and growth” (73).

In *Music and the Mind* Anthony Storr describes everyday activity in a way that shows how we function *without* the Alexander Technique:

We are not usually *conscious* of our inner sense of striving as manifested in bodily movements (a phenomenon described by Schopenhauer) except under special circumstances when we plan some action which is not habitual, as when we are learning to ride a bicycle or play a musical instrument. In the ordinary way, we just move in accordance with some prior intention which may or may not be consciously perceived, and then evaluate the move we have executed according to its results [emphasis in the original] (132).

The Alexander Technique is a way of becoming consciously aware of our underlying coordination in *any* activity, habitual or new. Alexander’s principle observation was that this coordination is governed by the quality of the relationship between our head and spine, and that it underpins everything we do. Marjorie Barstow describes the technique as “a unique approach to movement” (in Chance, “Marjorie”). It is not just about how we move. It starts with *how we think* about how we move and is therefore a method of psychophysical re-education. It is a technique that has utility not just for performers, although performers have been particularly drawn to it. This is because they need to operate psychophysically at a heightened level in order to do what they do. Elite performance requires a highly developed awareness of functioning, and so performers are often quicker to recognize and value the small changes in functioning

effected by the Alexander Technique. In her teaching Madden frequently describes the AT as “conscious cooperation with human design.”

John Dewey (1859–1952)

John Dewey was one of America’s most important public thinkers from the turn of the twentieth century to World War II and was perhaps the last American philosopher to have had a major impact on society (Boisvert 343). He began his philosophic career strongly influenced by Hegel. His lifelong rejection of dualisms is sometimes traced to that influence. He eventually abandoned Hegel’s idealism, however, and based his philosophy on Darwinian theory and scientific experimentalism. The dominant landmarks in Dewey’s pragmatism are: the reconstruction of philosophy so that it may deal with the “problems of men”; the importance of action to knowledge; the nature and practical improvement of education; growth as the goal of education; democracy as a way of life; and the social context of enquiry.

Dewey spent the majority of his professional life at the University of Chicago and Columbia University. He was extraordinarily prodigious and the complete collection of his work fills thirty-seven volumes in the form edited by Jo-Ann Boydston for Southern Illinois University Press. Boydston divided them into three periods: five volumes of Early Works (1882-1898), fifteen volumes of Middle Works (1899-1924) and seventeen volumes of Later Works (1925-1952). It is to this collected edition of his works that almost all Dewey citations in this thesis refer.

Dewey studied intermittently with F.M. Alexander from 1916 to the mid 1930s, and then with A.R. Alexander from 1935 to 1941. At the end of his life, after both ARA and FMA had left the US, Dewey also had lessons from Frank Pierce Jones³ (Conable, Interview). Dewey allowed his personal experience of Alexander’s work to influence his ideas. He found in Alexander’s discoveries what Frank Pierce Jones describes as “a kind of laboratory demonstration of principles that he had arrived at by reasoning” (*Body* 99). The concepts that had theoretical validity for Dewey were “the aesthetic quality of all experience, the unity of conscious and unconscious, the continuity between self and environment, the operational significance of inhibition,

³ See Appendix 2 for more information on Jones.

and the indivisibility of time and space,” but Jones notes that it was “the concrete, sensory evidence” that lessons in the Alexander Technique supplied which gave those concepts “a solid grounding in experience” (99).

Dewey was also certain that he owed his longevity, health and well-being to his lessons in the technique. Much has been written about the influence of Alexander’s work on Dewey’s thought. There has been much less interest in Dewey’s influence on Alexander. Equally scarce is any discussion in the literature about the importance of Dewey’s ideas for interpreting the Alexander Technique. The impact of Dewey on Alexander and his professional descendants is therefore largely unexplored. Nevertheless, Alexander does acknowledge the help Dewey gave him with his writing (*CCC xxiv*). Given the confluence of many of their ideas, Alexander’s regard for Dewey and Dewey’s superior ability to communicate ideas, it is curious that the Alexander community turns so infrequently to Dewey’s writing for guidance in teaching and thinking about the technique.

Marjorie Barstow (1899–1995)

In 1933 Marjorie Barstow was the first person to graduate from F.M. Alexander’s inaugural three-year training course in London and was one of three Americans in that course. After her training she worked for many years as A.R. Alexander’s assistant in Boston and New York. Judging by Carrington’s assessment in 1946 that Barstow “had gone clean off the rails,” it seems that her teaching had already begun to diverge from her English colleagues. And yet Conable observed that her teaching in the 1960s was more like traditional English teaching than it was later (Interview). Barstow attracted a certain amount of criticism in the 1970s. This may have been due to the fact that a small number of her pupils were claiming after only one workshop—sometimes not even the full length of the workshop—to be Alexander teachers (W. Conable, *Festschrift* 23). By the 1980s there was some controversy about her methods in more conservative Alexander circles and a heated debate sprang up about whether Barstow was teaching the Alexander Technique at all. In 1988 one prominent Barstowian student/teacher wrote: “Over the years, much has been said about the innovations which Marjorie Barstow has brought... People have both praised and vilified [her teaching] depending upon the fixed ideas which they brought to their

process of appraisal” (Weed, *Festschrift* 150). In the early 1990s *STATNews*, the newsletter of the Society of Teachers of the Alexander Technique (based in England), twice refused to print any information on the workshops of Marjorie Barstow (Chance, “Editorial”), suggesting a strong prejudice against her and demonstrating a tendency in the Alexander community “to shut off and get tribalistic” (M. Frederick, *Festschrift* 50).

The advent of the NASTAT (the American STAT, now AmSAT) organization in 1987 fostered “a political uproar throughout the profession” in the United States (Weed, *Festschrift* 150). It led to the characterization of teaching methods as being either “traditional” or “non-traditional.” Barstow’s was labelled “non-traditional,” with an implied class difference. As Weed describes, the term “traditional” implies that “this particular manner of teaching stretches back to Mr Alexander and his procedures and has been brought forward through time intact” (ibid). It also suggests that work done in this way “is somehow pure and untainted by experiment,” that only “traditional” work is of benefit and that “most or all ‘non-traditional’ work is so different and inferior that it should even be called by a different name” (ibid). Despite the controversy surrounding her work, Barstow remained outwardly unaffected (Barker, Interview) and taught until shortly before her death at the age of 95 in 1995. During the last two decades of her teaching, she attracted thousands of students to her workshops, both at home in Lincoln, Nebraska, and around the world. Her unique approach to teaching Alexander’s discoveries became a phenomenon in the Alexander community.

Pragmatism as a theoretical framework

Pragmatism was the school of philosophy to which Dewey belonged. It can be defined as a school of thought that emerged primarily from the writings of Dewey and two other American thinkers, Charles Sanders Peirce, natural scientist and philosopher (1839–1914), and William James, psychologist and philosopher (1842–1910). “Pragmatic” in the philosophical sense does not mean simply “convenient” or “practical” as it does in everyday language, but rather “tested by consequences rather than antecedents” (Barzun and Graff 180). Pragmatism is used in this thesis as the theoretical framework that links Alexander, Dewey and Barstow.

Pragmatism was the first philosophical “school” to emerge in North America and the first original contribution to an intellectual tradition that was dominated initially by theology and later by British empiricism and German idealism. The characteristic idea of philosophical pragmatism is that efficacy in practical application—the question of what “works out most effectively”—somehow provides a standard for the determination of truth in the case of statements, rightness in the case of actions, and value in the case of appraisals (Rescher). While pragmatism emerged in the North American context, the pragmatists were deeply influenced by European philosophy, especially that of Kant and Hegel. Thus pragmatism’s roots lie in the Western philosophical tradition. One major departure from this tradition, however, was the belief that in one way or another philosophy should take into account the methods and insights of modern science, since those too are developed from consequences in the broadest sense.

The dominant features of pragmatism are: the rejection of Cartesian thought and mind-body dualism; the cultivation of a functional view of thought; the interpretation of thought as closely interwoven with action; a fallibilistic view of knowledge, meaning that knowledge is provisional and forever open to correction; the representative character of thinking; the primacy of intellectual method; a social conception of science, meaning that science is directed at social improvement; an experimental conception of science based on the centrality of hypothetico-deductive method of scientific procedure; the importance of critical thinking; and the unity not of doctrine but of method and procedure (Scheffler, *Four*).

Having occupied a marginal position in the Western philosophical tradition for much of the twentieth century, pragmatism has once again become a philosophical force to be reckoned with in the current “post-analytic” era of philosophy (Biesta and Burbules 8; Rajchman and West). According to Kadlec, we are well over twenty-five years into an astonishing resurgence of interest in American pragmatism in general, and in John Dewey’s work specifically (1). It is as relevant today as it was more than a century ago, when the pragmatists began to criticize the disconnected and dehumanized way in which Western culture had conceived of knowledge and reality for more than two thousand years (Biesta and Burbules 2). In his broad-ranging and well researched book on the intellectual life of late nineteenth century America, *The*

Metaphysical Club, Louis Menand observes that Dewey and his contemporaries, William James, Charles Sanders Peirce and Oliver Wendell Holmes, were more responsible than any other group for moving American thought into the modern world: “They not only had an unparalleled influence on other writers and thinkers; they had an enormous influence on American life. Their ideas changed the way Americans thought— and continue to think—about education, democracy, liberty, justice, and tolerance... We are still living, to a great extent, in a country these thinkers helped to make” (Menand, *MTC* x-xi). That “ideas should never become ideologies” is the essence of what they taught (xi). It is my hope, in realigning Barstow and her “school” with pragmatism and within the Alexander canon, that this thesis might help her teachings to be recognized as a pedagogical “force to be reckoned with” (Biesta and Burbules).

Why Dewey and Why Pragmatism?

This thesis uses the ideas both of Dewey in particular and of pragmatism in general. It is through pragmatism that I suggest unexamined links between Alexander and Barstow. An overview of pragmatism is given in the thesis (Chapter 2) as a preliminary to constructing the constellation of Dewey, Alexander and Barstow. Such an examination contextualises Dewey’s work and locates the development of pragmatism as contemporaneous with that of Alexander’s technique.

There are five main reasons for using Dewey and pragmatism in this appraisal of Barstow’s teaching and construction of the constellation. These are: Dewey’s importance as a world-renowned philosopher of education, Dewey and Alexander’s connection and the contemporaneity of their ideas, Dewey’s emphasis on education and science in the Alexander Technique, the American question and, finally, Gummere’s challenge to the Alexander community.

While Dewey was a world-renowned educator and philosopher, and his ideas are still relevant today, their “importance has not yet been sufficiently recognized, at least in the context of educational research,” (Biesta and Burbules 3). Dewey’s close association with Alexander and the Alexander Technique makes Dewey’s pragmatism even more relevant to this thesis. Furthermore, the two thinkers are almost

contemporaneous. Dewey, along with other pragmatists, embarked upon a new path in philosophy at roughly the same time as Alexander was developing his technique. Dewey's philosophy was still evolving and was influencing American thought—particularly in regard to education—in the period in which Barstow underwent her university education, her Alexander training and her apprenticeship with A.R. Alexander in Boston (ca.1920–1940).

A great deal of Dewey's thought, research and writing focussed on the philosophy of education, more so than any other pragmatist. Dewey also wrote extensively and in detail about the process of scientific inquiry and its relationship to human action. It is these two aspects of Alexander's work in particular that Dewey championed: its value *as* education and *to* education in general, and its adherence to scientific process in relationship to human action. He went so far as to say that the technique “bears the same relation to education that education itself bears to all other human activities” and that it contains “the promise and potentiality of the new direction that is needed in all education” (*UOS*, “Introduction” *xix*). He also praised Alexander's work as “scientific in the strictest sense of the word” (*CCC*, “Introduction” *xxv*). I extend to the field and context of the Alexander Technique the claim above (Biesta and Burbules 3) that in the context of educational research the importance of Dewey's ideas has not yet been sufficiently recognized.

Then there is the question of the American dimension. Barstow can be considered an American “thinker,” receptive to “American” approaches, consciously and unconsciously manifesting them, and consciously or unconsciously showing Dewey's influence. If her interpretation of the Alexander Technique was simply American, however, it would resemble the teaching of all other American teachers of the technique. Barstow explained her approach as stemming from the fact that she learned the Alexander Technique “in another culture” (Engel in Rickover, *MBT6*). She saw it as her job to “decide and look at how she was going to teach Alexander's principles to the American culture” (*ibid*), the American culture in the thirties being “very, very different from what she had experienced in London” (Rickover, *MBT6*). This job she shared with all her American colleagues. It was merely the starting point. The singular manner in which she approached this job singled her out from her American colleagues and attracted the notice of the international Alexander community. Some

of her sternest critics are American teachers of the Alexander Technique (see articles by White and Armstrong, both American, for example), who fear, perhaps, that their own teaching may be associated with Barstow's simply by being American. It is the differences from other American teachers of the Alexander Technique that lend weight to the comparison with the philosophy of Dewey. Barstow had a deep regard for John Dewey. She met him while she was working as A.R. Alexander's teaching assistant in Boston (1934-42). Four decades later she said, regretfully, that there were many things she would like to ask him and talk to him about, now that she understood so much more about the "whole procedure" (Stillwell 18).

Finally, there is the philosophical challenge from Richard Gummere⁴ to which this thesis responds. Gummere urged that it is time "for Alexander's disciples to wax more philosophical" ("Three lessons" 48). Dewey once told Gummere of his belief that Alexander had been much influenced by Herbert Spencer, a forerunner of American pragmatism. Gummere entreats us to "improve on Spencer" for philosophical support of the Alexander Technique by turning to Dewey. Rather than assigning the power for the advancement of the human race to an Unseen Hand or Grand Design, as was Spencer's view, Dewey felt sure that the whole responsibility for human improvement fell to humans, with the only resource open to us being intelligence. Gummere points out that "the ability to use that power more imaginatively is the gift to which F.M. Alexander referred in the title of his book, *Man's Supreme Inheritance*" (48). Dewey suggested that, "given imagination, courage and the desire to experiment and to learn from its results, there is a push toward, a momentum for creative work" (48). It is this imagination, this courage, this desire to experiment and the resulting creative work in Barstow's pedagogy that are examined in this thesis. These elements, taken together, may be considered an outgrowth of philosophical pragmatism and certainly in accord with the main tenets of pragmatic thought. The parallels with philosophical pragmatism are, I argue, what separates the teaching of Marjorie Barstow from other strands of the Alexander Technique.

⁴ See Appendix 2 for information about Gummere.

This thesis offers several unique contributions. Apart from the very specific contributions described under descriptions and aims above, there are three, more general, ways in which the thesis is unique. These are that it explores the application of Dewey's philosophy to the Alexander Technique, demonstrates the importance of diversity within the Alexander Technique and engages with Gummere's challenge to wax more philosophical and explore an approach to the technique that may heighten creativity. As far as the first is concerned, there has been no scholarship to date examining the Alexander Technique and its teaching *in the light* of Dewey's philosophy. That is, there is no research that asks what the teaching of the Alexander Technique would look like if Dewey's philosophy were applied to it. This is the first study to draw links between Barstow and Dewey or to draw links between any Alexander teacher (apart from F.M. himself) and Dewey.

Second, the Alexander Technique is generally understood to be useful for musicians and this has been shown in several studies (See Valentine; Valentine et al; Jones, "Voice"; and Wilfred Barlow, "Research," for example). The AT has been introduced into performance academies and colleges around the world. On the other hand, there is also some dissatisfaction with and mistrust of the technique, as evidenced by Heirich's observation that voice students sometimes return from AT lessons as "devitalised robotic wimps" ("Speaking" 21). Further evidence that the perceived value of the AT for performers might be waning is the fact that the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (RADA) in London recently retrenched three full-time Alexander teachers (Hemley). This change may reflect differences in teaching practice. Now that the general benefits of the AT have been acknowledged by scientific research (see 3.2), it is time to expound more clearly on the connections between the Alexander Technique and pragmatic method and thereby to introduce a comparative dimension to Alexander studies. This may also mean clarifying the approaches to the technique as either education or physical/medical treatment.

The importance and value of a more nuanced appraisal of the Alexander Technique appears to be novel. Within the Alexander community differentiation among approaches is often called factionalism and tends to be viewed with suspicion or disdain. There is an overwhelming commitment to reduce difference and boil everything down to one cohesive whole. By contrast, the need identified in this thesis

to recognize and even name different approaches is seen as a sign that the Alexander Technique has reached a point of maturity, just like other significant fields of practice or inquiry. In studies that set out to show the technique's usefulness, there is no description of how the technique is taught, or what teaching approach is taken (See Valentine; Valentine et al; and Wilson and Roland, for example).

Finally, outside the field, the Alexander Technique is usually classified as being concerned with physical or mental health (Engel, "STATNews" 4). It is variously understood to be a form of complementary medicine for anxiety reduction, an aid to posture, or a method of releasing unwanted tension. Even when evaluating its usefulness for performance, researchers tend to want to measure its impact on performance anxiety alone (Kenny). Gummere, the aforementioned student of Alexander's and colleague of Dewey's, was concerned in the 1980s that the increasing focus on the problems of the body rather than on Alexander's whole psychophysical and moral concept, including heightened creativity and a new consciousness, "could subtly distract our profession away from his larger mission, the elevation of the human race" ("Three lessons" 47). In my examination of Barstow's pedagogy I aim to show how her approach might foster heightened creativity and moral elevation of the human race.

Background of the project

This project extends from my master's thesis on constructive vocal pedagogy. That thesis outlined the ways in which the teaching of Cathy Madden, a leading exponent of the AT, is innovative and progressive. Madden was a long-term student of Barstow's and worked as her teaching assistant for over a decade. The thesis described the ways that Madden's pedagogy had helped both my technique and my performing ability where other pedagogies had failed. The research method was heuristic and anecdotal, yet surveyed a significant amount of literature in a wide range of fields. The thesis outlined the basis of Madden's teaching, explaining how it draws on psychology, elite athletic performance and theatre, as well as the innovations and unique understanding that her own teacher, Marjorie Barstow, brought to the Alexander Technique. The acronym CMP was used to denote Cathy Madden's pedagogy. In the current thesis Madden is situated alongside Barstow as an example

of a second generation “Barstowian” in a historical and philosophical *Konstellation*. She, then, is also a part of the constellation of Alexander, Dewey and Barstow.

Background of the researcher

I first came into contact with the Alexander Technique in Melbourne in 1991 when visiting Alexander teacher Vivien Mackie (see Appendix 2) taught at a choir rehearsal and held a master-class for singers. I performed in the master-class and became fascinated with the AT. Before I discovered the Barstow approach to teaching the technique, I spent the intervening years studying with two Melbourne teachers trained in the Walter Carrington (see Appendix 2) tradition. These teachers helped me enormously at first, but as I “progressed,” I became increasingly confused and unclear about what I was learning and what they wanted me to do (or not do, as the case may be). When first introduced to Cathy Madden’s teaching in 2005, I was struck by her clarity as an AT teacher and her use of performance coaching to heighten the effects of the Alexander Technique. She made sense of what had long been vague and elusive concepts to me, although they had been appealing enough for me to persevere with the technique. Her ability to apply the technique was remarkable, as were the subtlety and detail of her observations. Beginners, trainees and teachers were frequently astonished at the simplicity and immediacy of the changes she was able to help them make.⁵ As a result of her workshop I began to think about the Alexander Technique, vocal technique, performance and teaching in entirely new ways. My studies with Madden began seriously in that same year. They have included five month-long trips to Seattle for daily lessons, weekly classes, weekend workshops and auditing of her postgraduate acting classes. I continue to learn from her both in groups and privately, by Skype and in person on her frequent trips to Australia and New Zealand. Performance is now a creative act that I enjoy rather than an exercise in managing the anxiety that performances used to bring. My teaching practice, too, has become conscious and confident. These changes inspired me to make a study of her teaching and to write about it so that others may also benefit.

⁵ For examples of Cathy Madden’s teaching, see my recent article, “Do You Really Mean That? Towards Precise, Considered and Constructive Language in Performance Teaching.” *Australian Journal of Music Education*. 3 (2015): 4-15.

Scope and Limitations of the research

As far as the limits of this research are concerned, I did not set out to analyse the *whole* of Dewey's philosophy and compare it with Barstow's pedagogy. Rather, since Barstow was my focus, I analysed and organised her pedagogy into themes. Each theme represents a dominant aspect of Barstow's approach to teaching the Alexander Technique and one which sets her teaching apart from many of her colleagues. After this analysis I looked to Dewey's work for parallels.

While this thesis may have benefits for performers and performance teachers, these benefits are not the main focus of the thesis. The focus is on the way Barstow taught the Alexander Technique (frequently, but not exclusively, to performers) and how this teaching makes her part of the philosophical constellation I reconstruct. The thesis will probably be of most interest to performer-scholars, teachers of the performing arts, scholars of performing arts pedagogy, anyone with an interest in the Alexander Technique and Alexander teachers. Scholars of education and philosophy—in particular scholars of Dewey—may also read it, but the thesis is written for those who have no prior knowledge of pragmatic philosophy and it assumes that the reader has at least some interest in the Alexander Technique or other performing arts pedagogy.

Correspondence between Dewey, Jones and Alexander, some of which still exists and could have shed more light on the constellation, was unable to be consulted for the current project. Similarly, correspondence between Jones and Barstow, which was discovered at a late stage in the research project, could have shed light on the linking role of Jones. Access to this archive is not allowed digitally, and a trip to the archive was beyond the scope of this project.

As far as limitations are concerned, there were several areas in which my findings might be considered to be compromised. First, those who wrote about Barstow's pedagogy at length were self-selecting and tended to write because of their enthusiasm about her teaching. The other—dissenting—voice is not heard so strongly. There was only one AT teacher who expressed doubt about the idea of Barstow having any philosophy whatever, let alone a connection or resonances with one of America's greatest philosophers. Interviewing more teachers who disapproved of

Barstow's teaching may have influenced my findings. These teachers are harder to find, however, since their opinions are not as widely published as those of her supporters. Alexandrians who did not like Barstow's teaching also necessarily had a shorter exposure to her methods as they did not stay and watch her develop. The second possible bias is my own. The philosophical research question was designed to attenuate the possibility of such a bias. Abolishing all bias is, however, impossible and not even desirable. There will always be some bias and subjectivity in any argument, and this is in fact celebrated in Henrich's philosophical method, which he also calls "The Return to Subjectivity."

Structure of the thesis

This introduction presents the description and aims of the project, an introduction to the key figures and ideas, the research question and justification of the research, the background of the project and researcher, the scope and limitations of the research and finally the structure of the thesis. It concludes with an overview of the structure of the thesis. Chapter 2 outlines the research methods, data collection processes and theoretical framework of the thesis, pragmatism.

Chapters 3 to 5 begin to build the constellation by exploring the historical background and context of each of its parts. Here are examined in detail: F.M. Alexander, his brother A.R., his technique and his pragmatism (Chapter 3), John Dewey, his part in pragmatic philosophy and his connection with the Alexander Technique (Chapter 4) and, finally, Marjorie Barstow's background and influences and an introduction to her pragmatism (Chapter 5). Chapter 6 goes into Barstow's pragmatism in more detail, offering five analyses of Barstow's pedagogy and drawing further links between her and Dewey.

Chapter 7 is the conclusion to the thesis, which summarises the answers to the research questions, discusses the implications of the findings and indicates further research projects that may give greater understanding and depth to the philosophical analysis of the Alexanders, Marjorie Barstow and others in the constellation.

There are three appendices. Appendix 1 is a glossary of terms used by Alexander or by Alexander teachers. Appendix 2 is an index of names, including short biographical details of significant people mentioned in the thesis and brief descriptions of organisations. Appendix 3 is a description of the data collection, the rationale for this being explained in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH METHODS

This chapter introduces and discusses the research methods used in the thesis. *Konstellationsforschung* (constellation research) is the primary method, with auxiliary methods being historical, qualitative and philosophical. *Konstellationsforschung* is presented in 2.1, immediately below. In 2.2, the data collection process is described. Finally, in 2.3, pragmatism is outlined, being the theoretical framework through which I construct the constellation.

2.1 Methods

Principal Method

The over-arching method is that of *Konstellationsforschung*. This word tends to retain its original German form even in the current anglophone philosophical literature, of which there is very little (most notably that by Freundlieb). A direct translation into English would be “constellation research.” The method stems from the work of contemporary German philosopher, Dieter Henrich (born 1927). It is one of the methods that shape Henrich’s historical work, particularly his project of a new history of the philosophy of German Idealism from Kant to Hegel. Henrich uses the terms *Konstellationsforschung* and *argumentanalytische Methode* (literally argument-analytical method) to describe his complementary methods. These two methods are described below.

Henrich’s work aims at an interpretation and systematic analysis of the period from Kant to Hegel (1740s to 1830s) with a methodology that differs from that of any previous history of that period. It departs from the practice of producing monographs about individual thinkers and their achievements, focussing instead on the analytic recovery and reconstruction of a whole *Denkraum*. Writing about Henrich’s work, Freundlieb describes a *Denkraum* as “an intellectual and conceptual space and force field, its problem situations and its developmental logic and potential” (16). In other words, a *Denkraum* is an environment within which ideas are developed and carried

forward in conversation. As Freundlieb says, “the history of philosophy can only give us an insight into a period if it is aware of the developmental potential of a *Denkraum*” (16).

Mulsow and Stamm, editors of “*Konstellationsforschung*,” the main—if not the only—title devoted to this methodology, offer the definition that it is “the examination or investigation of theory-developments and creative impulses which arise from the combination/interaction of various thinkers in a common *Denkraum*:

This type of research...has reconstructed philosophical developments in a detail that is unparalleled. By creating these reconstructions between great figures and systems, *Konstellationsforschung* seeks out missing links in a forensic manner, that is, hidden pathways and mutual influences at the intersection of large systems and formations [translation mine] (inside front cover).

Those who formed part of the *Denkraum* may or may not have been aware of its theoretical possibilities. Therefore “a philosophical position can sometimes be developed without an adequate understanding, on the part of the philosopher who develops it, of its precise methodological foundations. In fact, this is almost to be expected as the norm” (Freundlieb 16). In the current project it has not been possible to ascertain whether Barstow was aware of the parallels of her pedagogy with the ideas of Dewey.

As Freundlieb observes, the work of an individual philosopher cannot be adequately understood unless it is analysed within the context of the larger *Denkraum*. That individual’s work is always in some ways a response to the problems and the semantic and logical potential that is made possible (as well as being constrained) by the force field (16). In this thesis, philosophy is used in a broad sense, to include philosophy of education in general and how to teach the Alexander Technique in particular. The term “philosopher” is used in an equally broad sense to include Marjorie Barstow as an educator who questioned, analysed and thought critically about her own teaching and the methods she observed in others.

As a general rule, Freundlieb continues, “the kind of *Philosophiegeschichte*⁶ Henrich and his collaborators are undertaking requires a much wider and more diverse database than more traditional forms of historical work” (17). Materials in addition to published sources, such as letters and notes, can be of crucial importance for the reconstruction of what Henrich calls “*Konstellationen*,” or constellations. Since Barstow belongs to the relatively recent past, other unpublished sources are also available and important. These include interviews with people who knew her and examples of the teaching of second-generation “Barstowian” teachers, Madden in particular. Madden, then, would not only be a Barstowian teacher but also a thinker in the tradition of critical pragmatism according to the methodological approach taken here.

Konstellationsforschung is, then, the interpretative reconstruction of personal relations within and among groups of philosophers and theoretical relations between the motives that animated their work and the positions they developed. In Henrich’s work it is complemented by the *argumentanalytische* procedure. By this Henrich means the “detailed analysis and reconstruction of arguments in the light of the larger ‘constellational’ context in which they were put forward”:

This method tries to do justice to the ideal of historical and interpretative accuracy in the sense that the analysis must be aware of, and do justice to, the self-understanding and the motives of the author⁷. But it also tries to do justice to the idea that it is possible to understand the author better than he/she understood him/herself or, more precisely, to understand the philosophical potential of a text and its arguments better than its author was able to (Freundlieb 17).

In his explanation of Henrich’s methods Freundlieb concludes that in combination, *Konstellationsforschung* and the *argumentanalytische* method ensure that our analysis of the past has at least some of the features of a genuine dialogue (or a polylogue): “It takes the historical dialogue partners seriously, and it makes us virtual dialogue partners of the historical agents, that is partners whom they would have to take seriously as well, could we actually communicate with them” (18).

⁶ *History of philosophy*

⁷ “Author,” too, is used in this study in the broadest sense: the maker of something, creator or originator, and therefore includes Barstow.

Henrich points out that the “logical and semantic potential of the ideas and arguments contained in a text, and the complex relations in which those ideas and arguments stand to each other, usually transcend what its author was, or even could have been, aware of” (Freundlieb 18). This is certainly true of Alexander: it is unlikely that he could have foreseen a research project linking him with both Dewey and his student Barstow. Dewey is equally unlikely to have been unaware that his ideas and arguments would turn up in the pedagogy of Marjorie Barstow. In turn, Barstow was probably unaware of all the different ways her ideas on pedagogy could be used by the generation of teachers she trained, although it is likely that she recognized the potential for individual and creative interpretations and development of her ideas. Whether one has an awareness of the consequences of one’s own approach, however, does not in any way invalidate the constellation as such.

There is a fitting synchronicity between Henrich’s method and Dewey’s work. According to one of Dewey’s colleagues, the aim of Dewey’s historical work was to make an individual historical figure “thoroughly intelligible in terms of his environment” (Schneider in Lamont 103).

To conclude this methodological discussion, a definition from Stamm’s article “Konstellationsforschung—Ein Methodenprofil” is followed by a précis of the current project:

Konstellationsforschung is to be understood as a process of analysis and interpretation whose subject is a diachronic philosophical “text” in the broader sense. The object of examination is a systematic arrangement of a problem (in historical form) or a critical analysis and theory that emerges from the arrangement of this problem. Constellation research is in this sense part of a project of interpretation that has as its goal a systematic analysis of philosophical issues...[translation mine] (Stamm 33).

The research process and order of tasks was slightly different from the order of presentation. In the process of exploration, Alexander’s ideas and pedagogy were examined for critical pragmatism, and Dewey’s ideas were examined with a view to finding those that could pertain to teaching and/or an interpretation of the Alexander Technique. These formed part of Stamm’s “diachronic philosophical ‘text,’” the other part being Barstow’s pedagogy, which I had already interpreted and analysed.

Evidence was then sought and found for the connection of Alexander and Dewey, forming the earliest part of the constellation. Following this I sought direct connections between Dewey and Barstow. The order of presentation here is first Alexander's background and pragmatism (Chapter 3), then Dewey's (Chapter 4). These are followed by the connections between Alexander and Dewey (Chapter 4), which in turn are followed by Barstow's background and pragmatism (Chapters 5 and 6).

Chapters 5 and 6 are the further exploration and critical and systematic analysis of the philosophical approach described by Stamm. They introduce Barstow as part of the constellation. The five analyses in Chapter 6 use Dewey's philosophy as a guide and reference point. Examples of the teaching of both Barstow and Madden are provided to illustrate Barstow's approach. Parallels are drawn between Barstow and Dewey, and the missing link and probable influence of Frank Pierce Jones is identified.

Auxiliary methods: Historical, Qualitative, Philosophical
Included in the over-arching method of *Konstellationsforschung* are historical methods and qualitative analysis of raw data, documents, interviews and secondary literature. Also necessary in evaluating Barstow's pedagogy is the ability to make comparisons between her approach and that of others. Such comparisons rely on my personal experience of the Alexander Technique, some training in the teaching of the technique and a wide knowledge of the Alexander literature. These methods are described below under Data Collection Tools (page 25-26).

Justification of the historical method

Cicero famously observed that if we do not pay heed to the past, we remain (as does the world) forever a child."⁸ More specifically, Heller and Wilson describe the results of historical research as: a better understanding of the present, a richer basis of information, a more complete record, a more accurate accounting of what has taken place, and a clearer explanation of complex ideas (4). These five results offer a succinct description of the broad aims of this thesis. Historical method guides all parts

⁸ *Nescire autem quid ante quam natus sis acciderit, id est semper esse puerum* (Chapter XXXIV, Section 120, p.90).

of the thesis but is the predominant method in Chapters 3 to 5, which focus on the lives, circumstances and professional connections of Dewey, Alexander and Barstow.

Another justification for the historical approach can be found in Hegel, one of the nineteenth century's greatest historian/philosophers. Hegel was one of Dewey's earliest influences. For Hegel the facts of history are raw material to which the philosopher must give some sense. He thought that history displays a rational process of development, and that, by studying it, we can understand our own nature and place in the world. Although Dewey said that he eventually (and very slowly) drifted away from Hegelianism, he acknowledges that his acquaintance with Hegel left a permanent deposit in his thinking ("From Absolutism" 154). What appealed to him most was Hegel's synthesis of what tended to be seen at the time as polar opposites, for example, subject and object, matter and spirit and the divine and the human. This was no mere intellectual formula, according to Dewey; rather, "it operated as an immense release, a liberation" (153). Hegel's thought supplied a demand for unification that Dewey recognized as an intense emotional craving, but a hunger that "only an intellectualized subject-matter could satisfy" (153). Hegel's treatment of human culture, of institutions and the arts, involved the same dissolution of hard-and-fast dividing walls, and had a special attraction for Dewey (153).

The purposes of historical research in music education (as enumerated by music education researcher, Roger Phelps), which can equally be applied to AT education, (especially when the AT is viewed as an aspect of performing arts education) are: (1) to learn more about the life of a significant educator; (2) to study the organisation, development and influence of a performing group or professional organisation; (3) to complete a missing link in the figurative chain of knowledge; and (4) as Thucydides, the father of modern historical method, said, "Not to write for immediate applause but for posterity" (122-123).

Justification of the qualitative method

Qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. Qualitative researchers study "things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin and Lincoln 3). Such research involves the use and collection of a variety of

empirical methods, including “case study, personal experience, introspection, life story, interview, artefacts, and cultural texts and productions, along with observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts” that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals’ lives (ibid 4). Qualitative researchers deploy a “wide range of interconnected interpretive practices, hoping always to get a better understanding of the subject matter at hand” and knowing that each practice makes the world visible in a different way (ibid). Qualitative methods, like historical methods, pervade the entire thesis. They are perhaps most prominent, however, in Chapter 6, in which most use of interviews and observational texts is made.

Justification of the philosophical method

Estelle Jorgensen’s essay on the philosophical method in education research summarises what she calls the “symptoms of the philosophical”: “Among other things, philosophy clarifies its terms, exposes and evaluates underlying assumptions, relates its parts as a systematized theory that connects with other ideas and systems of thought, and addresses questions that are characteristically philosophical” (176). She explains that philosophy assumes a central place alongside science in music education research, since explanation in music education is understood to be multifaceted rather than monolithic: “As nonscientific ways of knowing complement scientific ways of knowing, so music education is properly studied scientifically and nonscientifically” (183). This thesis aims to exhibit the first three of Jorgensen’s aforementioned “symptoms,” as follows.

Chapters 2 to 5 can be viewed as an extended clarification of the terms—and figures and systems—used in this thesis, that is, philosophical pragmatism, F.M. and A.R. Alexander, the Alexander Technique, John Dewey and his pragmatism, and Marjorie Barstow. Chapter 6 exposes and evaluates assumptions that have been either handed down from Alexander himself or that have been made by later generations of teachers. Examples include the assumption that the language and phrases employed by Alexander are the best way to communicate his technique, that table and chair work should be central to AT pedagogy and that a three-year full-time training course is the only way to train teachers. Chapter 6 relates Barstow’s teaching as a systematized theory that connects with the ideas and philosophy of Dewey. In relation

to the fourth “symptom,” that of addressing questions that are characteristically philosophical, 6.1 offers Barstow’s answers to questions raised by inconsistencies in Alexander’s work, which have become part of the philosophical discussion of the Alexander community.

As Jorgensen explains: “As a way of understanding, philosophy addresses questions that differ from those of other ways of knowing, be they artistic, scientific, religious, or otherwise. These questions make up a profile of interests and concerns that are typically philosophical” (185). The various types of philosophical questions include ontological, epistemological, axiological, ethical, logical and aesthetic. In the following paragraphs consideration is given to the relevance of each type of question when evaluating Barstow’s pedagogy.

Ontological questions have to do with the nature of being and reality, such as “What is the nature of the educational experience?” (ibid). Dewey believed that the question of whether educational experience is educative or mis-educative, for example, depends on the reconciliation of various tensions (*D&E*; *E&E*). Jorgensen’s summary of these tensions is a perfect fit for an analysis of Barstow’s AT pedagogy. I quote it here with references to relevant parts of the thesis in square brackets: “Doing and undergoing [see 6.1], taking advantage of present desire while also envisioning future possibilities [see 6.2], ... focusing on means and ends [see 6.2], resolving freedom and control [see 4.2.2, 5.2 and 6.4], reconciling tradition and change [passim], and balancing the individual’s needs with those of the group [see 6.3]” (Jorgensen 185).

Epistemological questions that Barstow asked were of the following nature: How does learning take place? How does one come to know the Alexander Technique? What is the nature of the knowledge implied in understanding the Alexander Technique? What is learned by pupils in table work compared with what they learn when figuring out how to make changes to habitual patterns on their own? Such questions are central to this thesis.

Examples of Barstow’s axiological questions (those regarding matters of valuation) are: Is three years of full-time training the best way to learn to teach? Are Alexander’s

words and phrases “better” than those I might think of myself? Which skills in the Alexander Technique are of greatest importance?

While ethical questions are not central to this philosophical analysis, some questions are implied, such as whether it is ethical to develop and change the teaching methods of the Alexander Technique and still call it Alexander’s technique.

Logic appears in Barstow’s interpretation of some of Alexander’s concepts such as inhibition and the unreliability of our sensory feedback mechanism.

Having trained as a dancer, Barstow was an artist. Aesthetic questions about movement would have been one of the principal motivators of her unusual career choice, to study and teach the Alexander Technique.

These philosophical questions address a wide range of issues in Alexander and arts education, all of which Barstow answered through her pedagogical approach. To quote Jorgensen in summary, the common point of reference of these questions “is their challenge to the validity of extant ideas and practices: They systematically ask whether these ideas and practices are well grounded. They bypass the peripheral and trivial issues, going to the core of *why* things are as they seem to be and where they seem to be going” (187).

2.2 Data

The first three episodes of data collection, as described in Appendix 3, aimed to clarify which of a cluster of research questions would be the most suitable for a doctoral project. These included, What happens when Cathy Madden helps a *student* make a change? What happens when Madden helps a *musician* make a change? What are the defining features of Barstow’s pedagogy and how has Madden taken them further, into performance coaching? Do other musicians find Madden’s performance coaching revelatory, unusual and empowering? Could instrumental music teachers and voice teachers learn to incorporate performance coaching into their teaching? After these three episodes of data collection, the project changed direction and emphasis. The fourth episode collected further data on long-term students and

included an interview with Madden about her teaching. The interview questions were based on the data collected in previous episodes, querying her in particular on the source and/or genesis of several aspects of her teaching that participants had observed. The data from all episodes documenting Madden's teaching became a source of vignettes or illustrations of second-generation Barstowian teaching. Data collection tools were as follows:

- Audio-only recordings of a) Private lessons with Cathy Madden (Episode 3) and b) Interviews of short-term students of Madden's (Episode 1), slightly longer-term students of Madden's, all professional musicians (Episode 2), significantly longer-term students of Madden's (Episode 3), Madden herself (Episode 4), and long-term students of Barstow's (No particular episode; on-going).
- Personal experience of a) Madden's teaching; b) learning the Alexander Technique from various teachers; c) casual attendance at the training course in Melbourne (School for F.M. Alexander Studies); and d) partly completed teacher training with Cathy Madden (on-going);
- Historical documents including shipping records, war records, censuses, newspaper articles, letters, records of historical societies, teaching, an oral history project, videos of Barstow teaching and speaking about the AT and, finally,
- Philosophical and Literary (*Konstellationen*) information.

The majority of the data used in this study, as can be seen in Table 2 (page 29), was collected over an extended period of time, rather than in discrete episodes. The data from this on-going process might more accurately be described as gathering the corpus of information and works about the Alexanders, the Alexander Technique, Barstow's pedagogy, Dewey's philosophy and all matters pertaining to the constellation. This gathering of data has involved all the above collection tools.

The corpus and data collected inform the research question both directly and indirectly. Historical and biographical information about Barstow, Alexander and Dewey give insight into their personalities, influences on their thinking, and the development of their ideas. The published works of Alexander and Dewey give further details on their ideas, while secondary literature gives new perspectives, asks

new questions and offers succinct summaries of their work. Primary sources of Barstow's philosophy and pedagogy include footage of Barstow teaching, footage of her speaking as part of a panel of teachers at the first International AT Congress, interviews with her, both on film and on paper, and a film about her which shows her in a variety of situations including teaching and discussing the Alexander Technique (Geyer and Bates). These provide the opportunity for direct observation of her work. Further perspectives on her work come from those who have written about her teaching or about the Alexander Technique in general. Correspondence and/or interviews with such people has shed further light and details on her life and work. Because these secondary sources offer a longitudinal view of her teaching rather than the snap-shots offered by primary sources, these secondary sources form the main source of data on Barstow's teaching. The work most frequently cited in this thesis is what I have termed in shorthand *The Festschrift*. This German term refers to a collection of writing for or about a colleague to celebrate a lifetime's work on a particular occasion such as a birthday or at retirement. Barbara Conable, who studied with Barstow for many years, is the editor of this volume of contributions by forty of Barstow's students, Conable among them. She herself calls the book a *Festschrift* in her introduction. The long and original title is *Marjorie Barstow: Her Teaching and Training, a 90th Birthday Offering*. I read this book of essays closely and noted beside each paragraph the aspect or theme of Barstow's pedagogy that it described. After the annotation, I made a list of all the aspects or themes that arose in the essays. Each reference to that aspect/theme was then recorded by page number and author. The aspects/themes were organised into broad categories and the categories became the structure for discussing questions of Alexander pedagogy. The categories were: process and form; desire (the "application approach" versus "chair and table"); community and communication; psychology in teaching; and teacher training. These categories, with slight adjustments to their names, form the content of the five analyses on Barstow's teaching in Chapter 6.

Given the "much wider and more diverse database than more traditional forms of historical work" required for *Konstellationsforschung* (Freundlieb 17), background information on each major part of the constellation is necessary so that readers from a variety of fields can follow my argument. To appreciate the thesis, it is necessary to understand the background and works of Alexander, Dewey and Barstow in broad

terms. This background information constitutes much of Chapters 3 to 5 and forms the building blocks of the constellation.

Contact was made with several teachers trained by Barstow, in addition to Cathy Madden. These included Sarah Barker, William Conable, Robert Rickover, Bruce Fertman, Michael Frederick, Tommy Thomson and Jeremy Chance. In-depth interviews were conducted with Madden, Barker, Conable and Rickover and these were followed up with several emails for clarification and further questions. Emails only were exchanged with Fertman, Frederick, Thomson and Chance as timetables and time differences have not to date provided the opportunity for interviews, despite their willingness. For each interviewee the questions were tailored to address some of the points in their respective essays and books as well as to find out about the importance of Frank Pierce Jones in the constellation. These teachers form what I call second-generation Barstowian teachers. In addition to these interviews and emails, I had an extended conversation by email with Alex Murray, who trained with Walter Carrington and knew Marjorie Barstow and Frank Jones personally. Not being a Skype user, he preferred to answer questions by email. This medium was not always satisfactory for addressing the questions I asked. Despite requests for clarification, some of his responses remained unintelligible.

Two tables appear immediately below. Table 1 offers a summary of all the interviews conducted from the inception of this study. Further details can be found in Appendix 3. Table 2 table lists the research questions (column-headings) and shows which data sources were used to answer each (data sources in the left-hand column). Where a data source was used to inform the research question, the box is shaded. Blank boxes indicate that the data source did not inform that particular research question.

Table 1: Summary of the Sources of Interviews

Exposure to Madden or Barstow: Type of class or teaching	Exposure: Length of Time	Place of Interview	Number of Interviews
General weekend workshop General public including AT teachers	12 hours	Dunedin	3
UO HEDC Large class for academics	3 hours	Dunedin	6
UO Music Department Undergraduates large classes	2 hours	Dunedin	7
Small ensemble coaching A (very familiar repertoire)	2-3 hours	Dunedin	4
Small ensemble coaching B (less familiar repertoire)	2-5 hours	Dunedin	5
Long-term Madden students	Months to Years	Seattle	4
Long-term Barstow students (now second-generation Barstow teachers)	Many Years	Skype/ Dunedin	4
Total			28

Table 2: Research Questions and Data Sources

	RQ: Barstow and Dewey's ideas correspond?	SQ1: Dewey– Barstow– Alexander connection?	SQ2: Other members of constellation?	SQ3: Ramifications for association with Dewey?
Historical public records				
Literature				
Letters				
Interviews: Barstow students				
Interviews: Madden students				
Interviews: Barstow				
Videos: Barstow teaching				
Videos: Barstow speaking about the AT				
Personal experience: Alexander lessons and training programs				
Audio-recordings: lessons with Madden				

2.3 Pragmatism

This final part of Chapter 2 reiterates and then examines in more detail the chief features of pragmatism. It includes a short history of pragmatism and an etymology. Pragmatism is the philosophical and theoretical framework with which and through which I construct the constellation that includes Alexander, Dewey and Barstow. Dewey's background and the development of his philosophy are presented in Chapter 4.

History of pragmatism

Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914), William James (1842-1910), George Herbert Mead (1863-1931) and John Dewey are usually seen as the four founding fathers of pragmatism, Dewey being, in general influence and breadth of scope, the giant. Dewey unified Peirce's laboratory concerns, James's psychological interests, and the social orientation of Mead. One reason for his wide reach and popularity was that he applied his system of thought to the practical "problems of men" (his own term), rather than the abstract problems of conventional philosophy. Some philosophical historians (such as Cornell West) name Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) as the forefather of pragmatism. Others (such as Menand) include the legal realist and judge, Oliver Wendell Holmes (1841-1935), and Jane Addams (1860-1935), the pioneer settlement worker, sociologist and philosopher who had a significant influence on Dewey's thought. More information can be found on Peirce, James, Mead, Emerson, Holmes and Addams in Appendix 2.

Pragmatism as a determinate philosophical doctrine descends from Peirce's work. For him, pragmatism was primarily a theory of meaning: "Suffice to say once more that pragmatism is, in itself, no doctrine of metaphysics, no attempt to determine any truth of things. It is merely a method of ascertaining meanings of hard words and of abstract concepts" ("Survey" 29). As Amelie Rorty describes, Peirce believed that the function of philosophy was to set the stage for science. "In one way," she says, "pragmatism simply clears away old metaphysical rubbish and clarifies a few problems in scientific method by making explicit the criteria for validity and meaningfulness" (5). Peirce developed pragmatism into a substantial philosophical theory but was, in Dewey's words, "not at all a systematic writer and never expounded his ideas in a single system" ("Development" 203). His method applies

only to a very narrow and limited universe of discourse. It was William James, the psychologist and philosopher, who put it on the intellectual map. According to Menand, “James invented pragmatism as a favour to Charles Peirce” (*MTC* 347). Later, James extended the scope of the method, culminating in his *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking* in 1907. Where Peirce saw a road to impersonal and objective standards, James gave it a personalized and subjective twist. John Dewey, like Peirce, saw inquiry as a self-corrective process whose procedures and norms must be evaluated and revised in the light of subsequent experience. But Dewey regarded this reworking as a social and communal process proceeding in the light of values that are more broadly rooted in the psychic disposition of ordinary people at large—the moral and aesthetic dimension now being specifically included. Peirce’s pragmatism is scientifically elitist, James’s is psychologically personalistic, and Dewey’s is democratically populist” (Rescher 712).

Pragmatism has been dismissed as the philosophical expression of the American mentality with its success-orientated ideology and a manifestation of a populist repugnance to the long-established ideological tendencies of European philosophy (Rescher 712). Bertrand Russell rejected pragmatism as the philosophical expression of American commercialism (610). Dewey’s response to Russell points to the philosophical depth often overlooked in pragmatism (as well as to his own wit and dazzling skill with words and ideas):

The suggestion that pragmatism is the intellectual equivalent of commercialism ... is of that order of interpretation which would say that English neo-realism is a reflection of the aristocratic snobbery of the English; the tendency of French thought to dualism an expression of an alleged Gallic disposition to keep a mistress in addition to a wife; and the idealism of Germany a manifestation of an ability to elevate beer and sausage into a higher synthesis with the spiritual values of Beethoven and Wagner (“Pragmatic America” 307).

Pragmatism is widely described as America’s distinctive philosophy and the most important influence on its educational theory. But it has, in general, not been understood *as* a philosophy; rather, it has been taken casually as an attitude: an emphasis on action, practice, society, a concern with what works (Scheffler, *Four* 1). Critical pragmatism, however, is firmly rooted in Western philosophy. Peirce, James, Dewey and Mead were all deeply influenced by European thought. Peirce had an

intimate knowledge of Kant's work, and Dewey was deeply influenced by Hegel, while James and Mead received a considerable part of their academic education at German universities. Dewey described their background thus, using the term "instrumentalism," which he preferred to pragmatism: "I myself, and those who have collaborated with me in the exposition of instrumentalism, began by being neo-Kantians, in the same way that Peirce's point of departure was Kantianism and that of James was the empiricism of the British School" ("Development" 212).

For most of the twentieth century, pragmatism occupied a marginal position in the Western philosophical tradition. On the European continent, philosophy was dominated by phenomenology, existentialism and neo-Marxism (Biesta and Burbules 6-8). For Anglo-Saxons, analytic philosophy reigned supreme and came to dominate the modern philosophy of science. The situation for pragmatism changed mid-to-late century as a result of two developments to analytic philosophy, one from the inside and one from the outside (ibid). From the inside, several American analytic philosophers came to the conclusion that the fundamental assumptions of that tradition were untenable. Their critique led them to rediscover some of the key ideas of pragmatism. From the outside, Richard Rorty criticized the preoccupation of modern philosophy with the human mind as a mirror of nature and of knowledge as a representation in our minds of the world outside. He stressed the practical nature of all our knowledge and the indispensable role of language in knowledge and in the acquisition of knowledge (ibid). These criticisms led to the increased stature of pragmatic philosophy in the Western world of ideas. Rorty's argument, which underscores the important contribution made by critical pragmatism to Western thinking, further supports the central position that critical pragmatism occupies in this thesis.

Etymology

The name, pragmatism, as first used by Peirce, can be traced back to Kant's way of looking at the two terms "practical" (*praktisch*) and "pragmatic" (*pragmatisch*). The former designated the situation in which knowledge and action are strictly separate (practice is separate from theory), and the latter for the situation in which knowledge and action are intimately connected. Dewey hated the term "pragmatism." "I object root and branch to the term 'pragmatism,'" he declared in a private letter (2 January

1905). He called his philosophy “instrumentalism,” though rarely used this term in writing either, and later called the movement “experimentalism” (“Development” 203). James used the term “pragmatism” only because it was the term he remembered Peirce coining and would have preferred “humanism” instead (Menand, *MTC* 350). Peirce later called his philosophy “pragmaticism,” wanting to distinguish his work from that of James and Dewey, and believing the term too ugly to be kidnapped.

What is pragmatism? Some attempts at definition

Pragmatism looks simple at first glance but is ferociously complex.

—Cherryholmes (*Reading* 1)

For the same reason that pragmatism is hard to name, it is difficult to define. The meaning and application of pragmatism are always being debated, since, as Menand notes, people who are drawn to pragmatism “tend, after all, to be the kind of people who are reluctant to regard someone else’s word on a subject as final” (*Pragmatism* xxxv). Consequently, I have drawn on a number of different writers for various viewpoints. As Amelie Rorty puts it, “pragmatism, like most other ‘isms,’ is best thought of as a label for a range of views bearing a general family resemblance. Different features of these views are developed in a variety of ways by philosophers who then come to influence one another” (v). Almost every writer emphasises a different aspect of pragmatism. Following this tradition, I emphasize only those aspects of pragmatism that are particularly aligned with Marjorie Barstow’s pedagogy.

Cherryholmes, Menand and Dewey are particularly skilled in making ideas intelligible to the non-philosopher. This skill was important to pragmatists, as illustrated by Peirce’s article, “How to Make Our Ideas Clear.” Cherryholmes describes pragmatism as a discourse that attempts to bridge where we are now with where we might end up. Because of the uncertainty of the future, he notes, “the temptation is to look backward. Pragmatism resists this siren’s song by accepting the challenge to look ahead” (*Reading* 3). Menand links the rise of pragmatism with the American Civil War. He highlights the pragmatists’ belief that ideas should never become ideologies that can lead to the terrible outcomes of war. “Holmes, James,

Peirce, and Dewey,” he says, “helped to free thought from thralldom to official ideologies, of the church or the state or even the academy” (*MTC xii*). In his article, “The Development of American Pragmatism,” Dewey highlights the important pragmatist idea of the universe being “in the making”: “This taking into consideration of the future takes us to the conception of a universe whose evolution is not finished, of a universe which is still, in James’ term, ‘in the making,’ ‘in the process of becoming,’ of a universe up to a certain point still plastic” (210).

In the same article Dewey also highlights Peirce’s emphasis on the importance of action. He stresses the importance of application and experience. Disputing claims that pragmatism makes “action the end of life” or “subordinates thought and rational activity to particular ends of interest and profit,” Dewey acknowledges that pragmatism implies essentially “a certain relation to action, to human conduct”. He stresses, however, that the role of action is “that of an intermediary.” That is, application to our own existence is essential when attributing a meaning to concepts, and it is through action that application is made possible. Dewey claims that the modification of existence which results from this application constitutes the true meaning of concepts. “Pragmatism is, therefore,” he concludes, “far from being that glorification of action for its own sake which is regarded as the peculiar characteristic of American life” (“The Development” 205).

Following James, Dewey also defines pragmatism as merely empiricism pushed to its legitimate conclusions. It is an extension of historical empiricism, but with a fundamental difference: it insists upon the *possibilities* of action rather than the precedents of action. Dewey explains how important this is for growth, claiming that it is “almost revolutionary” in its consequences. He points out that an empiricism which is “content with repeating facts already past” has no place for possibility and liberty, and no room for general conceptions or ideas, “at least no more than to consider them as summaries or records.” By contrast, when we take the point of view of pragmatism “we see that general ideas have a very different rôle to play than that of reporting and registering past experiences. They are the bases for organizing future observations and experiences” (“The Development” 210).

Out of these descriptions emerge the following principles: making ideas clear, valuing consequences and possibilities over precedents, looking forward, bridging the present to the future, and freeing ourselves from ideology. The plasticity of the universe is emphasised along with the idea of things being in the making (and the value implicitly hereby placed on creativity). The importance of application for learning and experience is emphasised. These points do not always make it into summaries of pragmatism, but they will be important in the comparison with Barstow's pedagogy.

Why *critical* pragmatism?

Kadlec and Cherryholmes both discuss the significance and necessity for the inclusion of the word "critical" when speaking of pragmatism. Kadlec found that the phrase "critical pragmatism" appears at least as early as 1935 in Alain Locke's pragmatic theory of valuation. Kadlec's definitions of critical pragmatism, however, do not differ from those of pragmatism as described in this chapter. In 1988 Cherryholmes argued for a *critical* pragmatism, using the word *critical* to qualify pragmatism because "the word *pragmatism* had seemingly been subverted by constant popular usages that were far removed from its classical versions in the work of, say, Peirce" (*Reading 7*). Pragmatism seemed at that time to mean a thorough lack of principle, exaggerated expediency, emphasis on monetary gain, crassness and vulgarity in the 'calculation' of consequences, and to be something bounded by a horizon of immediacy (*Reading 7*). Cherryholmes used the term *vulgar pragmatism* to describe those less lofty connotations (*Power* 152). He later observed that the two terms, vulgar and critical, each required the other for its existence and coherence. If we understand pragmatism fully, however, then its encompassing of and emphasis on critical thought goes without having to use the word *critical* to differentiate it from crassness, expediency and short-sightedness. Cherryholmes later retained criticism as only one of the many constituents of pragmatism (*Reading 7*). I therefore use all three terms, pragmatism, critical pragmatism and philosophical pragmatism, employing the adjectives "critical" and "philosophical" only when highlighting those aspects of pragmatism.

Dominant themes in pragmatism

In *Four Pragmatists*, Israel Scheffler postulates nine dominant themes in pragmatism, which are those given in Chapter 1. I have divided these themes into three broad categories because these categories helped me to conceptualise what pragmatism is. In the interests of making ideas clear, I present the groupings here. They are Unity, Uncertainty and Scientific Method. Within the descriptions below, I refer back to the ideas already discussed above.

Category One: Unity

Within the category of unity I discuss the rejection of the Cartesian split, the functional view of thought and the connection between thought and action. Philosopher René Descartes (1596-1650) drew a sharp distinction between mind and body. His resulting philosophy was called dualism and greatly influenced centuries of Western thought. Pragmatism's rejection of the Cartesian split meant a strong belief in the unity of theory and praxis. The rejection of the Cartesian split led to a functional view of thought, that is, thought and philosophy are for dealing with the problems of human experience. Dewey's *Reconstruction of philosophy* comes out of these two ideas. Inherent in this theme is the importance to pragmatists of making their ideas clear. A further implication of the above two points is that thought and action are interwoven. The interpretation of thought as intimately interwoven with action in a purposive context is stressed by pragmatism as indicating the continuity of mind and nature. Connected with this is the importance of application and experience for learning, as mentioned above.

Category 2: Uncertainty

Under this subheading fall the ideas that knowledge is fallible, that thinking is representative only and that conclusions of inquiry are always only provisional. We can never be completely certain about our knowledge. This is not because of a gap between mind and matter or consciousness and reality, but rather from the fact that we can never be certain that the patterns of action that we have developed in the past will be appropriate for the problems we will encounter in the future. With this fallible view of knowledge are connected the importance of consequences rather than antecedents, the connection with future rather than past and the plasticity of the world: a universe in the making. It follows from this point that thinking, too, is

incapable of absolute fixity or absolute certainty. That is, pragmatism states that thinking is merely representative. It follows, further, that particular conclusions of inquiry must be regarded as provisional, hence incapable of yielding stability and continuity over time. Such stability and continuity are rather to be sought in those critical methods that define the community of investigation itself (Scheffler, *Four* 8). This involves the point above that mind and nature are not separate: we are impacted on by and must adapt to our environment.

Category 3: Concerning scientific method

In this category belong the social and experimental conception of science, the importance of critical thinking and scientific method to philosophy, and the primacy of method and procedure over doctrine. Science was seen by the pragmatists as the effort not of an individual, but of an ‘ideal’ community of investigators dedicated to learning from the consequences of “artful transformations of nature” (ibid 10). All pragmatists argued in one way or another that philosophy should take the methods and insights of modern science into account. It is allegiance to critical methods of learning from experience that unifies the generations of scientists despite the revisions of their substantive views. Such methods, moreover, reach beyond the special sciences in their significance and relate these sciences to critical thought in the spheres of art, practice, and education. The function of the latter is to foster those habits of mind capable of sustaining *critical thinking* in all areas of life (ibid 9). As the notion of scientific method is broadened to embrace critical thought generally, the concept of the scientific community is taken as a suggestive analogue of democratic society. According to Scheffler, if we follow the teachings of the pragmatists, we will “avoid enclosing their doctrines in a casket” (*Four* 259). We will try, rather, to use the best resources of our intelligence and critical thought to make sense of our world, as they did of theirs.

The first section of this chapter introduced constellation research as the primary method of this thesis. Data collection processes were then discussed in the second section. The final section of Chapter 2 provided a historical background of pragmatism, exploring its etymology, its various names and its dominant themes, the broad themes of which are the unity of praxis and theory and therefore thought and action, the idea that knowledge is not absolute or infallible (the world is “in the

making” and not a finite or finished product) and the acceptance of uncertainty, and finally the importance of critical thinking and the methods of modern science and the supremacy of method and procedure over doctrine. In the following chapter I introduce Alexander and his technique and discuss the extent of pragmatism in his work.

CHAPTER 3: F.M. ALEXANDER, THE TECHNIQUE, AND PRAGMATISM

This chapter provides an introduction to Alexander and his work. Section 3.1 tells the story of Alexander and how he developed his technique, Section 3.2 is an overview of the current research status into the technique, while Section 3.3 examines the presence of pragmatism in the Alexander Technique. Those of Alexander's key terms that are mentioned but not defined or described are explained in Appendix 1. Biographical information on minor characters can be found in Appendix 2. Alexander's four major publications with their acronymic titles are given in the text box below, as references to them are so frequent. To reiterate the system expounded in Chapter 1, F.M. Alexander will be called "Alexander," "F.M. Alexander" or "FMA." Other versions, such as "FM," or "F.M.," appear in quotations unedited. When used alone, the surname refers to F.M. Alexander. A.R. Alexander will be referred to as such or as "ARA." Note that Alexander called his clients "pupils" unless they were training to teach, in which case he called them "students."

Alexander's books, acronyms and dates of first editions

<i>Man's Supreme Inheritance</i>	MSI (1910)
<i>Constructive Conscious Control of the Individual</i>	CCC (1923)
<i>The Use of the Self</i>	UOS (1932)
<i>The Universal Constant in Living</i>	UCL (1941)

3.1 Alexander's Background, Technique and Major Publications

F.M. Alexander was born in 1869, the eldest of eight children who grew up in country Tasmania. As already described, in his early twenties he set out to discover what he was doing that was causing hoarseness and the loss of his voice after short periods of reciting. Through a long process of self-observation and experiment, he evolved a way to restore full use of his voice. In exploring how to help himself, he discovered

what he considered the crucial importance of the relationship between the head and spine. He named this relationship the Primary Control because he perceived it as primary in controlling the quality of all movements in human beings. Through self-observation he also discovered the unreliability of our self-sensing mechanism—what he called “debauched kinaesthesia” (*MSI* 14).

In 1896 he established a teaching practice in Melbourne. He is said to have then experimented together with his brother, Albert Redden (ARA), how to teach the work (Jones, *Body* 18). When in 1900 FMA moved to Sydney to pursue various dramatic and teaching opportunities, ARA took over the Melbourne teaching practice for a year. According to some sources the teaching in Melbourne stopped altogether when ARA went to the Boer War in 1901 (Bloch 49), while others suggest that Twycross continued teaching, FMA having deemed her “the only certified teacher of my method...in Melbourne” (Long). Perhaps influenced by a prominent Sydney surgeon he was teaching, Alexander soon began to make medical claims in his advertisements in addition to the vocal and breathing claims. The surgeon, McKay, offered to introduce Alexander to the medical world in London and in 1904 FMA won enough money on the horses to move there. His practice developed rapidly. In 1911 his mother and sister, Amy, timed their visit to coincide with the coronation of King George. ARA also moved to London some time before 1910 (see further discussion under “A.R. Alexander’s Pragmatism” below) to share his brother’s teaching load. Of the entire family, it seems that only ARA ever returned to Australia (Evans).

In 1910 Alexander published *Man’s Supreme Inheritance* (*MSI*), with the subtitle: *Conscious guidance and control in relation to human evolution in civilization*. He claimed that the average person is imperfectly coordinated; illnesses and general inefficiency are the result; misdirected energy affects the whole organism; and man can work out his own salvation if he will use his conscious mind to overcome subconscious habit. He called this process “conscious control.” He observed that the mental and the physical are entirely interdependent and cannot be separated. He pointed out that in learning conscious guidance and control, we must at first accept the conflict with our sense of what feels right and wrong, and embrace the sense of unfamiliarity and lack of confidence in new ways of doing.

When the war broke out in 1914, Margaret Naumburg invited Alexander to come to New York, where she promised to send him as many pupils as he wanted. Naumburg, a New Yorker of German Jewish extraction, played an important role in the dissemination of the Alexander Technique. She had undertaken graduate studies with Dewey at Columbia University from 1911 to 1912 and was well versed in his work. She was introduced to Alexander through Ethel Webb in 1913. The two women had met in Rome while studying with Maria Montessori earlier that year.⁹ Webb, a pianist, was the first non-family-member Alexander trained to teach. She worked for him for many years in various roles. Irene Tasker writes that Margaret Naumburg thought it very important that the two should meet (Letter 28 June 1951 and “Connecting” 11). Naumburg herself, however, denies mentioning Dewey in her invitation to Alexander, saying only that Alexander’s ideas were important for American education (Letter 6 Dec 1957). In the same letter Naumburg is very explicit about clarifying this matter: “I did not mention Dewey in asking Alexander to come to the U.S. I was only concerned through my own experience with his teaching of me in London, to get him over because of its educational importance. I agreed to and did get him his first pupils when he came” [underlining in the original].

In any case, Alexander accepted Naumburg’s invitation and went to New York in 1914. Ethel Webb and ARA joined him. The technique became quickly known at Columbia. John Dewey was introduced to the technique in 1916 and began having lessons. In 1918, a new American edition of *MSI* appeared, with an introduction by Dewey. This revised edition was the most widely read of all Alexander’s books (Jones, *Body* 33).

According to Alexander himself the two brothers spent the next ten years dividing their time between England and the United States, spending at least four months of each year in the US (qtd in Binkley 47).

⁹ According to Dalton (313), she was part of an American delegation that included John Dewey’s daughter, Evelyn, who soon after co-authored the book, *Schools of To-Morrow*, with her father. Naumburg appears to have been in Rome much earlier than Evelyn, however and returned much earlier, arriving in Quebec on 3 September 1913, having visited London and Alexander in the interim. According to correspondence between Evelyn and her family, she does not seem to get to Rome until early 1914.

In 1922 Gerald Stanley Lee, a pupil of Alexander's, published *Invisible Exercise: Seven Studies in Self Command with Practical Suggestions*. There was no acknowledgement of Alexander's method despite the obvious parallels. Alexander suspected plagiarism. Unable to patent his method and without waiting for the publishers to withdraw Lee's book after his threats of legal action, Alexander rushed to finish his second book, *Constructive Conscious Control of the Individual (CCC)*. He included a detailed description of one of his procedures, hands-behind-the-chair, in response to criticisms that he was withholding detailed information from the public so that they would be forced to come to him for lessons if they wanted to know more (Jones, *Body* 39).

Alexander's main aim in this book was to convince the reader of the necessity for psychophysical re-education for all things in life and society. He believed that constructive conscious control is important for our happiness, health and general well-being and is necessary before any constructive learning can take place. According to Alexander, re-education on a general basis must precede any attempt at specific re-education, and constructive conscious control must be our guiding principle. Whereas in *MSI*, Alexander mentions "end-gaining" only once, in *CCC* he refers to "end-gaining principles" frequently, and describes in detail how they must be replaced with "means whereby principles." Any education system based on end-gaining principles, he believed, was bound to fail. Alexander received a great deal of support for this latest book. Bloch, Alexander's biographer, notes the higher quality of writing compared with *MSI*, attributing this to the assistance of his "two highly literate amanuenses, Ethel Webb and Irene Tasker, and the advice received from Macdonald in England and Dewey in America." Bloch claims that in Boston during the early weeks of 1923, Dewey is said to have gone through the proofs with Alexander line by line, making numerous suggestions (123).

The genesis of Alexander's third book, *The Use of the Self (UOS)*, coincided with his establishment of official educational institutions. In 1924 in London, FMA established a school for children based on his principles, called "The Little School." The school was in operation until it was evacuated during World War II. The class was put in charge of Irene Tasker, one of Alexander's apprentices who had trained in the Montessori method alongside Webb and Naumburg in Rome. For the next several

years, both Alexander brothers made four-month-long trips to the US annually. In 1931 the first training course began. There follows a brief précis of the evolution of this institution.

Alexander's auto-didacticism came into play not only in the evolution of the Alexander Technique itself but also in his development of a teaching technique and later of a training technique. While A.R. Alexander is said to have been FMA's first trainee, it seems that ARA actually helped FMA formulate a technique of teaching the work. ARA's training coincided with FMA's development of a teaching practice, and the two brothers are said to have experimented on each other, working out teaching procedures and instructions (Jones, *Body* 18). ARA's contribution to the teaching technique might also explain the confidence FMA showed in his brother's teaching. In any case, ARA's training was remarkably short, consisting of about six lessons only (ibid). Soon after this, FMA trained his sister, Amy. Amy seems to have taught only in the capacity of ARA's assistant until she reached London in 1911, when she became FMA's assistant. She taught until her marriage in 1914 (and her daughter, Marjory Mechin—later Barlow—trained in the 1930s). Because the name Marjory Barlow is so close to Marjorie Barstow I will henceforth italicise her surname to distinguish it from Barstow's.

The next generation of teachers were Ethel Webb and Irene Tasker. Webb took over Amy Alexander's position in 1914, having begun lessons in 1910 (Gounaris 128). Tasker began lessons in 1913. Alexander invited her to be his assistant in 1917. There are very few details pertaining to the training of these two apprentices. Webb is said to have described her training as consisting simply of FMA telling her not to do anything she had ever seen him do.¹⁰ Webb's niece, Erika Whittaker, describes Webb and Tasker's training as being just lessons in the AT. "Well," she says, "F.M. just taught them. They simply had lessons" (in Gounaris 128). Whittaker also observed that although "neither of them had 'trained,' they were "wonderful teachers" ("England" 24). Margaret Goldie may also belong to this small group of apprentices. While she attended the first training course on alternate days, as did Tasker (ibid 22), it seems that she was already teaching with Tasker in the Little School. Whittaker

¹⁰ *Walter Carrington (qtd in Weed, Festschrift 157). Weed does not give a source and does not answer emails requesting information about his publications.*

refers indirectly to Goldie as a teacher (27) rather than a student in the training course and described her as “part of the inner circle,” meaning the Alexander brothers, Tasker and Webb (Hunter, “The First”).

Finally, in the late winter of 1931 the first training course began. Alexander had settled on a three-year training model. To decide that from then on students would need three years of full-time training before being qualified to teach seems arbitrary and perhaps motivated by other factors. Reports of time wasting are common, beginning in the 1930s (Westfeldt 82) and continuing to today’s courses (Fitzgerald 129). There are several accounts of the first training course.¹¹ Although it met with only moderate success (Westfeldt *passim*), it has remained the dominant model of training courses. Alexander included Shakespearean productions as part of the training course. While this gave the students an activity to which they could apply the technique, not everyone was interested in acting, and so there were widely varying degrees of interest and acceptance. Alexander seems to have needed to use the course (perhaps self-interestedly) to return to his first love, the theatre. The rehearsals did fill the unprofitable hours but left several trainees very disgruntled: “The enormous amount of time that was devoted to the play was hard to tolerate. It was at this time that the phrase ‘Ashley Place Blues’ was first coined. It was used to describe any student who seemed anxious and unhappy” (Westfeldt 73).

Marjory *Barlow*, who speaks only of her uncle in glowing terms, concedes that in the best tradition of all great teachers, FMA “preferred to teach the individual and to train people on the apprenticeship basis... It must have seemed a formidable job to a man who preferred individual, or small group contact with others, to working with large numbers. Alexander was at his best, I think, with a group of three or four students; and the initial training course saw his first attempt at teaching a large group” (*Barlow*, “Review”). F.M. Alexander took sole charge of the training course in London from 1934 when A.R. Alexander moved permanently to Boston to establish his own

¹¹ *Lulie Westfeldt’s, Kitty Wielopolska’s (Armstrong/Wielopolska), Patrick Macdonald’s (The Alexander), Marjory Barlow’s (Oxford; Davies), Erika Whittaker’s (“England”) and George Trevelyan’s (Fischer). In 2000 Gounaris et al. published six interviews with people who had trained with FMA, including two from the first training course, Barlow and Whittaker (Taking Time).*

practice. From then on FMA was principally in England while ARA was principally in America.

Whatever its failings, the first training course left a great legacy. More than half its members either made a name for themselves through teaching, training teachers, writing books or all three. The trainees, other than Barstow, who are frequently quoted in this thesis were Patrick Macdonald,¹² Irene Stewart, Lulie Westfeldt,¹³ Erika Whittaker (née Schümann), Kitty Wielopolska (née Merrick) and Marjory Barlow (née Mechin). Tasker and Goldie were already teaching and assisting when the first training course began, but they also attended the class on an irregular basis (Carrington and Barlow in Gounaris 45, 68). Others appearing frequently in this thesis who trained slightly later in the 1930s and made a similar mark are Walter Carrington¹⁴ and Wilfred Barlow.¹⁵

I now return to Alexander's writing and the genesis of *UOS*. Although Alexander always considered *CCC* his most important book (Jones, *Body* 44), it did not succeed with the critics or the public. "It was more ambitiously planned than any of the others; the examples and the language were carefully chosen; and it had the benefit of Dewey's advice" (ibid). Dewey became motivated to find foundation support for a scientific investigation of the technique in an attempt to boost its professional standing. Alexander's stringent requirements caused the project to fall through. Dewey was greatly disappointed and personal relations between the two became and remained strained, though Dewey continued his support of and interest in Alexander's work (ibid 45). Dewey's efforts were not entirely wasted, as Alexander finally consented to write a detailed account of the self-observations and experiments that had led up to the discovery and perfection of his technique. This became, in 1932, the first section of *UOS*. The chapter is an exemplar of all the major steps that, according to Dewey, are characteristic of a scientific inquiry. Alexander used to read sections aloud to the first training class for feedback.

¹² Author of *The Alexander Technique as I see it*.

¹³ Author of *F. Matthias Alexander: The Man and His Work. Memoirs of Training in the Alexander Technique 1931-34*.

¹⁴ Author of *Thinking Aloud*.

¹⁵ Author of *The Alexander Principle*.

In his earlier works Alexander employs the term “use” specifically and narrowly. Examples include the “use” of the psychophysical organism, the “use” of the respiratory mechanisms. In *UOS* he makes an abstract noun of the term “use,” which as a concept and in its significance becomes commensurate with “heredity” and “environment.” The second part of *UOS* is devoted to two case studies: one a stutterer and the other a golfer who cannot keep his eye on the ball. The final section is an argument to introduce the technique into the medical curriculum. Alexander’s style in *UOS* again shows the influence of Webb and Tasker, whom he thanks twice in the preface. Alexander’s final conclusion is that “use determines functioning,” which, as Jones suggests, might be called “Alexander’s law” (Jones, *Body* 45).

A significant spike of interest in the technique occurred when Aldous Huxley began daily Alexander lessons in 1935 in London and started to refer to the AT in his writing. *Eyeless in Gaza* (1936) includes a character based on FMA. *Ends and Means* (1937), which appeared shortly after Huxley’s migration to the US, led to a whole succession of new pupils who would probably otherwise never have heard of the Alexander Technique. The impact was intercontinental, leading to growth in the teaching practices of both FMA in London and ARA in Boston and New York (Jones, *Body* 56).

F.M. Alexander turned seventy a few months before World War II broke out 1939. His teaching practice was once again reduced. He evacuated to the US in 1940 to join ARA, taking with him Ethel Webb, Margaret Goldie, Irene Stewart and several children from the Little School. Tasker had by this stage moved to South Africa to teach. By January 1941 the Little School had been re-established in Stow, Massachusetts. The first American Teacher Training Course also began there that year with a single trainee, Frank Pierce Jones. A year later his wife, Helen, joined the course. The fate of this training school is described over the following two pages.

From about 1934 to about 1942 Marjorie Barstow worked in Boston and New York as ARA’s teaching assistant. They spent winters in Boston, and ARA travelled to New York on weekends. Barstow would either go to New York with him or stay and teach his Saturday students in Boston. In summer ARA would return to England and

Barstow would return to Lincoln. It was during these years that Dewey took lessons from ARA.

One of the few possessions F.M. Alexander had managed to take with him to America was the manuscript of *The Universal Constant in Living (UCL)*, which was published in 1941. As Frank Pierce Jones describes, *UCL* has “very little organization and can only be considered as a long, disconnected appendix to the earlier books” (*Body* 57). Once again Alexander stresses the importance of the unity of the human organism, showing how deeply rooted in Western thought is our division of ourselves into parts. The book is devoted to illustrating the influence of use upon functioning. It is like a scrapbook, with case histories, letters and testimonials from doctors and patients (most notably the biologist, George Coghill), news stories, photographs and more, all woven together with a running commentary by Alexander.

In 1942, just twenty months after creating it, the Alexanders closed the Stow Little School due to the sale of the homestead in Massachusetts. It is unclear what happened to the children who had come over from England. FMA moved to New York and taught private students for several months, slowly becoming disenchanted with America. In 1943 he returned to London with his three female teachers, Webb, Goldie and Stewart. ARA moved the training course from Stow to Boston and the Joneses went with him. Four more trainees joined at this point, most notably Richard Gummere, whose works are cited frequently in this thesis. Before any of them had finished their training, the course was moved again, this time to Pennsylvania (to two towns, called Swarthmore and Media, just west of Philadelphia) to become affiliated with a Quaker school where the trainees and graduates would teach.

In 1944, ARA suffered a stroke. He remained in Pennsylvania and soon returned to teaching, having made some changes to the way he taught due to his weakened condition. Jones reports that his lessons with ARA at this time were the best he had ever had from him. In 1945 ARA visited England for the summer and was not granted a return visa to the United States because of ill health. He died in England in 1947.

Only Frank Jones and Richard Gummere are known to have been certified (in 1944) by ARA before he left for England for the last time. When he did not return, two

trainees (Dolly Dailey and Alison Grant-Morris) took over the running of the course and Gummere taught there regularly. They formed The Alexander Foundation in 1945. It is unclear whether either Alexander brother ever sanctioned the foundation or the continued training of teachers. Of course, in 1945 no one realised that ARA would not be permitted to return to continue the training himself. In 1946 when perhaps it was clear that ARA would not be returning, FMA did express his disapproval in a letter to Jones (Bloch 193). The training course nevertheless grew in size to 25 students and continued until late 1949. By the time training was discontinued, the community had formed a working group, established the foundation mentioned above, and opened the Alexander Foundation School (Rootberg). There was copious correspondence and discussion about the training course and the new school. Critical voices included those of Frank Jones and Marjorie Barstow. Richard Gummere and others broke away from the group in 1949. The Alexander Foundation School apparently continued until the late 1950s or early 1960s (ibid).

Meanwhile Irene Tasker continued her successful teaching practice in South Africa, where she had settled in 1935, attracting the attention of the medical and educational establishments. While this attention was mostly beneficial, one physician (the physical education director for the South African government) took exception to Alexander's work and in 1944 published a scathing editorial entitled "Quackery versus Physical Education" (Jokl). While ungenerous in the extreme, the article is well reasoned and pinpoints many of Alexander's and even Dewey's inconsistencies. It also points up some of the outrageous claims Alexander made for the technique, such as that it could cure tuberculosis, appendicitis and other microbial-caused illnesses. It questions the scientific basis of the technique and the interpretation of scientific facts (such as those published by Magnus and Sherrington) Alexander used to support his technique. Alexander sued for defamation of character and, surprisingly, won the case. Although many of Jokl's points were valid and scrupulously researched, it appears that through his high connections, Alexander escaped any criticism for his sloppy methods. A letter from Sir Charles Sherrington seems to have won the case for Alexander. The case became a *cause célèbre*, and summaries of the case appeared in *The Lancet* and the *British Medical Journal*. Today it is Alexander's name we know, not Jokl's. The actor prevailed over the scientist.

Had Jokl been more circumspect and less vicious and had omitted the tone of ridicule, his valid points might have been heard.

Alexander did not even attend the case. His plans to attend were shelved when he had a series of strokes, paralysing his left side. Three of his medically qualified students flew there instead to give evidence. Wilfred Barlow, being one of them, later revealed how much this support of Alexander's work had cost him: "I myself had seen a medical career totally destroyed by the South African case, even though in every respect our evidence had been vindicated... It was clear that orthodox medicine wished to have nothing to do with me because of the part I had played in Alexander's 'victory'" (*More Talk* 205).

In 1947, Frank Pierce Jones met John Dewey. Possibly spurred on by the court case in South Africa, Jones and Dewey agreed that the Alexander Technique should be put under scientific observation so as to provide objective evidence for Alexander's "primary control of use." Alexander could not see any advantage in such an investigation. Any suggestion of associating science with his technique seemed to make him nervous. With Dewey's encouragement, Jones set up the first experiments in electromyography and had, in his words, modest results. Dewey was very excited and advised Jones to seek foundation support. Dewey died before Jones was able to secure it. Jones often wished that he could have discussed the project with Dewey and claimed that without Dewey's encouragement he might never have undertaken it (*Body* 105).

Alexander was not just reticent about scientific investigations into his work. He was equally unenthusiastic about the establishment of a professional society. His niece, Marjory Barlow, believed that he was worried about what would happen to the technique with the advent of a society and did not want his name associated with it. Her husband, Wilfred Barlow, worked hard to set up a professional body in the 1950s, employing lawyers to help work out a constitution. He was bitterly disappointed that FMA did not go ahead with it. Despite Barlow's generous support and professional sacrifice in the recent South African legal action, relations became strained between the Barlows and Alexander. John Hunter, in "Lessons with Miss G," tells of Marjory Barlow's later interest in knowing where her uncle's ashes were buried. Margaret

Goldie, “with one other person—most probably Irene Stewart—had scattered the ashes in a place which she said she would never reveal.”

After FMA’s death the need for a society grew, and Barlow proceeded, founding STAT (Society of Teachers of the Alexander Technique) in 1958. There are now eighteen affiliated societies worldwide including STAT. Unaffiliated societies include Alexander Technique International (ATI) and Professional Association of AT teachers (PAAT). These are discussed further in Appendix 2.

Alexander taught until shortly before he died, according to Goddard Binkley, who attended the last training course at which he officiated. F.M. Alexander died at the age of eighty-six in October 1955. Before long there were four training centres in London that were descended from and modelled after the three-year course at Ashley Place. Many of the teachers he trained carried on his work throughout the world and, in their turn taught it to the next generation of students and teachers.

3.2 The status of research into the Alexander Technique

In the past thirty years, studies have investigated the effects of the Alexander Technique on: back pain (Little et al.; Cacciatore et al., “Improvement”), chronic pain (Fisher; Elkayam et al.), Parkinson’s (Stallibrass et al., two different studies), postural tone (Cacciatore et al., “Increased”), postural and ergonomic skills (Reddy et al.; Stevens et al.), balance in the elderly (Batson and Barker, which also examines efficacy of group teaching; Dennis, “Functional”), breathing (Austin and Ausubel; Robinson and Garlick), stuttering (Schulte and Walach) and movement coordination (Cacciatore et al., “Prolonged”). All of studies cited found that the Alexander Technique has positive effects on posture, movement and balance. In order to overcome some of the perceived shortcomings of these studies, Stevens developed an experimental program of research, measuring various effects and using multiple measurement techniques. His task was to understand and explain the physiology of the technique (Stevens et al.; Stevens, *Towards a Physiology and Alexander Technique*). His summary of previous research was a valuable resource (“The Development”).

Studies have also been made into the effect of the technique on music technique. In the mid-1950s Wilfred Barlow made various studies, including the effect of the Alexander Technique on people's "posture" and also its effect on musical performance ("Postural Deformity," "Research at the Royal College"). Frank Pierce Jones's 1959 study showed the positive effect of Alexander lessons on the sit-to-stand manoeuvre (Jones and Gilley). He also studied its effect on singers and found striking results both through subjective reports of the singer and the listener and objective measurements using spectral analysis ("Voice production"). Later studies into music performance and/or related anxiety included that of Gerard Doyle in 1984, Roland Dennis in 1987, Valentine et al. in 1995 and Nielsen in 1994.

While these studies all show some of the positive effects that lessons in the Alexander Technique can have, the mechanism by which it works remains unclear. As Tim Cacciatore, a scientist and AT teacher, observed in 2012: "While the work of Jones forms an extensive body of carefully conducted, pioneering research, it fails to provide a plausible modern scientific basis for the AT. This failure does not result from the quality of the original work, but from the lack of subsequent research over the last 40 years" ("General Studies" 21).

Jones did formulate a theoretical framework to explain his data that was appropriate for the time. The hypothesis was that altered head-neck reflex responses (which he later called "postural set," a cognitive state) caused the coordination changes he observed. Such an extent of speculation in a primary research publication is no longer permissible and Cacciatore points out the indefensibility of "the idea that a particular head-neck relationship unleashes reflexive automatic coordination" ("General Studies" 21). Today, as Cacciatore explains, "we continue to face the same difficulty as Jones because the principles and practice of the AT still lack a theoretical basis" (21).

3.3 Pragmatism in the Alexander Technique

Under this heading I consider the pragmatism of F.M. Alexander, A.R. Alexander and other Alexander teachers, and the part pragmatism played in the first training course.

F.M. Alexander's pragmatism

There are considerable parallels between Alexander's thinking and that of the pragmatist philosophers at the same time. At about the time that Alexander was eschewing the conventional and limited prescriptions of the medical professionals he consulted, pragmatist philosophers were beginning to criticize the disconnected and dehumanized way in which Western culture was used to conceiving of knowledge and reality. Alexander made a connection between his vocal hoarseness and how he was using his voice, when the professionals whose advice he sought were simply advising cycles of rest and work. That he proceeded painstakingly to deconstruct his manner of doing can be taken as suggesting a measure of thinking in a critically pragmatic direction. To Alexander, writes Westfeldt, "knowledge was something that worked—it solved the problem. He would speak with bewilderment of heart specialists dying of heart disease, of oculists going blind. 'What use is their knowledge?' he would ask" (70).

F.M. Alexander questioned the discourses-practices of his day. "Discourses-practices" is a term used by Cleo Cherryholmes to help describe what pragmatism is. Critical pragmatism results "when a sense of crisis is brought to our choices, when it is accepted that our standards, beliefs, values, guiding texts, and discourses-practices themselves require evaluation and reappraisal... Our texts and discourses-practices continuously require interpretation and reconstruction" (*Power* 151). This is precisely the predicament in which Alexander found himself. His exploratory work in which he set out to see accurately and close-up exactly what he did when he recited, was his response to his vocal crisis. As Irene Tasker recalls, FMA never stopped asking questions and experimenting with his teaching. She says that his manner of teaching in his forties (in 1913, when she met him) was "entirely different from what it became in the later years" ("Connecting" 10). She notes that his teaching was "never static" and that he was "always learning, always changing" (10). She recalls the earlier style of his teaching as not being particularly conducive to learning: "I used to get so terrified that I can remember breaking out, as they say, 'into a cold sweat!' The more he scolded, the worse I became" (10).

Dewey underlined the “becoming” quality of Alexander’s work, claiming that as long as Alexander used the method, it would be a process tending continually towards perfection: “It will no more arrive at a stage of finished perfection than does any genuine experimental scientific procedure, with its theory and supporting facts” (*CCC*, “Introduction” xxv). The constant evolution of Alexander’s work resonates with Dewey’s emphasis on “becoming,” a word that he used repeatedly throughout his works. Dewey gives James the credit for conceiving of the universe as one that is “still ‘in the making,’ ‘in the process of becoming,’ of a universe up to a certain point still plastic” (“The Development” 210). Dewey believed that “actively to participate in the making of knowledge is the highest prerogative of man and the only warrant of his freedom” (“Science as Subject” 79). In her study of Dewey, Alison Kadlec explains the link between critical pragmatism and this concept of “in the making.” “Critical pragmatism hinges on the view that an appeal to any form of static absolutism is not merely unnecessary for orienting genuine critical reflection, rather it seriously impedes our efforts to grapple intelligently with a world that is ‘in the making’” (12). Alexander himself acknowledged the unfinished quality of his technique, stating that after working for a lifetime in this new field he was “conscious that the knowledge gained is but a beginning” (*UCL* xlii).

The nature and limitations of Alexander’s pragmatism

Alexander showed limited interest in the intersection of his ideas with those of others and not much more interest in acknowledging the provenance of his ideas. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4. Frank Pierce Jones says that Alexander learned little from Dewey (Letter 18 May 1957). When we examine Alexander’s attitude towards William James, this same reluctance—or perhaps inability—to learn from others is again evident. Alexander claims in the preface to the new edition of *CCC* (published in 1946) that William James had been persuaded by a medical practitioner to come to London for a course of lessons with Alexander but was prevented by unforeseen circumstances. “So I did not have the pleasure and honour of numbering him among my pupils. For me this has been a lifelong regret, because, from what this friend told me, there can be little doubt that much could have been done to help him to enlarge his experience...” (*xvii*). In other words, Alexander regretted having missed the chance to teach James, rather than to know him or learn anything from him.

Despite this, Alexander does acknowledge his interest in James's philosophy (CCC 201). Horace Kallen even claims that Alexander got his idea by reading James, then "seemed to have forgotten about James and used the formula 'ideomotor attitude'... which he had gotten from James's *Psychology*" (in Lamont 27). Maisel claims that Alexander became acquainted with, "and ardently applauded, what James said about 'ideo-motor function'—that is, the dynamics of conscious attitude and image in giving shape and direction to posture, and movement to the muscles of the body. As early as 1908...he was using James's concept and term in his writing" (xli). Alexander's five references to the "ideo-motor centre" merely refer to that part of the brain that conveys a "guiding influence" on movement.¹⁶ There is no mention of James associated with these references. The lack of acknowledgement does not indicate that Alexander did *not* get his idea from James, but it equally does not show a great and conscious debt to one of the fathers of pragmatism.

Roe claims that in *MSI* Alexander acknowledges William James, F.W.H. Myers, and I.P. Pavlov, with "warmest praise" going to R. W. Trine, "propounder of 'the New Thought.'" How much credit did he really give these thinkers, though? References to James were discussed in the preceding paragraph. Alexander mentions Myers in *MSI* only to distinguish his own ideas from those of Myers. Myers's "work, though inductive in form, was *a priori* in method," his fallacies "have been exposed again and again," and "his argument is intrinsically unsound," claims Alexander (20). Alexander acknowledges Myers only for his "conception of the subconscious," following this with a qualification: "Inasmuch as I wish it to be clearly understood from the outset that I use the term 'subconscious self' to denote an entirely different concept (20). What he meant by the subconscious self was that which we find predominating in animals: a delicate coordination of animal senses (21). Pavlov,

¹⁶ Alexander's references to this idea are as follows: "The ideo-motor centres were working to convey a wrong guiding influence to the specific parts concerned in the act of speech" (*MSI* 33). "It was very obvious to me ... that the idea projected from the ideo-motor centre constantly missed its proper direction" (77-78). "Mental conceptions are the stimuli to the ideo-motor centre which passes on the subconscious or conscious guiding orders to the mechanism" (131). "We must consider... the conceptions which are to be the forerunners of the ideo-motor guiding orders connected with the new and correct use of the different mechanisms" (131). "...from the ideo-motor centre project the new and different directing orders" (131).

contrary to Roe's claim, does not appear at all in *MSI*. Alexander does refer to Pavlov in *CCC* only to criticise his method of conditioning (160) and then not by name (Fischer in *CCC xxxiii*). Even the ideas of Ralph Waldo Trine, whom Roe describes as receiving warm praise, are really only held up as a half-baked answer to the problem he, Alexander, proposes to solve (28). According to Alexander, Trine's writings are limited, for example, by "the fallacy of considering the mental and physical as in some sense antitheses" (28).

What is possibly even more important to note here than the provenance of Alexander's ideas (or lack thereof) is his allegiance to the ideals of critical pragmatism. He dismisses Myers for his inductive reasoning and *a priori* method and warns that Trine's "New Thought" movement is "becoming rigid and involved in dogma, losing sight of its principle" (*CCC* 28). He highlights the importance of considering the mental and physical as "entirely interdependent, and, in my opinion, even more closely knit than is implied by such a phrase" (*ibid*).

Perhaps Alexander's greatest claim to critical pragmatism, however, was the scientific way he approached his subject, made his discoveries and set about teaching them. But it must also be said that Alexander was prone to making outlandish and unscientifically supported claims about the benefits of his technique. That is, he was inclined to severe bouts of unscientific subjectivism. With respect purely to method, however, that is, his process of questioning, observing, experimenting and revising his original ideas, F.M. can be said to be a Peircean kind of pragmatist. Charles Peirce limited his philosophy to that of scientific and so-called "objective" methods, while Dewey, expanding the psychological but individualistic interests of James, included social, communal and political processes, such as education, democracy and art. While Alexander's interests ran to such issues as well, and are frequently discussed in his books, his *method* was at its most critically pragmatic when he made his discoveries about "use" and functioning.

Dewey repeatedly pointed out that Alexander's work was scientific in regard to process. In his introduction to *CCC*, Dewey claimed that he would stake himself upon the fact that Alexander had applied "to our ideas and beliefs about ourselves and about our acts exactly the same method of experimentation and of production of new

sensory observations, as tests and means of developing thought, that have been the source of all progress in the physical sciences... (xxxi). Dewey defines “scientific” as using “a principle at work in effecting definite and verifiable consequences,” describing Alexander’s teaching as “scientific in the strictest sense of the word” and Alexander’s “plan” as satisfying “the most exacting demands of scientific method” (xxv). In his introduction to *UOS*, he says that personally, he “cannot speak with too much admiration—in the original sense of wonder as well as the sense of respect—of the persistence and thoroughness” with which Alexander’s experiments were carried out (8).

Even after he began teaching his technique, Alexander continued to apply a process that could be considered critically pragmatic. He started with a problem and an idea that is based on observation, and then devised an experiment to test the idea. He gathered information about the idea through experimentation, and then revised the ideas about the source of his difficulties. As Weed demonstrates, Alexander continued to do this throughout his life, whether in relation to his own use, his teaching, or training teachers. Initially the experimentation pertained only to his own use. When he began teaching the work, he experimented again. Weed documents some of the changes (“For a Darn”). Maisel claims that both Alexander brothers taught by verbal instruction alone when they began teaching in London. He describes the two brothers as being at opposite ends of the studio “shouting their disparate and desperate instructions at [their] victims” (xxvii). Maisel does give us the impression that this process was unsatisfactory. But, as Weed argues, “How can one account for the success of Alexander in Australia if teaching in this way was as futile as Maisel would have us believe?” According to Frank Pierce Jones, F.M. said that “in 1914 he was just beginning to find a new way of using his hands in teaching” (*Body* 31). This was ten years after Alexander had arrived in England. His teaching was already extraordinarily successful, and yet he was making significant changes to one of main methods of communicating his work. Marjory *Barlow* confirms that Alexander was definitely using his hands already when teaching in Australia before his departure for London (Davies 65). Finally, in regard to his method of training teachers, Alexander’s neglect of his trainees may have been a deliberate attempt to force them to learn by apprenticeship, that is, by experimenting with and on one another, with only a little input from the Alexander brothers each day.

Finally, as mentioned above, although Alexander refused to cooperate with the research project for which Dewey had secured funding from the Rockefeller Foundation, he did “consent to write a detailed account of the self-observations and experiments that had led up to the discovery and perfection of his technique” (Jones, *Body* 45). This account became the first chapter of *UOS* in 1932, and is entitled “The evolution of a technique.” It is this series of steps and Alexander’s final conclusion—that use determines functioning—which can be demonstrated so anyone who wishes can *know* it. According to Dewey, it is upon this point that the genuinely scientific character of Alexander’s teaching rests. While Alexander told the story of how he went about solving his vocal problems, he did not himself analyse his *scientific approach*. He broke down his ultimate plan for coordinated use and functioning, and went into great detail about the development, pitfalls, successes and changes of tack along the way, but he did not set out or review his investigative process. Significantly, it was Dewey who made this link to the scientific process and to pragmatism.

A.R. Alexander’s pragmatism

Be patient, stick to principle, and it will all open up like a great cauliflower

—A.R. Alexander (Jones, *Body* 68)

While certain points of Albert Redden Alexander’s life have already been mentioned as part of the story of the Alexander Technique, a brief outline is made here, repeating some points, to give a cohesive view of his own path or an ARA-centric version of the story. The available biographical information is limited. He was born 15 June 1874. At the age of sixteen (in 1889), as FMA was settling in Melbourne, ARA went to Kalgoorlie to seek his fortune as a gold-miner. He returned to Tasmania unsuccessful and recovering from typhoid (Evans 93). In 1896 ARA is believed to have moved to Melbourne to help FMA teach (ibid 110). They seem to have taught together for four years. In 1900 FMA left his Melbourne practice in the care of ARA and moved to Sydney in the interests of further publicising his work. Still restless and keen to travel the world, ARA went to Africa to fight in the Boer War in February 1901, declaring himself for the war effort a “stockman” rather than an “elocutionist” (ibid 123). He again narrowly avoided death and permanent injury, returning to Melbourne just over

a year later in April 1902. He began to join Amy (his sister) on her visits to Sydney to keep up with FMA's development of his teaching methods (ibid 124). This fits with Barstow's recollection of the facts. She says that FMA was "developing his 'work'" when ARA returned to Australia. "A.R. was around, listening and watching, and learned a great deal of it that way" (Stillwell 17). In January 1903 ARA opened his own school of physical culture in which he and Amy taught their brother's methods supplemented by the Delsarte System of Expression (after François Delsarte whose method influenced acting, declamation and dance) and the Sandow system (after the German pioneering bodybuilder, Eugen Sandow, born Friedrich Müller). By early 1904, their advertisements had phased out all references to the latter two systems and focussed entirely on their brother's work. At almost the same time FMA left for London. "Instructions flowed from London at weekly intervals and as FM developed his ideas he sent advice," which included a recommendation that ARA study anatomy and physiology (Evans 135, 144). ARA complied, hiring a private tutor. By the time he left Melbourne in 1910 he was a respected teacher in his own right. According to shipping records, an Albert Alexander (occupation: "none") left Melbourne for London, travelling alone and arriving 21 November 1910. Sources disagree about the year and date of ARA's travel and about his travelling companions.¹⁷ Public records confirm that he married on 20 April 1912 in London. In 1917 (Fischer in Binkley 158) or early 1918 (Bloch 118) ARA suffered a severe spinal injury while horse riding and was told by doctors that he would never walk again. Contrary to their predictions, he recovered to the point of being able to walk with a cane and occasionally without it. At the end of that year he began his almost yearly visits to America in 1918, which he stopped in 1924 (and in 1920 it seems that he and Grace visited Australia as well¹⁸). From then on he concentrated on the London practice with FMA and on creating stability for the education of his son, Max. In early 1933

¹⁷ Bloch claims that ARA, Grace and Agnes all sailed together in 1912. Evans claims the same but does not give a date. Fischer notes that ARA sailed some time between 1907 and 1910 (in Binkley 158). Shipping records indicate that Grace Nixon travelled with "Alice Alexander," who seems not to be related (Evans), arriving on 12 April 1912, just eight days before her wedding. This might be "Agnes" simply misheard by the shipping record scribe. There is no trace of ARA on this ship. Two people by the name of Agnes Alexander (one with initial M, that of Alexander's sister) can be seen travelling together from Sydney to London arriving in September 1909. It is unclear whether this is a relevant record.

¹⁸ In March 1920 Jane Dewey writes to her parents that "Mr. A. R. said he might stop off and make you a visit on his way home from Australia" (Letter).

Grace died, while ARA was co-teaching the first training course. A year later he decided to move back to America where neither he nor FMA had taught for ten years. His son Max began the training course at Ashley Place the same year. Barstow became ARA's assistant in New York and Boston. The American training course started in 1941 shortly after FMA arrived during the war. ARA carried it on alone when FMA returned to England in 1943. His stroke occurred in 1944. When he next attempted to return from England after his annual summer trip he was denied entry due to ill health. He died in England.

Events in A.R.'s life made it necessary for him to learn and apply the Alexander Technique in ways that differed from his brother's experience. First, he learned the technique from observing his brother teach, rather than through self-observation. During his convalescence in 1918 he had an intense period in London during which he put the technique to the test: he eventually did learn to walk again, at first with two canes, and later with one. Barstow recalls that around his home he did not need the cane (Stillwell 17). The main effect on his teaching was that he now taught sitting down instead of standing. This intense period of applying the technique to such an extreme situation may have given him several advantages as both practitioner and teacher that FMA did not share.

By many accounts A.R. Alexander was one of the greatest Alexander teachers of his time. The Alexanders' niece, Marjory *Barlow*, for example, observed that "the apprenticeship method of training has a lot going for it. After all, some of the greatest teachers learned that way (A.R. for instance)" (Davies 153). This quotation, in which she reveals her admiration for her uncle's teaching, is admittedly a little puzzling. As we have seen, *Barlow* was a kind of preservationist of FMA's teaching habits. Yet she admired ARA's teaching, which was far from conventional or simply an imitation of his brother's teaching. ARA valued some parts of FMA's work over others, and he put his own stamp on the work by emphasising these parts, as I shall show.

Other practitioners of the Alexander Technique have highlighted ARA's gifts as a teacher. Marjorie Barstow is quoted as saying: "F.M. was the genius who discovered the work; but AR was the teacher who knew how to teach" (Weed, "Our Debt"). Frank Pierce Jones observes that ARA, since he was not the discoverer but had to be

taught the technique, “had more understanding of the problems involved in learning” (*Body* 68). He implies that ARA was rather more diligent as a teacher than his brother. Jones describes FMA as having “very little to say about ‘directive orders’ or ‘thinking’” (67). Jones assumed from this that FMA was satisfied that he knew how to “order” and was being a cooperative pupil. He contrasts this lack of communication with ARA’s method. ARA “was always stopping a pupil and telling him he was ‘feeling, not thinking,’ by which he meant that the pupil had become either stiff or heavy and was not responding to the direction of his hands. It was very easy in a lesson to let your mind wander and be unaware of what was going on, but A.R. never let you get away with this for very long” (68).

One might also view it as most significant that Dewey told Jones that in many respects he got more from his lessons with ARA than from those with FMA (*Body* 104). According to Jones, ARA made little use of the procedures except for demonstration purposes. His emphasis was on thinking and “the instant [a pupil] stopped thinking... it would be detected at once” (71). This observation is seconded by Marjory Barlow: “A.R. was...very tough—very kind, but very tough on the thinking side... He was very meticulous about that” (Oxford 14). Equally, ARA had his own view of the directions or orders (directing your neck to relax, your head to go forward and up, to lengthen and widen your back). Whether verbalized or not, says Jones, ARA believed that they were “an aid to thinking but not a substitute for it” (*Body* 72). According to Jones, ARA had observed that it was possible to “give orders” without thinking. ARA had also noted that there were occasions (when talking, for example) when you had to be able to think without giving orders. He voiced these objections to Jones, who “had the feeling that [ARA] would have given up the concept altogether if it had not been stated so explicitly in the books” (72).

Despite these views that differed from his brother’s, ARA seems to have been the teacher in whom FMA showed the greatest confidence. Weed recalls being told repeatedly in lessons and conversations by many different people from many different backgrounds that, “although F.M. expressed reservations about all of the teachers who remained in London, he never lost faith or trust in A.R. and his work” (“Our Debt”).

There are, however, conflicting reports and comparisons of the two brothers. In Stillwell's interview Barstow describes some differences between the two Alexanders, both in personal style and teaching style. She describes FMA as a typical dapper English gentleman who wore spats and used a monocle that hung around his neck. He often wore a rosebud in his lapel. "He had a great sense of humor and loved telling jokes. He was very energetic in everything he did. Sort of theatrical and impulsive and yet he wasn't really impulsive because he had such beautiful control" (Stillwell 17). She describes ARA, on the other hand, as having a "more solid body-type with a round, full face." She recalls his "quiet unassuming attitude" and his easy and gracious friendliness (17). When it came to their teaching, Barstow claims that they "taught alike but their personalities were different, so their teaching was (pause) individual." FMA, being an actor, "was always very dynamic, a little bit of his acting creeping in. He had lots of pep and enthusiasm." She describes ARA as being "naturally of a more quiet nature" but draws attention to the keenness of his observations, which were "very sharp" (17).

In a different part of the interview (19) Stillwell asks the same question in a different way, eliciting a slightly different view. She says that she is sure that the thing that appealed to her was FMA's "general manner of use, in performance, in his teaching, which one could say was a performance because it was so dynamic and full of energy." She found the quality of his movement and the quality of his voice "extraordinary." This, for Barstow, was his strength: "the way in which he used himself in activity." She quickly adds that the same thing was true of ARA, "although his whole manner was different because of his personality," concluding that there was a "strength and quality of, I suppose, finesse, in the teaching of both gentlemen" (19).

Erika Whittaker (Ethel Webb's niece) remembers A.R. Alexander as bringing new dimensions to their work: "He was a much more out-going personality than F.M. and could sometimes get quite tough with a pupil if he thought they were taking it easy when they should have been paying attention. He had a wonderful sense of humour and we had a lot of fun with him" ("England" 24). This is in contrast to what Barstow says above (who remembered him only as quieter than his brother), although all reports point to ARA's emphasis on thinking.

Although Marjory *Barlow* claims that her uncle, ARA, was “very kind,” in the same paragraph she also contends that he was “a bit of a bully by nature” (Oxford 14). One area where there was room for improvement in teaching style, perhaps, was in creating the conditions in which the student can learn. Jones writes that his lessons with ARA were a kind of laboratory exercise in the cause and control of anxiety. He eventually taught himself to “stop being anxious about being anxious” and to find out what he was actually doing in response to ARA’s request to get up out of the chair: “I could feel myself becoming anxious during the course of the lesson... I do not now believe that it is necessary to heighten a pupil’s anxiety during a lesson in order to teach him how to control it. This was A.R.’s way, however” (*Body* 71).

ARA had different strengths from FMA. Reading between the lines one could guess that ARA’s observations were even more penetrating than his brother’s. Barstow juxtaposes FMA’s “pep and enthusiasm” with ARA’s “more quiet nature” and keen, “very sharp” observations (Stillwell 17) as what stood out in her memory about the two men. In this juxtaposition is the suggestion of a slight superiority in observation power (in ARA). Another advantage that ARA had, perhaps, was his different life experience. Jones notes that it was more reassuring to hear from ARA than from FMA that being patient and sticking to principle would lead to it all opening up “like a great cauliflower” (*Body* 68). In Jones’s view, ARA had greater handicaps to overcome than FMA’s loss of voice. Typhoid fever during his gold-mining trip to Western Australia had left him with badly impaired vision, and then, on top of this there was his back injury several years later in London. In Jones’s estimation ARA was overall a more diligent teacher, with “none of his brother’s showmanship” and being, perhaps, “less skilful with his hands” (68). But ARA was a very patient and determined communicator. Jones sometimes felt, in comparison, that FMA “lost interest in a pupil after he had made dramatic changes and was bored with teaching him anything further” (68). Jones observes that because ARA’s teaching did not involve spoon-feeding, it forced him to apply the principles of the technique in order to come up with his own style:

A.R. did not give much specific instruction in the use of the hands¹⁹, believing that the important thing was to be able to observe both yourself and the pupil and to work out your own style of teaching without end-gaining for specific changes...This disturbed me at first, but I now believe he was right, since I was forced to develop an understanding of the Alexander principle that I could communicate in my own terms instead of taking over a reasonably accurate facsimile of the Alexanders' way of teaching (80).

Jones's view accords with William Conable's. When I asked Conable about A.R. Alexander, his view was that the people for whom A.R. was an important influence "were the most flexible, interesting, exploratory and imaginative Alexander teachers of that first generation" (Interview). In this group he includes Frank Jones, Marjorie Barstow and Buzz (Richard) Gummere. "I think it's true," said Conable, "but if you ask Marj, and I did ask her something like that, she was quite indignant and said 'Mr Alexander was the one.' That may be the case, but I'll stick by what I say... many of the ones who were closest to Alexander...I want to say this carefully...were *influenced* by his personality" (ibid).

Further evidence that ARA's teaching diverged from his brother's is the story about a letter that was sent by some of the trainees in London to FMA in about 1934, saying that ARA "was not teaching the work" (*Barlow* in Davies 26). *Barlow* never found out the details, having been exempted from signing the letter on account of her family connection to ARA. She believed, however, that this was the impetus for his migration to the United States. She acknowledges his success in working with Barstow in America, and refers again to the fact that the two brothers taught differently.²⁰ *Barlow* believes that the complaints were due to ARA's tendency to be a "bit of a bully" (26) and also something to do with a split in the trainees governed by a mutual antipathy between Patrick Macdonald and George Trevelyan. According to *Barlow*, Macdonald adored ARA, while Trevelyan had no "time for the old 'rough diamond'" (197).

¹⁹ *Barstow* says that neither FMA nor ARA did so because they knew from their own past experiences that students would gain that knowledge as they improved in their own use, and they didn't start out to develop special procedures (in Brenner 40).

²⁰ *Barstow* certainly never complained about him, but (and see 6.3, *Benefits of Group Teaching: Constructive Thinking*) it is true to her nature not to say anything negative about anyone. *Barlow* also comments that Marj and ARA "got on like a house on fire" (Davies 197).

While F.M. certainly displayed aspects of pragmatism in his work, and endowed the technique and its teaching with this application of pragmatism, it was ARA who seems to have *emphasised* the pragmatic quality of FMA's work.

Passing on Critical Pragmatism

As described, there are descriptions of varying lengths of the first training course by several of its students. Consistently reported are the lack of rules and regulations; FMA's lack of organization, planning and structure; a necessity for independence, self-reliance and working with the other students; a sense of adventure; and an emphasis on observation, principle and experimenting. Erika Whittaker recalls Barstow, Trevelyan and herself as "the very first three, on the very first day" (in Gounaris 131). "We all sat on the table swinging our legs, saying, 'Where is F.M.? What are we going to do?' F.M. took us into the other room and we had a chair each. And he said, 'I have never done this before. It's the first time for all of us. Let's see what happens.' No rules and regulations. No time table. Nothing. There never was. Never" (ibid).

While the complete lack of a plan is not so consistent with scientific method and critical pragmatism, FMA did show certain qualities that could be recognized as critically pragmatic. These included his openness to seeing what happened (which approach could also be described as non-goal-directed research), his trust that the students could contribute to and take responsibility for their own learning, and his acknowledgement of being at the beginning of a learning process himself.

Barstow was one of the people who expressed great satisfaction about the first training course (Weed, *Festschrift* 159), and it seems that she later adopted many of FMA's strategies of training people. Although Westfeldt lamented the lack of support, she did acknowledge that it forced them to become independent. Marjory Barlow comments that "an awful lot of experimentation went on because we were pretty clueless" (Oxford 15). So the spirit of the first training course certainly encouraged and developed the critical pragmatism of its students, whether FMA intended this or not.

Pragmatism of other Alexander teachers

Marjorie Barstow cannot be said to be the only one to have made changes to the teaching of the Alexander Technique. Weed points to teachers other than Marjorie Barstow who have made changes to the work. He includes Walter Carrington, who made changes to the training course immediately after Alexander's death, such as the daily lecture, the regular private lessons, afternoon "games" and the early use of hands on the back of chairs as a non-endgaining activity. Weed also counts Patrick Macdonald, who introduced his "series of gymnastics into his work" such as "the Lunge, the Yo-Yo and Elevator" (Weed, *Festschrift* 161). Neither can Barstow be said to be the only one to have made changes that can be described as critically pragmatic. Weed describes Marjory Barlow as a preservationist of the Alexander Technique (*Festschrift* 161). Consistent with his description is the way Barlow frequently speaks in *An Examined Life* (Davies), as if she is averse to any kind of questioning of her uncle's ways and means, or indeed to any critical thinking in relation to the technique (passim). And yet, Weed finds that even "as stalwart a preservationist as Marjory Barlow is not immune to the pressures of improved understanding" (*Festschrift* 161). At the First International Congress, "Mrs Barlow, with some delight, showed our group some new discoveries which she had made in the functioning of the foot in standing. She was quite proud and pleased to share it with us though it was different from how she was taught and not part of 'traditional' teaching" (ibid). She justified her "deviation from standard cant and procedure by saying, 'I teach everything exactly the way that [F.M.] did, except when I have a darn good reason to change.'" (ibid). "A Darn Good Reason" is, then, the title of Weed's article, in which he defends Barstow's teaching. It seems that the Alexander Technique *invites* us to continue to learn more about our natural coordination for the rest of their lives. It invites us to experiment.

With respect to education, Dewey pointed out the importance of growth and change in communication. "All communication is like art. It may fairly be said, therefore, that any social arrangement that remains vitally social, or vitally shared, is educative to those who participate in it. Only when it becomes cast in a mould and runs in a routine way does it lose its educative power" (*D&E* 11). He also explained how

important adaptation is to continuity, saying that “continuity of life means continual readaptation of the environment to the needs of living organisms (ibid 7). If we applied this principle to the Alexander Technique, we might conclude that in order for the Alexander Technique to survive and continue, it must be adapted to the needs of today’s students. That is, teachers must learn to use language that communicates what Alexander discovered and taught, they must teach it in a way that gives them first hand experience of Alexander’s principles, and they must teach it in a way that attracts and maintains the interests of students.

Patrick Macdonald comments that his own ideas on the Alexander Technique “arise from the truth of experience in learning and teaching this most important of techniques” (*The Alexander ix*). This suggests, again, that by its very nature, the AT enhances creativity of thought. If these new ideas—resulting from learning and teaching the technique—do not lead to new experiments and modifications of practice, then surely the technique has failed.

Raymond Dart (see Appendix 2), in collaboration with Alex and Joan Murray, contributed to the AT repertoire of teaching procedures what are now known as the Dart Procedures. Like MacDonald’s innovations, these are what might be called variations on a theme. In 1943 Dart had a series of lessons in the Alexander Technique in Johannesburg from Irene Tasker. He became aware of his habits of movement and how they could be bettered. Upon Tasker’s return to England, Dart decided to continue alone. He developed what could be described as more “positions of mechanical advantage” in the style of those invented by F.M. Alexander. Dart’s knowledge of many different branches of scientific study enabled him to make connections that might have escaped the attention of others, his numerous areas of interest including vertebrate evolution, the spiral arrangement of the muscular system, malocclusion of the jaw and eye defects (Nicolson et al.). It seems, from viewing the procedures and their names, that it was Dart who coined the phrase “semi-supine” for what had previously been called “lying down work.” Marjory Barlow confirms this: “It’s Dart, you see. That’s what it is. It’s a nonsense—a kind of scientific affectation... This is what I can’t bear!” (Davies 108). As Murray explains, the Dart procedures are not exercises. Though muscular work is being done in response to gravity, it is a process of self-examination. The procedures have been part of the

Murrays' training program for many years. He urges that "working with the procedures will not teach one the Alexander Technique, but undertaken with the guidance of an Alexander teacher, they are a constant source of insight and a point of reference in one's patterns of behaviour" ("The Dart Procedures").

As I have shown, many of the "first generation teachers" (and later teachers such as Dart) imbibed the critically pragmatic nature of the Alexander Technique and continued to think critically about and experiment with ways of teaching it. In Chapter 6 I argue that Barstow made the most significant and dynamic changes to the teaching of the technique, and that these changes bear a remarkable alignment with the philosophy of John Dewey. Despite—or perhaps because of—Barstow's premium on Alexander's critical pragmatism and her faith in his experimental approach, much controversy has surrounded her teaching.

3.4 Summary

In this chapter I have given a brief history of the Alexander Technique and introduced its founder. The evolution of teaching the technique, training teachers and establishing professional societies was described. A summary of the status of research into the Alexander Technique was presented, and pragmatism in the Alexander Technique was discussed. The following chapter presents the biographical details and work of John Dewey. It then goes on to examine the connections between Alexander and Dewey.

CHAPTER 4: DEWEY AND ALEXANDER

In this chapter I introduce John Dewey and his work. I then examine the connections between Dewey and Alexander, from their early association and the confluence of their interests to recent scholarship linking the two. Dewey's endorsements of Alexander's work are examined and the extent of their mutual influence is discussed. Finally I review the scholarly works linking Alexander and Dewey.

4.1 John Dewey and his Philosophy

This part of the chapter sketches the biographical details of John Dewey and the evolution of his philosophy, in particular those ideas that are relevant to this thesis. The biographical details show how Dewey came to some of his most influential ideas, in particular those on education.

John Dewey was born in Burlington, Vermont, shortly before the American Civil War. Burlington was a town of diverse ethnicity, class and religion. To place Dewey in the timeline of ideas and scientific understanding of the world, he was born the year Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species* was published, 1859. The evolutionary ideas of process and continuity between mankind and the lower animals were extremely influential on his thinking (Scheffler, *Four* 5). The transition from the America of Dewey's childhood to that of his maturity was what formed the central theme of his philosophy.

After attending the University of Vermont, Dewey worked as a school teacher for three years, deciding then that his vocation lay elsewhere. In 1882 (at the age of 22) he went to Johns Hopkins University, in Baltimore, for advanced study in philosophy where he encountered the ideas of Hegel and was taught—perhaps most significantly—by Peirce. In Hegel's emphasis on the spiritual and organic nature of the universe, Dewey found what he had been vaguely groping for and embraced it. He received his PhD from the School of Arts and Sciences at Johns Hopkins University, writing on the psychology of Kant. His dissertation was not published and is now lost.

At 24, in 1884, he accepted a faculty position at the University of Michigan, where he taught psychology and philosophy. During this time his studies were mainly devoted to Hegel and the British Neo-Hegelians and to the new experimental, physiological psychology then being advanced in America by William James and also by G. Stanley Hall, who had been another of his teachers in Baltimore.

Dewey's keen interest in education began during his years at Michigan, in part because he married in 1886 and had six children. He married Hattie (Harriet) Alice Chipman, herself a noted teacher. She is described as having grounded her husband's more classical training and religious views in the reality of human experience (Stack 28). His interest in gender issues, including the importance of education for women, may also have been due to her influence. They met at the University of Michigan, where Alice had begun study in 1883. The same age as John, Alice (as she called herself) had entered the university at 25 with "advanced status" shortly before her future husband had begun teaching there. The Deweys had six children, of whom four survived into adulthood. They were: Frederick Archibald (1887–1967), Evelyn (1889–1965), Morris (1892–1895), Gordon (1896–1905), Lucy Alice (1897–1983), and Jane Mary (1900–1975+). The reciprocal family influence was strong: as noted, Alice was closely involved with and influenced her husband's work; Jane wrote a short biography of her father, which formed the first chapter of *The Philosophy of John Dewey* (eds. Dewey and Schilpp); while Evelyn co-authored *Schools of Tomorrow* with her father. Fred wrote his PhD on behaviour in social groups before giving up academia and going into business.

In 1894, when Dewey was 34, he joined the newly founded University of Chicago to become Professor of Philosophy and Chairman of the Department of Philosophy, Psychology and Pedagogy. He saw an opportunity to unite these three disciplines and in particular to bring pedagogy into closer relations with psychology and philosophy. Dewey soon became associated with the newly emerging pragmatic philosophy, developing his belief in an empirically based theory of knowledge, and rejecting the Hegelian theory of ideas, which views them as mirroring the rational order of the universe. Dewey preferred a theory of reality that holds nature—as encountered in scientific and ordinary experience—as the ultimate reality and man as a product of nature who finds his meaning and goals in life here and now. These doctrines

remained central to all Dewey's future philosophising. At Chicago, Dewey made significant contributions to all three fields: philosophy, psychology and education.

With respect to philosophy, Dewey was largely responsible for what William James called "The Chicago School." In 1903 Dewey sent James an advance copy of a volume of essays by members of his department, *Studies in Logical Theory*, asking if James would accept its dedication (Letter ca.15 March 1903). James replied, offering his "zealous co-operation" in accepting its dedication (Letter 3 December 1903). He reviewed it soon after, hailing Chicago as having a school of thought—"Real thought and a real school... a view of the world" ("Chicago School"). Dewey responded that he and his colleagues had "simply been rendering back in logical vocabulary what was already your own" (Letter 20 January 1904). An excerpt from James's review offers an overview of the new "school":

What strikes me most in it is the great sense of concrete reality with which it is filled. It seems a promising *via media* between the empiricist and transcendentalist tendencies of our time. Like empiricism, it is individualistic and phenomenistic; it places truth in *rebus*, and not *ante rem*. It resembles transcendentalism, on the other hand, in making value and fact inseparable, and in standing for continuities and purposes in things...("Chicago School" 5).

Dewey's contributions to psychology while at Chicago include his essay, "The Reflex Arc Concept in Psychology," which is now generally taken to mark the beginnings of functional psychology (that is, the psychology that focuses on the total organism in its endeavour to adjust to the environment). This essay received James's endorsement in the same review, above.

Dewey also produced his first two major works on education while at Chicago, *The School and Society* (1899, revised 1915), which has never been out of print, and *The Child and the Curriculum* (1902). These works presented and defended what were to remain the chief underlying tenets of Dewey's philosophy of education. Dewey's work in education at Chicago made him famous around the world, perhaps most notably among non-philosophers. Two years into his Chicago career, in January 1896, he opened the University Elementary School of the University of Chicago, which became a local sensation immediately and an international sensation soon after. It became known as the "Dewey School" and then officially as the "Laboratory School,"

which latter Dewey preferred, as it expressed his intentions. The school was a philosophy laboratory: a place “to work out in the concrete, instead of merely in the head or on paper, a theory of the unity of knowledge” (Dewey, “Theory of the Chicago” 204). The school helped to change the way children were taught, and it gave him a reputation as a great educator (Menand, *MTC* 317). Dewey’s response when praised as an educator was to emphasise the importance of thinking, “Sorry, I’m just a philosopher. I’m just trying to think. That’s all I’m doing” (Lamont 126). Despite Dewey’s modesty as an educator, the school remains to this day “the most famous experimental school in the history of American education” (Fallace). Some of Dewey’s reluctance to accept the label “educator” was perhaps out of deference to his wife, Alice, whom he credited with having inspired much of the work at the school. Years later, in the preface to the first edition of *How We Think*, he acknowledged his indebtedness to his wife, “by whom the ideas of this book were inspired, and through whose work in connection with the Laboratory School, existing in Chicago between 1896 and 1903, the ideas attained such concreteness as comes from embodiment and testing in practice” (Revised Edition 109). He also acknowledged his indebtedness to Ella Flagg Young (who worked alongside Alice Dewey) for the clarity of some of his most enduring ideas about democracy in education (Blount 163).

The three main influences on Dewey that had led to his experiments in education were the city of Chicago, his friendship with Jane Addams and the relationship with his own children. Dewey described the first of these influences, Chicago, in letters to his wife as “the place to make you appreciate at every turn the opportunity which chaos affords” (12 July 1894), this chaos being “such a loose jointed quantitative chaos after all, —and not an Ann Arbor parterre. Think of all hell turned loose, & yet not hell any longer, but simply material for a new creation” (25 August 1894). This chaos seems to have driven Dewey to a great need for reform. Two months later he writes, “There is an image of a school growing up in my mind all the time; a school where some actual & literal constructive activity shall be the centre & source of the whole thing” (1 November 1894).

The second influence was Jane Addams, who had a significant impact on Dewey’s thinking, both in personal friendship and through the example of her “sociology laboratory,” Hull House. Through her own experiment she had come to see the

importance of the autonomy and self-direction of the people she had set out to “help” and had realised the unacceptability of philanthropy as a one-way act. She consequently believed strongly in democracy and in the importance of the mutuality of interests. In a kind of double adulation, Dewey named his youngest daughter, Jane Mary, after Jane Addams and Jane’s close friend, Mary Smith.

Finally, of the three main influences, the most personal was also the most painful: that of his children. He claims to have become interested in education because of his children. His youngest child, Morris, was a fascination to Dewey, and he documented his development in detail until the child’s untimely death (at age 3) a year before the opening of the school.

After only eight years at Chicago Dewey resigned from his post in 1904 because of a disagreement with the president of the university over the administration and financing of the educational program, which included Dewey’s school. He took up a professorship of philosophy at Columbia University in New York. He was associated with Columbia for 47 years, and it was here that he was introduced to Alexander in 1916. During these years he travelled the world as a philosopher, social and political theorist, and educational consultant. Among his major journeys are his lecture tours in Japan and China from 1919 to 1921, his visit to Turkey in 1924 to recommend educational policy and a tour of schools in the USSR in 1928.

In 1927 Alice Dewey died, leaving her husband with the painful loss of a particularly close relationship. Almost twenty years after the death of his first wife Dewey married again, in 1946. He was 87 and Roberta Lowitz Grant was 42. They adopted two small Belgian children made orphans by the war. The four quickly became a close-knit and affectionate family group. Dewey enjoyed remarkably good health throughout his life and only in his nineties suffered a series of health incidents that led to his death in June 1952 at the age of 92. He attributed much of his health and longevity to the Alexander Technique.

Dewey’s scholarly output was enormous and his thought covered a wide range of topics, including logic and theory of knowledge, psychology, education, social philosophy, fine arts and religion. Major works dealing with each of these established

Dewey as the foremost philosopher in America. Other interests that attracted Dewey's support were women's suffrage, the Humanistic movement and (after his uncharacteristic support of US involvement in the First World War) world peace.

As Arthur Wirth describes, Dewey was "the most controversial figure in twentieth century American education," suffering from "uncritical adulation as well as unwarranted vituperation" (vii). At the turn of the century he had been a leader in the criticism of traditional schooling. By mid-century, and the last decade of Dewey's life, it became the mode in the popular press "to identify progressive education with loose, superficial educational practice and to label Dewey as its author" (ibid). Greatly agitated by the alleged failure of the schools to train pupils adequately in essential core subjects and in manners and discipline, critics blamed Dewey and his progressive ideas for these failures and made him the scapegoat of their grievances and frustrations.

Dewey's philosophy

All of Dewey's philosophy is interrelated, so it is somewhat artificial to separate it into subheadings. The concepts of reconstruction, experience, knowledge and action, community and the scientific method, for example, all weave in and out of one another. For the purposes of this thesis, however, and in the interests of succinctness and clarity, subheadings are used. This introduction and overview to Dewey's philosophy is necessarily selective, as Dewey's ideas were wide-ranging and eclectic. The following subheadings are used: The Problems of Men, Deconstruction and Reconstruction; Experience and Action; Psychology and Education; The Means-Ends Distinction and Reflective Experience; Society, Education and Critical Thinking; Democracy; Importance of Scientific Method; The Role of Art in Philosophy and Education; and Philosophy as Criticism.

Problems of Men, Deconstruction and Reconstruction

By "the problems of men," Dewey meant that the most important role of philosophy is to deal with the problems of ordinary people and living rather than to solve the problems of philosophers. *The Problems of Men* is the title of one of his books, written in 1946. It encapsulates Dewey's basic attitude toward philosophy. He wanted

to bring philosophers out of their ivory towers and apply philosophy to politics, ethics and education. This is perhaps one reason why he preferred the term “instrumentalism” to pragmatism, as it suggested more strongly his belief that ideas are instruments, or tools, that humans use to make greater sense of the world. The operating premise of instrumentalism is that “ideas empower people to direct natural events, including social processes and institutions, toward human benefit” (Gouinlock).

To make it true that philosophy’s role was different from its commonly conceived role, Dewey had to “reconstruct” it. This term comes again from a title of his, *Reconstruction in Philosophy* (1919). Dewey acknowledged the importance of the philosophical questions of the past *for cultures past*. But his constant question was how philosophy should be reconstructed to make it relevant to human experience today. Dewey considered all our social institutions, our educational systems, and our political ideals as skewed because the ground-map on which they were erected was greatly distorted. The earlier map had been set forth in its fundamentals by Plato, reaffirmed by Descartes and only modified by thinkers like Locke and Kant. The map was dualistic. That is, it was based on the separation of supposed opposites such as the material and the spiritual, experience and thought, theory and praxis, and the constant and inconstant. Dewey rejected the practice of creating dualities and believed instead in the unification of these perceived opposites.

Before reconstructing philosophy, Dewey had to deconstruct it. Boisvert saw the two tasks as polemical and constructive respectively: “Dewey’s polemical task was to announce that the map provided by earlier philosophers was inaccurate. His constructive task was that of drafting a new, more accurate one” (344). In this, Dewey was way ahead of his time. As Boisvert points out, Dewey was “already a deconstructionist of sorts in the 1920s,” long before “deconstructionism” became “the latest European fashion to influence American intellectuals” in the 1980s (345). Richard Rorty also puts pragmatists far ahead of these thinkers of the later twentieth century: “On my view, James and Dewey were not only waiting at the end of the dialectical road which analytical philosophy travelled, but are waiting at the end of the road which, for example, Foucault and Derrida are currently travelling” (*Consequences xviii*).

Dewey's deconstructionist enterprise involved four main parts: his endeavour to indicate the limitations imposed by prior assumptions, his deconstruction of the "modern," Cartesian-influenced map, his dismissal of quests for certainty and his recognition that all formulations are tentative and hypothetical (Boisvert 345). But Dewey was not a nihilist. He described the need for constant reconstruction as the work of intelligence coming up with answers to the "problems of men" (ibid). Writing philosophy on the problems of everyone, rather than just those of philosophers, then, was Dewey's reconstruction of philosophy.

Experience and action

We have seen how the opposition between knowing and doing, theory and practice, has been abandoned in the actual enterprise of scientific inquiry, how knowing goes forward by means of doing (Dewey, *Quest for Certainty* 231).

The above quotation is from the chapter that Dewey named "The Copernican Revolution." In that chapter he reviewed the philosophical thought to date, noting that "the old centre was mind" (232) and, just as Copernicus established heliocentrism, the new philosophy was making the new centre "indefinite interactions" (ibid). The interactions that are of specific importance for Dewey are those between the living human organism and its environment. He later called this interaction "transaction": "an active, adaptive and adjustive process in which the organism seeks to maintain a dynamic balance with its ever-changing environment" (Biesta and Burbules 10). Dewey used the term "transactional" to describe his theories of knowledge and experience, and this term could also be used to describe his entire philosophy. One of the key ideas of Dewey's pragmatism is that reality only reveals itself as a result of the activities—the doings—of the organism. Action is essential to knowledge. All knowledge is conditional on future experience (ibid). This view does not entail scepticism; it merely means that all claims to knowledge, even when they presuppose the ability to justify those claims, are corrigible. This aspect of Dewey's philosophy is closely tied to his ideas on education. Just as knowledge comes from doing, so education should be grounded in real experience. Dewey's emphasis on experience and action will be compared with Barstow's emphasis on experience and action in her teaching. See Section 6.1 (Process and Form), in particular under the subheading "Difference 2: Re-educating the senses" on page 137.

Psychology and education

Dewey's psychology was social in emphasis. It touched all aspects of his work. His first published book was titled *Psychology* and appeared in 1887, while he was still at Michigan. "The Reflex Arc," published in 1896, soon became a classic. Several other major works focussed at least in part on psychology, including *Human Nature and Conduct (HNC)* (1922), *Experience and Nature* (1923) and *How We Think* (1933). Psychology is woven in to all his works on education. *HNC* includes specific references to Alexander, particularly in relation to habits, conduct and will. This thesis focuses, however, on Dewey's psychology as found in his writings on education, impulse, learning, thinking and society rather than those on habit. This is because my aim is to link Dewey's ideas to an approach to *teaching* the Alexander Technique rather than to Alexander's observations about habit and conscious control.

The means-ends distinction

The means-ends distinction is an interest of Dewey's that intersects closely with the discoveries of Alexander. Alexander stressed the importance of reasoning out a means whereby an action or activity can be carried out with the best possible use of self (or coordination). He noted that when we are fixed solely on the end (or result) of the activity, we frequently do not employ optimal means. That is, he said, we are "end-gaining." Dewey wrote about the means-ends distinction in many of his works. The first in-depth discussions of it seem to have appeared in 1887 in an essay entitled "Ethics and Physical Science" and in his first book, *Psychology*. The discussion continues in *Outline of a Critical Theory of Ethics*, published in 1891, and in several of his essays throughout the 1890s ("The Superstition," "Self-Realization", for example). These discussions came long before Dewey had any awareness of Alexander's ideas, FMA being still in Melbourne and not having begun publishing. Dewey could, however, be describing the dangers of the Alexander Technique. He warns against making the means more important than the end, whereas Alexander's message was to do precisely this. The following excerpt could be read as a warning to Alexander teachers to keep the original end in mind *while paying attention to the means* rather than eschewing ends altogether. This danger is discussed in Chapter 6 (6.2), where I examine Barstow's retention of desire as an important part of the Alexander process. "When a theory of knowledge forgets that its value rests in solving the problem out of which it has arisen," writes Dewey, "when it forgets that it

has to work out the conditions under which the individual may freely direct himself without loss of the historic value of civilization,” when it forgets these things it begins to cumber the ground. It is a luxury, and hence a social nuisance and disturber.

Of course, in the very nature of things, every means or instrument will for a while absorb attention so that it becomes the end. Indeed it is the end when it is an indispensable condition of onward movement. But when once the means have been worked out they must operate as such. When the nature and method of knowledge are fairly understood, then interest must transfer itself from the possibility of knowledge to the possibility of its application to life (*The Significance* 21-22).

Means and ends are examined in almost all Dewey's major works, including *The School and Society* (1899), *Ethics* (1908), *Interest and Effort in Education* (1913), *Democracy and Education (D&E)* (1916), *Human Nature and Conduct (HNC)* (1922), *Experience and Nature* (1925), *The Quest for Certainty* (1929). By 1922, Dewey's contact with the Alexander Technique was in evidence. “To *reach* an end,” he wrote, for example, “we must take our mind off from it and attend to the act which is next to be performed. We must make that the end” (*HNC* 27). Dewey often distinguished between the *end* as the actual outcome of a course of action, and the *end in view* as the envisaged end which currently serves to direct activity. The end in view is a starting place, an important part of thinking, action and consequence. It is a hypothesis, a plan, which guides present activity. It is a beginning, to be evaluated by its fruits. Dewey wanted to extend the notion of hypothesis (from pertaining only to science) to all ideas. In particular he wanted it to extend to the domains of morality, education and social thought. Thus, ends in view are action-guiding ideas, having the character of hypotheses, a means of organising present activity. Ends in view can be altered throughout the activity and are acted upon by the activity itself. His first mention of “end in view” is in an essay of 1886, asking three questions: Should psychology be taught in high schools? With what end in view should it be taught? How should it be taught? The excerpt is quoted here not least because the end in view is an over-arching one in all his writings and teachings: the securing of intellectual freedom.

The result must be that if psychology is so taught it will aid largely in helping on to what is, when all is said and done, the end of education—the securing of intellectual freedom, in its various factors of openness of mind, hospitality to ideas, and ability to move among them unconstrainedly. I feel sure that if psychology could be

taught in high-schools with this *end in view*, fewer of our students in college would be monuments of blank and bland helplessness when a new idea is presented than is now the case [emphasis added](“Psychology in High- Schools” 87).

Society, education, critical thinking and democracy

Dewey’s works *School and Society* and *The Child and the Curriculum* presented and defended what were to remain the chief underlying tenets of Dewey’s philosophy of education. In 1916 he delved even more deeply into every aspect of this philosophy with another book, *Democracy and Education (D&E)*. Dewey stressed the importance of wholeness of approach and interconnection between subjects. The cultivation of intelligence under conditions of freedom is “at once, for Dewey, the fundamental imperative of democracy and the main task of education” (Scheffler, *Four* 243). The educational process must begin with and build up on the interests of the child. It must provide opportunity for the interplay of thinking and doing in the child’s classroom experience: Dewey deals with questions of knowledge and the acquisition of knowledge “within the framework of a philosophy of *action*, in fact, a philosophy that takes action as its *most basic* category” [emphasis in original](Biesta and Burbules 9). Dewey showed great allegiance to critical thought, believing that schools must strive to deepen reflection and strengthen independence to develop the intelligence, efficiency, imagination and responsibility of society to cope with its problems (Scheffler, *Four* 250). For Dewey the wisdom of the past helped to form guiding ideas rather than dogmas.

According to Dewey, the school should be organised as a miniature community. The ideal community for Dewey allows maximum growth of each person, fosters free exchange of ideas, treats ideas as hypotheses, is open to the test of experience and is criticisable by all affected. The teacher should be a guide and co-worker with pupils, rather than a taskmaster assigning a fixed set of lessons and recitations. Dewey wanted to change the one-sided relationship of power and subordination between teacher and student that had become the norm of public education. Instead of treating students as passive receptacles of knowledge, Dewey wanted to forge a communicative and experiential interaction between teacher and student that would advance learning through a process of reciprocal understanding. He believed that the goal of education is the growth of the child in all aspects of its being. This was in

opposition to the popular idea that education is about self-realisation, which in those days meant preparation rather than growth. In Jim Garrison's words, "for Deweyans, being made alive is among the most wonderful things in all existence. The only thing better is to grow and be made more alive, and that is the function of education and the faith of the Deweyan educator" (*Dewey and Eros* 52).

From *D&E*, it can be seen that Dewey believed in education that is experimental and that arises from experience. It must discover possibilities that will allow it to resolve problems that occur within experience. Education must stress the value of its own process. Education as preparation is education defeating itself: "To predetermine some future occupation for which education is to be a strict preparation is to injure the possibilities of present development and thereby to reduce the adequacy of preparation for a future right employment" (320). To use Alexander's term, such education is a kind of end-gaining.

Dewey held that a person's happiness depends upon the degree to which his activity has meaning. To illustrate this point (and showing his indebtedness to Jane Addams), he used social welfare, which as an end of action only promotes an offensive condescension, a harsh interference. It always tends in this direction when it is aimed at giving happiness to others directly, that is, as we can hand a physical thing to another. On the other hand, to foster conditions that widen the horizon of others and give them command of their own powers, so that they can find their own happiness in their own fashion, is the way of "social" action (*D&E* 293-4). Dewey's social philosophy and educational philosophy are inextricably linked.

According to Dewey, educational practices are "the beginning and the close" of all educational enquiry (*Sources of a Science* 17). They provide the data and the subject matter and also form "the final *test of value* of the conclusion of all researches" (ibid 16). He believed that the "final reality" of educational science is not found in books, laboratories, or classrooms, "but in the minds of those engaged in directing educational activities" (ibid) which, as interpreted by Biesta, means that "the outcomes of education inquiry only become 'educational science' when they are used, 'through the medium of the minds of educators, to make educational functions more intelligent'" (Biesta and Burbules 80). The implication of this view is that teachers

should themselves be investigators and that educational inquiry will never come to an end. “In education we will constantly be faced with new, unique situations and new, unique problems” (ibid 81). Barstow’s constantly evolving and experimental approach is discussed in Chapter 5 (5.3).

Dewey was also committed to the idea and practice of democracy as a way of life. Kadlec even suggests that Dewey’s democratic faith is his most significant legacy (4). That is, Dewey believed in the wisdom of the common man. Kadlec sees the most important elements of Dewey’s deep democratic faith as his staunch optimism about the human capacity for creative collaboration, and the attending belief that such collaboration is vital for the intelligent navigation of a dynamic world that is fraught in equal parts with promise and peril. Democracy in Barstow’s teaching is discussed in both 6.1 (The Teaching Dilemma, on p.174) and 6.3 (Community and Communication, on pp.211-213).

Science, art and critical thinking

Science plays two roles in Dewey’s philosophy. The first is the role of the methods of modern science to inform human problem solving, as described above. Dewey saw the importance of applying the scientific method to philosophy. He stressed the significance of the experimental method of modern science as a model for human problem solving and the acquisition of knowledge (Biesta and Burbules 5). This emphasis recalls the point above, that philosophy should be about solving the problems of men. The second role of science in Dewey’s philosophy is as information provider. Dewey believed that the philosopher has the responsibility to be constantly alert to the discovery of new scientific truths and to the development of scientific procedures. Dewey also adopted Pierce’s doctrine that scientific inquiry is a communal process: truth is what emerges at the end of a process of scientific experimentation carried out by a *community* of inquirers [emphasis added] (Amelie Rorty 202). An example of the interwoven quality of Dewey’s ideas and values can be seen here: the problems of men are connected with the role of science in philosophy, which in turn requires the involvement of community.

Dewey was critical of the quest for certainty that had characterised so much of Western philosophy. For him, philosophy was not solely the intellectual expression of

the total complex of a stage of civilization, but plays an active role in shaping the direction of civilization. Bernstein explains that for Dewey, the philosopher is like the artist, whose task—which is never completed—is to reconstruct material into something that has greater form and order, something that is funded with aesthetic significance. The artistic and aesthetic dimension, which pervades all of Dewey's thought, has often been neglected in appraising his philosophy (4). It was, as has been noted, part of Dewey's definition of good teaching.

Dewey described the Alexander Technique as “thinking in activity.” He also believed that thinking was just as important in art as it is in science. He observed that the artist must respond intelligently to every brush stroke to know where she is going. “She must see each element in the creative process in relation to the whole to be produced. The quality of her art depends on the intelligence she brings to bear” (Leddy).

For Dewey, philosophy can also be described as a form of criticism; it is a criticism of criticisms. We can live our lives uncritically accepting the values and methods we have inherited. When faced with new problems, we can, and most of us do, attempt to use old formulas and standards. One of the thoughts always in the foreground for Dewey is that the natural tendency of modern technological society is to encourage passivity and docility among humans. The philosopher, then, as the general critic, is someone who engages in criticism as a way of life for the sake of instituting and securing more enduring and extensive reasonable values.

Summary

Here I have gathered the principal areas of Dewey's philosophy: the deconstruction of traditional philosophy and its reconstruction for the problems of men; the importance of experience and action for knowledge; the importance of a psychologically-informed pedagogy; the means-ends distinction; Dewey's ideas of constructive, critical and social education; the value of democracy; the primacy and centrality of the scientific method; the role of art in philosophy and education and the role of thinking in art; and finally philosophy as criticism.

This part of the chapter has sketched Dewey's life and the development of his ideas, with a brief description of his philosophy and its categories. The next section considers the connections between Dewey and Alexander.

4.2 Dewey and Alexander

Here I examine the links between Dewey and Alexander in two parts. 5.2.1 considers their early connections, interests in common and their friendship. 5.2.2 explores the professional support they gave each other, the influence they had on each other and the scholarship to date that has linked their work.

4.2.1 Meeting, Common Interests and Friendship

Dewey met Alexander in 1916. It is now a widespread myth that Naumburg was the instigator of their introduction (Dalton 118), but she is categorical about having had nothing to do with their connection:

I was not present at the Bush's [sic] dinner when Alexander and Dewey met, and I was not in the least concerned that they should meet. That, from your reference to Miss Webb in Miss Tasker's letter, must have been the special interest of Miss Webb at that time. During the years of the First World War and following it, I saw nothing of Dewey. It was from 1928 to about 1934 that I saw him a good deal, but never concerning Alexander [emphasis in the original] (Letter 6 December 1957).

As Naumburg states in her letter, the meeting was probably due to Ethel Webb. It is possible, however, that Naumburg was responsible for making Alexander aware of Dewey. It was only after meeting Naumburg in England that Alexander read one of Dewey's books and, according to McCormack, decided that Dewey was "the man" to introduce his work to America (44). No meeting took place during FMA's first American winter (Bloch 107). The Bushes at whose dinner Dewey and Alexander met appear to be Wendell T. and Mary Bush. Mary was a friend of Ethel Webb's from her New York piano teaching days, while Wendell was a colleague of Dewey's from the philosophy department at Columbia. The Bushes took lessons from Alexander at Webb's urging, and they in turn recommended them to Alice Dewey who, with her children began lessons in late 1915. Dewey himself began lessons after meeting Alexander at the dinner given by the Bushes in 1916 (ibid).

Dewey continued to take lessons from Alexander at intervals throughout his life. He claims to have found both physical and intellectual benefits from studying the Alexander Technique. He noted improvements in his vision and his breathing, and doctors commented on the marked elasticity of his ribs even in his late eighties. “Intellectually, Dewey said, he found it much easier, after he had studied the technique, to hold a philosophical position calmly once he had taken it or to change it if new evidence came up warranting a change” (Jones, *Body* 97). He contrasted this attitude with the rigidity of other academic thinkers. Alexander’s work, then, helped Dewey become more of a pragmatist.

In addition to their shared interest in pragmatism (even if Alexander did not call it pragmatism), Dewey and Alexander also shared an interest in education. Highlighting a confluence of their ideas and interests, in the introduction to *MSI* Dewey praised Alexander’s criticism of repressive schools on one hand and schools of “free expression” on the other (xxvi). Alexander and Dewey each founded and ran a school for children, Dewey in 1896 and Alexander in 1924. Such an enormous undertaking as creating a school is extremely significant, given that running the school was the main occupation for neither man. Dewey had his academic and tertiary teaching obligations, while Alexander had his private teaching practice. In both cases the running of the school was eventually handed to a very capable woman, whose teaching abilities and philosophy Dewey and Alexander respected and trusted: in Dewey’s case his wife, and in Alexander’s Irene Tasker.

From 1916 until the late 1920s Dewey and Alexander remained friends. Dewey and his family continued to have lessons from the Alexanders and Irene Tasker whenever they were in the United States. Between 1916 and 1924 they met frequently, yet none of their correspondence seems to have survived (Bloch 109). Their last significant meetings seem to have been when Alexander made a brief visit to New York in 1929 to attend Dewey’s seventieth birthday celebrations. He also wished to discuss his current manuscript, *UOS*, with Dewey, and to discuss Dewey’s recent success at securing support from the Rockefeller Foundation for scientific research into the Alexander Technique. After initial enthusiasm and delight, Alexander became increasingly doubtful and insisted on so many preconditions for the project that the research was eventually abandoned and the friendship became strained, at least from

the point of view of Alexander. Citing Jones and Westfeldt, Bloch claims that although F.M. was “still expressing delight in 1931... his friendship with Dewey would effectively come to an end” (142). Bloch’s references are inaccurate: there is no indication from either Jones or Westfeldt on the pages cited that the friendship came to an end. Jones only goes as far as saying that the relationship became strained; Westfeldt does not mention the friendship at all on the cited page. In any case, the friendship cannot have come to a complete end because Dewey wrote a glowing introduction for *UOS* in 1932, and Alexander personally inscribed a copy of *UCL* for Dewey in 1941 (Boydston, *John Dewey’s Personal 2*). Dewey ceased neither his support of Alexander’s work nor his interest in the technique. The following section explores in more detail the support Dewey gave Alexander and discusses the influence they had on each other’s work. The scholarship linking their work is then surveyed.

4.2.2 Support, Influence and Scholarship

The following section focuses on Dewey’s support of Alexander, discussing Dewey’s influence on Alexander, and Alexander’s influence on Dewey.

Dewey’s support of Alexander

Dewey wrote introductions for three of Alexander’s books: in 1918, 1923 and 1932 for the American edition of *MSI*, for *CCC* and for *UOS* respectively. In the first of these, *MSI*, Dewey particularly commended Alexander’s views on education. He also gives a brief review of Alexander’s philosophy of evolution and its consequences in modern life. He assures the reader that Alexander has a “definite procedure, based upon a scientific knowledge of the organism” (xxvi) with which to remedy the problems of modern life and ill health. He claims that one result of this procedure is “true spontaneity,” which is “not a birth-right but the last term, the consummated conquest, of an art—the art of conscious control to the mastery of which Mr Alexander’s book so convincingly invites us” (xxvii).

In *CCC*, Dewey underscored the scientific method of Alexander, noting that “any sound plan must prove its soundness in reference both to concrete consequences and to general principles.” Dewey asserted “unhesitatingly” that, when judged by the

standard “of a principle at work in effecting definite and verifiable consequences,” “Mr Alexander’s teaching is scientific in the strictest sense of the word... the plan of Mr Alexander satisfies the most exacting demands of scientific method” (xxviii). He also claimed that the primary control, Alexander’s principal discovery, was a scientific principle “with respect to the control of human behaviour as important as any that has been discovered in the domain of external nature” (xxx).

In 1932, sixteen years after his first experience with the Alexander Technique, Dewey wrote his third introduction to an Alexander book, *UOS*. He was now able to speak as someone with over a decade of experience in learning and thinking about the technique and could write with a long-term perspective. “As one goes on,” he observed, “new areas are opened, new possibilities are seen and realized; one finds himself continually growing, and realizes that there is an endless process of growth initiated” (x). Again, Dewey emphasised the importance of the technique for education, claiming that it provided the conditions for the central direction of all special educational processes: “It bears the same relation to education that education itself bears to all other human activities... It contains in my judgment the promise and potentiality of the new direction that is needed in all education” (xix).

Dewey’s three introductions bear witness to his belief in the importance of the Alexander Technique for education, his faith in its underlying scientific method, and the value he placed on art.

There were further instances of Dewey’s public support of Alexander’s work. In 1923 Dewey’s article in *The New Republic*, “A Sick World,” pointed out that Emile Coué (See Appendix 2) and Alexander had recently arrived in New York on the same boat. Dewey denounced Couéism as a cheap and easy way of dealing with symptoms, contrasting it with Alexander’s (slower and less famous) methods of “organic education and re-education” (45). “The contrast between the reception of the two men affords a fair measure for our preference of a seemingly cheap and easy way of dealing with symptoms, our wish to be cured rather than to be well” (ibid).

In a lecture given to the New York Academy of Medicine in 1928 Dewey sought to show his audience the extent of the mind-body split in the fields of physiology and

psychology. He claimed that this split, incarnated in religion, morals and business as well as science and philosophy, was also responsible for divisive education. There are two published versions of this lecture. One version, called “Preoccupation with the Disconnected,” mentions Alexander by name, endorsing his method of demonstrating the continuity of mind and body, and lamenting the loss of a culture that understood this. “F.M. Alexander has pointed out that until we have a procedure in actual practice which demonstrates the continuity of mind and body, we shall increase the disease in the means used to cure it” (“Preoccupation”).²¹ The other version, called “Body and Mind,” is reprinted in the 2008 collected works of Dewey, edited by Boydston. The reprint is an exact copy of the original paper given in 1928. In “Body and Mind” Dewey spoke about pragmatism rather than the Alexander Technique. He describes pragmatism as a “contemporary philosophic movement” that is discontented with the current separation of theory and practice, and knowledge and action. Rather, pragmatism “regards thought and the beliefs which proceed from it as themselves modes of action and strives to envisage them in their directive office in conduct.” He claims that the movement “is often regarded as a heresy, indeed as a novel and peculiarly American heresy indicative of an insensate love of keeping busy, no matter how”. “In truth,” however, Dewey explains, pragmatism “marks a return to the idea of philosophy which prevailed when reflective thought was young and lusty, eager to engage in combat in the public arena, instead of living a sheltered and protected life.” This is because in those days, he claims, “science and philosophy had not parted ways because neither of them was cut loose from the arts. One word designated both science and art: *techne*” (25). There is no mention of Alexander.

Dewey’s support of Alexander’s work was sometimes so strong, however, that it raised eyebrows and caused controversy. In 1918 Randolph Bourne, who had been one of Dewey’s disciples, reviewed Alexander’s American edition of *MSI*—the one with Dewey’s new introduction—for *The New Republic*. Bourne ridiculed

²¹ “Preoccupation” appears in a volume edited by Wilfred Barlow. It is only four pages long and is described as “extracts from a talk” called “Body and Mind” “with a paragraph from *Experience and Nature* (1925)” (*More Talk* 107). The inserted paragraph is not directly taken from *Experience and Nature*, however. In the book Alexander appears only in footnotes, while the inserted paragraph refers directly to Alexander. It is not clear who made this pastiche of Dewey’s paper that puts Alexander in the centre, where Dewey did not. Since it seems only to appear in Barlow’s book, it may well have been him.

Alexander's exuberant philosophy, explaining the need for Dewey's support, and lamenting Alexander's exaggerated claims for what Bourne recognized as a worthy technique. Dewey promptly defended Alexander's work, publishing a "Reply to a Reviewer" in the same journal.

In his article, "The Philosopher and the Physiologist," philosopher and historian Paul Grimley Kuntz shows the extent to which Dewey went out on a limb to endorse Alexander's work. Dewey was commonly thought to be naïve or dishonest in his endorsements. Kuntz observes that Dewey's biographers, colleagues and friends do not even cite Alexander's books. They assume that Alexander was a quack and their style is "constantly to debunk" (27). McCormack observed this same scepticism in one of Dewey's pragmatist colleagues, writing to Roberta Dewey that he "was a little surprised at Sidney Hook's insistence on passing off your husband's attitude toward Alexander's notions as just kindness, and I'm glad you scolded him a little" (Letter 8 April 1958). Kuntz further observes that Dewey and Alexander's relationship "was taken to be only one of therapy prescribed by Alexander, rather than one of a deeper recognition of the physiological evidence of Dewey's philosophical theory of the embodied mind or mindful body—anything but mind-body dualism."²²

Dewey's influence on Alexander

Most of the literature linking Dewey and Alexander aims to show that Dewey endorsed Alexander's work, and that Alexander influenced Dewey. This is predominantly the literature of the Alexander community, which, like its founder, wants to use Dewey's status to support the credibility of the Alexander Technique (and it is reviewed in the following section of this chapter). The community is less invested in showing that Dewey influenced Alexander in any way. Alexander, too, was less interested in leaving evidence of anyone's influence on his work than he was in using others' work to promote his own. He wanted to be remembered for his own discoveries and the evolution of his technique rather than to discuss what history of

²² *Although aiming to be sympathetic to Dewey's cause, Kuntz unwittingly defends the mind-body split and the limited understanding of Dewey's colleagues by calling Dewey "the philosopher" and Alexander "the physiologist." He calls the AT a "therapy" and claims that Alexander's work had yielded some wisdom "about the body."*

ideas may have lain behind his own. Not surprisingly, then, there is far less literature outlining the influence of Dewey on Alexander.

As Margaret Naumburg, who helped to launch Alexander's career in New York, said many years later, "I never noted any interest in Alexander, when I talked with him, about Dewey's or anyone else's books or ideas" (Letter 6 December 1957). "As I told you" she continues in the same letter, "he was a dyed-in-the-wool Tory, and had no use for anyone or any idea that was not of use to him for pushing his own work." Whether or not he was interested in Dewey's ideas, he certainly seemed to want to be *seen* as having been untouched by them. It is also possible, of course, that Naumburg's observation is correct, and that Alexander really did not have *any* interest in the ideas of others. Michael Bloch describes Alexander in his biography as a loner who "ploughed his own furrow, and learned (in a way that Dewey would have found admirable) from his own experience." He claims that F.M. was not much of a reader, and "his basic teachings cannot be said to owe much to other thinkers" (110). Richard Gummere, however, claims that Alexander "read a lot as a young man" ("Three Lessons"). Dewey told Gummere that he assumed FMA's reading had included much Herbert Spencer, perhaps because Spencer is quoted several times in Alexander's works.

Despite Bloch's claims that Alexander did not owe much to other thinkers, he points out that Alexander did often look to others for "corroboration of, or new ways of presenting, his existing ideas" (110). He finds some examples of Dewey's influence in *MSI* and *UOS*. In FMA's "future writings," claims Bloch, seeming to mean those works after 1924, "one can often glimpse Dewey's hand" (109). He cites the example of Dewey's constant theme between 1914 and 1917 that, "although the US ought to support the Allies in the European war, she needed to guard herself against the evils of militarism," noting that FMA repeats the same injunction in Part One of the American edition of *MSI* (109). Bloch also points to the clear influence of Dewey in the scheme of the famous opening chapter of FMA's third book *UOS*, "which is presented in the classic form of a Dewey enquiry" (109).

According to Dalton, Beaumont Alexander (FMA's youngest brother) confirmed in a letter dated 9 September 1957 that Dewey did read the manuscript of *UOS* and

commented on it before publication (312). This letter, however, contains no mention of the manuscript. A letter from Goddard Binkley, on the other hand, does claim that Dewey gave extensive help to Alexander, particularly with *UOS* and the second edition of *CCC*. “Dewey went over both of these very carefully before they ever saw a publisher. One can imagine the long and sometimes tortuous discussions the two men must have had together, especially over terminology” (7 February 1959). Both these letters were written to Eric McCormack whose doctoral project linked Dewey and Alexander. McCormack, researching in the 1950s, had the benefit of being able to correspond with those who had been in close contact with FMA, such as Margaret Naumburg. McCormack quotes Wilfred Barlow, Marjory *Barlow*, Irene Tasker and Frank Jones, either directly or indirectly in letters to him (all sighted), to support his claim that Alexander was influenced little, if at all, by Dewey’s ideas. Naumburg’s letter suggests (as quoted above) that Alexander did not actually disdain Dewey’s ideas but rather showed no interest in or use for *anyone’s* ideas but his own. Wilfred Barlow’s letter confirms only Alexander’s lack of interest in Dewey rather than his interest in the ideas of others in general: “My wife [Marjory *Barlow*] ... agrees with me that Alexander took very little interest in Dewey’s ideas—Miss Tasker in a recent conversation confirms this” (Letter 2 June 1957).

Despite Bloch’s opinion that Dewey would have approved of Alexander’s methods as a loner who ploughed his own furrow, it is nevertheless to be seen as a limitation that Alexander neither read widely, acknowledged many influences, nor showed great interest in the ideas of others. Jones confirms the unidirectional nature of the relationship and adds his opinion of it: “It was a pity that [Alexander] was not able to learn as much from Dewey as Dewey learned from him” (Letter 18 May 1957).

There is evidence to suggest that Alexander was even a little disparaging of Dewey and felt himself superior to the philosopher. The story Alexander tells in *CCC* of “a pupil of mine, an author” (124) is “surely that of Dewey,” says Murray (“John Dewey”). Alexander’s attitude towards the pupil is more like what one might expect towards a recalcitrant child. If it is indeed Dewey, it is a questionable attitude to such a loyal and eminent supporter of Alexander’s work:

One afternoon he [the pupil] came to his lesson unusually depressed and enervated. And in response to my inquiries he admitted that

he'd been indulging in his literary work that morning from 9 until 1 without a break, in spite of my express stipulation that he must make frequent breaks. I pointed out to him that if he'd been continuing his work for four hours without a break we couldn't be surprised at the unfortunate result (Alexander, *CCC* 124).

Alexander is also reported by Goddard Binkley as having described Dewey in the following disparaging way: “‘Oh, Dewey was a bad pupil, as he'll tell you himself. He had many lessons. But it saved him. He's an old boy of 89 or 90 now. When first he came to me, in 1914 or 15, he was like this’—(Alexander stooped over and shook his hands nervously)” (*Expanding* 48).

In both these descriptions there is a slightly condescending tone that indicates at the very least some feelings of ambivalence towards Dewey. Alexander told Frank Jones that when Dewey first came to see him “he was ‘drugged with thinking’ and used to fall asleep during lessons” (*Body* 97). If Alexander was as proud and as much of an intellectual loner as is reported, then it may have been difficult to have to lean on Dewey for authentication of his work. These feelings, if they existed, seem to have grown more complicated still when Dewey pushed for a scientific investigation into the technique. The comments about Dewey above are consistent with a desire not to acknowledge any great role Dewey might have played in helping him.

Alexander certainly did look to Dewey for new ways of presenting his ideas, as Bloch described. In the 1918 edition of *MSI*, as Dalton observed, after consultation with Dewey “Alexander no longer imputed immaculate powers to the subconscious. He simply asserted what Dewey had long argued, that the mind and body *interact* and therefore conscious and subconscious processes both play an important role in human behaviour” (Dalton 119). Indeed, Dewey had been writing about this since the 1880s, possibly before Alexander had even worked this out for himself, let alone written about it. Dewey thought that Alexander would have greater appeal among intellectuals if he formulated his thesis in commonly accepted scientific terms. He was particularly interested in getting Alexander to clarify his conception of the subconscious (*ibid*). As Dalton observes, Alexander had asserted in the first edition of *MSI* that “all manifestations of what we have called the ‘subconscious self’ are functions of the vital essence or life force, which functions are passing from

automatic or unconscious to reasoning or conscious control” (ibid). Such terminology had already grown in disfavour among philosophers and physicists (ibid). Dalton ascribes the changes in the second edition of *MSI* to Dewey’s influence. “Dewey helped Alexander to clarify his premises about the subconscious, to further elaborate on how his technique worked, and to reformulate his arguments in contemporary scientific and psychological terms” (ibid). Dalton also suggests that it was at Dewey’s urging that Alexander substituted the term “psychophysical”—a word familiar to experimentalists—in the place of “psychic” to avoid equating his work with that of parapsychologists and mind curists.

In 1923, in the preface of *CCC*, Alexander does acknowledge Dewey’s help, acknowledging that “the preparation of the subject matter of this book has proved a very difficult task, in which I have needed considerable assistance, and I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to Professor John Dewey for the invaluable suggestions he made after reading the manuscript” (xxiv). This may be the last (and only) clear acknowledgement in writing by Alexander that Dewey had helped him in any way. There follow several more examples of the influence Dewey had on Alexander. None of them is acknowledged by Alexander himself.

Alexander does not acknowledge Dewey’s input in his last book, *UCL*, but he does use Dewey’s phrase, “thinking-in-activity.” It appears in a passage which quite obviously refers to Dewey’s philosophy and is the final paragraph of the book—a fitting, if unnecessarily concealed, tribute to Dewey. The book finishes by pointing out that while man adopted the democratic ideal “as the way to freedom of thought and action” he did not understand what was necessary for its realisation. For this, Alexander believed, we need the “full development of man’s potentiality not only for individual freedom *of* thought and action, but for that individual freedom *in* thought and action in the general use and functioning of the self.” Such a development of potential “gives ... control of individual and therefore collective reaction to the way of life essential to the practice of the theory of democracy” [emphasis in original] (*UCL* 244).

Thus, it seems that Dewey helped Alexander with each and every one of his four books and did indeed have some influence on Alexander. It was not in Alexander’s

interests to make this widely or abundantly known, however, just as it was not in his nature to give much credit to anyone other than himself for his achievements.

Alexander's influence on Dewey

While Eric McCormack was researching his doctoral project on Dewey and Alexander, he developed a close friendship with Dewey's widow, Roberta. Much of their correspondence has been preserved. After about a year of research McCormack referred back to one of the first things Roberta had told him: "What you said that very first day at Maple Lodge is absolutely true: 'What you find in John Dewey after he met Alexander, you also find in John Dewey before he met him'" (Letter 8 April 1958). He then specifies that "it's rather that a lot of things come together afterward that were there, but hadn't come together before" (ibid).

In 1943 Frank Pierce Jones published what seems to be the first extant article linking Alexander and Dewey, "The Work of F.M. Alexander as an Introduction to Dewey's Philosophy of Education." Jones proposes that Dewey's three introductions to Alexander's books, together with the chapter on habits and will in *Human Nature and Conduct*, still provide the best introduction to Alexander's work. He describes the latter as "an educational technique which forms the practical counterpart of Dewey's educational philosophy" (1).

The prestige of Dewey's name has attracted to the work many who might otherwise not have heard of Alexander. But it is not generally recognized that Alexander, in turn, can provide a unique introduction to the philosophy of Dewey. With a knowledge of the technique a person will experience a change in his *manner* of thinking similar to the change experienced by Dewey himself since he first came into contact with Alexander in 1916 [emphasis in original] (3).

With this, Jones promotes the Alexander Technique but also very cleverly gives Dewey at least as much credit as he gives Alexander for his ability to introduce and teach the work. Ultimately, though, Jones is showing the influence of the Alexander Technique on Dewey. He seconds Dewey's plea that we link theory to practice by using the Alexander Technique, noting that in the past, "philosophy has had a bad name with the general public because it has never provided a sure bridge from theory

to practice... Unlike other philosophers, however, Dewey has in the technique of Alexander a method for translating his philosophy into experience” (4).

Father Eric McCormack wrote the first large-scale work linking the ideas of Dewey and Alexander, submitting his work in 1958, only a few years after both Dewey and Alexander died (1952 and 1955 respectively). His project was entitled, “Frederick Matthias Alexander And John Dewey: A Neglected Influence.” McCormack investigates the nature and effect of Dewey’s contact with the Alexanders and their work. He cites evidence from several of Dewey’s books and writings to argue that Alexander persuaded Dewey to rethink his understanding of habit and that Alexander’s influence pervades Dewey’s work. His third chapter discusses early relations between Dewey and Alexander, while the fourth chapter compares some of the essential doctrine of *Man’s Supreme Inheritance* with Dewey’s *Human Nature and Conduct*. In the fifth and final chapter the importance of some aspects of Alexander’s doctrine for Dewey’s philosophy is taken up. Thus his focus is on how Alexander influenced Dewey rather than vice versa.

McCormack found that of all Dewey’s published writings, *Experience and Nature* (*E&N*) was the one in which Alexander’s principles “stand out most clearly and have penetrated most deeply” (161). “It is in Chapter VII, ‘Nature, Life and Body-Mind,’ and Chapter VIII, ‘Existence and Ideas,’ that we find the most obvious applications of Alexander’s doctrine, frequently made in his own peculiar terminology” (161). McCormack points to Dewey’s discussion of “the plane of conscious control,” the “operations of the self as the tool of tools” and “the psychophysical mechanism” (161). Dewey describes end-gaining as “intentions and efforts” bringing forth the opposite of what was intended and striven for, the result being “confusion and catastrophe” (*E&N* 190). McCormack went so far as to say that *E&N* cannot be fully grasped without knowledge of what Alexander taught (161): “The hand is indeed the hand of Dewey, but the voice is the voice of Alexander” (162).

In *Human Nature and Conduct* (*HNC*), which appeared in 1922, Dewey based his chapter, “Habits and Will,” on Alexander’s process and technique. In this chapter Dewey now discusses Alexander’s ideas, seeming to call him simply “a friend.” He

differs from Alexander by speaking respectfully about the “friend” and by acknowledging Alexander in a footnote:

Recently a friend remarked to me that there was one superstition current among even cultivated persons. They suppose that if one is told what to do, if the right *end* is pointed to them, all that is required in order to bring about the right act is will or wish on the part of the one who is to act. He used as an illustration the matter of physical posture; the assumption is that if a man is told to stand up straight, all that is further needed is wish and effort on his part, and the deed is done [emphasis in original] (*HNC* 23).

Given that the matter chosen for illustration is “physical posture,” and the footnote acknowledges both the technique and the theoretical statement of the process as Alexander’s (Footnote 2, 28), the only possible conclusion is that Alexander is the friend.

The theme of *HNC* is much broader than Alexander’s psychosocial theories, and Dewey’s discussion revolves around the notion of habit in each of the three parts of the book. According to McCormack, whose doctoral dissertation examines the influence of Alexander on Dewey, it was Alexander’s technique (rather than his philosophy) “whereby rigid, unthinking habits can be brought under integrated, flexible, conscious control, that enabled Dewey to see more concretely how readjustments to environmental considerations, physical, social, and even moral, might be effected” (vii). McCormack cited evidence from several of Dewey’s books and writings to argue that Alexander persuaded Dewey to rethink his understanding of habit and that Alexander’s influence pervades Dewey’s work. McCormack stresses that he is not suggesting that Dewey made a wholesale takeover of Alexander’s notions. Rather, “it is a question of selection and assimilation rather than of borrowing” (67).

Dewey’s daughter, Jane, draws attention to her father’s debt to the Alexanders, quoting him thus: “My theories of mind-body, of the co-ordination of the active elements of the self and of the place of ideas in inhibition and control of overt action required contact with the work of F.M. Alexander and in later years his brother, A.R.,

to transform them into realities” (“Biography” 44-45).²³ Kuntz claims that Dewey’s concluding statements always expressed something he regarded as of great importance (25). He uses this as proof of the significance of the above tribute, coming as it does at the end of Dewey’s biography: “Dewey thanks a ‘variety of contacts’ but names only Alexander (‘and in later years his brother, A.R.’) particularly with regard to ‘theories of mind-body’ to ‘put substance into these forms’”(ibid). While, as Jane Dewey says, the biography may be regarded as an autobiography in its emphasis on varied influences, she is also careful to explain that he was *not* responsible for the form of the essay, or all its details (3). That is, while Dewey’s acknowledgement is obviously important, the fact that it comes at the end of the essay cannot be held as further evidence of his esteem.

Although the above quotation, from 1939, is one of Dewey’s last published references to Alexander, there is evidence of his continued regard for the work. Dewey wrote to Joseph Ratner thirty years after his introduction to the Alexander work to say that his confidence in Alexander’s work was unabated. He reiterated his belief that Alexander had made “one of the most important discoveries that has been made in practical application of the unity of the mind-body principle.” As a personal endorsement he added, “If it hadn’t been for their treatment,²⁴ I’d hardly be here today, as a personal matter. I don’t talk about it very much because unless one has had personal experience, it sounds to others just like another one of those enthusiasms for some pet panacea” (Letter 24 July 1946). Dewey’s personal communication with Frank Pierce Jones also shows his undiminished interest in the Alexander Technique. One of the last letters he wrote to Jones—in 1950—was to express his enthusiasm on learning that an experimental study was under way (*Body* 105).

In summary, the evidence suggests that while Dewey’s ideas were formed independently of Alexander, his own pragmatism *required* that of Alexander to make

²³ Dewey’s daughters (only Jane is named) edited this short biography in a 1939 edition of their father’s philosophy, claiming that in the emphasis on varied influences and in the philosophical portions “it may be regarded as an autobiography” (3).

²⁴ This is a curious way for Dewey to describe Alexander’s work. Dewey was an advocate for its importance to education, but this is not the only anomaly. In a letter, for example, Evelyn Dewey describes Alexander’s pupils as “patients” (13 November 1918).

his own philosophy completely pragmatic, that is, informed by experience. As Roberta Dewey and Eric McCormack discussed during the latter's PhD research linking Dewey and Alexander, Dewey's ideas were already there before he met Alexander but, as McCormack suggests, Alexander helped Dewey's ideas "come together" (Letter 8 April 1958)

Other works that link Dewey and Alexander do so in three broad ways. They use Dewey's pragmatism as a methodology in Alexander studies, they use Dewey's pragmatism to help the Alexander Technique "become" or they remind us of Dewey's invitation to Alexander's followers. These categories form the next three subheadings.

Using Dewey's pragmatism as a methodology in Alexander studies

Terry Fitzgerald used "Deweyan pragmatism" as his PhD methodology to compare and critique training programs in the Alexander Technique. The title of the thesis is "The Future of Alexander Technique Teacher Education: Principles, Practices and Professionalism." Fitzgerald's is one of the few critical dissertations on the Alexander Technique. His field is education, and he is an AT teacher and teacher trainer. Most PhDs examining the AT are situated in the field of music, or other areas of performance, and examine the effects of the AT on instrumental technique, or performance anxiety or both. Several studies have now been published that show the impact of the technique on chronic pain and other medical conditions (Ernst and Canter; Little et al., for example), but none critiques its teaching *methods* or indeed acknowledges that there exist different ways of teaching the technique. Fitzgerald presents one of the fundamental problems in the teaching of the Alexander Technique: that many of its discourses and practices unwittingly reinforce Cartesian dichotomies, despite their being antithetical to Alexander's beliefs (18). He chooses "Deweyan pragmatism" as the methodological vehicle for his investigation. As a particular process of "educational inquiry," he explains, "Deweyan pragmatism has the capacity to open up educational practice by challenging the unexamined assumptions and dichotomous thinking that keep in place traditional systems and discourses" (79).

Fitzgerald also uses the post-structural approach of critical pragmatism as a lens with which to critique aspects of the AT field that have never before been analysed in depth. He refers to educationalist and political scientist, Cherryholmes, who wants educators to see the ebb and flow of change, to choose to constitute a dialectic of construction-deconstruction, to accept that curriculum discourse in the field is fragmented, pushed and pulled, contradictory and incomplete, so that curricula may evolve (*Power* 144). As Fitzgerald says, “the discourses and practices of a field need continually to be reinterpreted and reconstructed against a background of no moral or objective certainties” (19). He notes that Alexander’s attempts to construct his discourses and practices according to his holistic belief in body-mind continuity were circumscribed by his needing to use the educational structures and intellectual language of the epistemological paradigm prevailing at the time. “The result is that his followers inherited a set of Cartesian “discourses-practices” (Cherryholmes, *Power* 15) that are becoming problematic in a postmodern world which increasingly expects professional practitioners to look at their work critically” (Fitzgerald 19).

Fitzgerald extends Garrison’s phronetic interpretation of Dewey (in *Dewey and Eros*) to Alexander and suggests that the phronetic approach is relevant to qualitative research into the AT. *Phronesis* is Greek for “practical wisdom.” Fitzgerald suggests that Alexander himself was a critical pragmatist, pointing to his questioning of traditions, habits and beliefs: “Alexander, the ‘revolutionary and heretic’, was enough of a critical pragmatist to continuously question the process he was engaged in” (71). Fitzgerald argues for a continued pragmatic approach to teacher training. His own use of pragmatism is in the analysis of his data.

Using Dewey to help the Alexander Technique “become”

In his essay, “F.M. and the Scientific Method,” David Mills leans on Dewey’s introductions to Alexander’s books to argue that what is scientific—and most important—about Alexander’s work is its unwearied experimental character. As in Newton’s work in establishing the laws of motion, argues Mills, what was most important was *not the laws themselves but the systematic methods* which he developed to establish them. In his doctoral dissertation, “Dimensions of Embodiment,” Mills again links Dewey and Alexander, this time drawing on the

works of Merleau-Ponty and George Kelly to sustain a larger argument. Mills uses Merleau-Ponty and Dewey to lay a theoretical foundation for a synthesis of the practical work of Kelly and Alexander. “Comprehending is an embodied act,” argues Mills, who goes on to develop a conversational methodology for dealing with learning in a fully embodied way. Mills raises the question of whether it was what Alexander did with himself or what he did with his hands that is the Alexander Technique. He notes that while the scientific and philosophical importance that Dewey attributed to the work is clearly consistent with “what Alexander did with himself,” the Alexander Technique community has always seemed, in practice, to define the AT as “what he did with his hands” (82). Mills invites us to consider Alexander’s Technique in the same way as Kelly regarded psychology. Kelly was not so interested in what psychology *is*, “but rather in what it might *become*” (82). Dewey’s comments can then become an invitation to take the same view of the AT that Kelly took of psychology. As Mills observes, Alexander’s followers seem collectively to have taken the opposite view, that is, to focus on what it *is* (or has been). “And though they are as pleased with his endorsement as was their originator, they seem collectively to be as uninterested in taking up Dewey’s invitation to a wider exploration as were Dewey’s own colleagues and students” (82). Mills sees the fact that the technique has evolved “as a means for self-improvement rather than the method for self-inquiry that Dewey saw in it” as “a great opportunity missed” (82).

Dewey’s invitation to Alexander’s followers

Richard Gummere was well acquainted with both Alexander brothers as well as with John Dewey and Frank Pierce Jones. He reminds us of the opportunity missed by Alexander to learn from Dewey, and challenges Alexander’s professional descendants to act differently. “Well, F.M. is gone,” he says, “like a great meteor. But if the rest of us turned to Dewey, what might we learn?” (“Three Lessons” 45). Gummere supposes that Alexander’s early readings of Spencer gave him the courage to pursue his goals: “That Victorian English thinker, a champion of Evolution before Darwin, thought he saw a mighty drive inherent in the world advancing the human race in its progress” (48). Gummere believes that the optimism of “this weighty but popular philosopher” helped “nerve” Alexander “for his venture into the unknown” (48). But “for philosophical support” Gummere contends that “the Alexander constituency today can improve on Spencer” by turning to Dewey. “The independent Yankee

deplored reliance on any idealist's notion of an Unseen Hand, of a Grand Design. He felt sure the whole responsibility for human improvement fell to us, Here Below, and our only resource was intelligence. The ability to use that power more imaginatively is the gift to which F.M. Alexander referred in the title of his book, *MSP*' (48). Gummere highlights Dewey's "scary appeal for more good philosophy—the candid facing of large problems concealed in the hurly-burly of life and work" (48). He directs Alexandrians to Dewey's *Human Nature and Conduct* in which Dewey demonstrates that creative living can become a habit. "The whole book supports the assumption that great energy comes from both the resistance to creative habits by stable habits and from the challenge to the stable by the creative—a constant confrontation of the old and the new, a noble tension" (49). That is, Gummere put out a call to Alexander teachers to apply this creativity to their teaching, a call to apply Dewey to Alexander.

Summary of literature

Most of the Alexander literature linking Dewey and Alexander aims to show that Dewey endorsed Alexander's work, and that Dewey was indeed influenced by Alexander.

In the absence of scientific proof that the technique is effective, Alexander relied heavily on endorsements from an important figure who covered the field of philosophy, education, science and art. Dewey himself insisted, however, that scientific proof was required, and many contemporary researchers have attempted to fulfil this requirement. But if we value Alexander's work as a method of inquiry and critical evaluation, which treats—pragmatically—his conclusions and teaching procedures as fallible, then we do not need scientific proof. Rather, we might, as Alexander did, value the endorsement by a pragmatic philosopher, such as Dewey. There are a small number of scholarly works that either show the influence of Dewey on Alexander and/or that urge us to use Dewey's philosophy to help us to teach and understand the Alexander Technique better. The evidence suggests that Dewey needed Alexander to help him embody his philosophy, while Alexander needed Dewey to help make his ideas clear. I argue and aim to show that this is still the case.

This chapter traced Dewey's life and career, outlining the key ideas of his philosophy and the influences on his thinking. It then surveyed the connections between Dewey and Alexander. These connections were traced back to their meeting in New York and considered their common interests and friendship, the professional support they extended to each other and the question of the extent to which mutual influence can be detected in the intellectual projects they pursued. In the following chapter Marjorie Barstow is introduced and her background and influences examined.

CHAPTER 5: MARJORIE BARSTOW: BACKGROUND, INFLUENCES AND CONNECTIONS TO PRAGMATISM

This chapter has three main parts. The first, 6.1, examines Barstow's family, cultural and educational background. The second part, 6.2, discusses the various influences on her work from F.M. Alexander to Dewey and from quarter-horse training to dance. The final part, 6.3: "Barstow and the Aspects of Pragmatism," presents an overview of Barstow's pragmatism. The focus of this part is to draw links to the main tenets of pragmatism in general and Dewey's pragmatism in particular. The chief features of pragmatism are reiterated and the corresponding aspect of Barstow's pedagogy is indicated.

The published information about Marjorie Barstow's life is scarce. Many of the details collated here are from primary sources such as shipping records, newspapers and school yearbooks. The details frequently contradict what Barstow said about herself (or is reported to have said), not in content, but with respect to dates. This is not surprising, given that many of the interviews she gave were very late in her life. A common kind of answer in an interview was one that pointed out the difficulty of remembering that far back. In the Stony Brook Congress Interview in 1986, for example, in response to a question about the point at which the Alexanders allowed the trainees to use their hands to teach, she said, laughing, "Oh, That's a great question. That's something that happened fifty years ago. How do you expect me to remember details of fifty years ago?!"

5.1 Beginnings and early education

Marjorie Louise Barstow was the youngest of four children born in Ord, Nebraska, to William Townsend Barstow and Frances Foote Barstow. Nebraska is a state both of the Great Plains and of the Midwest. Her parents had come from Haverhill, New Hampshire, and New Berlin, in upstate New York, respectively. Marjorie was born in

1899 on 25 August. Her siblings were Helen Jacques, Adrian Foote and Frances Isabel, who were born in 1887, 1890 and 1895. In 1900 the growing family moved from the tiny rural town of Ord to the big city of Lincoln and built the majestic house that Marjorie still lived in during the late 1980s. Lincoln was by then the state capital, and in 1921 the University of Nebraska Yearbook, *The Cornhusker*, described it as “the second city of the state... a seat of learning and government” (19).²⁵

Despite the state capital’s leaning towards learning and government, Nebraska remains to this day a prairie state and consists mostly of farms. Nebraska’s nickname is “Cornhusker State.” William Barstow was the owner of a grain company. In an attempt to give Marjorie’s practicality and reflectiveness a background, Bill Brenner offers this recollection of her father’s business, “All the grain was delivered in wagons with horses pulling the wagons. No automobiles, no speed” (“Practical Marj” 37). The Barstow family was one of significant social standing and the Golden Wedding Anniversary party of Marjorie’s parents in 1936 was reported in the *Lincoln Evening Journal* as “one of the outstanding events of the fall social season” with more than 200 guests (“People You Know”).

Marjorie Barstow graduated from Walnut Hill High School in 1917. This was a finishing school in Nattick, Massachusetts, near where her mother had lived (Retzlaff et al. 8). Barstow spent two years there and then returned to Lincoln to attend the University of Nebraska in 1918. Her faculty was “Arts and Sciences”, but there is no extant record of what she studied there. She says many years later, “I sort of majored in physical education, I guess, but I think when I finished I had more credits in English. I did a lot in the athletic department” (ibid 9). Her extracurricular activities, however, are widely documented in *The Cornhusker Yearbooks*.

Barstow was a keen and able athlete as well as a dancer. She was a member of the Women’s Athletic Association (WAA) and an executive board member in 1919. Under the heading “Minor sports” in the 1920 *Cornhusker*, she is reported as having won first place in dancing:

²⁵ *The largest city is Omaha, on the Missouri River, and was the capital before the seat of government was moved to Lancaster in 1867. Lancaster soon after changed its name to Lincoln in honour of the recently assassinated president.*

The annual Minor Sports contest was featured by dancing and Indian club swinging. First place in dancing was awarded to Marjorie Barstow, who interpreted the difficult dance 'Bacnanal'²⁶ (sic) with excellent technique and spirit (388).

She was reported in the same yearbook to have won first place in the dancing the previous year, 1919. Barstow had learned to dance as a child: ballroom dancing, ballet and what she herself describes as "modern dance:"

I used to teach ballet. I used to teach modern dancing. People say to me, 'What kind of modern dancing did you do?' and I said, 'I can't explain it to you 'cause the thing I'm talking about you've never even seen.' Those were the days of Isadora Duncan and the Balanchines and those people and their dancing was very different... Freedom, flexibility, poise, grace. And you just don't see that anywhere nowadays (Retzlaff et al. 25-26).

Barstow continued to dance into her twenties. She also seems to have taught at the university. The 1924 *Cornhusker* reports that in 1923, which seems to be after Barstow had graduated, she "directed the dance 'All in a Garden Fair,' which was given in collaboration with a recital of Miss Barstow's pupils" (447). Barstow is also reported to have attended the Vestof-Serova Dancing School in New York and the Rock Mt. Dancing Camp in Colorado (Owen).

But dancing was not Barstow's only forte in the realm of the physical. In March 1920 she was selected as the university's official delegate and sent to the convention of the Central Section of the Women's Athletic Association in Columbus, Missouri. Barstow and three "unofficial delegates" "came back full of new ideas for the next year, and a consciousness of the bigness of the organisation and its influence" (*Cornhusker* 1920, 382). She was the winner of the shot-put event in 1919 (*ibid*, 389), and she came equal second over all in the 1920 track meet (1921, 273). In 1921 she was president of the Women's Athletic Association (1921, 75).

Barstow's appearances in the yearbooks also give a hint of her interest in progressive issues of the day. In her first year at college, she joined the Alpha Phi sorority, formed in 1872 at the University of Syracuse. This was one of the first three Greek-letter organisations for women. Several of the ten founders of this fraternity (as it was

²⁶ Probably a mis-spelling of the *Danse Bacchanale* from Saint-Saëns's opera, *Samson et Dalila*.

called then) had prominent careers in education and/or publishing and were active in women's issues. In 1919 Marjorie and her two sisters were members: Mrs Dan De Putron and Miss Frances Barstow as "members in the city" and Marjorie Barstow as a "sophomore" (*Cornhusker* 1919, 313). In 1920 Marjorie is listed as a "junior," while her two sisters are listed as "Resident Members" (1920, 236). Their affiliation with this sorority suggests that the Barstow sisters were interested in progressive issues and education for women. Or else they may simply have joined the Alpha Phi for family reasons.²⁷ Confirming the former hypothesis, however, Marjorie held the post of treasurer for Women's Self-Government Association, or WSGA (1919, 393). The purpose of the WSGA was "to uphold the rights and welfare of the women in the University" (1920, 313). WSGA was "the one University organization to which all women of the University belong" (1921, 419). In 1920 it was composed of more than 1000 women students and run by a council. Barstow was one of these nine council members (1920, 313). In 1921 she was one of seven board members, by whom "house rules are made for all women students" (1921, 419). These posts certainly suggest an interest in women's issues, progressive education and government.

Barstow is curiously absent from the 1922 edition of *The Cornhusker*. Although she is supposed to have graduated that year, she does not appear in the class lists of graduands. She is no longer part of the WSGA council. On the Women's Athletic Association page, she appears to be present in the photograph of fourteen un-named board members and is listed as an "active member" (168). She is listed only as a resident member of Alpha Phi, along with her two older sisters (276). In January of the previous year, her brother, Adrian Foote Barstow, was murdered at the family home at the age of 29 (6 Mar 1891–22 Jan 1921). According to newspaper articles from the time, "young Barstow" had just put his car in the garage. A neighbouring visitor heard "outcries" before the shots were heard. The Nebraska State Historical Society (NSHS) described the crime as one of Lincoln's unsolved murders. It was assumed by police that it was a robber who was known to Adrian:

²⁷ *Syracuse is very near the city where Marjorie's mother, Frances (née Foote), was born, New Berlin. One of the founding members of the Alpha Phi at Syracuse was a Miss Martha Foote, perhaps a relation of Frances. The Footes were/are a significant family in New England and New York State, having at least two books published on their genealogy.*

On January 22, 1921, Adrian Barstow, prominent grain and lumberman, was killed between his garage and his home at 1445 South Twentieth Street. The murder was definitely fixed at a few minutes before midnight. Barstow had put his car in the garage and started for the house. The police finally decided that Barstow had surprised a burglar whose identity he knew, and had been killed. The murderer was never located (Maupin, qtd in NSHS).²⁸

This traumatic event and the ensuing grief of the family may explain a kind of hiatus and/or vagueness in the reporting of events by Marjorie between this time and the time when she went to London. That is, for most of the 1920s. It may also account for her almost complete disappearance from the *Cornhusker* Yearbooks in her final year. It is also difficult to ascertain exactly when she finished her tertiary studies. She notes in later censuses that she completed four years at college (while her sister, Frances, claims to have completed only two). In the 1921 *Cornhusker* she is listed as a “junior” in Arts and Science: Alpha Phi; President of WAA; Valkyrie: Student Council. A junior is completing his/her third year. Marjorie’s academic achievements are not mentioned in later *Cornhuskers*. She does appear in later yearbooks other than in 1924, as mentioned above, where she was reported to have directed a dance in collaboration with a recital by her pupils.

5.2 Alexander Training, Teaching and Influences

A. Alexander training and the influence of FMA

Barstow reports that her dancing teacher went to England one summer and worked with Mr Alexander for a couple of weeks (Stillwell 15). She brought back one of his books, which Barstow read. Barstow was used to going away for the summer—

²⁸ *The Barstows believed that robbery was the motive, and it was not known “how much money he had on his person” (Sunday World Herald). Three weeks later it was reported that members of the family had seen a man riding away on a bicycle “across the Barstow lawn immediately after the fatal shots rang out. Evidence developed later that the same bicycle rider had a narrow escape from death when he crashed into an automobile just a block away from the Barstow home. One theory is that it was a ‘hired’ murder” (Omaha World Herald, “Offers”). William Barstow offered a \$5000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the murderer, as documented in several newspapers (Los Angeles Times; Omaha World Herald, “Offers”). Despite the search being held nation-wide (Omaha World Herald, “On Trail”), the case was never solved.*

mostly to New York—to train with other dancers, including students of Isadora Duncan. Her family was not averse to long-distance travel. The daughters had attended boarding school in Massachusetts; Adrian appears to have lived in Saskatchewan,²⁹ Canada, to work as a farmer (United-States) and Helen, the oldest child, had travelled to Europe at the age of 22.³⁰ As mentioned, Marjorie had also travelled on her own to Colorado, Missouri and New York. After reading Alexander's book, she decided to go to England to find out more about his work and how it could help her dancing.

In November 1926 (slightly earlier than she commonly recounted), Marjorie travelled with her sister, Frances Isabel, to London where they both had daily lessons with F.M. and A.R. Alexander for six months. They returned at the end of May 1927. According to Marjorie in much later interviews, she returned to Lincoln and opened her dance studio again for a couple of years. What is usually left out of Marjorie's story is a trip to England at the end of May 1929. The two sisters again travelled together, otherwise unaccompanied, arriving in Southampton on 1 June. They departed Liverpool eight weeks later on 26 July, arriving in Quebec on 2 August 1929. It is not clear whether this trip was for a second series of daily lessons with the Alexanders, but since Marjory *Barlow* describes Barstow as coming over more than once with her sister for lessons, this was probably the case: "Some of them had had years of work [before starting training], like Marjorie Barstow. She and her sister used to come over from the States and work with FMA" (Oxford 15).

Seven months after their second return from England (January 1930), Frances married and moved to Wisconsin to start a family. Marjorie was now left with just one sibling in Lincoln, her much older sister, who had also married and was busy with three

²⁹ *This information appears on his World War I Draft Registration Card. He went to "camp" where the flu epidemic of 1918 prevented the troops from going to war. By the time the camp was clear of flu, the war was over (Retzlaff et al. 16).*

³⁰ *She seems to have travelled with the Harris family (Frank B, Annie Rowena and Fritz W [age 18]) and Anna M Tibbits [age 42], arriving in Liverpool on June 29 1910 and returning to Boston from Naples Sep 1910 (shipping records). She confirms in the Neighborhood Oral History Project that she went with "some friends of ours, a family and their son. ...Mr Harris was a jeweller in Lincoln" (Retzlaff et al. 14). They travelled from Italy to England, France, Germany and Switzerland. Helen returned with typhoid fever and did not finish her university degree, being ill for an entire year (ibid 13).*

children. That same year, F.M. Alexander decided to commence his formal training school. At the end of February 1931 (18 months after the last trip), Barstow returned to England, this time on her own. She trained with the Alexanders for the next three years, returning home only once for Christmas in early December 1931. When she returned for her second year of training, she quoted “Ashley Place” as her proposed residence, which is the address of Alexander’s home and school. Previously the addresses given had been the “English Speaking Union, 36 Charles St, Berkely Sq, London” and “C/- American Express” respectively.

Barstow says that what drew her to the technique was partly her interest in dance, but that she knew many students “in all phases of the performing arts” and had noticed one common characteristic in all of them: “The quality of their performance did not seem to improve beyond a certain level considering the many hours they spent practising” (Stillwell 15). She says in the same interview that she had no idea of doing anything special with it: “I simply figured ‘Well, here’s something that is in my pathway and I either jump over it or stumble into it and find out what it’s all about’” (16). But she was clearly interested in the technique from the point of view of performing: “For people who are interested in movement Alexander’s work can be of great value to them” (15). She had also noticed that students who came to her with “fairly good coordination (not too much excess pressure on their bodies) were always the best dancers and that gave me a bit of insight” (17). Finally, what impressed her the most about F.M. Alexander was “his general manner of use, in performance, in his teaching, which one could say was a performance because it was so dynamic and full of energy. The quality of his movement and the quality of his voice... His strength, for me, was very much in the way in which he used himself in activity” (19).

B. Influence of other Alexander teachers (early)

During the training course, Barstow helped Irene Tasker in Alexander’s “Little School” for children. Barstow listed Tasker as one of her teachers (Fertman, “Memory”). She was certainly an apprentice and/or assistant to Tasker. Like Barstow, Tasker was a mature, independent woman interested in progressive education. She was probably Barstow’s first indirect link with John Dewey. Tasker had studied with and spent some time with Dewey in America. She took a post-graduate course with

Dewey in psychological ethics and in 1918 accompanied the Deweys to Stanford University (California) for a lecture tour. Tasker knew the Dewey family and had taught several of them. In a letter to her parents, Jane Dewey writes that she has been to Miss Tasker “every day this week” and thinks that she can go “three times from now on” (Letter 13 March 1920).

Tasker was probably the first teacher to teach predominantly “application work” (Tasker, “Connecting”). Barstow acknowledges the influence that Tasker’s application work on her: “That again made me see (I used to help her some in the school) and observing the children made me see how valuable our whole coordination is in relation to any of our activities” (Stillwell 18). In the 1980s Barstow wrote to Erika Whittaker saying that she thought Irene Tasker had been of more value than they could realise at the time they were in training: “Now I appreciate what she did for me more and more” (Whittaker, “The FM” 14).

Fertman also lists Ethel Webb and Irene Stewart³¹ as Barstow’s teachers: “She admired these teachers and decided to bring about Alexander teachers based on that older, original model of training through apprenticeship” (“Memory”). Webb and Tasker met in Rome while studying with Maria Montessori and it is possible that they passed on their interest in progressive education to Barstow. Webb is said to have been well versed in Dewey and this may have provided another link for Barstow to Dewey (Zuck 216). Zuck does not give the source of this claim, however, and it appears to be undocumented elsewhere.

C. Alexander Teaching and the influence of ARA

When Barstow returned to Lincoln after the training course, in December 1933, she closed her dance studio, having decided that the Alexander Technique was “much more fundamental” and “valuable to the people” she would be helping (Stillwell 19). Barstow’s teaching practice grew through the curiosity of friends and then word of mouth. “It just sort of developed by itself. I didn’t have much to do with it,” she says

³¹ *Although Stewart is listed as a training member starting in the same year as Barstow, it is believed by Fertman that she was already assisting Alexander to some extent (Email 14 January 2015). Sources on Stewart are extremely scarce. He may be confusing Irene Stewart with Irene Tasker.*

(ibid). It was soon after Barstow's return to Lincoln that ARA Alexander moved to Boston to live. He invited Barstow to come and be his assistant. This invitation reflects the regard that he had for his Nebraskan student. For eight years, from about 1934 to 1942, she lived on the East Coast, either accompanying ARA to New York on weekends or remaining in Boston to teach his Saturday pupils. They worked together during the winter months, "what you might call the school year," (ibid) and then returned to their respective homes for the summer, Barstow to Lincoln and ARA to England. It seems, then, that Barstow spent more time as an apprentice to ARA than she did learning directly from his brother, FMA. It is at this time that John Dewey took lessons from ARA: between 1935 and 1941. Dewey told Frank Jones "that in many respects he got more from them than from the lessons he had from F.M." (*Body* 104).

It is hard to glean from Stillwell's interview with Barstow exactly when the group teaching at the university began. A friend of Barstow's who had been the first Dean of Women arranged for her to teach in three different departments at the University of Nebraska. Chance claims that this marked the beginning of Barstow's "long study of group teaching" and took place in the 1950s ("Obituaries" 15). Conable, however, believes that when he met her in 1962 she did not yet teach groups (*Festschrift* 24). Stillwell's interview indicates that she began teaching *large* groups in 1971 (20). Chance indicates that "her group teaching skills took a major turn" with "an invitation from the Theatre Department of Southern Methodist University (SMU) in Dallas, Texas" ("Obituaries" 15). He names 1973 as the date, although Conable and Barstow say that it was 1971 (*Festschrift* 24 and Stillwell 20). It was here, explains Chance, that she arrived to find a class of sixty students and, "rather than disappoint them, Marj proceeded to figure out a way to teach that many people at once," surprising herself with the results she elicited—despite the overwhelming student to teacher ratio" (ibid). It was also around this time that Barstow began to run workshops—in addition to the private lessons she had been teaching for decades—at her home. Rickover notes that she was virtually unknown until she was in her 70s (the 1970s), although she had been teaching consistently since the 1930s. It was only in the seventies that she came to be widely recognized for the quality of her teaching (Rickover and Cross).

There is a gap in the documented detail of Marjorie Barstow's life from about 1942 to 1970. In August 1942 she turned forty-three. In April of that year her mother had died at the age of eighty-three, leaving Marjorie's eighty-nine-year-old father without any other family members at home. As the youngest of four and the only unmarried child, Marjorie was perhaps expected to return home to care for her father. This she seems to have done, and he lived on until May 1948. Another traumatic event in Barstow's life was the death of her beloved nephew, Adrian DePutron, her older sister Helen's youngest son. Born shortly after the premature death of his uncle Adrian, he was presumably named in memory of him. The death of the younger Adrian in the Battle of the Bulge in Luxembourg towards the end of World War II must have caused a compound grief, also bringing back the pain of her brother's early and violent death. He died on 20 January 1945, almost the same day of the year as his uncle, and just four months before the war ended. He was 22. William Conable confirmed that Barstow was devastated at her nephew's death (Interview). Barstow honoured her nephew with a gift to the Nebraska State Historical Society of over \$50,000. It is unclear when she did this, as the gift was made by her estate. Helen's husband, Daniel DePutron, died eight days later, creating a triple blow for Helen and indirectly, for Marjorie. It is perhaps not surprising that she remembered few details about everyday life from this decade.

A.R. Alexander left Boston unintentionally for good in 1945, when he went to England just for the summer but was not permitted to return due to health reasons. He died in 1947. Barstow says that her teaching practice "developed by itself," but there are still a couple of decades with no details about her life or work. Who was Marjorie Barstow in these years? With whom did she associate? Was this a fertile period of reading and thinking and experimenting? William Conable says that Barstow was an entrepreneur and that business took up a large amount of her time. She ran the farm and trained quarter horses. Her Alexander students were friends and family. Teaching was only a small part of her life (Interview). Walter Carrington's diary of 1946 sheds a little light on this otherwise dimly lit period of Barstow's life. This entry revealed that in fact it was a fertile period of experimenting for Barstow: "She has been writing to him [Alexander] claiming to have made wonderful new discoveries. However, he will have nothing to do with them" (*TTR* 26).

A.R. Alexander's influence on Marjorie Barstow's teaching cannot be underestimated. When it was suggested to Barstow that her teaching had been significantly influenced by ARA, she insisted that FMA was really "the one" (Conable, Interview).³² Walter Carrington maintained, however, that Barstow "idolised" ARA (*TTR* 7).

D. Acquaintance with and influence of Dewey

There are various anecdotes about Barstow's love of books and knowledge and reading. They are pieced together here to indicate the possibility that Barstow may have read some of Dewey's works.

Through reading

When I asked Cathy Madden whether she knew what Barstow used to read, she laughed and said, "Well, her library was a wonder to behold. I mean, she had this giant coffee table that spun, that was made from an old wagon wheel with a glass top on it, and, it was mostly magazines, but what we would marvel at was that every year a whole new topic would appear." While Madden does not "remember particular philosophy," she knows that Barstow "read a lot" (Private Lesson 1 Feb 2012). Richard Gummere reports that Barstow's reading "reflects her concern for growth." He observed that she was hungry "for assurance that the world is capable of growth." In 1989 he reported that she had recently subscribed to a scientific periodical and asked him especially to read an issue devoted to the great discoverers of this century. This was the year in which she turned 90. "At the same time," he adds, "she was re-reading *The Use of the Self* as though it were holy scripture" (*Festschrift* 166-67).

The significance of the library in the Barstows' house is highlighted by Don Weed, as he recalls the evolution of his branch of teaching in discussion with Barstow:

The Interactive Teaching Method was conceived in the library of Marjorie Barstow's home in Lincoln, Nebraska. Over the years I was privileged to live there on many occasions. Although the training classes with Marj and our formal lessons together were invaluable, I always felt that the most important part of my training

³² *The fact that Barstow did not pay a great deal of tribute to A.R. may have been her very private and subtle response to any unpleasantness he may have displayed. Recall that Barlow reported complaints about him and described him as a "bit of a bully."*

was in those sessions we spent in the library discussing the work. Very often, we would take out one of Alexander's books, and line by line, word by word, work together to find out about and illuminate his ideas. We would then relate these ideas to the practical considerations of teaching students ("How the ITM").

In this passage, Weed also highlights Barstow's meticulous approach to the reading of texts. Perhaps in contrast with the claim that Barstow was widely read, Marjory *Barlow* relates another story, which suggests that Barstow read little other than Alexander's books: "Michael Frederick was a very close friend to Marjorie Barstow. He told me a couple of lovely stories about her. One very important one was that she had one of F.M.'s books always by her bedside and that she read his books all the time. She hardly read anything else. People should know that" (Davies 110). While the suggestion that Barstow read little else is probably inaccurate given Madden's and Gummere's observations above, Barstow would certainly have been very familiar with Dewey's introductions to Alexander's books. That is, we can be fairly sure that she was familiar with at least some of Dewey's writing and, given her broad sweep, probably more than just these introductions.

Through Personal Connection

Barstow met Dewey when she was working as A.R. Alexander's teaching assistant. In the following excerpt from an interview by Janet Stillwell, she expresses a retrospective wish to discuss ideas with him:

He had lessons for quite a few years with F.M., and then when A.R. came to Boston to teach he continued to study. I used to see him when he came in for his lessons, but I never sat down and chatted with him. I don't think I understood the whole procedure well enough at that time to do so [after more than ten years of study and experience of the Alexander Technique]. I can think of a lot of things now that I'd like to ask him and talk to him about. Dewey was the one who termed the constructive thinking, 'Thinking in activity' (18).

Frank Pierce Jones may have been the key connection between Dewey and Barstow. Jones's first Alexander lessons were with ARA in Boston in late 1938. Barstow was at that time working as ARA's assistant. It was during this time that Barstow and Jones met (Chance, "Obituaries" 14). Jones had his first lessons from FMA in Maine in September 1940 and upon reassurance and encouragement from Dewey, began his

training as the only student in the first American training course in July 1941. As has been outlined in Chapter 4, Jones remained in contact with Dewey until Dewey died in 1952. Jones seems to have read Dewey's books very closely indeed, citing five of them in particular as providing the Alexander student with "a wealth of passages that evoke experiences" Dewey had "in applying the technique to his own life" (*Body* 104). Dewey took lessons from Jones after ARA returned to England. Together they discussed the importance of scientific studies into the Alexander Technique. Dewey wrote to Jones, saying, "A scientific investigation ... was something that Alexander 'was never able to undertake because of early obstinate prejudices—whose formation or persistence is readily understandable on any theory except his own'" (*Body* 105). Jones shared Dewey's attitude but did not consider himself qualified either by temperament or training to undertake a scientific investigation himself. In the absence of other candidates, however, Jones found himself "gradually propelled in that direction" (*ibid*). When Jones wrote to Dewey to share the modest results of his first pilot study, Dewey was delighted. He wrote, "You have every reason to be pleased to the point of excitement," and urged Jones to seek foundation support. Dewey died before Jones succeeded in getting such support, and Jones often wished in the course of his investigation that he "could have discussed it with Dewey" (*ibid*).

Barstow and Jones corresponded frequently. They were close enough to have travelled to London together to visit various Alexander training schools, and this visit took place some time in the 1950s or early 1960s (Conable, Interview). This trip alone must have provided many hours for discussions about the AT, teaching and training techniques, scientific investigation, and the works and ideas of Dewey. Barstow was interested in Jones's scientific studies into the technique and may even have been one of his benefactors (Conable, Interview). Conable concedes that Barstow "was not an academic." "But," he adds, "she supported Frank's research and made financial contributions, I *think*... She had a foundation and she contributed to stuff. She was a wealthy woman. She could also to a certain extent follow what he was doing. But it wasn't where she lived. It *was* where he lived" (*ibid*).

According to Tommy Thomson, who trained unofficially with Jones from 1972, "it was Frank who sent Marj to Southern Methodist." "I don't think anybody knows this," Thomson adds, saying that Jones was asked to "come out to Southern Methodist

and give the workshop, but that's when he was stumbling³³ so he called Marj and said, 'Why don't you go instead?' and that's when she started her career with all those workshops" (in Rickover, "The Teaching"). It seems that it was at this time that her teaching began to change rapidly. Despite Carrington's claim of Barstow having gone clean off the rails already in the 1940s (*TTR* 26), William Conable notes that in 1964 her teaching was more like traditional English teaching, and that Jones's was "much subtler than that" (Interview). At that time, Conable says, Barstow's approach "was to take the student as far as they could go in half an hour and send them away." She would take him well beyond where he could follow or understand, himself, and he was "a mass of aches and pains afterwards." By the early 1970s, in Conable's estimation, she had become "the person who knew what we needed to know" (*Festschrift* 22).

Judging from Jones's writings, and from interviews of his students conducted after his death, it seems that there were several points of confluence between his pedagogical traits and Barstow's. In the words of Tommy Thomson, Jones "brought the technique to the student rather than bringing the student to the technique" (in Rickover, "The Teaching"). He did not use the "directions" as Alexander had coined them, being more interested in your "being able to apply the work to what you already did in a more efficient way" (*ibid*). Like Barstow, he trained teachers only informally. His emphasis was on the steps of the scientific process of Alexander's work.

We cannot know for sure whether Barstow read much Dewey, and it has not been possible to establish who inherited her vast library. Given her personal connection with the philosopher, her indirect connections with his thinking through Webb, Tasker and Jones, her interest in Alexander's written works, her general interest in reading, and her interest in science, feminism, education and politics, it is likely that she encountered Dewey's philosophy. At the very least, we can be fairly certain that she was intimately acquainted with Dewey's three introductions to Alexander's books. Given Dewey's prominence in the field of education in America during her life time, her avowed interest in reading and the introduction to his thinking through the

³³ *The first signs of his brain tumour.*

endorsements of Alexander's work, it is likely that she knew at least a little of Dewey's outlook.

E. The influence of lifestyle and genes

Did Marjorie Barstow have a head start in the realm of psychophysical coordination? As we have seen, she was above average in her physical skills, most notably in the realm of athletics and dance. Of her "use" before she undertook the Alexander work, she says: "I wasn't doing too bad a job. I knew that" (Paludan 384). When it was suggested to her that her "use was probably pretty good to begin with," she replied: "It wasn't too bad, but I was a little stiff.... My legs were heavy ... because of an excessive tension that had developed in my body through my dancing... I had a tension through my neck and a bit of a high chest, but I danced and got along all right" (Stillwell 17). Of the dance pupils, all children, that Barstow taught before she learned the Alexander Technique, Marsha Paludan observed a great freedom of movement. Barstow replied: "They were real free. That is what we worked for. Freedom and ease and flexibility" (383). She had also made her own observations about the limited improvement made by many performers she knew despite the amount they practised. This made her wonder about a central coordination even before she encountered the work of Alexander, suggesting her own natural ability to observe and recognize optimum movement. Barstow's use before learning the Alexander Technique was probably above average but with some room for improvement.

One member of the first training course recalls that everyone believed that Barstow was the best student at the time. Frank Ottiwell believed that Barstow "probably got off to a relatively good psychophysical start." Shortly after meeting her he asked another of the members of the first training course if he remembered her. The answer was: "Yes. We all thought she was the best of the lot of us at the time" (*Festschrift* 2). Michael Frederick recounts a similar tale about Patrick Macdonald. At the first International Congress, in Stony Brook, NY, in 1986, Frederick was present at a meeting between Macdonald and Barstow.

I was standing ... when Marj and Patrick Macdonald first saw each other after about 40 years, and Patrick very clearly came up to Marj and said 'Ah, Marj, it's so wonderful to see you,' and he looked her

in the eye and said ‘You know, you were the best of all of us in those early years, you had the best hands’ (in Rickover, *MBTI*).

Marjory *Barlow*, also a member of the first training course, remembers Barstow’s hands too: “Marjorie Barstow had wonderful hands. Some people are naturally gifted with good hands. Other people’s hands are like plates of meat—no intelligence in them at all” (Oxford 15).

But was her psychophysical prowess a natural gift or a learned one, or perhaps a combination of both? Robert Rickover claims that Barstow learned a great deal about good movement from training horses (in Rickover and Cross), again suggesting a learned characteristic over a natural one. But she was no average horse trainer, either. She trained quarter horses and in 1970 her horse was the world champion cutting horse (Conable, Interview).³⁴

Rickover met Barstow when he was already half-way through his training at the School of Alexander Studies in London in 1978. This suggests that he had a reasonable degree of experience in the different standards and qualities of “touch” of Alexander teachers and students with which to compare Barstow’s. One of the special qualities of her teaching that he noticed was “her extraordinary touch” (*Festschrift* 28). Don Weed suggests that by this time (the late 1970s) Barstow’s touch had been greatly refined. “Students who started in the late ‘70’s find it hard to believe that Marjorie once used ‘heavy hands’ more than ‘light hands’” (*Festschrift* 156).

Rodrigue describes Barstow’s touch as “clear, very powerful and subtle” (*Festschrift* 101). Baty writes that it could “tap the creative core of our liveliness: instead of walking, we dance; speaking becomes singing” (*Festschrift* 117). Another student of Barstow’s, Kelly Mernaugh, says that in his first lesson in the Alexander Technique in

³⁴ *A quarter horse, says Conable, is bigger than a pony, but smaller than a full-sized horse. It is trained to “cut” a herd of cattle. That is, you tell the horse which cow you want, and the horse will separate it. After being named world champion, the horse died the following winter (1971), when he might have been siring. This great disappointment coincides roughly with the beginning of the resurgence of Barstow’s teaching career.*

1979, he wanted to give her a compliment: “I told her that she had a nice touch with her hands. In retrospect, I see that she had a nice touch, period” (*Festschrift* 127).

Finally, William Conable tells the amusing story of Barstow’s *always* winning the watermelon spitting competition at the end of the summer workshop, even in her eighties. He was also moved to share the story of her sitting in a bar during the interval of a play, again surrounded by several of her students. Suddenly she picked up a piece of popcorn and, using her other hand as a bat, flipped it into her mouth (Interview).

Perhaps Barstow’s relatively good use, which governed the use of her hands in teaching, also had something to do with having had more experience than the other students at the time of the training course. As *Barlow* said, “Some of them had had years of work, like Marjorie Barstow,” before beginning to train (Oxford 15). Certainly Barstow was older than most of the other students, and her maturity may have given her an edge and a greater degree of independence and confidence in herself.

To conclude, Barstow was probably above average with respect to her physical prowess. The most important aspect of Barstow’s teaching, however, was her thinking and her attention to process. As I aim to show, it is this that is also aligned with Deweyan pragmatism.

F. Summary of influences

The main influences on Barstow’s movement and thinking that can be gleaned from historical sources were as follows. Physically, she had a wealth of experience in dancing, athletics and horse training. She was a performer as well as a sportswoman. She had perhaps only a passing interest in self-government and feminism but these are inherent in much of what she achieved in her life. Her teaching was most strongly influenced by A.R. Alexander, F.M. Alexander, Irene Tasker, Ethel Webb and perhaps later by Frank Pierce Jones.

Perhaps through Barstow’s interactions with Tasker and Webb some of the ideas of Maria Montessori and John Dewey were planted. Barstow would probably have

studied Dewey's introductions to Alexander's books, as we know that, particularly late in life, she continued to read Alexander closely and regularly. She also admits to some regret that she was not able to take the opportunity to discuss ideas with Dewey when she knew him a little.

Having presented the known details of Barstow's life, I now return to the main tenets of pragmatism in general and Dewey's pragmatism in particular, showing how Barstow's teaching reflected each of these.

5.3 Barstow and the aspects of pragmatism

We are not looking for perfection; we are looking for improvement.

—Marjorie Barstow (Sarah Barker)

This section outlines the broad ways in which Barstow displayed aspects of pragmatism in her teaching. It is divided into five categories, covering the features of pragmatism introduced in Chapter 2 (and Chapter 5) and including some attributes of Barstow's pedagogy that do not fall into the five analyses of Chapter 6. The subheadings are Deconstruction and Reconstruction, Functional View of Knowledge, Social Conception of Science, Critical Thinking and Foregrounding of Scientific Process.

Deconstruction and Reconstruction

To recap, Dewey's main aim in reconstructing philosophy was to bring it closer to its ideal and true meaning: "the love of wisdom." Rather than believing in Plato's ideal forms, Dewey affirmed "the ineradicable union in nature of the relatively stable and the relatively contingent" (*Experience and Nature* 56). Beckman describes what Dewey saw as the fundamental problem in philosophy as "the attempt (whether conscious or unconscious) to restore the security of absolutism" ("Philosophy"). Dewey believed that we must "give up all of these devices of absolutism, certainty, and security" because the issue for humans "is the exercise of intelligence and not the need to be wired into any system of absolute reality or truth" (ibid). Out of Dewey's deconstruction and reconstruction comes a belief in the unity of theory and praxis, of

thought and action, and of method and procedure rather than of doctrine. Dewey's emphasis was on becoming.

Similarly, Barstow questioned the procedures and teaching practices of Alexander. In her reconstruction of teaching she expanded her application of the Alexander Technique to an ever-wider range of activities, showing her commitment to linking thought with action. Diana Bradley describes Barstow's rejection of a set form or way of working, just as Beckman describes Dewey's. Barstow rejected certainty and predictability, opting rather for an openness to experimentation and change and a commitment to process (*Festschrift* 114). Dewey reconstructed philosophy and made it more accessible, practical and true to its original meaning and *raison d'être*: the love of wisdom. He shifted the emphasis from questions about truth and goodness to solving the "problems of men." Richard Rorty describes it thus: "Pragmatists keep trying to find ways of making antiphilosophical points in nonphilosophical language" (xiv). Dewey wanted philosophy to be more practical. Similarly, Barstow was interested in what helped people in practical ways. Just as F.M. Alexander questioned the discourses-practices of his day, Marjorie Barstow questioned what she learned from him. Just as Dewey, while still revering Plato, questioned the ancient philosophy we inherited from him, Barstow still had great reverence of Alexander and his teachings.

Demonstrating her commitment to the unity of theory and practice, Barstow believed in philosophical discussion only when it was intimately connected with and accompanied by action and experimentation. "We would often fall into lengthy and heady conversations," says Barker, "about the implications and meaning of the technique amongst ourselves. Of course Marj was always the final authority, didn't much like theoretical talk and would always bring us back to earth if we asked her some abstract question" (*Festschrift* 80). James Kandik points out that "any true advancement in a field of inquiry involves a complete thought process," in which "conception and procedure occur together." Specifically referring to advancement of the Alexander Technique, he explains that one must employ the general principles of the work to improve its specific parts, noting that Barstow did exactly that: "Her advancements of Alexander's work depend upon her strict adherence to, and clear understanding of, his principles. Her sharp and insightful perception of how a person

moves enables her to use Alexander's ideas in a creative fashion that applies directly to the moment" (*Festschrift* 145). Gehman goes so far as to claim that Barstow's contribution of carrying constructive thinking into activity is the "second step" in the conscious evolution of mankind, Alexander having seen his technique as the first (*Festschrift* 121).

As Scheffler describes, if we follow the teachings of the pragmatists, we will "avoid enclosing their doctrines in a casket" (*Four* 259). We will try, rather, to use the best resources of our intelligence and critical thought to make sense of our world, as they did of theirs. In accordance with this, Barstow valued her own ideas as highly as she did those of Alexander's. Richard Gummere, who met Barstow when she was working as ARA's assistant in Boston (1930s–1940s), wrote in 1989, "She does look back with the utmost respect on [FMA's] own teaching... But to her, the dynamism in the discovery of Alexander required that she develop her own style" (*Festschrift* 165). She did not enclose Alexander's doctrines in a casket. She tried, rather, to use the best resources of her intelligence and critical thinking to make sense of her world and the world Alexander had shown her. Alice Pryor describes herself as continually in awe of Barstow's "extraordinary creativity" and "her intense desire not to be satisfied with the answer to anything." She describes Barstow as "always seeking a better way to do it, always exploring the possibility for change" and notes within Barstow's "deep respect for Alexander's work, her intense desire to get to the essence of it: what was he really saying? What did he really intend?" (*Festschrift* 131).

Arro Beaulieu summarises the evolution of the technique from FMA through ARA to Marjorie Barstow and concludes that we should celebrate the unique differences within that unity of method, which suggest "the natural and dynamic tension that exists when the discoveries of an innovator are learned and then employed by other intelligent and creative individuals" (*Festschrift* 14). "Once the principles of the initial discovery are assimilated" continues Beaulieu, "these individuals adapt them to their unique personalities and special aptitudes and circumstances. This evolution is a known and inevitable cultural phenomenon that should be celebrated" (*ibid*).

Fallibilistic view of knowledge and the representative character of thinking

We can never be completely certain about our knowledge because we can never be certain that the patterns of action that we have developed in the past will be appropriate for the problems we will encounter in the future. With this fallible view of knowledge are connected the importance of consequences rather than antecedents, the connection with future rather than past and the plasticity of the world: a universe in the making. Barstow's experimental approach shows how she valued consequences. For her, Alexander's discoveries were a starting point, rather than antecedents governing all future teaching methods. She approached the technique as a field "in the making." She would frequently say, "I don't know how to teach this work" (W. Conable, *Festschrift* 26). She meant it, too, according to Conable, who adds: "She doesn't think anybody does, and she is quite sincere in her expectation that the coming generations of teachers will find more effective teaching methods. She constantly strives to improve her own work and this is the impetus for the great pedagogical changes she has made" (ibid).

Weed highlights Barstow's emphasis on experimentation, describing her "as a tireless worker and a great innovator. She constantly reminded those of us who had trained with her how new this work was, and what an important part experimentation played in it" ("Reflections" n. pag.). Martha Fertman recalls learning experimentation as a fundamental part of teaching the Alexander Technique. She describes how she experimented with teaching dance, a skill in which she was already well qualified, while learning the AT from Barstow: "Every day I spent hours experimenting with my own use and with applying it to the use of my hands. My students were not necessarily aware of the level of my experimentation... My students learned contingent upon my use. They were my instructors and their feedback was direct and obvious (*Festschrift* 10).

Arro Beaulieu highlights Barstow's use of the expression "see what happens," which signalled a constant openness to future outcomes. He summarises Barstow's contribution to the technique as having "carried forward and developed Mr Alexander's discoveries in five key areas": teaching in groups, reformulating the

orders, the role of inhibition, personal responsibility, and certification (*Festschrift* 11). He describes how Barstow rejected the conventional wisdom of the late 1960s in the Alexander community, for example, that group teaching could not be done. Rather, her attitude was: “I guess we could try that out and see what happens.”

See what happens! Marjorie is always learning from her interactions with her students, seeing what works and what doesn't; and she is always willing to look in a new direction to see if it might lead somewhere useful, as this one did. What is taking root in her many students is not any specific application of the Technique as much as it is an attitude, marked by the qualities of self-reliant experimentation and discovery... (ibid 13).

Bradley emphasises Barstow's fallibilistic view of her own knowledge:

... I've been able to see her teaching evolve. She is the most disciplined teacher I have ever known. She never assumes that she has the final answer on anything... I think it is precisely the quality of not assuming that she knows it, which allows her to constantly discover new and fresh ways of thinking and applying the Technique. You might say that Marj is conducting an inquiry into the Technique which only ever comes up with interim answers (*Festschrift* 114).

Frederick described this element of experimenting as Barstow's greatest contribution to the technique, noting that she continued it to a remarkable age. He expressed the wish that, “no matter how old we get, and at this recording Marjorie is 88... we can continue that experimenting in our teaching and our teacher-training (*Festschrift* 48).

Alexander's niece, Marjory *Barlow*, underscores the critical pragmatism of her colleague, Marjorie Barstow, saying: “She wasn't on the beaten track, really” (Davies 112). Even in a field as new, progressive and experimental as the Alexander Technique, it was thought that Barstow was off the beaten track. But of what beaten track does Marjory *Barlow* speak? Is there such a thing as a beaten track in a technique that stresses meticulous self-observation, experimentation and thinking? A beaten track and critical pragmatism are mutually exclusive. This comment of *Barlow's* highlights the difference in attitudes that sprang up even in the first training course. On one hand there was an attitude of following unquestioningly what the founder told students to *do*; on the other hand an embrace of the critical pragmatism of its founder: questioning and thinking and doing. If, as Alexander himself said, the technique is “an entirely new field of exploration,” then it is one that, as Dewey

would have said, is in the making. Sarah Barker quotes Barstow as saying that this difference was a part of the AT: “There really isn’t a Technique because it is different with every teacher” (*Festschrift* 82).

In the same way that knowledge is fallible, our thinking, too, is incapable of absolute fixity or absolute certainty, according to pragmatic philosophy. Signs and symbols themselves “are not *images or pictures* of reality; they are rather to be interpreted as devices of the purposeful life” [emphasis in original] (Scheffler, *Worlds* 100). In an interview Barstow admits to changing her thinking constantly about teaching and to being never satisfied with where she is. Her interviewer, Stillwell, observes that every time she works with Barstow, she has changed her approach and seems to have grown again. “You’re never satisfied with where you are, are you?” To which Barstow answers, “No—never!” (20-21). Barstow’s approach at any given time did not represent “some unyielding tradition but rather the best application of her current thinking about the work and how to teach it,” as Weed, a long-term student, observes:

Students who started in Nebraska after the 1985 summer workshop find it hard to believe that we used to stay in one large group in one hot room for four consecutive hours. Students who started in the late ‘70’s find it hard to believe that Marjorie once used ‘heavy hands’ more than ‘light hands.’ People who started in the mid ‘70’s find it hard to believe that ‘doing activities’ was not always a priority. Almost everyone who works with Marjorie now finds it hard to believe that we used to get in and out of chairs regularly, that Marjorie would never teach wearing anything but a dress or skirt, or that she would almost never joke or kid around while teaching. Each change in her work began as an idea. Each change became an experiment. When experimentation proved the change valuable, it was kept. But, each new student believes that the procedures, methods, and terminology employed when he began his study was the best way to teach and the way that teaching was always done before his arrival (Weed, *Festschrift* 156).

Conclusions of inquiry must always be regarded as provisional, and hence incapable of yielding stability and continuity over time. As Bradley described above, “you might say that Marj is conducting an inquiry into the Technique which only ever comes up with interim answers” (*Festschrift* 114). Putting intellectual method at the forefront also requires the recognition that mind and nature are not separate: we are impacted on by and must adapt to our environment.

Social and experimental conception of science

Science was seen by the pragmatists as the effort not of an individual, but of an ‘ideal’ community of investigators dedicated to learning from the consequences of “artful transformations of nature” (Scheffler, *Four* 8). As Arro Beaulieu described above (under the subheading “Fallibilistic”), Barstow valued the interactions with her students not least because of their contribution to her own learning. Barstow taught these students in groups and encouraged them to form their own study/practice groups, thus creating her own ideal community of investigators dedicated to learning from the consequences of “artful transformations of nature.”

Critical thinking and the methods and insights of science

Pragmatism encouraged a critical approach to life. Dewey in particular wanted people to question the value of inherited formulas, methods and standards in facing new problems and to cultivate those habits of mind capable of sustaining *critical thinking* in all areas of life. In the following excerpt from *Democracy and Education*, he describes the responsibility of educators to use critical thinking in decision making: “By selecting the best for its exclusive use, [a school] strives to reinforce the power of this best. As a society becomes more enlightened, it realizes that it is responsible not to transmit and conserve the whole of its existing achievements, but only such as make for a better future society” (23-4).

Using critical thinking, Barstow did exactly as Dewey encourages. She emphasised what she saw as the best from Alexander’s achievements and de-emphasised aspects of his teaching that she came to believe were not contributing to a better future society. While it may be true, as Alex Murray has asserted, that Barstow was “anything but an intellectual” (Email 29 April 2013), she was certainly a critical thinker, and therefore a philosopher of a Deweyan kind. Cathy Madden gives an example of how studying with Barstow taught her to apply critical thinking to her own teaching practice. She reached a point in her teaching where her acting students were not doing what she thought she had taught them to do. She applied the critical thinking Barstow was teaching her in order to solve the problem: “No discoveries were made; they weren’t working in the present. I was confused. I thought I’d asked them to work through a process. Thanks to what I was learning from Marjorie, I

didn't assume that the problem was all with them" (*Festschrift* 30). Instead, she asked herself what it was *in her teaching* that was triggering the undesired response.

Foregrounding of the scientific process

Marjorie Barstow's emphasis on the scientific process as modelled by Alexander distinguishes her teaching from that of many of her colleagues. Because this important aspect of her pedagogy does not fit into any of the five major analyses in Chapter 6, it is discussed in detail here. The foregrounding of the scientific process is a key factor in establishing the philosophical constellation of Dewey, Alexander and Barstow (in this case illustrated by the pedagogy of Cathy Madden). The fact that Frank Pierce Jones also foregrounded the scientific process of Alexander in his interpretation of the AT confirms his role in the constellation as well. To begin, I outline Madden's emphasis on the scientific process of Alexander. Madden's articulation of the steps is used because there is no other record of the precise and systematic way that Barstow highlighted these. That is, I am using Madden as a second-generation Barstowian to illustrate the foregrounding of the scientific process of Barstow's teaching of the Alexander Technique. Her outline is then compared with Alexander's and is followed by Jones's analysis of the steps of this process. Similarities are then drawn between these steps (what Madden calls "The Change Process") and the steps of a "Reflective Experience" according to Dewey.

Cathy Madden, who learned her approach from Barstow, clearly articulates the steps in lessons and classes in a way not normally practised by other Alexander teachers. Madden learned this analytical and sequential approach from Barstow but it was not until later, while teaching, that she drew the link back to Alexander's original steps of enquiry:

I was teaching at a training school and the students didn't seem to have an idea of how to start or organize a lesson. I knew that I did. I decided to investigate what I did, starting with "What do I do first?" and then that night of class emphasized the first step. Then I asked myself, "What do I do next?" and so on. Each day we wrote down the step I had identified. It was on the last day that I looked at [the list of steps] and then looked at the class and said, "Do you know what we just did? This sequence is the sequence from *The Use of the Self*!" (Email, 26 April 2013).

Madden's description of her own teaching process highlights the emphasis on scientific process of discovery that she learned from Barstow. Barstow structured her teaching around the steps of the scientific process as demonstrated by Alexander, but Madden seems to have *highlighted* the connection between the structure of each lesson in the AT and Alexander's own process. The steps are 1. Wanting (intention and desire to do something differently), 2. Recognizing (that there was something fundamental he needed to address), 3. Deciding (to set about understanding it), 4. Gathering information (observation, experimentation and reasoning out what was and was not necessary for speech), 5. Creating a new plan for the activity ("selecting a means whereby"), 6. Deciding again (allowing himself the choice to carry out the intended activity or a different activity, or do nothing at all), 7. Thinking, asking, and directing, and 8. Experimenting/acting.

In Madden's view, Alexander's desire was an important factor in his process. "The want" is something that she reiterates again and again as the *sine qua non* for change, whether she is referring to Alexander and his process, teaching all levels of the AT, or coaching performers. "Desire to do something is the common seed of both performance and the Alexander Technique," she believes, while "performance is specifically a desire in relationship to others" (*Integrative* 173). Desire and "the want" was not a factor that Alexander emphasised himself, but it is irrefutably a factor in his work. It was his desire to perform that provided the impetus for—and fuelled his persistence in—his long voyage of discovery. His intention to speak well and nurture his voice was what guided him. He then *recognized* that he had a problem and wondered what to do about it. He *decided* to do look for a different solution to the problem. This is an important factor in Madden's teaching, as she insists that we always have a choice about whether we wish to learn and change, and that we always have the option to continue as before, without changing. In deciding to learn and change is another implicit manifestation of desire: "In this moment of choice, we rediscover freedom, enlisting our coordination to serve our desire" (*ibid*).

Gathering information is another major part of Madden's pedagogy as it was for Barstow and Alexander before her. The gathering information stage also differentiates Madden's teaching from many of her contemporaries. It includes but is not restricted to Alexander's term, "analysing the conditions of use present" (See Appendix 1). For

the teacher, it involves finding out as much as possible about the student, the nature of his/her desire, the importance of the activity to the student, the mechanics of the activity he/she is trying to master, and the current plan or ideas that the student has for his/her activity, which frequently reflect aspects of the psychology of the student. For the student, *gathering information* involves learning as much as possible about the structure and efficient functioning of the body (including Alexander's principles), analysing and verbalising in very simple terms what is required for the activity (an example being that air moves upwards to make sound). For the performer it includes understanding the nature of performance.

After gathering as much information as possible and helping the student to do the same, Madden helps the student *create a new plan* for the activity, using as much of the new information as possible. The new plan always includes asking for movement between head and spine (that is, the central piece of the Alexander Technique). The student then *decides* whether or not to execute the new plan, remembering that he/she has a choice: without the student's own desire to execute the plan, it is likely to fail. If the student decides to execute the new plan, he/she *thinks* it, *asking* for it to happen. Madden frequently paraphrases Alexander, saying that the desired movement between head and spine is a wish that you carry throughout the activity." Alexander's exact words were: "But if we are going to do, not a mechanical exercise, but something real that matters, you have to think out beforehand the means whereby you have to do it, and give the directions or orders for these means whereby, in the form of a wish, as it were, and keep that wish going all through the activity ("Bedford" 168).

The final step is to act, remembering that each act in the Alexander Technique is an experiment, which can lead you back to step one for another cycle.

Nowhere did Alexander set out these steps as simply and clearly as Madden does (and it was Dewey who recognized them as the scientific process). Alexander describes his final and successful plan, or "means whereby," as follows. Madden's steps are written in italics.

To get a direction of my use which would ensure this satisfactory reaction (*wanting*), I must cease to rely upon the feeling associated with my instinctive direction, and in its place employ my reasoning processes, in order (*recognizing, deciding*)

1. to analyse the conditions of use present; (*gathering information*)
2. to select (reason out) the means whereby a more satisfactory use could be brought about; (*creating a plan*)
3. to project *consciously* the directions required for putting these means into effect (*deciding, thinking, asking, directing*) (UOS 39).

This plan of Alexander's came about after he had made much progress in finding out how he was interfering with his optimal "use." He then found, however, that he was still reverting to his habitual patterns at the very last moment of proceeding to gain his end—to speak a sentence. He then had to add an element of choice, almost of surprise. It was leaving the option open at the end to act or not that finally got him over the last hurdle. Alexander describes it as follows:

Supposing that the 'end' I decided to work for was to speak a certain sentence, I would start in the same way as before and

1) inhibit any immediate response to the stimulus to speak the sentence,

2) project in their sequence the directions for the primary control...

3) continue to project these directions until I believed I was sufficiently *au fait* with them to employ them for the purpose of gaining my end and speaking the sentence. At this moment...I would change my usual procedure and

4) *while still continuing to project the directions for the new use* I would stop and consciously reconsider my first decision, and ask myself 'Shall I (proceed to that end) or shall I not? Or shall I go on to gain some other end altogether? —and then and there make a fresh decision,

5) either not to gain my original end, in which case I would continue to project the directions for maintaining the new use and not go on to speak the sentence

OR to change my end and do something different, say lift my hand instead of speaking the sentence...

OR to go on after all and gain my original end, in which case I would continue to project the directions for maintaining the new use to speak the sentence (UOS 45-6).

Alexander proudly summarises that this process is "an example of what Professor John Dewey has called 'thinking in activity', and anyone who carries it out faithfully while trying to gain an end will find that he is acquiring a new experience in what he calls 'thinking'" (ibid 42). What Madden does differently is to label each step and simplify it to its main verb, calling it "The Change Process." This appears to be one of the crucial points that bind the approach of Frank Jones with that of Marjorie Barstow. Barstow and Jones adopted the investigative process *as well as* the majority of Alexander's new plan for movement. Their contemporaries seem to have merely

adopted the new plan. Walter Carrington, for example, describes the technique simply as “‘inhibition’ and ‘direction’” (Gounaris 30). Frank Pierce Jones was perhaps the first to set down Alexander’s steps of investigation. In his words, “The Evolution of a Technique” is “an exemplar of all the major steps that, according to Dewey, are characteristic of a scientific inquiry” (*Body* 45). Jones quotes from Dewey’s introduction to *UOS*, saying that “anyone who does not identify science with a parade of technical vocabulary will find the essentials of scientific method” (*Body* 45). Jones observes that Alexander’s story starts out with a concrete problem (loss of voice). It describes:

1. the failure to solve it by orthodox means;
2. the design of a method for making controlled observations and collecting data;
3. the use of instruments (mirrors) for correcting and supplementing sense data obtained in the inquiry;
4. the unexpected discovery that there was a regular sequence of events that preceded the loss of voice;
5. the introduction of a change in the sequence in order to observe what other changes would (or would not) follow;
6. the setting up and testing of new hypotheses to account for new facts;
7. the construction of a generalized theory to account for both the original observations and the new experimental data;
8. the discovery that the new theory could explain additional facts and solve additional problems besides those for which it was set up (*ibid* 45).

Marjorie Barstow had great esteem for Alexander’s *UOS*. Out of all Alexander’s writings, she expected her students to read closely and understand at least “The Evolution of a Technique,” its first chapter. It is perhaps the focus on this work of Alexander’s and the scientific method within it that links her work most closely with Jones. I shall now draw links between Alexander’s method (as distilled by Barstow and Jones) and what John Dewey called a “reflective experience.”

John Dewey’s Reflective Experience

Dewey contrasted *reflective* experience with the process of trial and error. It is what could be called a *conscious change process*. When Madden refers to what she calls “The Change Process,” she means a process that is accompanied by critical thinking. I therefore now compare Dewey’s idea of a reflective experience with Madden’s

change process (originally Alexander's and emphasised by Barstow). Dewey listed five major steps of a reflective experience. Madden's equivalents are given in italics.

They are:

- (i) perplexity, confusion, doubt, due to the fact that one is implicated in an incomplete situation whose full character is not yet determined [*recognizing*];
- (ii) a conjectural anticipation—a tentative interpretation of the given elements, attributing to them a tendency to effect certain consequences [*analysing the conditions of use present*];
- (iii) a careful survey (examination, inspection, exploration, analysis) of all attainable consideration which will define and clarify the problem in hand [*further gathering of information*];
- (iv) a consequent elaboration of the tentative hypothesis to make it more precise and more consistent, because squaring with a wider range of facts [*creating a new plan*];
- (v) taking one stand upon the projected hypothesis as a plan of action which is applied to the existing state of affairs: doing something overtly to bring about the anticipated result, and thereby testing the hypothesis [*deciding/acting*] (D&E 157).

Dewey described reflective experience as “investigation called forth by problematic situations” in which there is “a rhythm of seeking and finding, of reaching out for a tenable conclusion and coming to what is at least a tentative one” (*Art* 183). Whereas in the process of trial and error, “we simply do something, and when it fails, we do something else, and keep on trying till we hit upon something which works, and then we adopt that method as a rule-of-thumb measure in subsequent procedure” (D&E 151-2). As Dewey says, “We see *that* a certain way of acting and a certain consequence are connected, but we do not see *how* they are. We do not see the details of the connection; the links are missing. Our discernment is very gross” (ibid 152). Dewey explains how the method of trial and error is at the mercy of circumstances—circumstances that “may change so that the act performed does not operate in the way it was expected to” (ibid). By contrast, in analyzing “to see just what lies between so as to bind together cause and effect, activity and consequence,” the extension of our insight “makes foresight more accurate and comprehensive” (ibid). “If we know in detail upon what the result depends, we can look to see whether the required conditions are there” (ibid). Thus Dewey emphasizes (indirectly) the importance of Alexander's term “analyzing the conditions of use present.” This process of analysing the “conditions of use present” is what Dewey calls “the thought implied in cut and

try experience” and he shows how it constitutes what he calls “reflective experience” (ibid). He points out that this thought changes the quality of the experience and that “the change is so significant that we may call this type of experience reflective—that is, reflective *par excellence*” (ibid). He concludes that the deliberate cultivation of this phase of thought constitutes “thinking as a distinctive experience” and that thinking “is the intentional endeavor to discover *specific* connections between something which we do and the consequences which result, so that the two become continuous” (ibid).

Dewey places particular importance on steps three and four: “It is the extent and accuracy of steps three and four which mark off a distinctive reflective experience from one on the trial and error plane. They make *thinking* itself into an experience” (D&E 157). These are the steps that Madden might call gathering information and creating a new plan: those that are emphasised in the Barstow strand of the Alexander Technique. In Barstow’s approach there was an emphasis on gathering information for both teacher and student, in a continual and endless process of investigation, and there was an equal emphasis on the technique being a series of questions, hypotheses and experiments, that is, in creating new plans and trying them out.

The emphasis as taught by Barstow and her students is on gathering information and creating a new plan based on this information. In emphasizing these two steps, there is the recognition that everyone is different, moves differently, has different needs and may need a plan to act that is tailored to their own situation. Other schools seem to enter the process after the fourth step, adopting Alexander’s directions and/or procedures as a package for the new means-whereby, without gathering information about the present situation, conditions and requirements for each individual student. Alexander’s directions and procedures (contrasted with Barstow’s experimental and applied approach) are discussed further in the following chapter.

This final of three sections of the chapter on Barstow has introduced the broad ways in which she demonstrated the ideals of critical pragmatism. Some of these were illustrated by Madden’s teaching as an exemplar of second-generation Barstowian pedagogy. This overview of Barstow’s pragmatism ended with a discussion on the scientific process in teaching the Alexander Technique. The first part of the chapter

presented Barstow's family, cultural and educational background, while the second was a discussion of the influences on her work. The following chapter examines Barstow's work in greater detail, offering five analyses of her teaching.

CHAPTER 6: FIVE ANALYSES: THE PRAGMATISM OF BARSTOW

This chapter presents five detailed analyses of Barstow's pedagogy. These five analyses form sections 6.1 to 6.5 of the chapter. The subjects of the analyses reflect some of the defining features of Barstow's pedagogy, and parallels are drawn to Dewey's philosophy. The first of these analyses centres on what I call the Alexander teacher's "Teaching Dilemma" and examines how Barstow's response to this dilemma necessitated an emphasis on the process of the technique in preference to its form. The subjects of the subsequent analyses are: Desire as Part of Process, Community and Communication, Creating the Conditions for Learning and Training Teachers. Section 6.6 is a brief summary of the chapter. The *Festschrift* is the principal source of information on Barstow, a series of essays by forty of her long-term students.

6.1: THE TEACHING DILEMMA (PROCESS AND FORM)

You don't want to reproduce the feeling but the mental process.

—Marjorie Barstow

In this analysis I examine Barstow's emphasis on the process of the Alexander Technique. This includes her preference for process over form, for thinking over feeling and for movement over feeling. Her attention to process, thinking and movement led to her increasing application of the AT to any and all activities instead of just to those Alexander had prescribed. Because the two aspects (attention to process and her application practice) are so closely linked, there is some overlap between Analyses 1 and 2. The focus of Analysis 1, however, is about how Barstow solved Alexander's teaching dilemmas by following process, while that of Analysis 2 is the importance of desire and application as a part of that process. Analysis 1 begins with a consideration of Alexander's legacy in the area of teaching. Here I identify

three major issues in the development of Alexander pedagogy. These issues constitute what might be called the teaching dilemma. Barstow's deconstruction and reconstruction of Alexander pedagogy were based on her belief that the Alexander Technique was primarily about education. She resisted any part of Alexander's legacy that made the technique resemble a form of medical treatment. In this she stood in solidarity with Dewey, who announced that the AT provides "the conditions for the central direction of all special educational processes. It bears the same relation to education that education itself bears to all other human activities... It contains in my judgment the promise and potentiality of the new direction that is needed in all education" ("Introduction" to *UOS* xix). In choosing Dewey to endorse his books and his method in this way, Alexander subtly endorsed Dewey's interpretation of his work: that it is education, not treatment.

The other ideas of Dewey's that are relevant to this analysis are that experiences can be educative, mis-educative or non-educative. Educators should aim for experiences that are more than immediately enjoyable so that they promote the desire for further experiences. Educational experiences must have both continuity and interaction. They must include reflection on the part of the student and lead to more knowledge, entertainment of ideas and better organisation of these ideas. The teacher's suggestion must be a starting point only, with the potential for growth and the contribution from individual and group. Finally, past solutions to past problems will not necessarily solve present problems for every individual. Difference must be acknowledged both amongst students and amongst teachers, and this in turn will necessitate that different styles of teaching and solutions to problems emerge. Finally, it is of the utmost importance for learners to see their role as active rather than passive.

Alexander's Confusing Legacy, or the Teaching Dilemma

Alexander's legacy presents many contradictions and some confusion. The contradictions stem mainly from the differences between his own process of discovery and the way he taught his method to others. Alexander teachers must therefore decide whether to guide students towards a path of discovery similar to that of Alexander or to teach students in the way Alexander taught. This is what I call the teaching dilemma. I will examine three of the differences that have come to my

attention since I began learning the technique in 1991 and researching it in depth in 2006. The differences revolve around the questions of thinking versus feeling, belief in the re-education of the senses, and Alexander's procedures for teaching versus experimentation.

Difference 1: Thinking/Feeling

The first difference is that Alexander's process was about *thinking*, or "reasoning out a means whereby" he could do what he intended without relying on habitual responses to stimuli. One of the chief tenets of Alexander's writing was that our use should be governed by reason rather than by our senses. Yet, as will be shown below, Alexander relied increasingly on giving his pupils a passive experience—that is, a sensation—of good use while he either worked in silence or chatted about unrelated matters. This raises the further question of whether our senses can really be re-educated.

Difference 2: Re-educating the Senses?

The second difference causing the teaching dilemma is the question of whether our unreliable senses can be re-educated to the point that we can rely on them again, or whether they remain essentially unreliable. One's answer to this question appears to guide one's teaching practice, resulting in one of two vastly different approaches, as will be discussed. The difference in answers is related to the question of whether the Alexander Technique is education, requiring an active process, or treatment, implying a more passive one. This question is also discussed.

What happens to our sensory appreciation when we learn the AT? There is a great deal of confusion on the subject of the sensory apparatus and what happens to it when we have Alexander lessons. One of Alexander's major discoveries was that our sensory appreciation is unreliable. He also believed that with the Alexander Technique our sensory awareness grows stronger and is re-educated to the point that it becomes reliable again:

Almost all civilized human creatures have developed a condition in which the sensory appreciation (feeling) is more or less imperfect and deceptive, and it naturally follows that it cannot be relied upon in re-education, readjustment, and coordination... The connexion between psycho-physical defects and incorrect sensory guidance must therefore be recognized by the teacher in the practical work of

re-education. This recognition will make it impossible for him to expect a pupil to be able to perform satisfactorily any new psycho-physical act *until the new correct experiences in sensory appreciation involved have become established* [emphasis in the original] (CCC 98).

First generation teachers tended to follow suit in their beliefs. Patrick Macdonald believed that “re-education” took place through a series of half-hourly lessons during which time the teacher, by a number of simple limb and body manipulations, allows the pupil to become aware of the correct sensory awareness in how to use the whole body (*The Alexander* ix–xiii). Macdonald’s belief was that the distortion of the natural rhythm of the body was the cause of “most of the ill-health and distress of many so-called mental and physical diseases” and that if one’s sensory appreciation was false, all else was false (xiii). Marjorie Barstow herself believed this, reporting in 1986 her experience of training in the 1930s: “So thrilling day by day to know that my sensory mechanism was beginning gradually to be more reliable” (“A Letter”). Her colleague, Marjory *Barlow* even used science to support the idea that the senses could become reliable:

The improved kinaesthetic appreciation is being accurately aware of the sensory information that the brain is receiving from the muscle spindles. The thing is that in F.M.’s day, he didn’t know what it was that made feeling go wrong. Now we do—we know about muscle spindles, for instance. And we know that if we harbour tension in the muscle beyond a certain point, the muscle spindles, which are the transmitters that send the message up to your brain of what’s happening, cease to work... And there’s no doubt that as you work on people and get them to order, feeling comes back because the muscle spindles wake up again (Davies 60).

While this may be true, and it may be possible to *improve* the processing of our sensory information, even Alexander states that he had to stop relying on his feeling in order to maintain his good use:

Faced with this, I now saw that if I was ever to succeed in making the changes in use I desired, I must subject the processes directing my use to a new experience, the experience, that is, of being dominated by reasoning instead of by feeling, particularly at the critical moment when the giving of directions merged into ‘doing’ for the gaining of the end I had decided upon. This meant that I must be prepared to carry on with any procedure I had reasoned out as best for my purpose, even though that procedure might feel wrong. In other words, *my trust in my reasoning processes to bring me safely to my ‘end’* must be a genuine trust, not a half-trust

needing the assurance of feeling right as well [emphasis added] (*UOS*, 45).

Alexander also maintained that once you were “right,” you would no longer care whether you were “right.” That is, you would no longer be relying on your senses to test out whether you were “in coordination,” so committed to the *process* would you be. But he continued to teach as if his job as teacher were to give a pupil an experience and sensation of good use, and thereby to improve the sensory appreciation of the pupil. In fact, the following contradictory “breakthrough” of stressing passive sensation as a pedagogical tool occurred about the same time as Alexander wrote the foregoing, which paradoxically stresses the importance of trust in “reasoning processes.” Alexander was writing *UOS* contemporaneously with the first training course, from which Westfeldt’s anecdote (immediately below) dates. Here Alexander reveals his decision to *take away* from the pupil the responsibility for change, to omit any discussion about process, and generally act as if, as Jeremy Chance puts it, sensory experience was the god (*Festschrift* 71):

Shortly after I had realized Alexander’s ineptness with words he came into the classroom one morning and said exultingly, ‘I can get it now in spite of them.’ He said that his hands were now sufficiently skilled to get the new HN&B [head, neck & back] pattern going without the pupil’s help. He spoke as if a great burden had been lifted from him, as if he were freed from the frustrating struggle of trying to get the pupil to understand him. While he seemed to feel morally responsible for changing a pupil’s condition, he did not feel responsible for communicating with the pupil or for giving him understanding (Westfeldt 51).

Westfeldt makes another observation that confirms Alexander’s focus on the passivity of the pupil, rather than teaching them how to learn to discover, observe and become self-reliant, as he did himself. She notes that during his American visit at the time of the Second World War many old pupils did not return to him for lessons, a number of whom told her that it “boiled down to going to him for very expensive lessons and then there was nothing they could do about it themselves” and that “they lost the benefits of his work more rapidly than if they did nothing” (96). According to Westfeldt, Alexander did not even answer her questions in class. She claims that questions themselves were viewed “as symptoms of poor use” (48).

F.M. Alexander taught either in silence or “accompanied by an incessant inconsequential patter interrupted by irrelevant declamations of Byron and Shakespeare” as one pupil described it, who was almost entirely put off at first by the “showmanship” of his teacher (Ludovici 105). Erika Whittaker, who trained at the same time as Barstow, recalls that “F.M. did not talk much when he was teaching” (“England” 26). Another pupil (from the American school in Stow) recalls, “While he moved around, he talked and entertained us. He talked about American food and American products (both of which he considered inferior) and he told jokes. His lessons were punctuated with an occasional ‘There you are,’ which was a sign of approval (in Jones, *Body* 76). By contrast, people tended to point to the constructive methods of his brother, ARA. *Barlow*, for example, emphasised how crucial his teaching was to the trainees “because he was so insistent on ‘thinking’” (Davies 25), while Dewey is reported to have told Jones that in many respects he got more from his lessons with ARA than from the lessons he had from FMA (*Body* 104).

Cathy Madden has a further criticism of the reliance on the purely sensory experience given by many Alexander teachers. “But folks,” she says, akin to the child in *The Emperor’s New Clothes*, who revealed a very obvious but hidden truth, “if the senses are unreliable, they *remain* unreliable.” She refers frequently to the passage by Alexander quoted above (“Faced with this...”) from *UOS* to show that even Alexander found this in his own experience. But for some reason he did not apply this truth to teaching. Madden does sometimes give her students sensory experiences, and she calls these “belief changers.” That is, if we experience an easier way of moving that is unfamiliar to us, this experience can make us curious and motivated enough to learn more and ideally learn how to make such a change independent of a teacher. She is very clear, however, that belief changers are not the main ingredient of most lessons. Being a philosophical pragmatist and applying the logic of science to her teaching practice, Madden frequently explains that our senses are comparative and give us information about the past, not the present. They are designed to give us information about what is happening now *with respect to* what was happening *in the immediate past*. They give us relative, rather than absolute, information, and so remain fundamentally unreliable for absolute information. An example Madden frequently gives is this: if you put your left hand in hot water and your right hand in cold water, and then place both hands in a single container of tepid water, your left

hand will sense the tepid water as hot, while the right will sense the same water as cold. This demonstrates the *relativity* of our senses rather than their unreliability. Similarly, if a pupil of the Alexander Technique has been leaning backwards her whole life, and the teacher simply “puts her right” (as Alexander used to say) without any explanation or attention to process, she will feel like the teacher is telling her to lean forwards. Her reference point (that is, what feels “normal”) may have changed as a result of the lesson, and she may end up walking around leaning forwards.

In summary, then, Alexander’s legacy in writing and teaching has led to the widespread belief that “the work” of teaching was to give students a passive experience of good use and to re-educate the senses largely through teaching the procedures that Alexander had invented. As Westfeldt and Ludovici suggest, Alexander taught increasingly in silence or engaging in small talk. The focus was *not* on getting students to think through the process in a way that was individual and specific to them. Having learned Barstow’s different approach, Jeremy Chance reflected upon his earlier experiences of Alexander lessons and points out the contradiction:

I did not really have to think about much at all and I could still experience the wonderful changes. I developed the notion, collected from my reading, that the process of learning the technique for the present-day pupil is the direct opposite of the process used by Alexander in discovering it. Alexander developed an experience from a true conscious understanding of it, while I and later my own pupils were to develop a conscious understanding from a solid experience of it (*Festschrift* 71).

From his Carrington-style training in England in the 1970s, Chance picked up the habit of spending much of the lesson in silence or engaging in small talk. After explaining the basic concepts of the technique to students, he would look off into space, put his hands on them, and “desperately try to give them a glorious, unforgettable experience.” He was sure that the experience “was the god” (*ibid*). His later training with Barstow made him aware that this kind of teaching had set his pupils off in that direction which he had heard many outsiders observe of Alexandrians, namely that some of us look “held and stiff” (*ibid* 73), he emphasis on an “experience” or a “feeling” of good use having made both teachers and pupils try to recreate or recall the feeling associated with that experience.

The responsibility and maturity required for an independent and critically pragmatic approach to psychophysical re-education will not appeal to everyone. It seems that some performers would prefer to be “fixed” than to earn a new approach to movement. Dame Judi Dench says, for example, “It’s quite the miracle. I barely felt Mark move me it was so gentle, and yet when I stood up I was moving and breathing twice as easily as when I lay down. I don’t know what he did but it is perfectly brilliant” (Lacey). Barstow was quite caustic about people who wanted her to fix them. She was in the business of education, not therapy (Rickover and Cross).

Although most in the Alexander world would agree that the technique is about education rather than therapy, there have been trends that have led to confusion about its categorisation. This is another contradiction within the Alexander Technique. In 1999 the British National Health Services ruled that alternative, complementary and non-orthodox health-related services must conform to national standards of public accountability and quality assurance. Franis Engel, summarising *STATNews* for *Direction Journal* in 2002, said, “It doesn’t matter that teachers see AT as an educational process and not a therapy because the public recognizes AT ‘to be concerned (wholly or partly) with physical or mental health’” (“STATNews” 4). Some of the practices and language used by senior British teachers emphasised passivity, and this may have contributed to the confusion. Marjory Barlow and Walter Carrington, for example, both of whom had a great influence on the way the technique is practised today, tended to talk about teaching as working *on* people, rather than *with* people or rather than simply *teaching* people, thus reinforcing the passivity of the student and the therapeutic nature of the technique (Oxford; Carrington, *TTR* passim). Some teachers have gone so far in this direction as to reject the idea of the AT as education altogether. One teacher, for example, describes his practice as “hands-on work from me,” adding that he doesn’t really consider it giving “lessons” (Armstrong, “A Crucial”).

In this preliminary discussion I have discussed the idea of sensory re-education and shown the differences in AT teaching that result from the various beliefs about this possibility. The next preliminary discussion focuses on the difference between Alexander’s personal example and Alexander’s teaching example.

Difference 3: Procedures/Positions/Movement

Alexander abhorred the idea of exercises to be practised and taught that there was no such thing as one stereotyped correct position for each and every pupil (*MSI* 169). Part One, Chapter II of *MSI* is devoted to the dangers of exercises, or what was then called “physical culture.” He avoided the term “posture” in relation to his work because of its etymological and semantic association with “position.” On the other hand, one of the major features of his teaching were the “positions of mechanical advantage” (POMAs). These included “semi-supine,” “monkey” and “hands on the back of the chair” and formed part of his teaching repertoire. As far as can be ascertained from reports of his teaching, this repertoire was combined with a limited number of activities, such as walking, getting in and out of a chair and “the whispered AH.” This teaching repertoire will be henceforth referred to as Alexander’s “procedures.”

It was Barstow who raised the question of what to teach in teaching the Alexander Technique simply by starting to change the emphasis on what she taught. In the 1980s supporters and students of Barstow’s method, such as David Mills and Don Weed, began to ask of her detractors whether they were teaching what Alexander did for himself—that is, the scientific process as applied to human movement—or whether they were simply imitating the ways he taught others. As Mills observes in his doctoral dissertation, Alexander’s discoveries and the method of teaching it are two different entities (“Dimensions” 79). Don Weed summarises the debate between those who teach the “procedures” and those who teach the process, observing that we must decide “whether we are trying to trademark a particular set of protocols for teaching or employing Mr Alexander’s ‘work’ or whether we are trying to identify a group of principles, discoveries, and ideas whose applications are as flexible as the ideas themselves” (*Festschrift* 151).

Moshé Feldenkrais, who knew F.M. Alexander and was the founder of another mind-body-functioning method, lamented what the Alexander Technique had become after Alexander’s death (Williamson, *Festschrift* 57). In Feldenkrais’s view, the Alexander Technique had lost much of the brilliance and potential of the creator’s thought as a standardized practice was developed. Feldenkrais expressed the concern that after his own death his work, too, would become a set of manipulations of the body rather than

a functional approach to human learning based on a way of thinking. In 1913 Dewey had described such a phenomenon as “a tendency unfortunately attendant upon the spread of every definitely formulated system.” He was describing what he feared would happen to the methods of Maria Montessori—that teachers would “reduce them to isolated mechanical exercises” (*Interest* 74).

Just as Feldenkrais observed, Alexander’s procedures have become a kind of jargon and defining feature of the technique in conservative Alexander circles and in the wider public, without carrying a great deal of meaning. John Wynhausen says that before encountering Barstow, he “had practically equated Alexander work with lying down on a table” with books under his head (*Festschrift* 132). This kind of equation is not unusual. One music graduate of the University of Otago said of her dance and movement class, “Oh yes, we learned about the Alexander Technique: something about getting in and out of chairs...” It is alarming that an introduction to the technique through a tertiary movement class could leave this impression.

Barstow saw a lot of AT teachers “getting locked in procedures,” (M. Frederick, *Festschrift* 48). By contrast, Barstow felt that the Alexander Technique was a living thing, and therefore the way it needed to be taught was also a living thing. Frederick, who trained first with the Carringtons in England, explains:

Sometimes I have felt that she [Barstow] stayed away from those more traditional procedures just because she wanted to put an emphasis on that ability to explore other ways, to experiment... She will work with those activities with me just like she works with somebody playing the violin. So I think fundamentally she sees that there’s no difference; it’s just that she doesn’t want her students to get stuck in form (*ibid*)... One of the traps I found in doing things like monkey, hands on back of a chair, and so on is that one gets a little linear in the way the body operates. But the body doesn’t operate linearly... she really nails me on that... I’ve become much more flexible and less moving into a specific form when I teach (*ibid* 52).

Bruce Fertman tells how his first lesson with Barstow upset his preconceived ideas about the Alexander Technique. This was after he had been studying it for three years and had joined a training program. After reading Alexander’s writings and some of Jones’s articles, he felt that he was still “off track.” The way he describes his “Alexander best” below can be a result of teaching that is, as Frederick described

above, stuck in form, or as Martha Fertman described above, replete with orders and positions of mechanical advantage:

I was sitting, literally, on the edge of my chair, feet on the ground, legs uncrossed, perfectly symmetrical, back straight, palms up, ‘directing’ a mile a minute, doing my Alexander best. Marj came over, steady, unhurried, and placed the tip of her index finger ever so lightly upon my rigid chest and said ‘Sit back. Why don’t you just take a good old slump?’ I did what she asked as best I could, having not slumped in years (B. Fertman, *Festschrift* 66).

Barstow’s answer: Emphasize process, not form

In answer to these contradictions by Alexander, Barstow emphasised the process of his discoveries. This meant guiding her students to think constructively *at the same time* as she gave them an experience of good use. She also became a master of subtlety and restraint in order to keep these experiences in line with the student’s thinking, rather than taking them past what they could do on their own. She taught that the process was observing, thinking, moving and changing. Rather than working with the procedures and positions of mechanical advantage, which she found limiting, she emphasized movement and the activities of daily life. Finally, her emphasis on process rather than form meant that she had to reconstruct Alexander’s language. The following section illustrates Barstow’s emphasis on process and is divided into the categories: general; thinking versus feeling; movement versus procedures; and reconstruction of language.

Barstow’s Answer 1: General emphasis on process

Arro Beaulieu, a pianist and Dartmouth music graduate, observes that Barstow’s “departures from the main body of teaching practice constitute improvements in form rather than changes of any essential nature” (*Festschrift* 12). He describes her different outlook and procedure:

She begins a lesson by emphasizing our ability to notice something, however fragmentary, about our own use at that moment. She asks us to describe, however imperfectly, what we notice. Our choice of words and manner of speaking tell her about our thinking at that moment. Based on what she hears and sees, Marjorie formulates her verbal directions (‘talks to our thinking’) and at the same time uses her hands (‘talks to our feelings’), not to manipulate a change for us, but to suggest a direction that we may follow to make a constructive change in our use (*Festschrift* 18).

Diana Bradley points out how Barstow's eschewing of the "form" of Alexander teaching necessarily led to an emphasis on process. Barstow's style did not encourage—or even allow—any kind of passivity, imitation or laziness. It required initiative and creativity, experimentation and practical application. It was an invitation to pragmatists:

Because Marj doesn't utilize any set ways of putting her hands on or use any set routines in working with people, there's an endless fascination in learning from her. Since there is no particular form to hold on to, what comes through are the basic principles of the technique... Each teacher must make the work his or her own by continual experimentation and practical application of the principles. Then and only then will he or she have something to offer of value to others (*Festschrift* 114).

Robert Rickover highlights the fact that Barstow's focus on process was not the predominant way of teaching. He was half way through a training course in England when he met Barstow. He completed the English training course and immediately moved to Lincoln to continue working with her:

Marj's approach, I soon discovered, was one which emphasized the *process* underlying the Technique... This of course was the procedure Alexander himself used to solve his voice problem, and it is one that puts a lot of responsibility on the student right from the start. It was not what I was used to, although it certainly made a lot of sense to me (*Festschrift* 27).

Barstow's Answer 2: Thinking or feeling?

I don't believe in giving lessons in silence because I want to know what my pupils are thinking.

—Marjorie Barstow (in Chance and Flynn)

Barstow was determined to get students to think for themselves creatively. She was meticulous in her focus on process and thinking, and in allowing students to find out the consequences of their thinking for themselves. "When teaching," she would say, "you should put the students on your level, explain what you're trying to do but not what results you want" (Barker, *Festschrift* 84). Michael Frederick describes how Barstow encouraged her students to think for themselves, saying that she had "the quality of direction that I experienced with my best English teachers, but she doles it out, as it were, when your thinking is equal to that direction" (*Festschrift* 47). That is, she would dole it out when she was satisfied that the feeling you might get from her

hands would not distract you past the point you had reached in your thinking. Similarly, Arro Beaulieu claims that she “does not make, but only guides, the movement for us,” thus highlighting the importance of thinking and initiating movement oneself (*Festschrift* 18). “We gain an experience which includes not only a glimpse of a new sensory appreciation, enabling us to better recognize our habitual use ... but also the confidence which comes with having initiated the change in our use through our own volition and movement (ibid).

Barstow observes that the Alexanders, too, leaned increasingly in this direction over the years. “I think they did less,” she says in an interview. “I think they emphasized the thinking more, that is, the value of the thinking. It seems to me they were just more and more insistent upon the thinking and the importance of that (Stillwell 19).

While Barstow did have the opportunity to observe FMA’s teaching over several years (from the 1920s to 1933), it should be noted that it was ARA’s teaching to which she had the most exposure and with which she had the longest and latest association. As already mentioned above, A.R. Alexander laid great emphasis on thinking rather than feeling. It seems that he was more consistent in this than his brother. He also used the procedures and the directions less than FMA did, according to Jones (67-8). The reports of FMA’s teaching in silence or accompanied by an unrelated patter came more from the later years of his teaching, which Barstow did not observe. It seems that ARA was remembered more for his emphasis on thinking than FMA was.

Barstow’s emphasis on thinking is demonstrated in the following two descriptions of her teaching by Troberman and Fertman. Troberman describes herself in her first (pre-Barstow) lessons in San Francisco as “not catching on at all” (*Festschrift* 138). Barstow’s teaching clarified what was required and even inspired her to train to become a teacher (which she did in San Francisco because Barstow had no formal training course). Troberman started to see other people change in Barstow’s classes, and she thrived on the practical, constructive reasoning and the clear kinaesthetic information that Barstow provided. It seems she was not getting these in her lessons in San Francisco: “In retrospect, I realize the importance of beginning with that constructive reasoning process. In fact, as I later learned, that is where Alexander

himself began” (138). She adds that while the information she was receiving from Barstow’s hands was the clearest that she had experienced, it was something else that made Barstow’s work so streamlined and unique: “She was teaching us how to reason out” (ibid). Martha Fertman describes Barstow’s process-oriented approach as a revelation. Her previous experience of the Alexander Technique, she says, “had been replete with orders and positions of mechanical advantage,” and her dance training had also had “its full measure of directives and right positions.” To find that Barstow believed that “an alive, active, inquiring, intending mind...should have something to do with movement” was revelatory to Fertman (ibid 9).

To reiterate, the process referred to here is an emphasis on thinking and not on teaching the student a feeling of good use or indeed a position of mechanical advantage. Feelings, or our sensory apparatus, give us important feedback that we should not ignore, but they are not, as Alexander pointed out, absolutely reliable. Feelings are a *result* of process, rather than the process itself. Feelings may be different each time we follow a process, as we never start from the same place twice. Finally, feelings depend on a multiplicity of factors specific to each individual. They are therefore an inaccurate and misleading way of teaching a process.

Barstow’s emphasis on thinking was intimately related to her emphasis on movement. The reason she talked to her students (rather than working in silence) was that she wanted “the student to start thinking about how their thoughts influenced the quality of their movement. And she would do that really right from the beginning of working with anybody. And that, for sure, was not part of the standard methodology of the time” (Rickover, *MBT6*). As Franis Engel, who studied with Barstow, describes, “Thinking is a kind of movement that is the first phase of the action. Movement extends intent” (*Discovery 5*). In this observation Engel, who learned it from Barstow, is supported by Dewey. In describing the possible benefits of teaching psychology in high schools Dewey pinpoints beautifully the movement that is thinking:

How can we make the mind, not more mature, but more receptive to ideas; how can we cultivate, not a higher grade of intelligence, but spontaneity of action? These are the questions. The notion that the study of psychology will aid in answering them, is because this study requires in such large measure the self-initiating, self-directing movement of mind (“Psychology” 86).

Barstow's Answer 3: Movement or the Static Procedures?

"One of Marj's most clear and brilliant insights is that the Alexander Technique is about movement" (Conable, Interview). That this is a unique insight by Barstow suggests that other Alexander teachers of Barstow's generation were restricting their movement. Any criticism Barstow made of other teachers of the AT were about holding fixed positions and stiffness, which is why, Conable explains, "unless you really press her she doesn't spend time on anything that you could make into an exercise" (W. Conable, *Festschrift* 23). One of the reasons that Barstow moved her teaching away from the set procedures as laid down by F.M. Alexander was that they removed the focus of the technique away from movement and inadvertently towards "set fixtures," as she called them. Before going into depth about Barstow's emphasis on movement, I consider some of Alexander's procedures in detail, examining what they are, their rationale, some of the arguments against their use, and, as far as possible, whether Barstow ever used them at all, and when and why she stopped using them.

The Procedures

Monkey

This position of mechanical advantage is described in Appendix 1. Jones, who trained with FMA in the 1940s, described it as producing a state of plastic tonus throughout the extensor system (*Body* 69). Marjory Barlow goes into great detail about how "monkey" should be done, and claims that "lots of it" should be done: "Anything to encourage those muscles to work," she says. "It's the back. You've got to get the back muscles working" (Davies 67). Patrick Macdonald concurs, "A variation I find difficult to understand is the omission by some teachers of the use of the 'position of mechanical advantage' as F.M. called it — what we call Monkey Position. It is much the easiest and shortest way to get the lower back working" (*The Alexander* 75). Macdonald equates the term monkey with "the position of mechanical advantage."³⁵

³⁵ Alexander used the term, "position of mechanical advantage," less discriminately, however, and it is not always clear exactly what he means by the term (MSI 170, for example). In MSI he describes in detail a procedure of sitting in a chair and gradually leaning back into the back of the chair (118) and ends by saying that the position thus secured "is one of a number which I employ and which for want of a better name I refer to as a position of "mechanical advantage." On page 170 of MSI

Some of the shortcomings of practising “monkey” are that it gives mixed messages about position, fixedness and movement and does not help pupils use the Alexander Technique in their daily life. If the back only learns to “work” in monkey, how does the back know when it is required in another activity, and to what extent and in what way? That is, how do we transfer this “working” of the back to other activities? Of what use is the position of monkey in everyday activities? What does *Barlow* mean precisely by “the back muscles working”? Working how? And for what purpose? If it is just to work or stretch muscles in isolation for no reason, then surely this is the definition of an exercise to be practised, something that Alexander abhorred. Such random widening of the back without application to activity could encourage reliance on the *sensation* of width, something Barstow wanted to avoid. If monkey is to “get the lower back working,” then it also encourages an excess of attention on the back of our organism, when we also have a front and sides, where most of the muscles that help to balance us are to be found. Madden, who taught alongside Barstow as she made many of her changes to language, talks about torsos, rather than backs, and frequently reminds Alexander trainees that we have a front side, back side, inside, outside, right side, left side, up side and down side. Barstow did teach monkey in the early 1970s, according to the notes from Sarah Barker’s journal of 1972: “Worked with ‘monkey (business) position.’ ... Monkey stand also widens the back” (Barker, *Festschrift* 83). It had disappeared from Barstow’s teaching by 1975 (Madden, Email 22 April 15).

Getting in and out of a chair, or “chairwork”

The act of sitting down and standing up was one of Alexander’s central teaching activities. Getting in and out of a chair was perhaps a symbol for all the acts of living, which offer the Alexander student “a real and never-ending intellectual problem of constructive control” (CCC 197). Alexander observed that a student, as soon as he touches the chair, will “make certain unnecessary movements and alterations in the adjustment and general condition of the organism, involving that imperfect use of the mechanisms which he subconsciously employs in order to seat himself (‘sit down’)...Likewise, when he stands up, he ‘feels’ the way to stand up, and repeats the

he seems to use it to describe the monkey procedure, while in CCC the example given is “hands on the back of the chair” (112–120).

same subconscious indulgence of his automatic habits” (197). Alexander claims that when sitting and standing are performed with constructive conscious control, “the process involves an adequate and continuous state of increasing awareness in regard to the use of the mechanisms, so that immediately there is a wrong use of these mechanisms, the person concerned becomes aware of it, and at once substitutes a satisfactory for the unsatisfactory use” (198).

Alexander’s rationale for choosing this activity for almost everyone was that while it employed many unconscious habits and patterns of movement, it was not usually associated with a strong emotional impulse or cultivated habits, things which make “un-learning” more difficult. The drawback of this lack of investment in the *how* of getting in and out of a chair is that it is usually accompanied by a lack of care or interest, and a lack of desire to make any change. Walter Carrington quotes one of his students as saying, “I know what is the trouble with me, I don’t really want to do this” (*TTR* 24). In my own lessons that involved chairwork, I certainly had no interest in or concern with the way I sat down or stood up. Further, I had to rely completely on the feedback my teacher gave me. My awareness did not increase, although my confusion about what was required did. I did not learn to become aware of my wrong use, as Alexander said I would. In *ten years*, this never changed. I did not learn to substitute satisfactory for unsatisfactory use in the act of sitting and standing and I never gained any independence in making changes. Indeed, if lessons had consisted only of sitting, standing and semi-supine, I would not have continued. I became increasingly frustrated and impatient during any time spent on chairwork. When I sang in my lessons, however, I could *hear* immediately when a change in my use had occurred. I did learn to recognise unsatisfactory use and I did learn to make changes to my general coordination on my own.

Marjorie Barstow did sometimes work with people getting in and out of a chair. Her earlier teaching still focussed heavily on this activity. Late in her teaching career, it seems that chairwork only featured in a lesson or class if a student requested it. William Conable says that she was still using it generously in the early 1960s. Sarah Barker’s journal from the 1972 summer workshop includes mention of chair work: “Began the morning by watching each other get out of chairs very slowly” (Barker, *Festschrift* 83). Her journal suggests, however, that this was just one activity among

many. Moreover, even in 1972 Barstow's emphasis seemed to be in getting the students to watch one another in the process, thus training observation and analysis rather than an introverted process of self-focus. Michael Frederick says that it was the main activity in the first class he attended of Barstow's, which was in 1974. "Marj Barstow came to the University of Iowa, to the music department, and I went there to check her out, as it were, and she was giving classic chair turns in front of a group of musicians and other people who were interested" (in Rickover, *MBTI*). Robert Rickover's response to this is, "That's interesting that she was doing a sort of a traditional chair lesson at that point. By the time I first met her, which was in the winter of 1979, 1980, I think it was here in Lincoln, she wasn't really doing those kinds of lessons anymore" (ibid). Cathy Madden says, "I started studying in 1975.... and I didn't know chairwork, semi-supine or monkey existed until many years later. [Marj] did none of those" (Email 22 April 15). By way of overview, Don Weed observes that as the years went by, Barstow used a chair less and less often (*Festschrift* 156). By 1988, he claims, almost everyone who was working with Marjorie at that time found it hard to believe "that we used to get in and out of chairs regularly" (ibid 156). It seems, then, that Barstow's use of the chair as a regular activity disappeared gradually but that perhaps there was also a significant shift around 1974/1975.

Semi-supine

Semi-supine was also called "table work," or "lying down work." It is described in Appendix 1. A description of table work and its benefits are not set down anywhere by Alexander. It is presumed that for severe end-gainers, the total removal of impulse was considered necessary before they could be given an experience of satisfactory use. The fact that there is no written reference by Alexander to this practice has led to some controversy over the authenticity and value of table work. It seems, as will be shown in the following review of sources, that while he prescribed it, it did not form part of his private lessons. Here is another of Alexander's apparent contradictions.

There is a clip on YouTube in which Alexander's niece, Marjory *Barlow*, answers a question from an audience member about whether F.M. worked with people on the table ("A Masterclass"). The question is: "I receive from my teachers conflicting information in answer to the question 'Did F.M. work with people on the table?'"

Barlow's answer is elliptical. She starts by grumbling about myths and “things that aren’t true.” She appears to be proceeding from the belief that there is a “myth” that he did not do table work. She begins her answer, “He certainly worked,” and then seems to realise that she can’t say that he did work with people on the table. She distracts attention away from this realisation by inventing new questions: whether FMA taught trainees how to do it, whether he thought table work was important and whether he approved of it:

Oh yes, yes. This is a very good question, because you know I spend my life trying to get rid of the myths about Alexander [laughter] yep [pause] things that aren’t true. He certainly worked [pause] he didn’t have a table in his teaching room, but his assistants used to take the people after they’d had a lesson from him, take them on the table. And in the first training course, he spent hour after hour after hour, day after day after day teaching us how to do it: exactly how to give a lying down turn. So he thought it was very important [pause]. He said that it was a wonderful opportunity for people when they were lying down to pay attention to their orders. They didn’t have to bother about keeping their equilibrium or their balance. So he thoroughly approved of it, or he wouldn’t have taught us how to do it [my transcription] (“A Masterclass”).

So the answer to the question is probably “no,” but *Barlow* wants to underline her uncle’s belief in its importance rather than allowing his neglect of this kind of work to reflect poorly upon it. She does say elsewhere that if FMA “wanted to work with somebody lying down that was usually when he would pass them on to one of the teachers and he would come and help” (Oxford 16). In the clip transcribed above, *Barlow* is standing on a stage in front of a massage table draped with a white sheet. The table looks like one prepared for a medical examination or procedure and gives the impression that the table is central to Alexander work, or is even a kind of symbol for it.

Barstow’s recollection that it was the assistants who did the “lying down” lessons (Stillwell 18) fits with *Barlow's* answer. When asked by Stillwell if table work originated with the two women, Tasker and Webb, Barstow assures her that it was F.M. Alexander’s invention. She also observes that the table work seems to have gained in popularity since her own training:

Both brothers used the ‘chair work’ throughout their teaching. The ‘lying down’ work is very popular, I believe, in the training today. The Alexanders, themselves, however, did not give many ‘lying

down' lessons. If they felt someone would be helped by having it, it was generally Miss Webb or Miss Tasker who gave that work. I used to get 'lying down' lessons during the first six months we were there, from Miss Webb. In the training course we worked with each other (18).

Alexander himself may be indirectly responsible for the increase in its popularity, not by practising it himself, but by what he prescribed. One account of lessons in 1947 documents that Alexander gave a consultation and just one lesson to new students, who were then referred to his assistants with a prescription such as, "I should give her plenty of time on the table, Rene" (Evelyn Webb in Fischer 18). By delegating in this way he perhaps caused his trainees and assistants to value the table work more than other activities, since it was in that practice that they had the most experience.

Erika Whittaker, on the other hand, says that FMA did not "even approve" of table work when she was training (1931-34). She is perhaps one of the teachers to whom *Barlow* referred above. Whittaker says that FMA considered "lying-down turns" "too therapeutic and just a nice rest" ("England" 25). Both she and Irene Tasker ("Connecting" 14) confirm that Alexander referred the "lying-down turns" to Ethel Webb or Tasker herself: "He did often ask Ethel Webb to 'put down' a pupil after a lesson with him" ("England" 25). A report from a pupil at the Alexander School in Stow (Massachusetts) in 1941-42 indicates that of the five teachers there, FMA, ARA, Goldie, Stewart and Webb, this was the common practice there too: "Miss Webb was the only one that I remember who gave 'lying down work'" (in Jones, *Body* 76). Whittaker laments of not having enquired of Alexander how he explained the apparent contradiction. She comments that they did not do "much lying-down work in those days; in any case there was only the floor to do it on, except for a kind of trestle table in the small back room" ("England" 25).

Whatever Alexander's view of table work, its appeal to performers is probably limited. Barstow observed in 1986 that table work was incompatible with her movement-oriented approach, saying, "I don't work on the table. I think the Alexander Technique is about movement. I like to work with my pupils in their daily activities" (Miller and Chance). Similarly, Frank Pierce Jones observes that table work gives an impression of the Alexander Technique as relaxation therapy. He did

not know the Alexanders to do table work when he was training in the 1940s: “So far as I know, the Alexander brothers never did ‘lying-down-work’ of this kind unless they had a pupil who was bedridden. In my observation, it gives a wrong first impression of the technique, as if it were a form of relaxation therapy” (*Body* 6). In 1975, according to Madden, Barstow did not even appear to own a table for such work. In 1981, Barstow is reported as having said that another reason she did not teach with the table was because of the immediate needs of the performing artists she taught. She noted that her teaching situation was different from that of the Alexanders: “Most of their work, at the time I knew them, was dealing with middle-aged or older people. I work mostly with university students. Most of my students are active in the performing arts and business. They want something that they can make use of right now” (Stillwell 18).

This dichotomy between table work and active work suggests the kind of split between theory and practice that Dewey was against, and the kind of mind-body split that Alexander rejected. The table work, as described by *Barlow*, is a kind of chance to work on theory: practising your directions without having to worry about balance or equilibrium, and without stimulus to which to react; while the activity work could be seen as the practice.

Hands on the back of the chair

“Hands on the back of the chair” is a shape that is made with one’s body to no particular end except perhaps to flex as many muscles as possible. It is a good example of what Barstow described as a set fixture. Probably because it lacked a more dynamic “end” and did not encourage movement, Barstow excluded it from her teaching practice.

Whispered Ah and Walking

The only things Barstow retained from Alexander’s repertoire were the whispered Ah and walking. These are the only two that involve movement and can be motivated by intention. The whispered Ah is described in detail in Appendix 1. According to Madden, it is not unique to the Alexander Technique, and Alexander probably adopted it from theatre training. It can be motivated by an intention to communicate, and this intention can then occupy and organise the psychophysical being, preventing any tendency to “feel out” the exercise with “good use.” In my own experience of

walking in Alexander lessons before I encountered Madden's teaching, I used to walk around the room vaguely and without intention or destination, trying to feel what my teacher had changed in me during my 45 minutes on the table and see if I could "keep" it. By contrast, Madden encourages students to choose something to walk towards, again harnessing the whole psychophysical organism (by desire and intention) and preventing micromanagement of "use." Madden says that this was her own innovation, which came out of her acting knowledge (Email 8 June 2015).

Problems with the procedures-oriented approach

As outlined above, Barstow saw that consistent attention to process was missing in the procedures-oriented approach advocated by Alexander. She stopped teaching the procedures and giving her students passive experiences, she encouraged them to think and move and apply the technique to their passion. Her approach thus put a greater emphasis on process. It elevated movement and desire to key concepts in the technique. This change of emphasis was of enormous importance in shifting the Alexander Technique away from its treatment-focussed bias and towards the goals of constructive education.

Barstow's emphasis on movement

Having examined what Barstow viewed as the opposite of movement, that is, Alexander's procedures, I now consider her emphasis on movement. To begin, her descriptions of the AT always include a reference to movement. Her introduction at the beginning of the voice-over of a filmed workshop in 1986 was such a movement-oriented definition: "The first thing that I think is very important ...[is] to help people to realise that it's a very unique [sic] and unusual approach to the study of movement (Chance and Flynn).

In a more detailed description for an oral history project by the Nebraska Historical Society, she says that the AT "is information that is valuable for anyone who wishes to improve their efficiency in movement." She explains that "without recognizing it we put an excessive amount of tension and strain on our bodies, downward pressures. You can always see it. You know, the way everybody sits in a good old slump? It's constructive thinking to help you recognize how you mistreat yourself in movement" (Retzlaff et al. 25).

As Conable observed above, fixed positions and stiffness were Barstow's main criticism of her students, her colleagues or their students. "She does not like to see people slouching around, but I think she probably prefers that to rigid posturing," he further explained (W. Conable, *Festschrift* 23). As explained in Chapter 5, Barstow was interested in movement for a variety of reasons and as a result of a variety of influences. She was a dancer, having studied ballroom dancing, ballet and a kind of modern dance influenced by Isadora Duncan. As Marsha Paludan explains, the Duncan style was about the exploration of movement and encouraged the freedom of movement (384). Paludan suggests that it was precisely Barstow's interest in *freedom* of movement that prompted her to study with Alexander. She also learned a great deal about good movement from training horses.

Martha Fertman was studying the AT with Kitty Wielopolska when she met Marjorie Barstow. Fertman had developed a reputation as a dance teacher who could help with difficulties and injuries. She says that this was because she had been learning about the Alexander Technique as if it were about "alignment" (*Festschrift* 8). On her way to her first workshop with Barstow, she was prepared for "any level of rigorousness, asceticism, or tedium," but she found instead a liveliness that was absent from her previous training:

To my surprise, Marj's workshop was overwhelmingly lively; it was full of sound, action, motion, and energy. ... Even in the act of moving, there was thinking, there was an alive, inquiring, intending mind. That this should have something to do with movement was a revelation, both from the point of view of more 'traditional' Alexander Technique, which in my experience had been replete with orders and positions of mechanical advantage, and from that of my dance training which had also had its full measure of directives and right positions (9).

Saura Bartner, also a dancer and ACAT-trained AT teacher, singled out this aspect of Barstow's teaching as the defining or differentiating feature: "This is what Marjorie Barstow does differently. She encourages us to move. To think and to move and think and move" (Bartner, *Festschrift* 74). In her journal from Barstow's workshop Sarah Barker notes this same emphasis on movement: "The ease can come as we move," (*Festschrift* 84) "Improvement always comes through motion" (88), and "What we're working for is freedom in motion..." (93).

Jane Staggs had taught the AT for almost twenty-five years in what she calls the “traditional” forms when she started to notice her long-term students “gently falling apart.” She began to realise that they needed to move more. Staggs decided to explore Pilates and even trained as a Pilates instructor in 2006. To her delight the Pilates work improved her coordination and in turn her use in everyday life (Cook). Barstow was doing this without recourse to another discipline more than thirty years earlier. As Lena Frederick observes of Barstow’s work, “I saw that working with people in activities put the Alexander work into the realm of movement, which was where my interest in it had originated” (*Festschrift* 104).

The reservation Alexander teachers have towards movement probably comes from the ideas of “non-doing” and “inhibition.” While “non-doing” was invented to help people understand the way we habitually interfere with our natural coordination by overdoing the effort that is required for any given movement, an unfortunate side effect of the phrase has been that students of the technique believe that they don’t have to move or indeed must inhibit *all* movement. It has also contributed to the idea that we should be relaxed and de-energised when we perform. Jane Heirich’s comment about robotic, de-vitalised wimps is an example of this (“Speaking”). Alex Murray offers “relaxed playing” as a goal of studying the Alexander Technique (“The AT”). Cathy Madden, who teaches in Alexander training schools around the world, noted in a keynote conference paper the widespread perception in the Alexander world that the AT is about doing less. She also noted the common perception in the performing arts world that the Alexander Technique turns you into “a wet noodle”, hardly appealing to performers or performance institutions (“ATPA Keynote”). The AT can even create *more* tension, then, if in attempting not to do, we start holding ourselves and our breath.

Cathy Madden inherited Barstow’s emphasis on movement in her teaching. It is one of the things that caught my attention in my first workshop with her. I was puzzled about what happened at “the joint between head and spine,” as she called it (what Alexander called the primary control). She called it at the time “the coordinating movement.” When I asked her to clarify this further, she said, “It’s movement we want.” This was a surprise to me after ten years of lessons and thinking that it was only the *potential* for movement that was required. This began an allowing process

for me, which started to undo a great deal of the holding and stiffening I had previously been employing in the production of my voice, thinking that I was employing the Alexander Technique. One of the greatest discoveries I made by not just *allowing* movement in my practice, rehearsals and lessons, but by *exploring* it actively, was the connection between movement and meaning. Moving revealed itself to be an extremely important part of interpreting the text and music of a song for me, something I had been blocking by trying to obey the countless messages I had received from teachers—singing and Alexander—to limit my movement instead of encouraging, investigating and experimenting with it. This process was greatly facilitated by Madden, and she includes a description of helping me explore it in her recent book (*Integrative* 341).

In summary, Barstow's emphasis and insistence on movement was unusual in the Alexander world. It helps to explain some of the changes she made to her teaching and some of the ways she diverged from F.M. Alexander, especially her consistent attention to process. Being particularly interested in movement, she saw early on that a "procedures"-based teaching practice could only be of limited assistance in helping students to learn to move better.

Reconstruction of Alexander's language

The final example of Barstow's emphasis on process is her attention to language. Barstow was intent on extracting the meaning of Alexander's discoveries, words and phrases, and refining their form to reflect their import more accurately. Superficial appraisals of her teaching led to assumptions about her teaching. Diana Bradley notes that despite Barstow's changes in terminology, her teaching still focussed on the process of Alexander's work:

Alexander students who have had experience with other teachers are sometimes surprised because Marj doesn't use the words inhibition and primary control. If they take a little time... they will come to know through experience that all she is teaching is inhibition and primary control... Regardless of level of understanding, all students are learning the same things—observation of self and others, inhibition/direction and the ability to carry their constructive thinking/movement into the performance of any activity, including teaching (Bradley, *Festschrift* 114).

James Kandik explains how Barstow's reconstruction of language reflects her attention to process, even quoting Alexander himself to support her changes:

Marjorie's choice of language in explaining the Technique demonstrates her adherence to principle. Alexander believed that any expansion of an idea necessitates either the revision of a definition or the employment of a new word or phrase altogether. The ways in which Marjorie speaks of this work stem directly from her expansion of the work... Marjorie uses words to give her students practical information that they may immediately use... (Kandik, *Festschrift* 145).

F.M. Alexander's writing is notorious for being long-winded and difficult to read. Michael Holt describes all of Alexander's books (with the exception of *UOS*) as "obscure and difficult to understand" and sometimes defying comprehension ("Making FM" 29). "Not because of the content, most of it quite straightforward, but because of the broken-backed prose style." Holt wonders why Alexander didn't pocket his pride and consult two of his most distinguished pupils, Aldous Huxley and Bernard Shaw on the gentle art of writing readable prose. Alexander's unwillingness to rely on others' ideas or expertise has been discussed in Chapter 4. He does, however, acknowledge the difficulty he encountered in writing *CCC* and his considerable need for assistance, expressing his gratitude to Professor John Dewey for the invaluable suggestions he made after reading the manuscript (*xiv*).

Alexander's way of speaking, too, came under attack for being not very specific and prone to exaggeration, full of "broad generalizations and startling statements" (Westfeldt 68). Westfeldt relates a conversation she had with him where she questioned his meaning. After discussing it throughout the morning, he finally agreed with her that he had meant what she had said. She also gradually came to realise that she was not alone in being unable to understand Alexander's meanings and described him as a man "whose inability to explain verbally what he meant was keeping his pupils from learning the first rudiments of his work" (49). "Colleagues in the training course, as well as private pupils who had had a great deal of work, were going around in a fog, not knowing how to carry on the work by themselves and doing some quite wrong things" (*ibid*). Marjory Barlow tacitly confirms this observation of Westfeldt's, claiming that it was Patrick Macdonald—not Alexander—who set her straight on the exact meaning of "head forward and up" and at which joint the movement occurs

(Oxford 16). Jones observed of both FMA and ARA that “like so many people who know but one language, they believed in a one-to-one relation between the word and the thing... They were confident that the words they used to describe what they did were the best that could be found. If a pupil did not understand, they repeated the explanation verbatim” (*Body* 68). In contrast to Jones’s recollections of the teaching situation, Alexander himself admitted *in writing* to the shortcomings of “certain phrases employed in the teaching technique” (*CCC* 112). He stressed that his phrases call for comment, “seeing that they do not always adequately express my meaning and that, furthermore, they cannot be defended as being demonstrably accurate” (*ibid*). He also stressed that because of the inadequacy and inaccuracy of the phrases, they only serve their purpose when a teacher is present to demonstrate them, by means of manipulation of the pupil. Perhaps this specification explains the contradiction between Jones’s reports and Alexander’s written acknowledgement. Examples of such phrases are: “lengthening the spine,” “relax the neck,” “head forward and up,” “widen the back.”

Alexander himself recognized the shortcomings of his words. In the preface to the 1923 edition of *CCC*, he wrote that “expanding ideas demand new words which will adequately express the original as well as the new thought involved” (*xxiii-xxiv*³⁶). Erika Whittaker notes Alexander’s reticence to be tied down to a judgment: “We may have wanted to tie him down yes or no to a matter which he saw as being in the process of change, and he refused to commit himself, especially if we asked him how we were getting on, were we progressing? So ‘he didn’t say yes and he didn’t say no’—we had to put up with that” (“England” 27). Whittaker’s description of FMA underscores and reinforces the point that his ideas and findings were, as he said, expanding—not static or fixed. That is, he was inviting future generations to improve on his terms. Barstow took up this challenge.

Students frequently remark on the clarity of Barstow’s reconstruction, particularly those who attended other training courses before encountering Barstow’s approach. Meade Andrews, for example, observes that “in her use of language Marj has distilled the essence of Alexander’s principles. She offers the most straightforward verbal

³⁶ *The edition of CCC cited in this thesis is that of 2004, which includes the preface to the 1923 edition.*

approach to problem solving” (*Festschrift* 111). Dewey believed that people are “culpable in acquiescing to avoidable evils whenever, evading the possibilities of intelligent reconstruction, they swim along with the inertia of old ways or follow the momentary promptings of whim” (Scheffler, *Four* 195). Barstow neither swam along with Alexander’s language nor followed the momentary promptings of her whim. In order to emphasise the process behind the technique she constantly invented new ways to talk about it, dropping ways that she observed had become less useful. “I’ll use a word until it’s no longer useful,” she would say, “then I’ll find a new one” (Pryor, *Festschrift* 130). By observing her students, she tested the effects of the words as she used them and decided accordingly about their usefulness. In contrast to Alexander, who in Holt’s opinion “hid his unique light under a bushel of impenetrable verbiage, thus concealing his ‘gold brick’” (31), Barstow dispensed “with a lot of the verbal freight of traditional Alexander teaching, both Alexander’s own and that developed by other teachers” (W. Conable, *Festschrift* 24). “If you ask about the neck,” for example, “she’ll say, ‘The only way to free the neck is by moving the head’” (ibid). Conable makes the point that for Barstow, Alexander’s discoveries *were not words*: “She is willing to change her language radically in order to communicate the fruits of her experience and understanding, and to abandon explanations that she finds leading to operational confusion [emphasis in the original] (25).

“Beyond words is our intimate experience,” writes Aase Beaulieu in a poem about her experience of Barstow’s teaching (*Festschrift* 109). And yet words were particularly important to Barstow. Cathy Madden says that Barstow’s stress on the importance of words taught her to look closely at how she used and responded to words herself: “I learned the value of choosing what I wanted to say, watching what I did while I said it, and observing what happened as my student responded to my words and began an activity” (*Festschrift* 32). An example of Barstow’s considered use of language in teaching was that she asked questions in preference to giving orders. Rather than telling a student to move her head, she might ask: “What would happen if I³⁷ moved your head in an upward direction?” “Questions like that are more helpful than orders,” she believed. (Barker, *Festschrift* 88). According to Williamson, Barstow

³⁷ This diary entry was in 1973. Later Barstow would probably have replaced “I” with “you,” giving the responsibility for movement to the student.

became reluctant to continue using Alexander's words when she realised that pupils tended to have a pre-conceived idea about what they meant and would attach a faulty meaning and action to the "buzzwords," such as primary control, directing, and inhibition (*Festschrift* 56). Many things that Alexander said seem to have led to some confusion in the Alexander world. Barstow had a way of interpreting some of these and putting them into her own words to make them clearer for her students. There follow three examples of Alexander's terms, phrases and concepts made clearer and simpler by Barstow: "the primary control," "directions/orders," and "inhibition."

Alexander's Term 1: Primary Control

As Westfeldt observed, the term "primary control" is not a happy one, "as it is ambiguous and lends itself to misunderstanding" (*xiii*). Westfeldt's solution was to replace the term with "HN&B (head, neck, and back) pattern." Head-neck-back is a widely used concept and term in the Alexander world, and there are several things that make it little—if any—better than "primary control." Like the latter term it sounds static and can imply that there is an ideal position to be attained. The term "neck" is anatomically vague and the focus on the back is misleading. The weight-bearing part of the spine is the *front* of the vertebrae. The bulk of the spine is therefore closer to the *centre* of the torso than it is to the *back* (whatever it is we mean anatomically by "the back"). This focus on the "back" is inaccurate and incomplete body mapping if our intention is to involve the whole torso and spine.

Another common way of describing the primary control is that "the head leads and the body follows." This can also be confusing, as it is oversimplified. I have heard Alexander trainees expounding that the head should always lead in any activity, which is misleading. Barstow clarified that there is a distinction between the head leading in the primary control and the head leading in an activity. She called these two separate movements "use" and "extension" respectively: "When you ease up it is a very subtle movement. You only go a tiny bit. This is the difference between extension and use" (Barker, *Festschrift* 83).

Cathy Madden's description of the distinction between extension and use made me realise that after ten years of lessons in the Walter Carrington paradigm I had never fully understood the concept of primary control. I had also never understood that there

was such a distinction. Hearing Madden clarify this was for me a similar moment to the Conables' sudden realisation in 1972 that they had come across the person (Barstow) who knew what they needed to learn. When I later questioned Madden about the genesis of her own explanation, she said that she could not remember exactly how Barstow articulated it, but that the distinction was certainly inherent in her teaching. Since we have no record of exactly how Barstow articulated it, other than the brief allusion above by Barker, I offer Madden's way of describing the difference. Note that Madden continues the reconstruction of language, employing her words, which are clearer still, "coordinating movement" and "activity movement." They also remind the student of the Barstowian emphasis on movement.

Coordinating Movement (Barstow's "Use")

Madden uses the term "coordinating movement" to describe the primary control. She describes it by asking people to do the following exercise. "Please put one finger up to represent your body... and use the other hand to create a very large head for the body... Now, press the fist into the finger, as if trying to compact or shorten the finger. Take your finger for a little walk, and notice the reduced flexibility, range of movement, ease and comfort and the increased amount of effort required for just a small amount of movement in the finger. Now do the reverse: holding on to the end of the finger with the fist, pull the finger as if trying to lengthen it. Again take the finger for a walk and notice how it moves and feels. Finally, allow the fist to rest—without pushing or pulling—at the end of the finger. Observe the quality and quantity of movement now possible in your finger. It is towards this ideal balance between head and spine that the coordinating movement takes us before and as we engage in the activity movement. We ask to "coordinate" so that a change may occur in the relationship between head and spine. This necessarily involves movement, no matter how small, and all of me follows. Madden's short-hand for this process is "head moves, so that all of me can follow." Her use of the verb "to coordinate" here means:

to ask for (or to will) the optimal relationship between your head and spine in movement—cooperating with our design. If you have been interfering with the head/spine relationship, then 'to coordinate' is about restoring design. If you are preparing for a task you care about and not particularly disturbing your coordination, asking 'to coordinate' is a request to your whole self to work optimally (Madden, *Integrative* 26-7).

Activity Movement (Barstow's "Extension")

The activity movement is made up of the specific tasks necessary to do something. While the coordinating movement is the same for all activities, that is, head moves and all of me follows, the activity movement is specific to each activity. In walking, the activity movement does begin with the head moving first. If the activity is to lift something, however, then the activity movement will probably begin with some part of the arm instead. But the activity movement should be preceded by the coordinating movement. Madden includes both the coordinating movement and the activity movement in her plan for any activity: "Head moves, so that all of me can follow *so that I can* sing this phrase," for example.

Using the terms that Madden uses takes us back to Alexander's original term, that is, the term he used *before* he changed it to "primary control": the "primary movement." When he realised the central importance of this particular movement in our overall coordination, he changed it to "primary control." If he had retained the first term, the idea of movement might have remained central to the Alexander Technique.

Alexander's Term 2: Directions/orders

In an attempt to clarify what Alexander's discoveries were really about, Barstow rarely used the "orders," such as "neck to be free," "head to go forward and up," "back to lengthen and widen" (W. Conable, *Festschrift* 25). She disliked both their form and their content. First, she preferred questions to orders and secondly, she found their content limited and limiting. Two discussions of these phrases follow, "head forward and up" and "back to lengthen and widen."

Example 1: "Head forward and up"

Barstow stopped using the word "up" during the 1980s (Madden, private lesson 2006). This was perhaps due to Barstow's experience in training schools, where trainees were becoming stuck, stiff, or overextended in this direction, just as in the exercise that describes the coordinating movement, above, when the finger is over-stretched and over-straightened. If a student replaces a pulling down with a poking forward, then the direction of change needs to be towards general movement and potential to move freely rather than in just one direction. Insisting on the same direction lesson after lesson, year after year may explain the stiffness resulting from Alexander lessons previously described.

Again referring to the distinction between extension and use, or coordinating movement and activity movement, William Conable explains that Barstow viewed the clarity of this concept “as an important distinguishing characteristic of her teaching.” Because the activity movement may require—especially for dancers—the head moving backwards and down, it was necessary to clarify that the forward and up movement of the head only consistently described the coordinating movement: “Marj has an extraordinarily lucid understanding of the meaning of ‘head forward’... She draws a clear distinction between the forward rotation of the head at the atlanto-occipital joint and the head’s path in space or relative to the body, which may well be *back* as well as up. I have seen a great deal of confusion on this point from even some very senior teachers” (W. Conable, *Festschrift* 24).

The direction of “head forward and up” can also hamper singers, who need freedom at the atlanto-occipital joint (the joint between head and spine) at all times and need to be able to tilt their heads back slightly for high notes (Doscher 67). Doscher even describes Caruso as singing high notes with his arms down, head back and jaw open, standing in an absolutely straight line (*ibid*). When the forward and up direction is taken to an extreme, which it can be in some Alexander studios, singing teachers are justified in claiming that the technique is not helpful for singers. Alexander teachers’ hands can get in the way of the freedom of movement at this joint. I have had some Alexander experiences in which I could not access my head voice at all because extension at this joint was being prevented by the hands of the Alexander teacher.

Example 2: “Back to lengthen and widen”

Marj didn’t use the word ‘widen’ much—it would appear periodically for a specific purpose in some of the early years, and then disappeared (Madden, Email 27 July 2012).

Alexander specifies that things such as the back lengthening and widening happen *as a result of* the coordinating movement: The pupil is asked to order his neck to relax and his head to go forward and up, “*in order to* secure the necessary lengthening” [emphasis added] (CCC 116). But the lengthening and widening have become directions in themselves. Trainees and teachers talk constantly of lengthening and widening the back as if it were a real possibility of direct and voluntary action. This

practice leads to further stiffness, particularly since, as Weed points out, it is impossible to shorten (that is, use) muscles and lengthen them at the same time. He calls the attempt to do so “the definition of tension” (*What* 55). If a muscle is required for an activity, then we cannot lengthen it simultaneously. I suggest that this is why Barstow stopped using the words “lengthen” and “widen,” given her attention to process, her desire to separate cause from effect and her reluctance to ask students to create sensations. Further, Barstow used the word “torso” rather than “back,” as in “The head can only continue moving ‘forward and up’ when the torso moves with it” (L. Frederick, *Festschrift* 104). For a technique that emphasises forward movement, there is an inordinate amount of attention given to people’s backs. This emphasis tends to make people believe that their spines are at the very back of their torsos, and that their heads sit on their spines at the back of their necks. They move accordingly. To reiterate, the head sits on the spine almost at the centre of the base of the skull, and the weight-bearing part of the spine is very close to the centre of the torso (except in the morbidly obese).

Such details of anatomical accuracy were what led William and Barbara Conable to develop their idea of “body mapping.” These details have been extraordinarily helpful in my own learning of the technique and singing, and were introduced to me by Cathy Madden. While William Conable says that the *idea* for body mapping came from Barstow’s teaching, he says that Barstow herself was suspicious of such details. She did not want students to become focussed on parts and details of anatomy, as she saw so many performers doing. She would say, “I only know about two things: whole heads and whole bodies” (Conable, *Festschrift* 24).

Alexander’s Term 3: Inhibition

Inhibition 1: The Term and Concept, Definitions and Interpretations

To “inhibit” means to prevent the subconscious habit from happening so that new ways of doing can occur in their place (Alexander, *MSI* 157-58) “This... really means that in the application of my technique the process of inhibition—that is, *the act of refusing to respond* to the primary desire to gain an ‘end’—*becomes the act of responding* (volitional act) to the conscious reasoned desire to employ the *means whereby* that ‘end’ may be gained” [emphasis in the original] (Alexander, *CCC* 123).

The term “inhibition” is another source of confusion and controversy that Barstow both clarified and stopped referring to by name. She taught the practice of inhibition consistently but stopped using that word to describe it. John Dewey shared her scepticism of the term. He even made a special trip to warn Alexander that the word “inhibition” would cause confusion in the climate of psychoanalytic opinion.

In the tradition of Alexander followed by Patrick Macdonald, Marjory *Barlow*, Walter Carrington and others, pupils are asked to “do nothing” in response to a stimulus and to allow the teacher to move them. In *MSI* Alexander does state that pupils are unable to perform the act correctly because they believe that there is something for them to do physically, “when as a matter of fact the very opposite is necessary”: they are “*doing* what is wrong” [emphasis in the original] (157). This has led to widespread conviction that the Alexander Technique is about “stopping and thinking” (Holland, “A way”). Barstow did not interpret inhibition as doing nothing. Her interpretation of inhibition was rather that definition Alexander gives in *CCC* given above in which the act of refusing to respond becomes the act of employing a new “means whereby” (123). Instead of teaching people to refuse to act in response to a stimulus, she taught replacement of the old, unconstructive plan for movement with a new, constructive plan, which may or may not require a complete stop. John Wynhausen describes Barstow’s fluidity and flexibility of approach and way of moving, noting, as many others have, the stiffness of some teachers of the other schools. He observed a major difference between Barstow’s interpretation and the way teachers before her had discussed it: “Marj describes the work in terms of taking actions. You move your head, you let you body follow. The traditional view is: first you refuse to do anything, that is, you ‘inhibit’ your impulse to move. Small wonder so many Alexander teachers look stiff, almost paralysed, in their movements” (Wynhausen, *Festschrift* 133).

Barstow’s approach, which recognizes the importance of movement, is in line with the psychological research about refference that Jones cites. Jones found a great deal of experimental evidence to show that “perceptual learning is very much more effective if the subject is allowed to make some voluntary use of his muscles during the learning process. In animal studies the term ‘reafference’ has been used to describe the neural excitation that follows sensory stimulation produced by voluntary movements of the animal doing the sensing” (*Body* 157). Jones goes on to make the

case that the principle of refference applies in teaching the Alexander Technique: “Instead of depending passively on a teacher for whatever new experiences he obtains, the pupil becomes an active participant in the operation, taking major responsibility for what happens” (ibid). Jones notes that he liked this way of presenting the technique better than the way in which it was presented to him (by the Alexanders).

The following discussion shows how Barstow interpreted the word “inhibition” as replacement.

Inhibition 2: Replacement and the Problem with Nothing

Arro Beaulieu identifies the problem with Alexander’s earlier definition of inhibition as a complete refusal to act (*MSI*). As he says, it is impossible to do nothing, and he warns of the dangers of trying to do such an impossible task:

There is no such thing as neutral with regard to ourselves. We cannot do nothing; we must always do something. Alexander’s refusal ‘to do anything immediately in response’ to the stimulus to speak (the classic definition of inhibition) referred only to his habitual pattern of response, not to any and all activity. ‘Non-doing’ means not employing habitual use, and nothing more; if it becomes confused with an attempt to literally do nothing, then the inevitable result will be holding a position of one sort or another, since that is how our feelings will interpret such an attempt, and that holding is a *doing* readily habituated and as destructive of good use as any other ‘old activity’ ... (Beaulieu, *Festschrift* 17).

Alexander himself offers the more active definition of inhibition as replacement in *CCC* (given above) and, as Beaulieu points out, “this is precisely what Marjorie means when people ask her why she has not talked about inhibition and she replies, ‘I haven’t talked about anything else because you can’t go in two directions at once’” (*Festschrift* 17).

In his philosophy of experience, Dewey goes into how we must always be doing something and cannot *not* do something (Biesta and Burbules 12). Marjorie Barstow dispensed with the ideas of stopping, inhibiting and non-doing that are common in the AT teaching of others. Something was required to fill the space in which people believed that they were stopping, inhibiting or not doing. That something was usually

holding or “getting set,” as Lena Frederick describes it. “Rather,” she adds, inhibition is “a delicate movement of head and body together that doesn’t allow tension to set in” (L. Frederick, *Festschrift* 104).

Barstow’s emphasis on movement taught that inhibition was replacement. She used to say: “Inhibition is *all* that I teach. If you’re doing or thinking something else, then you’re not thinking the thing you don’t want to be thinking” (Rickover in Rickover and Cross). In other words, as one of her students put it, “by seeing to it that I continue to carry out the decision to allow my head to move and my body to follow, my habitual response has no opportunity to get started” (Kroll, *Festschrift* 123). A practical example given by one of Barstow’s students is that of overcoming a problem with an injured knee. She had been trying to organise her approach to curbs so that the “good” leg was always ready. She applied what she had learned from Barstow, noting that with her approach, there was no need for a micro-analysis of her old plan: it was simply by-passed: “Obviously I had been ‘preparing’ for this activity, but once the preparation (whatever it was) was eliminated, I had no problem. Thus I did not consciously inhibit the old way, *I never even knew what it was*. I simply substituted this new activity of moving up” [emphasis added] (Venable, *Festschrift* 76).

Jean-Louis Rodrigue, who learned in his ACAT training to “do nothing” and was already a teacher when he encountered Barstow, highlights the difference in the two schools of thought on inhibition. He explains how Barstow changed his understanding: “I truly thought that I had *to do nothing*, I had to inhibit, just think the directions, trust implicitly my teachers and let them move me. But Marj was asking me to *actively think* of the change I wanted to bring about, and be *completely responsible for that change* [emphasis in the original] (*Festschrift* 101).

As for the need to stop, Barstow used the analogy of driving down the freeway and suddenly realising that you are going the wrong way. You need to do a U-turn. If there is no traffic coming, you *might* make a complete stop before joining the road going the other way, but you *don’t have to* (Rickover and Cross). “The movement in and of itself is the inhibition... She makes the connection that inhibition is within the action” (M. Frederick, *Festschrift* 47). Frederick explains how different this interpretation is from the rest of the Alexander world (in Rickover, *MBTI*). As

Rickover describes in the following excerpt from that interview, this difference is crucial for performers.

Now, I remember watching Alexander teachers unable to process that. You know, to them, it was just too much of a radical way of looking at things, but it's absolutely true. You see, if you want to go North and you find you're going South, what you have to do is change direction. And if you are an athlete or an actor in the midst of the sport or the performance, you cannot stop and say to the audience "Well, I have to stop now, I notice myself tightening and I have to inhibit a little bit before I re-engage in the performance." What you have to be able to do is change it within the action (Rickover, *MBTI*).

Finally, one student of Madden's singled out this streamlined and movement-oriented approach to Alexander's concept of inhibition as thing that most differentiated Madden's teaching from that of his previous AT teacher. He notes that with Madden the technique has been "much more immediately practical," or "immediately experiential," and that he has learned more quickly with her than with his previous teacher.

Well, for example, my prior teacher was big into pausing... And so it felt very analytical to me: OK, I'm going to stop, I'm going to think, I'm going to redirect all those things... Cathy, I've always felt, has been much more fluid than that in what I do. There's never that stopping and thinking about it, it's like thinking so you *do* do it.... I've learned more quickly with Cathy than I did previously, and yet I still kind of value the knowledge I had before (Doctoral Conducting Student, DCE3, 2011).

Inhibition 3: Reframing, and "Inhibition" for Performers

Madden is meticulous in her non-use of the word "inhibition" because the majority of her students are performers. Performers need to be open to stimuli and spontaneous in their responses. They need to be free to respond in ways that lead to further discoveries about their work, rather than to pause, stop or close off their reactions. As a variation on replacement, Madden uses the idea of reframing to inhibit unhelpful habitual patterns of movement, while still encouraging a performer's ability to be spontaneous, creative and adaptable to change. As Lulie Westfeldt describes, the germ of this idea is inherent in Alexander's discoveries. If Alexander was "to get rid of the old body pattern that had caused his voice trouble and substitute the new HN&B pattern when he spoke, he would have to get rid of the idea of speaking! He

cut through this seemingly impossible impasse by some brilliant thinking. He ‘inhibited’ or said ‘no’ to the idea of speaking” (19).

Rather than inhibiting it or saying “no,” however, Madden sometimes replaces the *name* of the activity—what we might call reframing. To a Japanese student, for example, she suggested “oompah-loompahing,” instead of playing the piano, because the student had so many unhelpful rules and ideas associated with what she called “playing the piano.” The silliness of the term helped to distract the student from old ideas about playing. In a sense, then, Marjorie Barstow and Cathy Madden have *reframed* (effectively “inhibited”) inhibition itself by calling it something else. In doing so, they have *replaced* the idea of stopping and made Alexander’s concept of inhibition something exploratory, dynamic and indispensable to performers.

Parallels with Dewey

How does Barstow’s process-oriented approach align with Dewey’s ideas about process? Dewey’s philosophy, like Barstow’s teaching, was process-oriented. Philosophy in Dewey’s understanding is adaptive and flexible, and so change occurs through the dynamic way in which it transacts its business. This is a change from the traditional mission of philosophy, which was conceived as a search for unchanging truth. Dewey believed that past doctrines always require reconstruction in order to remain useful for the present time.

Boisvert quoted Dewey as having been outraged by the famous “billiard ball” psychology of empiricism, which translates “into the passive, purely receptive, ‘blank tablet’ students, waiting to receive the proper impression from the instructor who is activity to their passivity” (345-46). This “billiard ball” attitude toward education was also observed by Jane Addams, whose ideas influenced Dewey, in 1899. She noted that there seemed to be a belief among educators that it was not possible “for the mass of mankind to have experiences which are of themselves worth anything.” These educators, she said, believed that accordingly, if a neighbourhood was to receive valuable ideas at all, they must be brought in from the outside. “Such scepticism regarding the possibilities of human nature ... results in equipping even the youngest

children with the tools of reading and writing, but gives them no real participation in the industrial and social life with which they come in contact” (“A Function” 282).

I liken Alexander’s teaching to this Cartesian-influenced billiard ball view of education. Alexander believed that his job was to imprint upon the student “the proper impression” of good use. The experience came, then, from *outside* the student. Alexander believed that the student would only learn proper use if he/she refused to do anything at all in response to a stimulus and allowed the teacher to move him/her. By contrast, Barstow wanted to empower her students through process, something which happens from within. She wanted both student and teacher to be active in the learning *and teaching* process. Barstow believed that no one knew how to teach this work (W. Conable, *Festschrift* 26). By this she meant that the teacher must be always looking for better ways of teaching it. That is, the teacher must always be learning.

Dewey believed in experiential education. For him, neither traditional nor progressive education was the ideal. Traditional education, he said, consisted of bodies of information, skills, developed standards, and rules of conduct that worked historically, and encouraged an attitude of docility, receptivity, and obedience (*E&E* 6). It is not hard to imagine, then, why Alexander might have thought this an acceptable model of teaching his work. While he questioned many things in traditional education, there were perhaps some that he assumed should be part of any kind of training school or teaching method. Progressive education, on the other hand, according to Dewey, offered significant philosophical improvements, such as growth and expression of individuality; free activity; learning through experience; the acquisition of skills as a means of attaining ends that are vital and appealing to students; and becoming acquainted with a changing world. But he believed that it suffered from excessive individualism and from being unconstrained by the educator (21). He proposed a new philosophy of experience and applied this to education. Experience-based education, he said, must provide learners with quality experiences that will result in *growth* and *creativity* in their *subsequent* experiences. Dewey called this the continuity of experience (35). As I have argued, this is what Barstow was doing by focusing on process and encouraging the independent learning and experimentation of her students, while also constraining and guiding her students to keep thinking, moving and experimenting.

Contrary to the billiard ball approach, this method of teaching also accords with Dewey's commitment to "democracy as a way of life." Dewey believed in the wisdom of the common man, just as Barstow believed in the wisdom of her students. She encouraged their independence because she believed that everyone had the capacity to learn and discover the Alexander Technique on their own. Compared with Alexander, who had a very dim view of human nature and its capabilities, this was a radical belief indeed. "Stupid" was a favourite epithet of Alexander's "for everyone and everything" (Maisel *xli*). The degree of his mistrust of and lack of confidence in current and future AT teachers is also reflected in his veto of the formation of a professional society in his lifetime.

Summary

Analysis 1 has reviewed Barstow's emphasis on process, which meant the foregrounding of thinking over feeling, movement over the positions of mechanical advantage, and a careful choice of language so as to prevent adherence to fixed or pre-conceived ideas. Barstow's answers to the various aspects of F.M. Alexander's confusing legacy put the Alexander Technique firmly in the field of education, rather than treatment, and echo Dewey's own interpretation of the technique. Barstow also supports Dewey's emphasis on education as experiential and his belief in democracy. Analysis 2 will examine the importance of desire in teaching the Alexander Technique.

6.2: DESIRE AS PART OF PROCESS

Interest means a unified activity.

—Dewey, *Interest and Effort* 15

In the morning I gave JG a lesson and, to my great satisfaction, he observed, ‘I know what is the trouble with me, I don’t really want to do this.’ So at last, he is seeing the light.

—Carrington, *TTR* 24

The above diary entry by Walter Carrington betrays the importance of desire on the part of an Alexander pupil. Carrington is pleased that the pupil is seeing the light. But Carrington himself seems to have missed the light. That is, that the potential to harness the student’s desire lay as much with the teacher and his methods as it did with the student. Dewey puts this responsibility firmly on educators: “The problem of educators, teachers, parents, the state, is to provide the environment that induces educative or developing activities, and where these are found the one thing needful in education is secured” (*Interest* 96). Martha Fertman describes her (pre-Barstow) boredom and confusion in trying to learn the technique through Alexander’s prescribed activities and the failure of this approach to affect her dancing: “In my daily puzzling and tedious experiments with ordering, with lying, sitting, standing, with walking occasionally, and with getting in and out of a chair in an odd manner, I kept waiting for something to happen to my dancing” (*Festschrift* 8).

Analysis 1 showed how Marjorie Barstow emphasised process over form. Analysis 2 connects this process with desire, examining the philosophy and practice of “The Application Approach.” I seek to show how the element of desire is integral to Barstow’s accent on applying the Alexander Technique to a much wider range of activities than Alexander prescribed. The definition and origins of the Application Approach (AA) are given, and public (Alexander community) opposition to the approach is discussed.

The ideas of Dewey’s that will be relevant here are: his strong belief that interest is required for real learning to take place and that desire is required for action; his desire for the unity of theory and practice (in this case application); and his belief in the importance of context. Specifically, he points to the advances of science and philosophy in the last generations that have “brought about recognition of the direct

value of actions and a freer utilization of play and occupational activities” (*Interest* 74). In relation to application of a skill and the interest of the learner, Dewey says that there is no point “in the philosophy of progressive education which is sounder than its emphasis upon the importance of the participation of the learner in the formation of the purposes which direct his activities in the learning process, just as there is no defect in traditional education greater than its failure to secure the active cooperation of the pupil in construction of the purposes involved in his studying” (*E&E* 43).

It seems that the name “Application Approach” developed from Irene Tasker’s contribution to the early development of the AT, “namely, the starting of the children’s class for the application of the Technique in 1924” (Tasker, “Connecting” 6). Her first work as an Alexander teacher was “mostly in ‘application,’” she says (13). Tasker makes a distinction between this application work, described below, and “lessons in the technique,” as if they are completely separate entities: “There was no question of my giving lessons in the Technique that summer, so I did what I could in getting them to inhibit in the sense of stopping to think out ‘means’ in whatever they were doing—games, riding, swimming, canoeing, acting play” (13-14). Confusingly, she says that *after* this teaching of the application of the AT, she started her “apprenticeship” (14). That is, she began to learn to teach after she had already been teaching. Or perhaps she means that she began to learn to teach as Alexander taught only after she had some experience in teaching it her own way. It seems that her training consisted chiefly of “taking over various pupils after their lessons with FMA, and doing ‘inhibition work’ with them lying down” (14). Tasker seems to suggest that teaching inhibition in general activities was not considered training or teaching the AT. Teaching inhibition while they were lying down—that is, applying the same process as in application work—*was* considered teaching the Alexander Technique. If that same process is not the Alexander Technique, what is it? Further on in her lecture, she says that F.M. arranged for her to “give lessons and ‘application work’ to one of his pupils.” The “and” in that sentence suggests that it was Alexander who decreed that lessons do not involve application, and that lessons and application are mutually exclusive. And yet, they did involve application: to sitting, standing, walking, lying, whispered Ah and the positions of mechanical advantage. Mysteriously, these activities counted as lessons in the technique and all other activities were called “application work.” Herein lies another part of the confusing

legacy of F.M. Alexander. The term “application work” or “application approach” (which seems later to have gained capital letters) introduces a Cartesian split between theory and practice. By separating the application work and giving it its own name, the Alexander community tacitly acknowledges that the rest of the work—chiefly Alexander’s procedures and directions, or anything that is not applied—is “pure,” and therefore theoretical and separated from practice.

Barstow did not take on Tasker’s narrow definition of the Alexander Technique and seems to have been favourably enough impressed with Tasker’s application work to have made it (albeit much later) one of the defining features of her own teaching. Her letter to Whittaker in the 1980s confirms this (Whittaker, “The FM” 15). While Barstow did not “invent” the Application Approach or its name, her name became associated with this approach.

Dewey observed that “desires are the ultimate moving springs of action” (*E&E* 45). In *An Examined Life* (a book by Davies in conversation with Marjory Barlow) Barlow underlines the role of desire in the journey of self-discovery Alexander made. Davies asks Barlow, “What do you think kept F.M. alight through all those years of work?” Her answer is: “Passion. All his youthful, violent energy, you see, went into his passion. That’s the right word. That was what F.M. had—real, real *passion*... for Shakespeare. He wanted to be a great Shakespearean actor.” She even goes so far as to say that “if he hadn’t had *that* petrol in his engine, he never could have discovered this work. Never. And that was what carried him all the way!” [both emphases in original] (3). The same passion drove his writing, according to Barlow, who says: “It was his love of language that allowed F.M. to write—his love of the Bible and Shakespeare” (19).

Barstow’s emphasis on applying the Alexander Technique to activities chosen by the student echoes Dewey’s beliefs that the educational process must begin with and build on the interests of the child, and that the teacher should be a guide and co-worker with pupils, rather than a taskmaster assigning a fixed set of lessons and recitations. Barstow recognized that in order to do what Alexander did, you need to have a desire as strong as that described by Marjory Barlow (above) of her uncle. Barstow harnessed that desire in her students by expecting them to have an interest

that they cared deeply enough about, which would make them persevere. She expected them to have a desire to learn that was strong enough to make them ask for a turn in class. In Dewey's terms, she helped them turn desire and impulse into purpose, or an "end-in-view." Dewey stresses that desire and impulse alone do not constitute purpose (or "end-in-view"). Rather, they need to be translated "into a plan and method of action based upon foresight of the consequences of acting under given observed conditions in a certain way" (*E&E* 44). "In an *educational* scheme, the occurrence of a desire and impulse is not the final end. It is an occasion and a demand for the formation of a plan and method of activity...The teacher's business is to see that the occasion is taken advantage of" (*ibid* 46). Barstow made this her business.

Alexander believed that this desire was unhelpful in the learning process, tempting people too strongly into end-gaining. This is why he limited his teaching activities to fairly inconsequential tasks. But in doing so, he created yet another contradiction in his work, overlooking the importance of his own desire in his own process of discovery. "You can do what I do if you do what I did," he used to say. But surely this means that all other things must be equal, including his desire to get to the bottom of his vocal trouble so that he could continue performing. "The intensity of the desire measures the strength of the efforts that will be put forth," wrote Dewey (*E&E* 45). Surely this can cut both ways, rather than only in the negative, end-gaining, sense. That is, desire leads not only to end-gaining but also to our determination to learn a better way, such as the AT. Perhaps Alexander forgot about his original passion once he had made his discoveries. He did eventually give up performing. Thus his own example teaches us that committing to the Alexander Technique leads to the abandonment of one's art and makes the technique into an end in itself. Barstow believed in performance. She also wanted to work with young, passionate people. Her critical pragmatism led her to think differently from Alexander about desire and to value it highly.

Barstow helped students to access and harness their deep desire to learn and/or change. Kevin Ruddell recalls her asking him during a turn if he really wanted to change. The activity he had chosen for his turn was to make a fist. "I briefly considered the years of fruitless practice during which I tried to improve my manner

of movement.” Just as he was deciding and saying that he really *did* want to change, she began to help him move (Ruddell, *Festschrift* 136). This anecdote suggests that Barstow was not in the business of playing it safe so that people could languish in their unwillingness to change or to learn. She had the skills to help them out of this if they truly wished. If they didn’t want to or were not ready, she wanted them to recognize this and take responsibility for the next step themselves.

Lucy Venable describes the necessity of applying the technique, pointing out that “moving up is *in order to do something*. You cannot just take someone up and leave him or her there. Once the head moves up the person has to go into movement to get the connection between the head leading and the body following” [emphasis added] (*Festschrift* 77). Dewey makes the “end-in-view” an important part of thinking, action and consequence. By eschewing “end-gaining,” many Alexander teachers, like Alexander himself, throw the baby out with the bathwater and miss the guiding and motivating influence of an end-in-view. In Barstow’s pedagogy, the end-in-view is the *reason* you want to change your use. In order to engage our whole psycho-physical selves, we need a reason to make this change, and the reason needs to be compelling. Otherwise, as in the extreme examples of Ethel Webb and F.M. Alexander giving up performing, the Alexander Technique becomes the end-in-view. This practice makes the Alexander Technique into a “what” rather than a “how” and is not an enticing proposition for performers. Eckhart Richter mentions Alexander’s “quite justified apprehension” that his work would end up as a mere adjunct to another discipline and be subsumed under it...” (“The Application”). But if the Alexander Technique is to have wide appeal to performers, it must not become an end in itself or relegate art to a mere adjunct of the Alexander Technique.

One case in point is a pianist participant (P) in Data Collection Episode 2 in Dunedin. He said that in his limited experience of the Alexander Technique prior to meeting Cathy Madden he never sat at the piano. He consequently did not persevere with lessons. By contrast, he was one of the experienced performers who were keen to have further lessons with Madden upon her repeat visits to Dunedin.

P: I guess what I recall about it was I never sat at the piano with Barbara Kent. You know she worked on my posture, standing... That *was* helpful. I mean, I felt relaxed and wonderful after the session, but...

Interviewer: You didn't apply it?

P: I didn't apply it. It was during the Aspen summer program that I had two sessions with her. When I went back to New York, somehow... I guess I didn't feel like it would make a big enough difference maybe, and maybe I wasn't ready at the time (2011).

Madden harnesses the power of a clear desire and clear intention when helping performers learn to coordinate themselves. She asks questions such as, "Why do you want to sing?", "Why do you want to sing this song?" and "How do you want to change the world with this song?" It is the desire that initiates action. Such questions were never a part of my own traditional music training in piano, flute or voice. Consequently, before studying with Madden, my intentions in performance were mostly unclear. This lack of clarity adversely affected the clarity of my movement and therefore quality of my performance. This uncertainty alone is responsible for a great deal of what is usually called stage fright or performance anxiety but could be more constructively renamed non-specific fear due to lack of prepared intentions, desire and will. With a clear intention and strong desire to carry it out, there is far less room for this anxiety.

According to Westfeldt, even F.M. Alexander's teaching changed when his focus turned to something that he was passionate about, that is, acting. She was otherwise critical of his teaching.

F.M. really laboured with me. He was untiring. In teaching me this role of Gobbo he was more of a *teacher* than I had ever seen him. He still 'showed' me rather than used words to tell me about it, but in this instance showing me was the right thing to do, and he did it to perfection...and, wonder of wonders, he actually seemed to try to get in touch with my mind in an attempt to remove whatever impediments were deadening me (75).

Is the Alexander Technique a How or a What?

"James presented pragmatism, after all, not as a philosophy but as a *way of doing philosophy*, and Peirce ... described it as a *method* for making ideas clear and not as a place to look for ideas themselves. Pragmatism, in the most basic sense, is about how to think, not what we think" (Menand, *Pragmatism* xxvi). Resonating with this description of pragmatism, Cathy Madden frequently describes the Alexander Technique as "a how, not a what." This is her own description, but one she formulated through her study with Barstow. It fits with Alexander's philosophy and

his teachings, but it also clarifies the confusing legacy of his teaching *methods* that have given the impression that the technique is a *what*, that is, chair work, table work and positions of mechanical advantage. The description of the AT as a *how* reminds students that in studying and practising the technique, we are particularly concerned with our overall use in whatever activity we happen to be doing. The choice of activity is less important than our overall use *as we do it*. It is important to practise applying the technique to as many different activities as possible *including* those we care deeply about. The Application Approach emphasizes and proceeds from the idea that the Alexander Technique is a *how* rather than a *what*.

As the previous analysis showed, Barstow focussed on process rather than an inherited form. She also fused theory and praxis by applying the technique to all and any activities, in preference to working simply with a chair or table. In what Jeremy Chance calls “the classical school” (Barker, Interview), the chair and table work acts as a kind of symbol for all other activities. Students are expected to transfer the knowledge (or perhaps the sensory experience?) gained to all and sundry activities. According to Frank Pierce Jones this was a shortcoming of his training with FMA and ARA: “Although the technique is non-end-gaining, it has to be applied in an end-gaining world. We were given no help in finding ways to bridge the gap” (*Body* 80). Cathy Madden sometimes asks Alexander teachers of the “classical school” how their students learn this application to their other activities and finds that many teachers observe that the students simply don’t. As Dewey said, using symbols is better than trial and error, but still involves some degree of hit and miss. Best of all is the trial of a particular solution or response appropriate for the particular situation (Biesta and Burbules 12).

Like Dewey, for whom “neglect of context is the greatest single disaster which philosophic thinking can incur” (“Context”), Barstow believed in the importance of context. Bruce Fertman recollects his first contact with Barstow, when he called to enquire about her winter workshop in 1976. Her questions show her conviction about context and that the Alexander Technique is not an end in itself.

When Marjorie answered the phone I told her that Ed Maisel had recommended I call her. She said, ‘What do you do?’ I said that I studied the Alexander Technique. ‘Is that all? What else do you do?’ I was a little taken aback, but proceeded to tell her that I was a

graduate in movement education, a professional modern dancer, and a martial artist. She said something like, ‘Come to my winter workshop. I think you might enjoy it’ (B. Fertman, *Festschrift* 66).

Criticism and Justification

Walton White, who wrote a scathing article about Barstow’s teaching, complained that she did not teach the Alexander Technique, and that to say she did compromises both the technique and her own innovation. One of his chief criticisms of the “Application Approach” was that there was undue attention paid to the quality of the performance of an activity rather than to the quality of employment of the organism in any given activity:

The Alexander Technique concerns itself with how well an individual employs his organism as a whole (a set of means) in any activity, not with how well he performs the activity. The Application Approach focuses on performing an activity (an end) and uses the quality of this performance as a basis for making judgments on how well the individual is using himself as a whole (“An Appellation Approach”).

First, it is not accurate to say that Barstow used the quality of the performance as a basis for making judgments on how well the student was using himself as a whole. Her powers of observation are well documented (and will be discussed further in 6.3), and her own use was a model for all her students. She certainly did not need students to bring in their activities so that she could use those as a method for assessing her students’ use. Secondly, Alexander maintained that “use” determined “functioning.” By this he meant that any change in overall use will have an impact on any given activity. While it does not follow that every improvement in functioning is due to an improvement in use, an improvement in use will be manifested in the quality of the activity, and thus can give *the beginning student* important feedback about the impact of the Alexander Technique. Further, the student’s specialised expertise brings with it an ability to judge an impact *in that field* that may rival the Alexander teacher’s ability to judge or observe overall use. This expertise gives the Alexander teacher extra feedback and encourages students to be actively involved in their learning. This self-observation occurs in conjunction with the observation of the teacher, who is ideally observing both the use *and* the functioning and can give vital information to the student about either or both. This immediate impact upon performance is especially important to performers who cannot afford to invest years of their time and

money in learning a technique that is of questionable value to them, as it is if the only activity in class is chair or table work. Cathy Madden tells the story of one of her first experiences of bringing acting to Barstow's class, playing Cordelia from *King Lear*. She describes the role this played in her motivation as a pivotal learning experience and fundamental commitment to the Alexander Technique, aiding her understanding of its relevance and application to performers:

Three months after the play closed, I did one of Cordelia's monologues, the 'recognition speech' for Marjorie. As she worked with me, I saw my hand reaching out the way I had always intended it to; I heard subtlety and power in my voice and many nuances that I had planned but had never heard; my images became amazingly clear; action choices and changes were very easy, yet so full of energy and the love that fuelled all the actions; I was even making new discoveries about the text itself... I was frightened because for the first time everything that I wanted to happen, and more, was happening. After I calmed down, I realized that I had had a glimpse of what had been fascinating me all along, the power and ease of psychophysical integration. (Madden, *Festschrift* 29).

Contrast this experience with the following story about Ethel Webb, who gave up the piano to master the Alexander Technique:

Ethel Webb was F.M.'s amanuensis. She made his appointments, was his receptionist and taught. She was a pianist. But she stopped playing because she wasn't going to play until she had really understood what Mr Alexander was teaching. And she didn't play the piano again for the rest of her life. Now, I'm sorry, but that's nuts. It's exactly the opposite of Marj's approach ... She wanted us to use what we were learning all the time (Conable, Interview).

This attitude makes the AT into a *what*, or an end in itself. Focussing on this *what* completely obscured the passion for piano playing, a passion so strong that it had led Webb to the Alexander Technique. To give up their art in order to master something else is not what most performers want. They are drawn to the technique because of its promise to help them to do what they love doing and/or are paid to do. Michael Frederick points out that of the five Guest Senior Teachers at the First AT Congress, in New York State 1986, Barstow was the only one who had been a performer. He compares her love of dancing with F.M. Alexander's love of acting (*Festschrift* 49). Alexander and Webb seem to have believed it necessary to give up their desire to perform altogether in order to master technique. They urged their students to do the same. Barstow says that Alexander recommended that she stop dancing during her

training. Concurring with Conable's story about Ethel Webb, above, Erika Whittaker shows how much this idea of stopping was part of her aunt's language. Whittaker is not quoting her aunt here in a critical way, rather just to show how she viewed this fundamental idea of inhibition in her application of the Alexander Technique to life. "I was playing some Chopin," she says. "Well, I can't play Chopin of course, but I was sight-reading and pulling it all to pieces. It probably sounded awful but I was enjoying myself so much. And my aunt suddenly came in and said, 'Stop! You're making a *terrible* noise.' And I knew she'd say that. 'Stop'" (in Gounaris 127). She says that the things she learned from Irene Tasker and from her aunt "are all to do with living, and stopping" (144). Although these examples are about stopping temporarily in order to learn, I have chosen them to highlight the extremism and even violence of the attitude. Note that Whittaker tells how much she was enjoying herself when her aunt said, "Stop! You're making a *terrible* noise," thus killing the joy of a small child. In the same way Webb seems to have stopped herself from deriving any joy she had from playing the piano herself. Whittaker mentions in the same interview how her aunt had a most wonderful touch on the piano but hardly ever played when she got older. When she played it was wonderful, but she hardly ever played.

Lucy Venable recalls working on a chair with Barstow in 1974 and the clarity she derived, in contrast, when she chose to dance for her "turn":

I recognized that it seemed hard for me to do [chair work] easily, but I never really understood the reason for the exercise. I responded much better to help given me while performing *pliés, relevés*, jumps, bends of the body, as I knew when these movements were improving. They were activities that I was involved with all of the time, and I could apply my new Alexander information to them immediately (*Festschrift* 76-77).

Alexander's expectation that pupils apply the work to all areas of life on their own represents another contradiction in his thinking. On one hand he believed that everyone had to be spoon-fed and could not learn the technique on his or her own. On the other hand, he expected students to make the transition on their own from chair work to every other activity in life. When Barstow first began studying with Alexander, she asked him about giving up her dancing while she studied with him. His response was: "It might be [a good idea]" (Paludan 384). It was perhaps Alexander, then, who encouraged Webb to stop her piano playing, too. Barstow later

believed that to practise the concepts of easing up for just fifteen minutes a day and then forgetting about it was not going to help (Barker, *Festschrift* 82). And yet it seemed that Alexander's lessons implicitly encouraged this. "Being conscious of what you're doing with your body in all activities will [help]" (ibid). Barstow helped her students make the leap by including as many activities in her classes as possible, while still emphasizing their own role in the process.

Lena Frederick, who had trained in England before meeting Barstow "saw in watching her work how the Technique really touched people when it related to something that was important to them, for example, playing a musical instrument, dancing, teaching a class" (*Festschrift* 104). Barbara Conable called Barstow's work with performers "applying Alexander's discoveries right at the point of greatest personal relevance" (*Festschrift* 149). In the same way, Lucy Venable observes the importance of application work in helping people understand what the technique is about. She describes Barstow's approach as a dialogue rather than a monologue, which resonates strongly with Dewey's idea that the teacher is a guide or co-worker:

You need to recognize that a lesson is a dialogue, not a monologue. You talk to the student to learn of his or her interests. You want to establish trust with the student. You find out what you can help a person with before you ever start talking about heads and bodies as you need to relate the lesson to something the student is interested in and understands, since there is nothing you can compare the Alexander Technique to that they have ever experienced before (Venable, *Festschrift* 77).

Another reason Barstow may have had for focussing on activities that people cared about deeply and had therefore practised, is that these activities had many cultivated habits associated with them. Alexander had observed that cultivated habits were often harder to shift because usually the owner of them had paid a teacher or coach to teach them that particular habit. The cultivated habit that he himself struggled to remove was that of clutching the floor with his feet as he recited. Every performer will have their own repertoire of cultivated habits, both helpful and unhelpful in performing their art. Heather Kroll reports that it was particularly in watching people meet these cultivated habits in their chosen fields that she learned "to see when someone's constructive thinking stopped, when they stopped inhibiting and returned to end-

gaining.” It can be seen, therefore, that the application work and group teaching are mutually beneficial. Group teaching is discussed further in Analysis 3.

The importance of application for performers

While it is true that the Alexander Technique is not to be judged by the quality of the performance of an activity, it is important to acknowledge that it is precisely through its impact on their performance that most performers will gauge its value, especially in the beginning phases. A singer’s specific vocal problems, for example, are often remedied—at least in part—by an improvement in overall (whole person) use through the Alexander Technique. The student will usually still need to attend to aspects of specific vocal technique, but the change in whole person use will have a noticeable impact on the art-specific technique of a performer. It is often this that draws a performer to study the Alexander Technique.

Cathy Madden has applied the Alexander Technique to such an extent that Dewey might have called it “thinking in artistic activity.” Madden herself calls it “Integrative Alexander Technique for performing artists,” and this name forms part of the title of her recent book. She constantly gathers information—and encourages students to do the same—about the conditions of use present and requirements for a performance, including a constructive response to adrenalin (as opposed to the usual attempt to conquer or banish it), inviting and using constructively the presence of an audience, and global and overarching artistic desire as well as specific intentions and desires for each performance. She trains performers to think constructively about these aspects of performance that are rarely addressed in traditional music education (Bennett, *Understanding* and “Utopia”).

Summary

In Analysis 2 the focus has been on the importance of desire in the process of learning the Alexander Technique and how that desire is harnessed in application work. Alexander seems often to have wanted to dispense with the end-in-view altogether, and in his own case did dispense with acting—his original end—to concentrate on his technique. Barstow, however, saw the importance of retaining the end-in-view for performers. Even though she herself gave up dancing, she wanted her students to have

other interests, a “so that I can,” or an end-in-view. Desire was an important part of the process to which Barstow adhered.

Belief in the importance of a student’s desire goes hand in hand with group teaching. One enhances the other. Desire is important in any learning, but the group situation highlights its value. One of the synergistic effects of combining these aspects of teaching is that the dynamic of a group can create an overall desire that belongs to the group and be more motivating than learning on one’s own. Barstow’s extended workshops enabled people to form small groups on their own, in which they continued learning independently and together, just like the students in Alexander’s first training course. Further, a student may need an even stronger desire to learn in front of others. Barstow believed that this desire was the first step in learning the Alexander Technique. The second step was accepting responsibility and deciding to do something about it. She made sure that students exercised these two steps every time they volunteered or asked for a turn (which they had to do if they wanted one). Once they were standing in front of the group, ready for their turn, they were already well on the way through Alexander’s steps of discovery. The combination of the Application Approach with group teaching is particularly suited to performers. The second of these mutually enhancing aspects of Barstow’s teaching will now be addressed under the heading 6.3: Community and Communication.

6.3: COMMUNITY & COMMUNICATION

[Alexander] was not good at explaining what had to happen and how it had to happen and why it had to happen. He got better in that as time went on, but he was very bad in the early days. I remember one man coming out of his room in a rather flustered state, and he said to me (I was just coming in), he said: "What a wonderful man, what an extraordinary man, what a marvellous man," he said, "I can't understand a word he says!" And it was rather like that. People *didn't* understand a word he said. And he didn't even explain to people at all reasonably *why* they couldn't understand what he said. Because you mustn't *expect* to understand what an Alexander teacher tells you straight away ... but it is quite easy to make people understand why they can't understand and carry on from there (Macdonald, "In the 80s" 23m37s).

This third analysis examines Barstow's highlighting of community and communication and the interrelation of these concepts. The etymological connections between community and communication are presented and Dewey's observations on these connections are reviewed. Again I review some of the criticism levelled at Barstow, now focussing on her group teaching, and I clarify precisely *how* she taught groups. Some aspects of her pedagogy that were emphasized and enhanced through group teaching are identified.

Dewey

The ideas of Dewey relating to this analysis are broadly three: the importance of community in education (and the impact of social intelligence on purpose), the connection between community and communication, and the importance of community in science. On the first idea Dewey had perhaps the most to say, with his firm belief that "the very process of living together educates. It enlarges and enlightens experience; it stimulates and enriches imagination; it creates responsibility for accuracy and vividness of statement and thought" (*Democracy* 11). He believed that education often failed "because it neglects this fundamental principle of the school as a form of community life" ("My Pedagogic" 88). In *The School and Society* he argued for each school to be made "an embryonic community life, active with types of occupations that reflect the life of the larger society and permeated throughout with the spirit of art, history, and science" (19). In his work on experiential education, Dewey claimed that an educational experience is the

experience between an individual and his or her environment (*E&E* 25). He also saw the relationship between education and social process as affecting the role of the teacher: “When education is based upon experience and educative experience is seen to be a social process...the teacher loses the position of external boss or dictator but takes on that of leader of group activities (37). He saw this guidance and the educative plan as a cooperative endeavour, where “the teacher’s suggestion is not a mold for a cast-iron result but is a starting point to be developed into a plan *through contributions from the experience of all engaged in the learning process*. The development occurs through reciprocal give-and-take, the teacher taking but not being afraid also to give. The essential point is that the purpose grow and take shape through the process of social intelligence” [emphasis added] (47).

The second idea, the connection between community and communication, stems from but is not limited to the etymological relationship of their names. The words “community” and “communication” share a “common” root, “common” being the translation of their mutual Latin origin, *communis*. As Dewey says, though, “there is more than a verbal tie between the words common, community, and communication” (*D&E* 7). We live in a community in virtue of the things we have in common; and communication is the way in which we come to possess things in common. What we must have in common in order to form a community or society are “aims, beliefs, aspirations, knowledge—a common understanding—like mindedness as the sociologists say. Such things cannot be passed physically from one to another, like bricks...the communication which insures participation in a common understanding is one which secures similar emotional and intellectual dispositions” (*ibid*). While language is an expression of thought and a logical instrument, “it is fundamentally and primarily a social instrument. Language is the device for communication; it is the tool through which one individual comes to share the ideas and feelings of others. When treated simply as a way of getting individual information, or as a means of showing off what one has learned, it loses its social motive and end (“My Pedagogic” 90). Dewey further observed that “the use of language to convey and acquire ideas is an extension and refinement of the principle that things gain meaning by being used in a shared experience or joint action” (*D&E* 20).

Dewey's belief in community extended further than just education for children, however. He also had a social and experimental conception of science, which he saw as the effort "not of an individual, but of an 'ideal' community of investigators dedicated to learning from the consequences of artful transformations of nature" (Scheffler, *Four* 10). This is the third idea of Dewey's that relates to Barstow's group teaching.

Barstow, community and communication

Every time Marj helped someone, we were all touched... This kind of group experience is a powerful one and much appreciated at a time when life is increasingly insular, specialized and fragmented (Baty, *Festschrift* 117).

One of the overwhelming impressions made by the *Festschrift* is the sense of community that Barstow created and that her students continued. This legacy lives on today in the organisation called ATI (Alexander Technique International). Barstow's teaching is far from common, and yet it revolves around the ideals of community and communication. Her attention to language and communication is bound up in her belief in the community she created for her teaching. This is part of the rationale for Barstow's elastic approach to Alexander's terms. She observed the effect they had on her students, both individually and as a group, and she used the group to try out her new ways of clarifying Alexander's ideas in her own words. That is, she allowed the social and educative context to change the way she taught Alexander's discoveries. While Dewey's educational precepts were written principally for the education of children, they have a marked resonance with Barstow's pedagogy for adults. She seems to have begun experimenting with these ideas most vigorously while teaching large groups of university students in the early 1970s.

Unlike Barstow, Alexander "was not a 'group' person: he never felt comfortable in ... discussions where everyone had a go—this was linked to his intense dislike of committees and organizations" (Whittaker, "England" 27). His training courses *were* based on group classes. But Barstow diverged from Alexander in making group teaching a conscious and deliberate part of her teaching to all levels of students. She may not have been "a group person" any more than Alexander in that she did not participate in the "great split" of the first training course, choosing to remain

independent (*Examined* 197). Further, her group classes were not exactly like the example of a group given by Whittaker above, in that she remained the teacher and she was in charge. It was certainly not teaching by committee. Nevertheless, she does seem to have valued the contributions, discoveries and observations made by her students more than Alexander did. She did treat her students as co-investigators in their own learning and the learning of the group as a whole.

Following this principle of treating students as co-investigators, Cathy Madden often brings a kind of Derridean deconstructive flavour to the coordinating movement (or primary control) by using a made-up word for it that has no prior meaning to anyone in the class, so that the group can construct the meaning as it learns, that is *through experience*. This is so as to avoid “irreconcilable interpretations of interpretation simultaneously” as the pragmatist, Cherryholmes, described them (*Power* 166). Madden’s practice pays heed to Alexander’s comment that we can use “abracadabra” if we like, as long as it means what he meant (*Barlow* qtd in Madden, *Integrative* 25). Her approach also reflects Dewey’s idea about intersubjectivity (that partners in interaction create a shared, intersubjective world), what Biesta calls Dewey’s pragmatist theory of knowledge (12-13). In Madden’s class, the group *creates* the meaning, through action and experience, of the new word that signifies the coordinating movement. Nancy Williamson also learned this approach from Barstow: “As Alexander’s principles are applied, the Technique *is created anew* with each intentional contact between teacher and pupil, depending on what each is able to bring to the experience at that moment” [emphasis added] (*Festschrift* 56).

The social context offered by group learning gives performers practical experience in performance, rather than just theoretical experience as in individual lessons. So it is another example of connecting theory and praxis. Edward Bouchard tells how important it was for him to learn the Alexander Technique in application to performance. Despite Alexander’s promise to Westfeldt that his trainees would not have any stage fright, Bouchard continued to suffer from it, and his individual lessons did not address or alleviate the phenomenon:

At last the motor processes of my stage fright were identified...The performance setting of Marjorie’s class revived my stage fright in full force... The group setting itself seemed to enhance my ability to respond. It is possible that the attention of the group magnifies the

awareness of the individual. One appears to notice more or be moved more easily from the habitual to new territory if the teacher creates the proper environment in the group for change to occur. Marjorie Barstow, for instance, constantly encourages people to ‘take a risk’ as they suddenly find themselves performing with ease what previously had been difficult (32).

The social context also reminds performers that one of the primary aims of our art is communication. It can be easy to forget this in our practice rooms, alone or just with a teacher working on technical problems. Having an audience present during our learning can help us to remember the vital aspect of communication in what we do. This communication can act as a coordinating force, making our intention clearer and therefore our movements clearer in turn, as Madden describes: “Since one of the ways our students learn is by imitating us, this process that Marj taught me ensured that I presented an improved coordination to my students” (Chance and Madden). In other words, Madden *communicated* an improved coordination to her students.

Criticism of group teaching

The criticisms that were levelled at Barstow and her group teaching were of two main kinds. The first claimed that Alexander did not teach in groups, and so Barstow’s teaching was unorthodox or inauthentic. Weed notes that throughout his career as a teacher, people have told him that “F. M. never taught in groups” (“Let’s get rid”). Even some of Barstow’s students believed that the Alexanders gave private lessons and *only* taught in groups during training courses (Arro Beaulieu, *Festschrift* 12). The second kind of criticism was based on the assumption that it was simply not possible to teach the AT in groups. Behind this assumption lies the first criticism, too. If it were more widely understood that Alexander had taught in groups, there would be less or no discussion about whether it is possible. There is also a seemingly unconscious Cartesian split between methods of teaching and methods of training. The split seems to allow for group teaching in training courses but not for the wider public, and certainly not for beginners.

By 1978 Barstow’s teaching was attracting attention internationally. Robert Rickover heard (while studying in England) that she was “an excellent teacher who usually worked with her students in a group setting.” He notes that there was very little group work being done in England at the time and that, in fact, there were some teachers

there who didn't think the Alexander Technique *could* be taught in groups, at least not without compromising its basic integrity. Many still think this, as evidenced by the PAAT (Professional Association of Alexander Teachers) website, which claims:

During a lesson you are *worked on* by the teacher almost continuously and as the teacher works to encourage you to let go of tensions that you are creating, he/she talks to you, explaining the Technique and relating it to your particular circumstances. It is not possible to *work on* two people at once. Also, if you are to effect real personal change in your life then the lessons must be geared to your specific needs and not to the more general needs of a group [emphasis added].

Note again the use of the preposition “on,” rather than “with,” suggesting a therapeutic role of the Alexander Technique rather than a teaching one. The view that the AT cannot be taught in groups is consistent with the idea that it is something that is done to a student.

Alex Murray wrote to let me know that Frank Jones disapproved of Barstow's teaching. “Frank and Helen Jones were initially good friends and admirers of Marj, but when they watched a late group session in Boston, they thought it a travesty of the technique” (2 May 2013). In 1988 Diana Johnston wrote a letter to the *Alexander Review* complaining about large classes that were being held in Australia by Jeremy Chance “and others” (23), insisting that “the teacher who teaches PRIVATELY re-educates the individual,” “at the same time having respect for the fact that each person is totally different, physically, mentally, instinctively and emotionally, while following closely the principles as stated and *taught* by F.M.” [emphasis and capitals in the original] (24). One of the constant concerns by the dissenters was that group teaching assumes that everyone is the same. They also argue that since the Alexander Technique is about one's own use, then it is pointless to teach it in a group. They are convinced that nothing beneficial can be learned in a group situation and that individual lessons are paramount. In addition to his story about the Joneses, Murray sent the following anecdote about instrumental master classes, which he compares with teaching the AT in a group: “What can be group-taught is not necessarily what the individual needs” (Email 2 May 2013). Note the analogy, once again of the AT—and, oddly, of performance classes—with a clinical situation:

James Galway gave a lovely description of the futility of master classes, although he continues to make a good income from them.

He compared it to a physician calling for patients in a full hall. One comes up, he observes the problem, takes a piece of sticking plaster and puts it on the thumb of the volunteer. The audience all take their own pieces of plaster and stick them on their thumbs (ibid).

Response to criticisms

In response to the first criticism, that Alexander did not teach in groups, Michael Frederick points out that group teaching is not such a foreign idea in the Alexander world. “Any teacher training program that I’ve ever seen in America, England or in Israel is a group activity. I mean the teacher is there working with individuals, but it’s also a group process,” he says (*Festschrift* 49). Group work was an integral and regular part of the first training course, as Erika Whittaker describes: “In class we often worked in twos and threes under F.M.’s guidance—basically he worked on us whatever our part was in the group” (“England” 27). And yet, the underlying belief persists that the technique cannot be taught in groups, suggesting a tacit approval of group teaching in training courses but not for the wider public. There are many instances of teachers reiterating this Cartesian split between teaching and training. In Gounaris’s *Taking Time*, for example, which consists of six interviews with first generation teachers discussing teacher training, the tendency of the interviewees is to talk about the two teaching processes as if they are fundamentally different, and as if this difference is a foregone conclusion.

Even if there weren’t this apparent split, there is also evidence to suggest that Alexander did teach people in groups. That is, people who were not training. One boy writes about his experience at the Alexander School in Stow from 1941 to 1942:

F.M., when he was there, gave group lessons. It seems to me that both adults and children were in the group. The pupils were seated on chairs in a circle. Sometimes in summer we sat outside under a large horse-chestnut tree on the front lawn. F.M. would move from one pupil to another, often leaving one in an uncomfortable position and moving on to the next. I don’t remember specifically that he ever abandoned anyone when they were halfway out of a chair but he might have. While he moved around, he talked and entertained us... and he told jokes (Jones, *Body* 76).

In response to the second kind of criticism, that group teaching is either not possible or not appropriate, that they resemble music master classes, or that they are a travesty

of the technique, it should perhaps be clarified here what is meant by group teaching as exemplified by Barstow. As Frank Ottiwell pointed out, one reason there was so much controversy over her teaching may have been that there was a misinterpretation of what she did:

The fact that Marj teaches almost exclusively in groups appears to be anathema to many other Alexander teachers. I think there may be a misunderstanding...She works, as Fritz Perls described in his method of working in Gestalt therapy, *one-to-one in a group setting* (Ottiwell, *Festschrift* 3).

In Barstow's classes there was a mixture of whole group activities and individual turns in front of the class. There were also times when the larger group would divide into smaller groups and student teachers would assist the small groups, or small groups of student teachers would work with one another. Certainly, for group teaching to be effective, the teacher must have extraordinary skill. Rickover recounts that Barstow was able, for example, to help one person with her hands, another with her voice, and bring several others into the process with her eyes (*Festschrift* 28). Alice Pryor realised, through watching Barstow successfully work with 50 to 70 students, that she knew she could learn as much from her teaching style as from its content, so skilfully did Barstow retain her students' attention and guide their learning through the movement process (*Festschrift* 131). "She connects with people because she's connected with herself," says Wynhausen (*Festschrift* 133), who notes Barstow's talent for an "easy rapport with her students": "What really categorizes her teaching is the lively dialogue that transpires. It is this thing that really distinguished her from the other eminent teachers who came to New York for the International Congress (*Festschrift* 133).

In response to Alexander Murray's criticisms, which he bolsters with anecdotes about Frank Jones and James Galway, first, Jones could not have attended a "late" group session, as he died in 1976 and was unwell for some time before this. Barstow's only started teaching large groups in the 1970s and continued to do so for more than 20 years. Indeed, it seems to have been Jones who was responsible for the beginning of Barstow's large group classes when he asked her to take his place at SMU in 1973 (Chance, "Obituaries" 15). At most, Jones may have observed a large group session in Boston towards the end of his life and at the very beginning of Barstow's large-group

teaching. Perhaps he thought the group too big, although this is somewhat ironic, Jones having referred Barstow to teach what he would otherwise have taught himself, an enormous group at SMU. If Murray's story is true, perhaps there was some bitterness mixed into Jones's description of Barstow's teaching being "a travesty of the technique." Fate had served Jones a terminal illness, while Barstow's star shone ever brighter.

In response to the Galway story offer by Murray, Barstow's classes were not master classes. They had little in common with master classes as they are generally conducted in music institutions. As Renée Fleming (51) observes, master classes are a form of entertainment in which the "master" often chooses to entertain her audience at the expense of the students. Furthermore, they are usually one-off classes. There is no follow-up and no long-term guidance. Such master classes do not create the kind of on-going, nurturing and learning environment of Barstow's group classes.

Mending the Cartesian split between teaching and training

Since Barstow did not separate the teaching of trainee teachers from that of performers or anyone else, she taught everyone in the same way. It was up to the students to ask for what they needed. Because Barstow taught everyone together, trainees received constant tuition in how to teach all levels from beginners through to advanced pupils. Perhaps even more importantly, students learned many things from watching one other: how to learn, how to ask for what they needed and how Barstow responded to these needs, even when they were not articulated. Barstow was extraordinarily sensitive to, and perceptive of, students' needs: "She teaches appropriately to the group that she is working with. She gives them what they need. It's simply a matter of meeting people where they are and delicately showing them how the technique can improve what they're doing," observed Bradley (*Festschrift* 115).

Frederick and Rickover also noted Barstow's ability to perceive people's needs and attend to the individual while still teaching the group:

Frederick: Well, the thing we also said, part of her brilliance was that she had this amazing adaptability to the individual. She would listen, really listen to you and watch you, keen observer. And

then she would figure out how to best access you so you could learn.

Rickover: And always with, if it was in a group setting, which it usually was until the very end of her life, she was very aware of what she was saying in terms of how people in the group would interpret it. Very careful with her choice of words (*MBTI*).

This repair of the Cartesian split between teaching and training has the added benefit of teaching trainees how to teach beginners, something which would otherwise be left out of training courses. It was said of Barstow that she did not train teachers, but it could equally be argued that *all she did* was train teachers, whether people went on to teach others or whether they simply learned to teach themselves. She adopted the teaching format in which she had learned to teach the technique, that is, the group class, and applied it to all learning of the Alexander Technique.

Barstow's Community

In the following excerpt from an interview published in 1981, Barstow tells how she began teaching group classes:

Stillwell: You work with very large groups of people, Marj; I've counted up to 87 people in a room at one time. Obviously, this work started out as a one to one kind of thing or possibly small groups. Where did you make the transition to working with larger groups?

Barstow: What I have believed for a long time is that (university) students ... are used to working together in performing. They're used to taking constructive criticism from their teachers; and I've always believed that if a person had something simple and logical and reasonable to present to students of that age and at that time of life, they would be interested. And I wanted to prove to myself that this could be accomplished in a group situation... A friend of mine in Lincoln who had been the first Dean of Women ... made arrangements for me to teach three classes for one semester at the University. I had one group from the speech department, another from psychology, and the third from home economics. I met each class once a week and was pleasantly surprised how quickly the students became interested. They were seniors and would be off teaching the next year. They all wanted to continue learning more of the Technique... This experience proved to me that the Technique could be successfully taught in groups and I was anxious to continue experimenting with the idea (Stillwell 20).

Barstow describes the beginnings of her group classes as an experiment—something she wanted to test and prove. What might be described as a surprising result of this experiment was that as the number of people in the groups increased and the individual time with Barstow decreased, the quality of learning actually increased, as observed by both Barstow herself and William Conable (*Festschrift* 22). Conable suggests that this inverse relationship has something to do with another phenomenon he observed in Barstow, that “she does less and less for her students and makes them do more and more for themselves” (24). He also attributes it to people only being able to learn the Alexander Technique effectively in small bites, while large spectacular changes often lead to end-gaining, fixture and confusion (24). The success of Barstow’s large classes probably also says something about the quality of commitment of those who were drawn to Barstow’s teaching and the high value that they themselves placed on community. Many of her students took on Barstow’s attitude toward community. “The people who came to the workshop were very fun to be with. We did things together during the free time that made the workshop that much richer an experience” (Wynhausen, *Festschrift* 133). They also formed their own study groups. “During the Lincoln workshops, a number of us who were teaching the technique, or studying to teach, would regularly get together after workshop hours to exchange work and ideas” (Troberman, *Festschrift* 138). Those who lived in Lincoln also “got together about once a week, without Marj, to work with each other” (Fishman, *Festschrift* 5). Barstow invited her student teachers to assist at her larger and more public “Community College” classes, thus reinforcing the community of those learning and training (ibid).

One of the most remarkable things about Barstow was the way she seems to have invited so many of her students in to various aspects of her life. Sarah Barker suggests that at least part of the motivation for this was for the further and more complete education of her students, but it seems that the invitation into her community *for itself* was at least as important. She offered this to her students as a part of herself.

Marj worked with us daily, weekdays, for four to six hours. But we all saw her outside of the class when she would invite one or two of us to accompany her visiting the ranch, making a milk run, having lunch with her friends, and she made us a part of her Lincoln community. And no matter what we were doing we couldn’t help but think of using the Alexander Technique under her watchful eye... ‘I’ve been watching you as you go along in your activities

and I wonder if you might do a little more thinking about how you are using yourself” (Barker, *Festschrift* 88).

Benefits of group teaching and links with other important features

There are obvious benefits of private lessons, such as having the teacher’s complete attention, having to encounter discussion only about questions that are of immediate interest to oneself and privacy. In the case of performers, individual lessons offer the chance to work on larger amounts of repertoire with the teacher. What was unusual in the case of Barstow was that some of her students, Cathy Madden among them, learned the Alexander Technique solely in groups. The benefits of teaching the Alexander Technique in groups are arranged and discussed under the headings of Observation Skills; Constructive Thinking and Communication; and Independence, Community and Democracy. Each major category is called a “benefit and coordinating effect” since each benefit connects with another important aspect of Barstow’s pedagogy.

Benefit and Coordinating Effect 1: The training of observation

It is wonderful to observe how each person uniquely reflects the more or less universal habit of ‘pulling down.’

—Arro Beaulieu, *Festschrift* 13.

Learning in a group facilitates the training of observation skills. Barstow did not use mirrors in her teaching because she wanted people to watch themselves directly in activity (rather than in a mirror image) and to watch others. The students act as live, *communicative*, non-mirror-image feedback givers. Students were encouraged to practise observing while not experiencing a direct “turn” from the teacher and to articulate what they saw. Heather Kroll describes how this training helped her apply the technique to herself:

I found at first that I could see someone else’s habits of movement much more easily than I could see my own. By watching other people as Marj worked with them, I learned to see how their thinking changed their coordination. Seeing this process in others

helped me to understand it better so that I could apply it to myself more easily (Kroll, *Festschrift* 123).

To help someone else constructively, Barstow believed, you must clearly understand what both you and your student are doing (W. Conable, *Festschrift* 24). This requires highly refined observation skills. Although the skill of observation relies on our sensory perception, which is, by nature, unreliable, the visual sense is perhaps “the least capricious” of them all, according to Cathy Madden. The McGurk effect (Tiippana) and several sense studies (Bresciani et al, for example) suggest, rather, that vision is simply our dominant sense. It has the ability to override our other senses and can actually be less reliable than other senses. For Barstow, however, observation was not just visual. Jane Clanton Bick explains how Barstow helped her grow in her sensitivity to the sounds of speech as another means to find out what she was doing with herself (*Festschrift* 60). Cathy Madden also explains that she gathers information about what a student is doing from a variety of senses.

Frederick notes that observation is the first part of what he means by “thinking” in the Alexander Technique. His explanation shows how group work, with its emphasis on observation, can encourage students to think: “What I mean by thinking is, first of all, observing exactly what is going on within myself kinesthetically. Seeing what exactly I’m doing with myself... it’s really an act of attention” (*Festschrift* 46-47). He describes how Barstow’s insistence on his carrying out that act of attention while he worked with Frank Ottiwell made him see that he was “stiffening and tightening” (46). “Stop. What are you doing?” she asked him. His act of attention, as she helped him to put his hands on Ottiwell again was “like a lightning flash” that went through him as he experienced a clear understanding of what psychophysical re-education meant. “Prior to that,” Frederick says, “Alexander work had seemed ‘physical-psycho,’” working from the body to change the mind, as opposed to seeing that it was your thinking that had to change (46).

The observation skills that Barstow taught and engendered in her students have the ability to cut through the sometimes baffling detail of the technique of another discipline, or the way our habits can make these details seem baffling. Peter Trimmer describes how his training with Barstow helped him learn Aikido, for example: “In

Aikido we are shown a technique and we have to perform what the instructor has done. With my ability to see, I am able to execute the demonstrated techniques as they were shown and not how my habits perceived them” (*Festschrift* 140).

Madden’s skills in observation equally enable her to cut through the details of vocal technique to see right to the core of how a student has conceived of the task of singing. In 2005 she watched me in a lesson while I sang and then asked whether I used to play the flute. I did play the flute for many years. “It looks like you are trying to adjust your lips to a flute, or trying to form an embouchure that is right for the flute, but not for singing,” she said. Madden happened to have a flute at hand. She observed what I did with my mouth as I played it. We then talked about the differences required for playing the flute and singing, which helped to clarify what I needed to do to sing. Previous teachers had simply become frustrated with me, demanding (sometimes to the point of shouting) that I get “it” away from my lips (whatever “it” was); to “relax” my lips or jaw, when I could not perceive anything that felt like tension; or to “speak from a forward position,” another vague and impossible instruction if one doesn’t already know what it means. A forward position with what part of my body? Forward of where and with respect to what? If I ever asked such questions of my previous teachers I would be accused of “getting into semantics,” but I was simply trying to find out what they meant and to get instructions that I could follow. Madden’s observations, coupled with her precise understanding of articulation and her ability to suggest changes that are comprehensible and possible, led to the beginning of significant changes in my singing.

Madden made a similarly astute observation while teaching one of the research participants in a private lesson. The participant allowed me to watch and record the lesson. Her singing was of a very high standard, but she seemed to be carrying excess tension in her arms. “You *look* like you’re trying to bow,” observed Madden. “Oh I *am*!” said the student, “I used to play the violin. But I didn’t realise that I was still playing it!” (DCE 4, 2012). Madden helped the singer clarify the movements required to play the violin, separating them from those required to sing. This clarification was a kind of gathering of information, or analysing the “conditions of use present” for the student so as not to make the movement of her arms *wrong*. The singer easily made the change.

Having discussed the importance of observation skills and some of their applications in teaching performers, I now return to their connection with and dependence on group teaching.

Bradley and Gehman both draw attention to the importance of observing others learn and teach. The way they describe their experience of Barstow's group teaching suggests that it pulled the technique away from being an introspective process and towards an interactive and social process with communication at its heart, something that Dewey would have delighted in. Bradley admits that she "never knew how important it was to observe others in the process of learning the technique" until she met Barstow (*Festschrift* 114). Barstow would say: "Watch yourself, watch others. What do you notice? What do you see?" (L. Frederick, *Festschrift* 104), thus inviting her students to learn by watching the interactions that occurred between teacher and student without being the one in the hot seat. Bradley notes that she sometimes learns more about herself from watching Barstow teach than she does from having a lesson (114). Gehman observes this, too: "Although I remember feeling in many lessons that I had made a great step forward, I feel that the real changes in my depth of understanding have come from watching Marj teach. ... the respect, thoroughness and joy with which she approaches each student is a constant inspiration" (*Festschrift* 119).

Finally, Heather Kroll stresses the link between group teaching, observation, communication and thinking. As Barstow worked with one student, explains Kroll, she would "draw the attention of the group to the student's movements, to his thinking and to the relationship between them" (*Festschrift* 124). With time, Kroll's observation skills developed, and she was able to perceive progressively more subtle movements. "At first," she says, "I did not see the relationship between all those movements. Now... it is often as though I can see what someone is thinking which is causing him to move as he is. And when I "see" what a person is thinking, I have a much easier time helping him to make a change" (124). As Kroll describes, then, group teaching helps bring observing and thinking together.

Alexander's Example

The example of F.M. Alexander himself is testament to the importance of observation skills. In her teaching Barstow emphasised that the most important thing Alexander did was to “take a look at himself” (W. Conable, *Festschrift* 23). She would stress this over and over to students at all levels: that their first responsibility is to observe their own use (ibid). She used to remind her students that Alexander began his exploration “through visual perception, observation... He watched to see what he was doing incorrectly and then he experimented to see what happened” (Barker, *Festschrift* 95). But he also maintained its importance in teaching. Erika Whittaker recalls that in the first training course he constantly stressed the importance of observation: “Not to judge what we saw as right or wrong but to see what people did when they talked, walked, stood, carried bags, sat in theatres and at meals, at desks and at work with hobbies” (“England” 23). “Use your observation!” she recalls him saying (27).

Marjory *Barlow* also recalls that Alexander tried to train this skill of observing in the training course: “He’d sometimes get us lined up on the couch watching whoever was working. Our job was to shout out when we saw it going wrong. He was testing our observation, trying to train our eyes” (Davies 86). She notes that “they don’t do that much now,” highlighting the uniqueness of Barstow’s approach. This conscious effort on the part of Alexander was enhanced by what may have been a less conscious ploy to train his students to observe: his lack of interest in verbal explanations. Westfeldt describes this process:

We knew that we would have to take the initiative in learning his work, and that since it was not likely F.M.’s explanations would improve, our powers of observation seemed the best thing to rely on. He was, after all, showing us, rather than telling us. So we began to observe carefully what F.M.’s hands were doing in a lesson and what changes occurred in a pupil; then as a group we discussed and appraised these observations. As a final step we would sometimes turn to F.M. for confirmation on doubtful points. The more we knew, the better chance we had of getting information from F.M. (Westfeldt 57).

Barstow's Response

Barstow seems to have valued this skill more highly than others, as she retained it as a defining feature of her teaching. She is known for her emphasis on observation, perhaps more than any other teacher of that generation. In this emphasis, she was

carrying out the scientific process or “the ongoing *detailed* interaction of principle and concrete observation” (Mills, *Festschrift* 40). Barstow’s own observation of what was important to the Alexanders is as follows:

Days, months, and years observing his own movements, and then those of others, developed within him an extraordinarily keen sense of perceiving the delicacy of movements. In our first private lessons with both F.M. and A.R. this information was continually stressed. These were also leading subjects in the training course (Stillwell 17).

Observation is fundamental to the experimental approach. In Lucy Venable’s notes on teaching can be seen Barstow’s adherence to critical pragmatism: “The teacher has to be able to observe what the student is doing because that is the clue for what to do next. You do not set out with a fixed plan” (*Festschrift* 77). Richard Gummere observed how Barstow’s emphasis on observation echoed Alexander’s responsiveness. “I recall responsiveness as a trait of F.M. Alexander, who manifested it, with his theatrical flair. In Marjorie it seems like the steadier attention of a farmer, sizing up everything, large or small, that needs watching” (*Festschrift* 165). Barstow became known for her extraordinary powers of observation. Ottiwell, who ran a training course in San Francisco, noted Barstow’s unusual capacity, even in the Alexander world: “It became clear that one of the major components was her skill of dispassionate observation. Skill? Art? Talent? It hardly matters, because whichever it was to begin with it has been honed by years of disciplined attention” (*Festschrift* 2).

Learning to teach from someone with such highly developed observation skills was, as Madden says, “exciting and exacting:”

When I first began to teach with her, I gained even more respect for her observation skills. I learned to see what I was doing with myself with more honesty and precision. There were times when the honesty she asked of me frightened me, but I continue to be rewarded many times over for ‘opening my eyes and really seeing what I’m doing’ (Madden, *Festschrift* 32).

Heather Kroll attributes her own observation skills to Barstow’s subtle teaching: “Just as when Alexander first looked in the mirror during his ordinary speaking and saw nothing unusual, so I, when I first ‘took a look at myself’ during a lesson, saw nothing unusual” (*Festschrift* 122). She points to Barstow’s patient guidance with her words

and hands as having gradually taught her to be able to observe her whole self during activity” (*Festschrift* 122).

Multi-level teaching

Observation is also connected to multi-level teaching. In group classes the level of experience can vary widely. Beginners can learn from a variety of sources—not just directly from the teacher. More advanced students get to observe how to teach beginners and can use their “turns” to teach under supervision. All students can observe all stages of learning and expertise. Fellow students offer valuable insights when we have a “turn.” These insights often generate discussions in which much useful information is shared. For beginners who might otherwise give up in frustration and confusion, seeing others respond to the teaching can help make an early and informed decision about whether to persevere. William Conable believes that because the subtlety and unfamiliarity of the Alexander experience can seem vague at first, it can help to see other people have it. It removes the necessity for blind faith in the teacher, who stands to gain financially from telling the student that they have made a positive change in their use. If other students confirm that they see it too, they provide a more impartial feedback. Eileen Troberman, for example, put her early doubts to rest as a result of learning in a group: “Luckily, Marj worked in groups and I could see people making remarkable changes, so I figured there was hope for me, too” (*Festschrift* 138).

Conversely, in groups, there is the danger of the emperor’s new clothes phenomenon, in which there is a kind of peer-group pressure to talk yourself into being able to see changes that you cannot really see. Young undergraduate students, however, with no investment in the success or otherwise of Madden’s class at the University of Otago, frequently volunteered the point that it was helpful to have their classmates, whom they knew and trusted, give them extra feedback about the changes they were making and the impact of the changes on their singing and playing. Watching a video of the class later during their interviews further confirmed for them that the observations (both by Madden and their colleagues) were accurate.

Having looked in detail at observation skills, let us now examine the constructive thinking, language and communication skills that can be emphasised through group teaching.

Benefit and Coordinating Effect 2: Constructive thinking and communicating in constructive language

The ‘magic,’ if you want to call it magic, is your constructive thinking.’

—Barstow in Miller and Chance

Barstow’s emphasis and insistence on constructive thinking and language demonstrated her total acceptance of the unity of mind and body that both Alexander and Dewey (amongst others) pointed out. Barstow used the group situation to maximise the teaching of constructive thought through subtle and varied repetition. By communicating with her class using constructive language, her students could observe its impact on themselves as well as the person who was having a turn. If they were particularly perceptive, they could also observe its impact on the group as a whole. Teaching in groups allowed Barstow to *model* the application of the Alexander Technique to communication. Communication was F.M. Alexander’s original motivation for and application of his work and is therefore its original *raison d’être*. When learning in a group, students also learn from the teacher how to communicate to a group, an important skill for performers. In teaching group lessons in the Alexander Technique, one models one’s use of self, one’s vocal production and one’s clarity of communication. Long-term students implicitly learn this. To be effective and constructive, then, this kind of teaching requires exacting standards of whole person use, voice production, communication and constructive thinking. The requirement of having to reach (or train others to reach) these standards may account for some of the objections to group teaching by Alexander teachers.

Constructive thinking and constructive language in teaching may be best learned in groups because of the reiteration, myriad examples, discussion and social interaction they afford. Barstow describes constructive thinking as follows:

During a lesson with an Alexander teacher, the student discovers downward pressures on the body which heretofore had not been observed. The student must then ask, ‘Are these pressures beneficial

or not?’ If one decides that they are not, the knowledge of the AT will be a guide to prevention of these pressures. In other words, the redirections of energy will release unnecessary pressures and one will sense greater freedom of movement. Through the constructive thinking one continues this process while carrying out daily activities. Constructive thinking is basic to the understanding of F.M.’s discovery because one constructively makes sense of his technique in a practical manner (Stillwell 19).

These remarks are really just the beginning of constructive thinking for Barstow. She took the word “constructive” to lengths and heights that are far beyond its commonly accepted meaning and practice. For example, she never focussed on what a student *had* been doing or thinking or why. She called such a focus “useless speculation about the past and future” and instead kept everyone “focussed on the present moment so they could constructively redirect their thoughts and energies” (Rickover, *Festschrift* 28). She regarded analysing old habits as negative thinking and this analysis was, itself, “our old habits at work” (L. Frederick, *Festschrift* 105). “How we get ourselves into this mess I don’t know,” she would say, “but this is a way to get out” (Miller and Chance 17).

Group classes allowed everyone to see that that they were not alone in entertaining too many negative thoughts that are both destructive and generally stunt growth (Rodrigue, *Festschrift* 102). Barstow worked tirelessly with her “unfailing positiveness” (Ottiwell, *Festschrift* 3) to turn these thoughts around. She could turn any situation into a constructive learning experience: “I’ve seen her disarm the most negative and sceptical of prospective students by her simple, direct and unpretentious manner” (Bradley, *Festschrift* 116). An example Conable gave of Barstow’s absolute commitment to positive expression (coupled with both her sense of humour and decorum) was when a young student asked if he could smoke in her house. “‘Certainly,’ she said, ‘if you can take the smoke with you when you leave.’ She really did not want to be negative about *anything*” (Interview 2013).

Part of Barstow’s reluctance to continue with the word “inhibition” stems from her absolute insistence on constructive thinking. Saura Bartner came to Barstow from ACAT-NY and so still used the word “inhibit.” Barstow’s insistence on positive thinking and framing did not mean that she did not get frustrated at times. Bartner’s

story suggests that negativity—no matter how subtle—was so prevalent that Barstow did occasionally become frustrated and even angry when it appeared:

When I said, ‘I am finding it difficult and I need to inhibit, inhibit,’ she said, ‘Enough with that negativity.’ She got quite angry for a moment. She said, ‘How often do I have to tell you that you think of it once, you observe the habit once and you move—that the positive approach is more constructive thinking. Notice the habit once and let the head move up and your body come with it’ (Bartner, *Festschrift* 74).

Barstow also knew how to use a positive lesson learned, no matter how small, to reinforce the constructive thinking of the student: “It is important to stay with what is happening at the moment. It is not helpful to call attention to what has gone wrong, or what has happened in the past. Work until you find something that is done properly. Then leave the student to think about it” (Venable, *Festschrift* 77-78). For the same reason Barstow would interrupt a student’s attempts to plaster over any small successes with the ubiquitous and permanent list of things still to be learned:

Early in my studies, I would describe an experience to Marj and immediately begin qualifying, ‘...but...’ ‘No buts!’ Marj would interrupt decisively. ‘No buts?’ I would wail inwardly, ‘But then how can I say what is still not clear?’ My frustration lessened as I began to understand what Marj was doing. In her own way she was insisting I allow myself a positive experience and learn from it, instead of muddying the waters (Baty, *Festschrift* 118).

The aim of the Alexander work is constant improvement, not perfection. Current psychological research supports Barstow’s belief in acknowledging small improvements rather than dismissing these in the search for that elusive state, perfection. It shows that emphasizing a sense of progress, rather than achievement and arrival, is an important motivator in learning (Dweck). Dweck summarises this difference as that between a growth mindset and a fixed mindset.

The constructive thinking and communication cultivated by group classes not only fostered this critically pragmatic emphasis on improvement rather than perfection, but also encouraged experimentation. In Marjorie Barstow’s classes and education in general, it is not a matter, as in James Galway’s analogy (see under Criticism of Group Teaching above), of students being given a treatment and all observers trying the treatment. Ideas, rather than cures, are the content of education, and communication is the medium by which they are conveyed. When Barstow gave

someone a “turn” in class, she was communicating with the group, inviting people to experiment with these ideas. This is different from the analogy, which suggests that observers simply, passively and unquestioningly apply a common cure to themselves: “People observing start to experiment with the various ideas that she is suggesting. They come to understand that Marj isn’t only working with the individual that she is speaking to and has her hands on, but that she is working with the entire group all of the time” (Bradley, *Festschrift* 114).

The final example of the intersection between group classes, constructive thinking and communication shows the benefits of this kind of teaching for performers. Cathy Madden was teaching groups of actors while she studied with Barstow. “Because of the changes in thinking that I was making,” she says, “it was much easier for me to see how negative thinking and trying to do something right were preventing my acting students from progressing” (*Festschrift* 31). In addition to obviously negative responses such as “I can’t” or other “variations on the ‘I’m not good enough’ theme,” she began to identify it in the phrases, “I should be” and “I’ll try,” and nonverbally in looks of disbelief, anger and long intellectual responses. Consequently she set out to remove negativity from her own requests and comments, and to defuse negative comments that she got back (31). Madden also learned from Barstow—in groups—the link between such negativity and poor coordination (and a detailed example of how she learned to teach is given in Analysis 5). “One of the major things that caused me to pull down was negative, critical thinking about myself. To stay in good coordination I really did need to make what I was telling myself kind” (“Viewpoint”). By modelling kindness to herself and her students, Madden teaches her students to do this for themselves. When she does this in group teaching, it is again an important implicit lesson for performers. Performers learn this kindness to self *in the act of* communicating with a group, which is what group teaching and performance have in common. Thus they are learning performance skills implicitly. In the tradition of her own teacher, Madden is constantly on the lookout for language in her teaching that might directly or indirectly imply a negative judgment. The last time I saw her she had stopped using the word “change” in relation to what students were doing, because it implied that what they were doing previously was wrong. In her efforts to engender constructive thinking, Madden is scrupulous in avoiding any comment that makes the student feel wrong. This includes instructions or commands of any kind. As

psychologist, Vincent Kenny observes, conversations of command and obedience “take place within an emotional frame of negation. That is, by complying with commands to do as he otherwise would not do, the one obeying the commands both negates himself and the person commanding (by attributing to him a characteristic of ‘superiority’). The one commanding also engages in this dual negation.” In her scrupulous kindness to self, which engenders—as she explains—good use, she teaches performers better coordination that then influences their performance.

The following and final section on community and communication examines the way in which group teaching honours the ideal of democracy, contributes to the independence of the student, and can foster further constructive communities.

Benefit and Coordinating Effect 3: Independence and Community

In groups, as we observe each other make remarkable and brave changes, a self-evident conclusion is that if this change is so simple and obvious we must each be able to figure this out for ourselves. Marj’s group teaching encourages, by necessity, the independence of will that fundamentally lets the technique be learned (M. Fertman *Festschrift* 9).

The third major benefit of learning the Alexander Technique in groups is that it integrates the benefits of independence, or responsibility for one’s own learning, and community. This point about independence relates to the discussion on thinking versus feeling in Analysis 1 (6.1). In that discussion I focussed on how Barstow’s emphasis on thinking was an example of following process rather than results and how this encouraged the student’s independence. Here I examine the link between group teaching, independence, and encouraging students to take responsibility for their own learning.

Arro Beaulieu counts Barstow’s “insistence upon our personal responsibility for improvement in our own use” as her most fundamental departure from the traditional way of teaching the Technique,” and insists that it is “of greater consequence than changes in procedure and vocabulary” (*Festschrift* 18). As he observes, this responsibility leads to greater confidence, which “comes with having initiated the change in our use through our own volition and movement...” (ibid). Bruce Fertman

emphasizes that watching “Marj work with others is not a passive experience, but very demanding.” Watching the teacher teach, watching how the teacher observes, and watching others learn a process were further activities to which Barstow encouraged the application of the AT in her classes. All participants in every class could be actively learning all the time *if they chose to be*, and this way of teaching again put a premium on the student’s own responsibility and choice to pay attention and learn (*Festschrift* 67).

Psychologist Patricia Carrington offers a description of just one of the ingredients that contribute to the learning (or in this case the *changing*) process in groups, calling it “borrowing benefits” (“Solving”). When audience members or workshop participants align themselves empathically with the person in the spotlight, a large number of observers report improvement with their own issue:

When we Borrow Benefits we allow the person who is actually saying the words and doing the tapping to take responsibility for these actions and so we are in a sense not responsible for them, we are only followers. Consequently, when we are absorbed in the problems of another person and identifying on an energetic level with them, we seem to be not nearly as defended against insights or change in ourselves as ordinarily. In a sense, Borrowing Benefits seems to ‘sneak’ past our psychological barriers so that this technique can reach directly to the core of ourselves (ibid).

Group teaching as Barstow practised it meant that each student had a short individual “turn” in class rather than a prolonged intense dose of learning. Between short turns students are given the chance to think about what they learned while also benefiting in various ways from the learning of others. Barstow believed that if the work was to be learned thoroughly and independently, then the learning had to take place in small chunks. “Be happy with small progress,” she would say (Barker, *Festschrift* 85), or “Okay, just do a little bit—your head’s moving—go on and continue that—don’t do any more—just a tiny bit of change is enough” (92). The idea of “small progress” connects the ideas of independence, democracy *and* constructive thinking. Independence is involved because small changes can be made more easily alone than large ones. “It is the little changes that I can follow, understand, and reproduce *myself* that last and contribute to my long-term benefit (W. Conable, *Festschrift* 24). We are unused to the idea of celebrating small steps in education: “This delicacy of movement is what our feelings aren’t quite used to. You can’t get a big feeling from a

little movement” (ibid 98). We usually want to feel or experience a significant impact if we are paying for our lessons. According to Dewey, gradual improvement is the way to liberation, rather than large steps, or even flight, as Scheffler describes: “Liberation is to be sought, not in a flight from habits, but in their improvement... The course Dewey advocates is one of continual adjustment and renewal of available habits through intelligence” (*Four* 216).

Celebrating small progress is linked with democracy because more of us are likely to be able to make small changes on our own than large ones. If everyone is capable of making small changes, then we can all learn the Alexander Technique. It is not an elite sport or academic achievement. Dewey’s allegiance to democracy lay in his belief in the wisdom of the common man. Similarly, Barstow had an underlying belief that people can learn this work on their own, just as Alexander did. Constructive thinking is involved because we are celebrating small successes rather than focussing on what still needs to be learned. One participant in my research both noticed and articulated this about Cathy Madden’s teaching too:

I felt that her approach was to take baby steps and to get you to do things that you could actually do and have a sense of achievement. And, yes, just little bits of success...[pointing this out] may be a way of getting you to keep going with something conceptually difficult (Historian, DCE 1, 2010).

Barstow was able to communicate through group teaching that the responsibility to learn the work rested with the student. She constantly and consistently demonstrated this, as observed by Williamson: “At no time have I had the impression that Marj was assuming responsibility for a student’s ability or lack of it” (*Festschrift* 57). Or, in Fishman’s words, “the Alexander Technique is a self-help program. And it was this approach that [Barstow] emphasized over and over” (*Festschrift* 6). Fishman found this “the most difficult and elusive thing to grasp, but ultimately the most valuable” (6). Martha Fertman concurs, claiming that “this primary responsibility of the individual to the work is its greatest rigor” (9).

Summary

Analysis 3 reviewed Dewey’s beliefs about the importance of community in education and science (or experimentation and discovery) and the connections

between community and communication. I then showed how Barstow intertwined the ideas of community and communication by teaching in groups, and I reviewed and responded to some of the criticisms of her group teaching. I then outlined in detail how this kind of teaching emphasised some of the most important aspects of Barstow's work: observation skills, constructive thinking, independence, and responsibility for one's own learning. In Analysis 4 I discuss the ways in which Barstow created the conditions for learning.

6.4: CREATING THE CONDITIONS FOR LEARNING

In Analysis 4 I examine Barstow's methods of creating the conditions for learning. I shall abbreviate these methods in general to "CCL" to mark the gerund as a concept and differentiate it from more active uses of the verb. As has been shown in previous analyses, Barstow was particularly clear about the role of teacher and student. The teacher does not just impart information or give students an experience, but creates the conditions for the student to take responsibility for his/her own learning.

The following is a description of how a reminder about this role—like the Alexander Technique itself—can take immediate effect and change the dynamics of a lesson in play. The anecdote comes from one of my own lessons with Madden on her 2012 visit to Dunedin (DCE 4). So that I could work with teaching, I invited a friend to be my student and have a singing/Alexander lesson from me. At one point during the lesson the friend-student could not do what I was suggesting and I found myself wanting to take responsibility for whether or not she succeeded in doing the warm-up exercise I was offering. I told Madden that I felt stuck and was noticing my own tendency to take on the responsibility for the student's success. I felt both powerless and pushy at the same time. Madden reminded me that my job as the teacher is to create the conditions in which the student can learn. I immediately remembered to look after my own use and think about what I was modelling. Teaching immediately became easier, and my student stopped trying to get it "right." The reminder acted as a kind of circuit breaker, taking unnecessary and unconstructive pressure off us both and allowing real communication and learning to take place (an apt metaphor for the Alexander Technique itself).

The ideas of Dewey that are relevant to, and correlate with, Barstow's practice of CCL are his belief in the importance of: objective conditions for education; conditions that arouse and guide curiosity; educating indirectly by means of the environment and by example; and expanding freedom. Highlighting again the importance of community and the social environment, Dewey discusses "objective conditions" for education. These include a wide range of things, the most important among which is

“the total social set-up of the situations in which a person is engaged” (*E&E* 26). “Establishing conditions that will arouse and guide *curiosity*” is a requirement for “forming habits of reflective thought,” wrote Dewey in his revised edition of *How We Think* [emphasis in original] (157). He believed that “we never educate directly, but indirectly by means of the environment,” (*Democracy* 23) and that “any environment is a chance environment so far as its educative influence is concerned unless it has been deliberately regulated with reference to its educative effect” (*ibid*). Dewey’s belief that “example is notoriously more potent than precept” (*ibid* 22) shows, once again, his belief in indirect means of educating. It also suggests that the student is responsible for his/her own learning, and that, rather than attempt a direct transfer of knowledge from self to pupil, the teacher must set up conditions that allow the student to learn. “Despite the never ending play of conscious correction and instruction, the surrounding atmosphere and spirit is in the end the chief agent in forming manners” (*ibid*). Finally, with respect to expanding freedom, Dewey believed that helping others, “instead of being a form of charity which impoverishes the recipient, is simply an aid in setting free the powers and furthering the impulse of the one helped” (*The School* 11). “Education is an awakening and movement of the mind. To take hold actively of any matters with which it comes in contact, to be able to deal with them in a free, honest and straight-forward manner is the condition under which the mind grows, develops” (“Freedom” 332). Dewey scholar, Jim Garrison, draws attention to the connection between creativity, morality and expanding someone’s freedom. “Expanding freedom,” he says, “is as much a creative aesthetic adventure as it is a moral duty... Finding means to desirable ends is a matter of inquiry, imagination, and creativity. It also requires technique” (22).

The ways that Barstow created the conditions for learning are a kind of synthesis of all that has been discussed in the previous three analyses. Specifically, that meant to pay attention to process, to value and encourage their independence and autonomy, to make her ideas clear, to look after her own coordination so that she could teach by example, to meet and accept her students, and to expand their freedom. The aspects that have not already been examined in depth at this point are making ideas clear, meeting and accepting student, teaching by example and expanding freedom. These will be now described.

Making our ideas clear

Barstow's attempts to make the Alexander Technique as clear and simple as possible were part of her belief that people can learn this work independently. She would constantly reiterate how simple the work really was, saying things such as, "It's so simple. It's just too simple for us. Our little brains can't understand simplicity" (Stony Brook), and "That little bit of nothing," which is "shockingly simple" to do (Dodge, *Festschrift* 135). While it may not be good pedagogy to reiterate how simple it is when a student does not understand, it does remind people not to assume that they will never succeed, that they must rely on a teacher to get it, or that it is elusive. It reminds the student that it is within reach of everyone, it is possible, he/she may be trying too hard or complicating the work unnecessarily, and it is democratic. That is, it rejects the notion that the teacher is far above or beyond the students, or that Alexander himself was superhuman or in a class of his own, far above the rest of us. To balance this, Barstow frequently contrasted the technique's simplicity with its exactingness. Comments such as: "There now, isn't that simple? It's so easy!" might be followed by: "It is the most demanding discipline that I know of" (Ottiwell, *Festschrift* 2). What was indisputably good pedagogy, however, and what helped create the conditions for learning were her clarity of thought, her ability to make the Alexander work seem—and actually be—simple and achievable, and her patience and ability to allow degrees of misconception by new students to ensure this perception of simplicity: "Marj seems to allow a lot of misconception held by a new student but this is to keep the process simple" (Barker, *Festschrift* 86). She did not want students to get weighed down by detail. "Marj is a demon for simplicity," writes William Conable, quoting her as saying things like, "I only know about two things: whole heads and whole bodies" (*Festschrift* 24). He counters this by explaining that Barstow in fact had a keenly analytical mind and knew about "whole rafts of details" but was "reluctant to get involved in talking about them." When she worked with someone she would constantly emphasize the whole (24).

Similarly, she did not allow students to weigh her down with complaints about the past or projected problems in the future: "In her gentle but firm manner she would show them how easily they could make a change right now" (Bradley, *Festschrift* 113). Gehman describes her clear, simple way of teaching as distilling "the practical

essence of everything I was learning about the technique” (*Festschrift* 119). This simplicity reflected Barstow’s clarity of thought, as Bradley describes:

Some of the best lessons I’ve had from Marj are when she’s directed my thinking without the use of her hands. Her clarity of thinking and intention are so powerful that she can guide my thinking, which allows me to make a change so that the use of her hands becomes superfluous (Bradley, *Festschrift* 115).

Some teachers clutter a student’s mind with many instructions. In some cases this is unintentional and indicates a lack of skill, while in other cases it is a deliberate attempt to overload students and distract them from themselves (Green and Gallwey 118). Barstow had no patience either with such carelessness on one hand or with such tricks on the other. Her commitment was to the ideal of making her ideas clear and simple to her students so that they could continue to teach themselves.

Teaching by example and implicit learning

As Marj teaches we all benefit by her example. Seemingly tireless, Marj uses her energy so evenly that after many hours of teaching she is still going strong... Since there is no unnecessary effort in her own motions, her teaching becomes transparent (Baty, *Festschrift* 117).

Marjorie Barstow used to ask of her students, “Who’s the most important person in the lesson?” Her answer is: “The teacher” (Madden, “Viewpoint”). By this Barstow meant that if you are not “in good use,” you cannot teach “good use.” If you go out of coordination in order to press a point, then you make something other than yourself and your use more important. Barstow meant that good teaching of any kind is best carried out when the teacher is well coordinated, and this is most true when teaching the Alexander Technique. “We carry out our teaching better with good coordination rather than with poor coordination” (*ibid*).

Creating the conditions for learning acknowledges the phenomenon of implicit learning, which is the process through which one becomes sensitive to certain regularities in the environment. Cleeremans and Dienes say that implicit learning happens: 1) without trying to learn these regularities, 2) without knowing that one is learning regularities, and 3) in such a way that the resulting knowledge is unconscious” and which everyday experience suggests is “a ubiquitous phenomenon”

(396). Learning is implicit when the learning process is unaffected by intention (Frensch and R nger). If students are in a state in which learning can easily take place, they are more likely to learn and imitate the use of their teacher. This phenomenon puts a premium on the good use of the teacher.

Marjorie Barstow placed great value on the example of good use that she represented for her students. It was for this reason that she stressed the importance of a teacher's own use: students learned implicitly how to use themselves better simply by being around someone with excellent use. Rickover relates a story of one of Barstow's health aides who noticed this effect, without having had any independent desire to learn the technique. Towards the end of her life Barstow always had home health aides with her. If Barstow was sitting, they would just sit in a chair in the room; if she was standing they would stand behind her. "One in particular, Becky," says Rickover, "was very, very fond of Marj...After one of the classes, Becky asked me, she said 'You know, when Marj is teaching, I feel like I'm a little lighter inside myself, is that possible?' I said, 'Yup.'" Rickover stresses that this was a 20-year-old student who knew nothing about the Technique except the little that she had seen while working for Barstow (Rickover, *MBTI*).

The following quotations from the *Festschrift* illustrate Barstow's attention to the importance of modelling what she was teaching. The first highlights that this is the most important part of teaching for her:

She puts a remarkable emphasis on the teacher's own use both as an exemplar and because of the understanding that what a teacher communicates most clearly is the quality of his or her own use. It is clear enough that it is possible to produce effects on other people; it is this approach which Marj most strongly deprecates. She says over and over, 'the most important thing is what you yourself are doing' (W. Conable, *Festschrift* 25).

The second reiterates this ability of our use to *communicate*:

I learned... that the skill of using my hands does not reside in my hands, but in my brain, which controls the way I use them. I learned that teaching happens when I use my whole mechanism skilfully...in order to communicate with my voice and my hands that (we) can think in a different way (Kroll, *Festschrift* 124).

Meeting and accepting

Under this heading I discuss Barstow's skill in respecting and accepting people for who they are and meeting them at whatever stage they are at and in whatever way they need to be met. This skill applies both to a personal meeting through listening and observing *and* to a psychophysical meeting with the use of hands in teaching. The former was a quality/ability she shared with Dewey, who "was fundamentally interested in the human being, in the individual, in people. And he had great tolerance of people. His ability to listen was one of his most striking characteristics" (Kallen in Lamont 99).

The personal meeting

Mernaugh outlines what I call Barstow's "meeting," describing her as "helping her students understand delicacy with less and less fuss. How? By taking the student from where the student is. She works with the student's own vocabulary, gestures, movements, and humour" (*Festschrift* 129). Such an approach was "based on respect for the individual student's ability to make observations and actively participate in the process of learning" (Gehman, *Festschrift* 121). Bradley notes that Barstow did the same with the group as a whole: "She teaches appropriately to the group that she is working with. She gives them what they need. It's simply a matter of meeting people where they are and delicately showing them how the technique can improve what they are doing" (*Festschrift* 115). One of Cathy Madden's longer-term students, observed how rare this quality is and how crucial to CCL: "What I do appreciate about Cathy's teaching, that you don't find many places, is that she allows you to simply be where you're at." He gives an example of being exhausted when arriving at a lesson. He describes Madden's approach as: " 'OK, well you're exhausted so let's sing from that exhausted place.' There's no coercing to try to make you do something or be something that you aren't being or doing, it's taking you where you're at and going forward from there" (Conductor/Flautist, DCE3, 2011).

Another (academic) research participant described the wisdom and effectiveness of this kind of meeting. He contrasted it with a situation where you are "lying on a wharf on your tummy and you smack the water. There's massive resistance from the water. The water doesn't get harder; it's to do with the way you approach." He then likened Madden's approach to lowering your hand "slowly and gently" into the water so that

“it doesn’t resist. And I try to remember that as a way of going through life, because when you try and barge, life resists. In a way, the atmosphere she creates, it works on the same principle” (Historian, DCE1, 2010). Madden described this skill in the interview I conducted with her. She said that she does her best “to hear and listen in the world they’re in,” couching her language to enhance their language. The example she gives is of a student “who always answered me in geography: head in the Arctic and feet in the Antarctic... so I started talking to her in geography” (Madden, Interview).

The psychophysical meeting: using one’s hands to teach

For descriptions of Barstow’s use of hands in teaching, I have relied on the testimony of Barstow’s students (including Madden), and my experience of learning how to teach from Madden. As a second-generation example, I use data collected in the research on Madden’s teaching in Dunedin to illustrate the impact, impression and effects of *Madden’s* hands, and offer this as a glimpse through the present into the past.

Michael Frederick notes Barstow’s use of hands in teaching as being judicious and intimately connected with the student’s thinking. He contrasts this with the very hands-dominant school of teaching prominent in England, where he trained with the Carringtons. Several of Barstow’s students make specific reference to her use of hands in teaching. Venable explains Barstow’s guiding intention: “Shape your hands to the shape of the person’s body...The touch should be delicate, but clear. If you are not using yourself properly, then you will not be communicating anything with your hands” (*Festschrift* 77). Aase Beaulieu, in poetic reverence, points to the delicacy of Barstow’s touch and, less directly, to the subtle intention (*Festschrift* 109). I have attempted to preserve the layout of the poem excerpt:

Your touch like to that of a bird on a mountaintop—
A gentle reminder that we move without being
coerced.

Madden’s use of hands

Madden’s intention—as learned from Barstow—is to allow the student to shape her hand and to help the student to “say ‘yes’ to the new idea.” While using her hands to

teach, she is also constantly asking for her own coordination, so that she can ask the student to coordinate, so that the quality of her touch is imbued with this fine coordination. Madden articulated this way of using her hands while teaching me to do so. In the following excerpt from my lesson, the chair is standing in for a student:

Madden: It is a wilful move; it's not a nothing. So my fingers come here and I *intend* to let them take the shape of the chair. What I'll note if I haven't before is: it *is* bypassing a reflex. Because the reflex would do this: It says, 'Oh, chair...' So I am consciously bypassing that, in order to create another skill...

Now, this is something we can't ask, because Marjorie Barstow is on the other side, but what I realised at a certain point... is that this is a way, as close as we can to not interfere: to meet someone *where they are* rather than imposing an idea of where they are. So it's a meeting. As soon as I stiffen my hand first, I am more likely to create an anomaly, or to make them do something *because* my hand is there (Lesson #3, DCE3, 2011).

This approach is in contrast to the “more stiff imposition” that Madden experienced once when she injured herself at an Alexander congress and was inundated with offers of well-intentioned Alexander teachers and hands: “I had to really actively say [to myself], ‘OK, I’m going to do what *I* want to do...’ because some of them have a more stiff imposition. And they are good teachers, but they have a different idea of what their job is from mine” (Lesson #3, DCE3, 2011). Barstow was “very sensitive to the fact that the imposition of the teacher’s will upon a student is a violation of the severest nature of both the principles of the technique and the sanctity of the open relationship which allows learning to take place. She respects each person she deals with” (Kandik 146). One of the questions I asked all research participants in Dunedin was “How did you respond to the use of Cathy Madden’s hands in her teaching?” The following comments are by those who noticed and articulated the quality of Madden’s touch *and* noted how it enabled them to learn or find something new for themselves or on their own: “Her touch is very light, and once again gives you that confidence that she’s not trying to readjust you, but just giving you a bit of guidance,” said one amateur musician (DCE 1, 2010). An Alexander Technique teacher observed that her touch was “very inviting, not pulling or pushing me around at all... And I felt that definitely with her hands she was doing the same thing I do, but talking maybe with a different emphasis, with head leads, body follows” (DCE 1, 2010). Two professional musicians (a singer and a cellist) described Madden’s hands as creating “an awareness” that enabled their own coordination. “She manages to put the body in an

awareness so that can do what you're trying to do," said the singer, while the cellist described Madden as creating "an awareness where you then naturally adjust" (DCE 2, 2011). A professional violinist pointed out the importance of Madden's ability to put people at ease as part of her facilitation of this self-coordination: "It's like she puts her hands *near* where you're going to be and then you adjust, so I think the ability to have people completely at ease, at least for me, is very special" (DCE 2, 2011). Finally, a professional pianist waxed lyrical about the spiritual involvement, emphasising again the facilitation of one's own power:

I think, the only way I can describe it, somehow it's the laying on of hands and then you are visited by the spirit, but the laying on of hands hasn't changed your body and the spirit is still coming from within you... you know, it may *feel* like the light of the holy spirit visited you and now your head's on fire, but it's all released, it's *your* spirit released and alive and governing what you do, which is kind of where we all want to be, so the enabling, or the physical work she does frees your own energy (DCE 2, 2011).

Expanding freedom

Gummere observes Barstow's own personal expansion of freedom from the 1940s to the 1980s, noting that it might astonish those who knew her recently to hear that back then "she was generous and affable but a little staid—or covered." Every time he met her since, she struck him "as more free than before" (*Festschrift* 165). Freedom is, of course, one of those aspects of technique most highly prized by musicians. It is one of the things that musicians hope to gain from the Alexander Technique. But Alexander teachers do not all or always give more freedom to students. Teachers can restrict a student's freedom through a strict adherence to rules and beliefs about Alexandrian authenticity and an unbending commitment to inhibiting and saying "no." An example of this was given under the heading of "head forward and up" in Analysis 1. By contrast, one cellist describes the effect of Madden's touch, with she learned from Barstow, and her whole approach as freeing:

But when I played for Cathy and she manipulated me with her hands (what she does, I don't know), but I felt in a way that I had much more movement, but in a way I was more still. Because there was no obstruction to the movement, and I didn't have to do much to make it comfortable. So it was as if it was more still... less jerking... more fluid, and less movement, but freer (Professional Cellist).

As Garrison says, paraphrasing Dewey, expanding freedom is as much a creative aesthetic adventure as it is a moral duty. Madden's current philosophy is "to teach from the perspective of *yes*," and stems from Barstow's relentless commitment to constructive thinking and attempts to banish negativity. The following excerpt is from a transcribed lesson with Madden on Debussy's *Chansons de Bilitis*. It is a kind of summary of what was enabled by Madden's perspective of *yes*—particularly to movement—in the constructive and safe environment of her studio, and the conditions she creates for students to learn:

Singer: Also what I find out by doing actions and gestures... I find out all sorts of different things that I want to do with the music... ideas that I've never had before. I mean, I've never thought of ... you know when he takes his hoe, with the iron of his hoe, he breaks the ice, I have never thought of that as him bringing [the *Naiades*] back to life. I'd never thought of that until I sat down, as [the satyr] asked me to do, on the side of their tombstone... and looked, and so I did that, and then I saw and realised...

Madden: There's just so much 'no' in your instruction that it turned everything off. Not everything, because there's a lot there, but some important stuff, and you're not the only one. You're out there as a vanguard, saying, 'Excuse me, we need a lot more yes in what we do!' (Lesson #14, DCE3, 2011).

Summary

Analysis 4 represents a kind of synthesis of many aspects of Barstow's teaching, which combine to create the conditions for learning. These aspects are: making our ideas clear, teaching by example, an understanding of implicit learning, meeting and accepting, and expanding freedom. Engel summarises Barstow's ability to create the conditions for learning as patience, compassion, detachment and ability to be present:

Where do you get your patience and compassion? You don't get discouraged when your teaching help made an obvious difference to everyone else in the room, but the person you're helping still says they want to get down ... You just get them to move out of it afterwards and not stay down there. I guess you must have really given up any attachment to how your students understand you... You must approach ... us with the readiness that maybe, this time, we could be ripe to understand and use everything you have ever had to offer, so you had better be present enough to give it to us (in Engel, *Discovery* 56-57).

Analysis 5 reviews Barstow's practice in regard to training teachers.

6.5: TRAINING TEACHERS

Analysis 5 examines the evolution of Barstow's beliefs about her role in training teachers. It will be seen that while she did not ever run a formal training course, she certainly trained a significant number of teachers in her own way. Dewey observed that when formal teaching and training grow in extent, an undesirable split can develop between valuable life experience and the abstract material studied in schools: "As societies become more complex in structure and resources, the need of formal or intentional teaching and learning increases. As formal teaching and training grow in extent, there is the danger of creating an undesirable split between the experience gained in more direct associations and what is acquired in school" (*Democracy* 14). This observation of Dewey's is central to the analysis of Barstow's method of training teachers.

While Alexander eventually moved from an informal apprenticeship model to a formal training course in the 1930s, there is no question that he valued the teaching of those taught by apprenticeship any less than those who attended a training course. In fact, if anything he seemed to value the teaching of his brother ARA above that of anyone else, leaving his entire teaching practice in his care when he moved first to Sydney and later to London. ARA is said to have had only six lessons before he began teaching (Jones, *Body* 18). So it seems that the training course came into being because of sheer numbers of interested students and the question of logistics.

Barstow resisted the idea of a formal training course with a set number of hours, weeks and years and a set curriculum. She preferred to teach people to become independent—both in learning the Alexander Technique and in their thinking—however long this took: "I do not teach people to teach. You must learn as much as you can about Alexander's discoveries and how to apply them. How you pass on this information is then up to you" (Venable, *Festschrift* 76).

There were many examples of fine "first generation teachers" whom Alexander had trained by the apprenticeship method, including his sister Amy Alexander, Ethel Webb, Irene Tasker, and Margaret Goldie. Frank Jones's training was conducted as a

kind of apprenticeship, he being the only trainee in 1941, and the training being “conducted informally like a protracted private lesson in which one or more of F.M.’s assistants took part” (*Body* 77). Despite these well known and respected teachers who had trained by apprenticeship, people claimed in the 1980s that Barstow could not be training teachers at all because she did not run a three-year training program (Ottiwell, *Festschrift* 3). In 1963 it was true that she did not train teachers at all. When William Conable met her and explained his desire to learn to teach, she recommended Frank Jones: “If you’re going to England, go to Walter Carrington, but I’d like to see you go to Boston and study with Frank Pierce Jones” (Conable, Interview). At this point, then, while not training teachers herself, Barstow expressed a preference for Jones’s methods. Jones did not run a formal training course and taught informally by apprenticeship. Conable was to experience a similar prejudice against less formal training methods when he received a letter from a prominent New York AT teacher telling him, “You can’t have trained with Frank Jones, because he didn’t train teachers.” Barstow did begin to train teachers in the following decades, but she returned to the original training model, that of apprenticeship. Bruce Fertman confirms that Barstow took inspiration from the quality of teaching of those who had learned from FMA “more informally, over a longer period of time. She admired these teachers, and she decided to bring about Alexander teachers based on this older, original model of training through apprenticeship (“Memory”).

Barstow’s method of teaching, as described by Diana Bradley, shows up the mismatch of formal teaching with the Alexander Technique. Bradley saw the importance of the way Barstow brought her own self and life to her teaching and doubted that such an approach could be compatible with formal teaching:

I wasn’t sure where the Teaching left off and where Marj began. Was there something magical about being in her presence? She has a way of putting people at absolute ease before she even begins to teach. Or had the teaching already started in the way in which she leads her life and relates to people and her environment? I was beginning to wonder whether one could really learn what she was teaching in a formal setting. Or does the formality already set up rigidities? (Bradley, *Festschrift* 113).

Many of the ideas Barstow had about training teachers come from ideas discussed in previous analyses. First, her adherence to process over form meant that she was

committed to the process of teaching in a qualitative way, rather than a quantitative way. Modern training schools stress that a minimum of 1600 hours over a minimum of three years be spent in training. Some schools, such as PAAT (a Carrington-inspired school), require a minimum of 2000 hours over four years, in addition to a prerequisite year of lessons prior to training. This is regardless of what exactly is being learned and how well it is being learned. Barstow observed graduates of formal training courses who, she believed, had not understood the underlying process of Alexander's work and/or had not developed the fundamental observation skills, communication skills, analytical skills or sensitivity required to teach the work. Two of her long-term students, Conable and Fertman, have described her attitude to training courses and training teachers. Conable highlights the commitment to process, once again, rather than to the result, or in Alexander's words, the means-whereby rather than end-gaining:

She has often been distressed to see graduates of other training courses who have learned 'Alexander teaching techniques' but who do not in her view really understand the core of Alexander's discovery... I believe that she has also been reluctant to concentrate her energies on setting up a structure, a curriculum, and a school. I don't think she is sure that is the best way to train Alexander teachers. I think that this is what she means when she says 'I do not train teachers' [because] in fact, she *does* train teachers [emphasis in original] (W. Conable, *Festschrift* p26).

Bruce Fertman describes how her method of certification was based on the quality of teaching rather than quantity of hours spent formally studying: "I remember someone once asking her how long it took to become a teacher of the Alexander Technique. She said, 'I don't know. It depends on the individual. It could take six months, six years, or it might take forever!' (*Festschrift* 68). He also recalls how she changed her description of her teacher training over the years. Occasionally, at workshops, people would ask her if she trained teachers. Fertman remembers her replying for a number of years, "No, I help people to become sensitive and what they do with their sensitivity is their own business." Later, she used to reply, "No, I don't train teachers, but many of my students have gone on to become excellent teachers" (68).

Formal training courses, while possibly a necessity in a growing field, reinforce the split Dewey describes between learning in real-life situations and learning in the abstract. In particular, the formal training model, with its segregation of trainees and

beginners, does not give students experience in teaching beginners. Barstow's mode of training draws less of a distinction between learning the technique in order to teach it to others and learning it for use in other activities or professions. She saw teaching as an activity not inherently different from any other activity in that "we must be able to use ourselves well in order to engage in it successfully" (Arro Beaulieu, *Festschrift* 19). As quoted above in 6.4 (Teaching by Example), Barstow wanted her student-teachers to understand that the teacher's use is of the utmost importance "both as an exemplar and because of the understanding that what a teacher communicates most clearly is the quality of his or her own use" (W. Conable, *Festschrift* 25). This was the main content of her teacher training, says Conable, "from which everything else flows" (25).

Marjory *Barlow*, like Barstow, saw the value of the apprenticeship method and regretted that when she brought it up once or twice with STAT, there was always a "significant silence in response" (Davies 153). She points to her uncle's belief in this method, justifying his reluctance to begin a training course in the Alexander Technique: "In the best tradition of all great teachers, he preferred to teach the individual and to train people on the apprenticeship basis" ("Review"). She notes that some of the greatest teachers learned that way and points out the limitations of a formal training course. Echoing Dewey's concerns, *Barlow* says of the apprenticeship method of training, "It's good because you see people working in a real situation—a training course is always somehow artificial, don't you think?" (Davies 153). Note *Barlow*'s assumption that training courses are run in groups, while apprenticeships are individual. Barstow shook up this "set fixture," just as she had shaken up others. Her apprentices learned, along with all her students from beginner to advanced, together in groups.

Rather than the kind of "*Quest for Certainty*" of a formal training course, with its set number of hours, number of years, and a certificate at the end, Barstow saw the process of becoming a teacher as a continuum. Her own training began informally when she and her sister went to London twice for intensive series of lessons. She completed the training course and then for many years worked as A.R. Alexander's assistant in Boston. As Frederick says, "It's not that you become certified and then rest on your laurels... It's not that at all—it's a living process that continues as our

use changes and improves” (M. Frederick, *Festschrift* 53). Martha Fertman describes her organic transition to teaching the AT while studying with Barstow. Her private practice as a “dance coach” gradually widened to include people of all sorts of interests and problems: “Slowly, as I grew more proficient, it became self-evident that what was most useful for most people were the principles of the Alexander Technique. Eventually, I became an Alexander teacher because that was what I taught” (*Festschrift* 10).

The apprenticeship model, because of the lack of formality and official certification, can only work if students honour the code to the extent that the trainer expects. In Barstow’s code, as Conable describes it (*Festschrift* 26), people begin studying as ordinary pupils. Then, if they have interest and talent, they begin to function as teachers-in-training, assisting her, working with older apprentices and being closely supervised. With the teacher’s blessing, they then begin to teach elsewhere, returning from time to time for help and guidance. Still later they begin to make their own contributions to the technique. There will always be those, however, who do not honour the code, and it was some such students who damaged the reputation of Barstow and her methods in the 1970s when, “people who had been to one workshop, perhaps not even for the entire month, were going away and claiming to be Alexander teachers, to the dismay of everyone and the detriment of the reputations of both Marj and the technique” (W. Conable, *Festschrift* 23). In addition, Conable says that some obviously unqualified people had been importuning Barstow about certification before they were remotely ready to teach. Similarly, after a three-hour introductory Alexander class in Dunedin in 2010, one physiotherapist wanted a certificate to put on his practice wall. This kind of behaviour justifies the existence of formal training courses. And yet, people so intent on certification and end-gaining might never learn to apply Alexander’s principles successfully. As Barstow said, “it might take forever” (B. Fertman, *Festschrift* 68). Arro Beaulieu describes Barstow’s refusal to certify teachers as “a fine act of inhibition,” serving as a constant reminder to all in the Alexander community “to look first and foremost to themselves in that same spirit” as Alexander himself. Barstow’s model was certainly idealistic and depended on the honour and maturity of her students.

The second idea of Barstow's that can be seen at work in her training model is the importance of desire. The desire to teach had to drive the student to direct his/her own learning. While teaching was just another activity to which to apply the Alexander Technique, Barstow took this activity extremely seriously. It had to start with a strong enough desire to be able to stand up in class and say, "I want to work with teaching." When it came to teaching, there was "no frivolity" (Troberman, *Festschrift* 139), "no evasion," and "no equivocation" (Andrews, *Festschrift* 112). She expected of her students an extraordinary degree of clear reasoning and attention to principle and to detail (Troberman, *Festschrift* 139). For someone who did not officially or formally train teachers, her training was extremely rigorous. As Eileen Troberman says:

We also learned to pay particularly close attention to how we were using our voices—a basic in F.M.'s own learning process. And we had to be actively carrying out a delicate upward direction in ourselves during the time our hands were on, or we would be told—in no uncertain terms—to take our hands off. I cannot imagine stricter training. At times I felt as though I was under the scrutiny of Alexander himself (139).

Finally, for Barstow, good teaching involved good use (or coordination), observation, communication, constructive thinking and teaching by example (dependent on implicit learning). Good teaching made all these things interdependent. As Madden describes it, "the first and most important key that we have as AT teachers in communication is our ability to use our constructive thinking to be in good use of ourselves ... With good coordination we are able to see and hear our student clearly" (Chance and Madden). The following description of how she trained teachers shows Barstow's absolute commitment to process and the extremely high standard of use and communication that she required of her students before allowing them to teach unsupervised.

If I wished to teach, I would say to Marj in one of our group classes, 'Marj, I would like to work with teaching.' Once I had someone willing to be a student for me, I would start to rise from my chair and Marj would say, 'Cathy, what do you notice about yourself?' If I could describe what I noticed, which might include my thinking, my feeling, or my moving; and, if I could 'use my constructive thinking' to improve anything that needed improving, I would be encouraged to continue in the lesson I was giving. And the next question Marjorie would ask from her chair across the room is 'What do you notice about your student?' Again, if I could answer, we went on with teaching. If, however, I was unclear or negative or mumbled, or was unable to prevent interference in myself, my

lesson would be over for the moment and Marj would suggest ‘why don’t you think about that?’ It was quite a while before I made it all the way across the room to my student ... (Chance and Madden).

As Madden explains, the order of Barstow’s questions is vital. It was not until she could constructively work with or answer the question, ‘What do I notice about myself?’, that she could move on to noticing anything about the student (ibid). Student-teachers had to articulate what they saw and were expected to talk to the student while moving well and speaking clearly. “Since one of the ways our students learn is by imitating us,” says Madden, “this process that Marj taught me ensured that I presented an improved coordination to my students” (ibid). Heather Kroll tells a similar story about this synthesis and virtuous circle of good teaching abilities.

Before I could even get to the point of actually moving someone, as I would at work [as a physiotherapist], Marj in her very particular way would insist that I go back to paying attention to myself. What was I thinking about? Did I have a clear idea about what I was doing? How was I using my voice? Was I speaking in a manner which the person I was working with could easily understand? Were my instructions clear and simple? Was I engaging the thinking processes of the person I was helping or just letting him go along for the ride? By attending to all of these issues first, the physical part of the task became much easier ... (*Festschrift* 123).

Gehman adds to these important points the importance of the group setting in learning to teach everyone in the room, even while working directly with just one person: “She [Marj] really asks only one thing of me as a teacher: to be able to watch myself with every movement I make and word I say, while seeing and doing just what I need to do to help the individual with whom I’m working, and remembering that I’m teaching everyone else in the room” (*Festschrift* 121).

In 1986, when the West arm of ACAT (The American Center for the Alexander Technique) was planning to merge with the East arm of ACAT, the West arm was attempting to create a way for Barstow teachers to be part of the new organisation. In the midst of negotiations ACAT East suddenly gave ACAT West an ultimatum to join with them at short notice and exclude the Barstow teachers (Madden, Email 4 April 2015). Reluctantly some of the ACAT West members joined, but Michael Frederick continued to look for ways for the Barstow teachers to be accepted by the new merged association, now called NASTAT. He told Barstow that if she wrote a letter to

NASTAT acknowledging the people she recognized as teachers, then they would be welcome to join. She wrote the letter, explaining that each of the people named had worked with her in “what can be considered an extended apprenticeship training program.” Every one of the teachers named had studied with her for “over 1600 hours,” had assisted her at workshops as Alexander teachers, had been observed by her “at various times and under different situations,” some having worked with her consistently since the early 1960s and moved to Lincoln, Nebraska, for various lengths of time to study with her, “some for up to six and seven years” (Letter 1986). There are 26 names in the letter. Barstow added that she fully supported the formation of NASTAT. The board gave *Barstow* a membership and rejected her letter and her teachers (Madden, Email 4 April 2015). Madden notes that Barstow “did tear that membership certificate up.” Out of the political rubble, Alexander Technique International (ATI) was born, an association that embraced those trained by Barstow and that now embraces the next generation of teachers trained by her graduates to her standards.

In Analysis 5 I have examined Barstow’s method of training teachers. Her training method stresses the importance of a group, with a real-life mix of students of all levels, so that experience is relevant and not detached from reality, thus answering Dewey’s concerns. Like any good training method in the Alexander Technique, it puts a premium on good use. But her training method synthesises all the aspects of her teaching, emphasis on process, importance of desire, communication skills and community (being the group), observation skills, independence of the student, expansion of freedom and teaching by example.

6.6: Summary

This chapter has examined the critical pragmatism of Marjorie Barstow in five detailed analyses. The first analysis described her focus on process, which meant education rather than treatment, active involvement by students rather than passive experiences, thinking rather than feeling, and movement in preference to feeling and non-doing. The second analysis examined the importance of desire as part of this active process of education. The third analysis reviewed Barstow’s belief in

communication and community and their importance for education. The fourth analysis presented the ways in which Barstow's pedagogy highlighted the creating of conditions for learning, and the fifth and final analysis discussed her unique and stringent methods and standards for training teachers.

In the details of these analyses can be seen the themes of pragmatism outlined in Chapter 5: deconstruction, reconstruction and the unity of theory and praxis, thought and action, and method and procedure; a functional view of thought and knowledge; the social conception of science; critical thinking and the foregrounding of the steps of the scientific process. There are also several aspects of education that John Dewey advocated, which were embraced by Barstow. These were the fostering of creativity and the cultivation of interest, and a commitment to community and democracy. As an overarching goal of education, Dewey and Barstow both put great store by growth and the expansion of freedom.

These analyses confirm Barstow's alignment with Dewey's philosophy and, in particular, with his own belief that the Alexander Technique was education rather than treatment. The hallmarks of Dewey's reconstruction of philosophy and his beliefs about constructive education are all demonstrated in Barstow's teaching.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

7.1 Introductory

In the first part of this chapter I revisit the aims of the thesis and reiterate the research questions. I reiterate the context, background and importance of the topic, explaining the controversy surrounding Barstow's pedagogy and justifying the approach taken. Following this introductory section, I place my findings in relation to the literature, examine the implications and contribution of the findings and make recommendations based on my findings. Finally the limitations of the research are reiterated, which leads to recommendations for further and future research.

In Chapter 1 I described my first aim as evaluating and contextualising Barstow's pedagogy. Chapter 5 contextualised her teaching by drawing links with the major facets of pragmatism, while the five analyses in Chapter 6 evaluated and contextualised by drawing links with Dewey's philosophy. In these chapters I also showed that Barstow was faithful to Alexander's principles, while also solving some of his contradictions, what I called The Teaching Dilemma, differences between how he discovered these principles and how he taught them. In doing so, I hope to have achieved my second aim, to reinstate Barstow in the Alexander canon. In examining Barstow's singular answers to these contradictions and showing her particular emphasis on process, desire, communication, community and creating the conditions for learning, as well as her examining her apprenticeship approach to training teachers, my third aim was achieved, to acknowledge and demonstrate diversity within the Alexander Technique. Finally, by constructing the philosophical constellation that included Barstow, Alexander and Dewey, I hope to have demonstrated that this diversity was consistent with the ideals of both pragmatism and Alexander's original technique.

This thesis posed the over-arching question, In what ways do the ideas of Dewey and Barstow, two Alexander "practitioners," correspond? The sub-questions were:

SQ1. How did the connection between Dewey and Marjorie Barstow come about and how, with reference to Alexander, did it come to constitute a constellation?

SQ2. Who are the other practitioners or philosophers in the constellation who can be associated or credited with, or responsible for, the established connection?

SQ3. What are some of the possible ramifications for Barstow's approach of an association with Dewey's philosophy?

These questions will be answered after a brief reiteration of the background and importance of the topic and justification for the approach used. As Barstow's unique approach came to be known in the wider field of Alexander studies, controversy sprang up that raised doubts about the authenticity and validity of her approach. On the other hand, Alexander himself, his protégés and other writers wanting to promote the technique and raise its credibility have often turned to Dewey for his supportive comments, lectures and essays, and his practical example of taking lessons for many decades. This thesis, using the method of *Konstellationsforschung*, which included historical method, philosophical method and qualitative analysis, attempted to draw the two—Barstow and Dewey—together into a single philosophical constellation. It examined the points of concurrence between these two thinkers and educators. While Dewey insisted that he was no educator, simply a philosopher, the sheer volume of his philosophical writings on education surely allow us to give him this title. A range of responses to the research question and sub-questions can be given.

I found in answer to the major research question that there are significant parallels between John Dewey's philosophy and Marjorie Barstow's pedagogy and that these two pioneering figures can be seen as part of the same constellation. I found that for each of the major innovations Barstow introduced to the teaching and training of the Alexander Technique, there can be found in Dewey's philosophy ideas that strongly support or correspond to the change and that validate her intentions. Some of these ideas come from his writings on the Alexander Technique, while others are from his works on education, philosophy and democracy. Furthermore these changes were frequently in line with certain of Alexander's own principles and teachings. As far as the pragmatism of the Alexanders is concerned, I found that F.M. Alexander was inconsistent. He showed strong pragmatist features in some areas and traditionalist/conservative approaches in others. The example he set was full of critical pragmatism, and he *seemed* to invite his followers to embrace this aspect of his work, yet in effect he encouraged (consciously or unconsciously) something more

like religious reverence in many of his pupils, trainees and assistants. It seems that his brother, Albert Redden, may have been more of a pragmatist than Frederick Matthias himself.

The five analyses in Chapter 6 showed that Barstow's pedagogy is aligned with critical pragmatism in general and the philosophy of Dewey in particular in the following ways: in her willingness to experiment and emphasise the steps of the scientific process (or change process or reflective experience) that focus on gathering information and acting (or moving); in her mending of several paradoxical Cartesian splits in the teaching of the AT; in her dedication to process, critical thinking and movement; in her inclination to reconstruct Alexander's (and her own) teaching language; in her refusal to limit her teaching activities to those prescribed by Alexander; in her emphasis on community and clear communication in education; in her practice of training teachers alongside beginners and others; and in her belief in creating the conditions for learning to take place.

In answer to the first subquestion, I found that while there were many ways in which Barstow was connected—directly and indirectly—to Dewey, it is still not completely clear how the parallel between their ideas came about. Barstow is quite likely to have read some of Dewey's works. It is almost certain that—at the very least—she was familiar with Dewey's introductions to Alexander's books. There were also the personal connections, both direct while teaching with A.R. Alexander and indirect through Jones, Tasker, Webb, Gummere and both Alexander brothers.

In answer to the second subquestion, it seems that Frank Pierce Jones may have had the most significant role in encouraging Barstow to make critically pragmatic and even Deweyan changes to the way she taught. Jones was both Alexander practitioner and scholar, and he knew both Alexander brothers as well as Dewey. The collection of their unpublished letters could shed more light on the precise nature of their friendship, the content of their discussions, the degree of mutual influence and indeed whether they mentioned Dewey. The only declared influence of Dewey on Jones was that which encouraged him initially to train in the Alexander Technique and later to carry out scientific tests. The fact that Jones also read several of Dewey's works closely, however, indicates that there may have been other—undeclared—influences

on his thinking and interpretation of the Alexander Technique and how to teach it. It also suggests that Jones can be considered part of the same constellation.

Irene Tasker and A.R. Alexander seem also to have played some role in the constellation of which Barstow was a part. Tasker and ARA each had a personal relationship with Dewey, and Barstow spent a great deal of time with each of them. She acknowledges her debt to Tasker but is more guarded with respect to ARA, tending to give FMA most of the credit. There is still Conable's observation, however, that all the teachers he knew for whom ARA was an important influence were the most "flexible, interesting, exploratory and imaginative teachers of that first generation" (Interview).

In answer to the third subquestion, an association with Dewey's philosophy may lend Barstow's approach greater respect among dissenters. While a stronger association with Dewey may lend an even more American label to Barstow's approach, it may also add a more nuanced appreciation of her technique as critical pragmatism. This association with Dewey and the analyses of her teaching also suggest that there might be some more appropriate names for Barstow's pedagogy than the "Application Approach. While admittedly clunky and unlikely to catch on, some alternatives might be: the Alexander Technique for performers, the Alexander Technique for critical thinkers, the Alexander Technique for movement, the Alexander Technique for movers, shakers and thinkers, Barstowian Alexander Technique, the Alexander Technique for critical pragmatists, critically pragmatic Alexander Technique, Deweyan Alexander Technique, the Alexander-Barstow technique, the Barstow-Alexander Technique, or the Alexander-Dewey Technique.

Finally, a strong association with Dewey's philosophy may be what the Alexander Technique needs in order to decide the question once and for all whether the work is therapy or education. I hope to have established that Barstow's approach lies firmly in the field of education. Yet there remain strong voices in the Alexander community whose interpretation of the technique make it more akin to therapy. Perhaps it is time for the Alexander community to split into two bodies with corresponding names: Alexander Therapy and Alexander Technique. Those with a therapeutic bent can practise table and chair work, giving their "patients" passive experiences of good use

and relief from pain, and receiving support from public and private health funds. Those interested in education, that is, guiding their students to independent learning, fostering critical thinking and critical pragmatism, and assisting performers and athletes to reach their goals, can continue to practise a Technique. In Chapter 1, in addition to the research questions, I wrote of my aim to show how Barstow's approach might foster heightened creativity and moral elevation of the human race. It is precisely through her emphasis on those principles (that make it education) that she has done this.

7.2 The literature

How do my findings augment the existing literature on Alexander and Dewey? My findings suggest that Barstow very scrupulously interpreted Alexander's writings and teachings and identified in them some elements of critical pragmatism (whether or not she recognized them by that name). This is contrary to what Carrington and FMA said of Barstow in the 1940s, that she had gone "clean off the rails." The findings equally oppose the criticisms of other dissenters of the 1970s and 80s, that she was not teaching inhibition, she was not teaching the Alexander Technique, she was not training teachers and she was not following Alexander's example. It was precisely those most pragmatic of Alexander's examples, writings and teachings, along with other pragmatic ideas that echo Dewey, that influenced her innovations in teaching. Thus the findings of this study challenge the assumptions and criticisms of Barstow's teaching. They add to what we know about Dewey's relationship with the Alexander Technique. My findings offer a new direction in this Dewey-Alexander partnership: one in which Dewey influences the teaching of the Alexander Technique (directly or indirectly). To date the predominant direction of the partnership has been for Alexandrians to use Dewey as a spokesperson or a support to spread the word about the benefits of the technique. What is new is the possibility that Dewey—or at least his ideas and beliefs—has had and can still have an influence over its future directions and development. My work contributes to the literatures on Barstow and her approach by giving a more detailed history of her life and influences than has heretofore been available. It contributes to the literatures on Dewey and Alexander by offering a new interpretation of Dewey's relationship with and influence on the technique. It offers the new idea of Alexander showing some—but inconsistent—traits of critical

pragmatism. Finally, it gives the first in-depth analysis of Barstow's pedagogy, linking it in a constellation with one of America's greatest thinkers.

7.3 Implications and contribution

In the Alexander community, the parallels drawn between Barstow and Dewey might raise the status of her methods and of her students, now senior teachers themselves. The regard for some of these teachers by STAT, its related societies and those who organise the three-yearly International Congress is still not consistently high and there remain suspicions about their qualifications, since they did not count their hours of training and the training did not take place on a set number of days a week for a prescribed number of years.

The findings in this study could therefore be of interest to Barstow's students, who have battled to gain the respect of those colleagues trained in another paradigm. For the same reason, the findings might worry some of those who have maintained, as Carrington did, that Barstow went clean off the rails, or as others claimed, that she did not teach inhibition, was not teaching the Alexander Technique, and did not train teachers. To learn that her pedagogy so closely aligns with the ideas of that philosopher upon whom they call to give credibility to the Alexander Technique might be particularly uncomfortable to some and instructive for others.

In performing arts institutions the knowledge of the differences between the Barstowian approach and that approach which focuses on table work and chair work is important when deciding whether to retain, employ or hire Alexander teachers or include the technique as part of the curriculum. Knowing that there are (at least) two such divergent approaches would be a step forward in itself. To be aware of the benefits and drawbacks of various approaches would be a further step forward. To have the ability to choose and prescribe the approach most appropriate for performing artists would be a new and important skill for hiring committees and governing bodies. This same ability is important for performing arts teachers so that they can prescribe what is most required for their students. Performers themselves would also benefit from the knowledge that Barstow-style teachers offer a nuanced and differentiated approach to teaching the technique that pays particular attention to the

needs of performers. This knowledge helps all these arts professionals make informed decisions, rather than simply prescribing or rejecting “The Alexander Technique” as a fixed, pre-determined and single entity.

The fact that Barstow’s approach is aligned with the educational and philosophical ideals of one of the last century’s greatest thinkers gives extra credence to her teaching style and to the different path she trod from Alexander. Prospective Alexander students would benefit from knowing of Barstow’s alignment with Dewey’s philosophy so that they can make an informed decision about what kind of lessons they seek. It is important to understand that Barstow’s approach is not simply a random and personal re-invention of the technique but that it aligns with the values of critical pragmatism and Dewey’s ideas about education.

7.3A Recommendations

Terry Fitzgerald asks at the conclusion of his thesis on teacher training, “How do we know, 75 years after Alexander instituted his first formal teacher training school, that AT teacher education cannot be improved?” More broadly, I ask, Do we know, more than 100 years after Alexander began to teach his technique, that his teaching procedures and methods, his language and terms and his concept of what is scientific about his technique cannot or even should not be improved upon? It is my wish that this in-depth analysis of Barstow’s technique shows not simply *that* her changes are improvements on Alexander’s methods and thoughts, but *how* and *why* they might be considered as such, and *how* they are grounded in a critical pragmatism not unlike Alexander’s own and very like Dewey’s. Just as Fitzgerald concludes that “it is imperative that future generations of AT teachers maintain a critical stance towards teacher education practices,” I maintain that it is crucial for future generations of AT teachers to follow Barstow’s example that so resonates with Dewey’s pragmatism: to maintain this stance towards *the whole* of AT teaching, not just the training of teachers, so that it can once again become “the promise and potentiality of the new direction that is needed in all education,” as Dewey described it (*UOS* xix).

Ideally, I would wish that all teachers of the Alexander Technique and especially those who teach performers would examine Barstow’s methods, understand them,

question them and their own methods and take up her challenge to continue with her experiments.

7.3B Terms and Scientific Research

Scientific researchers into the Alexander Technique need to understand the importance of the differences in approach to teaching in order to make their outcomes more specific and relevant for those who wish to benefit from the findings. It is not enough to say, “lessons in the Alexander Technique were given,” without specifying the content and nature of those lessons. If the studies are examining the impact of “performance anxiety,” the reader needs to know whether those lessons were group lessons that taught the performer how to apply the technique to the performance situation in the lessons, making use of the audience there, or whether they were individual lessons that taught the performer to “lengthen and widen” in response to adrenalin, for example. If someone wishes to consult an Alexander teacher for back pain, then they may find that the table and chair work might give them more relief, even if this approach runs the risk of putting the teacher in the role of healer rather than educator. Studies into the Alexander Technique for the relief of medical symptoms, then, also need to specify what kind of lessons they were investigating. Did the lessons take place principally on a table with little application to activity, or where they mainly applied to the student’s everyday actions?

7.4 The Limitations of the Research; Further Research

This project is not a double-blind study comparing the effects of Marjorie Barstow’s pedagogy with that of, say, Walter Carrington. It does not, for example, assess scientifically whether teaching in groups is more effective for performers than individual lessons. It does not compare empirical outcomes of teaching that centres on Alexander’s procedures with those of teaching with student’s chosen activities. It does not empirically compare the effects of Carrington’s interpretation of inhibition with Barstow’s. These may be areas for future research. This project rather seeks to place Barstow and her ideas in a constellation with Dewey and to argue for the philosophical soundness and authenticity of her approach, as well as its usefulness for performers.

The project does not *prove* by empirical standards any direct or palpable connection between Dewey and Barstow. It does not show that Barstow took her ideas from Dewey. It does, rather, draw parallels between certain of their key ideas, most importantly those that affected Barstow's teaching, and these parallels suggest a philosophical constellation. It provides a philosophical rationale for Barstow's changes to the technique and shows that these changes all find justification in Dewey's works.

As concluded above, further research might be done in comparing the two approaches (Barstow's and "classical" English) empirically. There are difficulties here because in order to minimise the variable of personal style, personality and charisma, the same teacher must be able and willing to teach according to two vastly different paradigms. In the planning stages of this current research project, discussions with Cathy Madden revealed that she would not be willing to teach in ways that she regarded as less than constructive (such as using particular terms). Her training was not in giving table turns or chair turns or teaching hands on the back of the chair (although her own research into these activities coupled with her ability to apply the technique to anything would make her competent at them). Equally, teachers strongly schooled in the paradigm of table and chair will be less experienced in application work. Even if teachers were willing to teach in two different ways but believed that one way was more beneficial than the other, that belief could influence (consciously or unconsciously) the outcome. One exception to this could be to compare the results of individual versus group teaching with the same teacher teaching, since many teachers teach in both these situations.

Further research might also be conducted into the constellation itself, asking the following questions:

- a. Was Barstow aware that her changes were "Deweyan"?
- b. What was the nature, extent and content of the friendship between Barstow and Jones?
- c. Who else may have influenced Barstow in this way that so closely resonates with Dewey, and were they themselves connected with Dewey?
- d. What was the relationship between Marjorie Barstow and Dolly Dailey of the Alexander Foundation School in Pennsylvania? What kind of changes did

Dailey make and was she an influence on Barstow? What does their correspondence (probably mostly lost) reveal about teaching the Alexander Technique in the United States in the 1940s? Does Alexander's lack of interest in the discoveries Barstow wrote to him about have anything to do with his problems with Dolly Dailey?

- e. Why was Alexander so suspicious of Barstow's experiments and discoveries, when he stressed that his work was in its infancy? Is there evidence to suggest that his prejudice was gender-based? Or perhaps anti-American? Or a combination of the two? Were women only allowed to be independent and pioneering teachers of the Alexander Technique if they towed the party line and did large amounts of table work, such as Tasker and Webb?

Final statement

Richard Gummere believed that if the ghost of Alexander walked today, he would recognize Marjorie Barstow as “a disciple with the quality he expected in those who thoroughly understood his principles—originality” (*Festschrift* 166). I would go one step further and say that if the ghost of Dewey walked today, he would recognize Marjorie Barstow as having applied his own principles to a technique that he championed and to which he owed the concretization of several of his theories.

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APPENDIX 1: A BRIEF INTRODUCTORY LESSON IN THE ALEXANDER TECHNIQUE, AND GLOSSARY

For readers wishing to learn about the process of Alexander's technique before reading this thesis, I refer them to the first chapter of *The Use of the Self*. This chapter explains how he learned to observe what it was that was interfering with his voice production and the steps he employed to overcome the interference. It is easy to read, relatively free of jargon, straightforward and clear.

Because this thesis presents the Alexander Technique primarily as it was taught by Marjorie Barstow, I offer two excerpts of her teaching that were video-taped at the Stony Brook AT Congress in 1986. These excerpts were transcribed by me. I offer her explanations and teaching style verbatim, to give a sense (albeit limited) of her personality and teaching style. Her sense of humour and no-nonsense approach are in evidence here.

Bear in mind that she is teaching a group of Alexander teachers and students from all over the world. While she does go back to basics to define what Alexander's contribution was (and this is my reason for including it here), she also has some expectation that her audience/students will readily provide the answers to her questions. She sets up a sort of dialogue with the group, in effect defining (and redefining for some) Alexander's work from scratch. She also challenges them to be clear and tolerates no wishy-washy answers.

THE ALEXANDER TECHNIQUE ACCORDING TO MARJORIE BARSTOW

Excerpt 1: From Stony Brook Interview of Marjorie Barstow

The way Marjorie Barstow describes "direction" gives an effective overview of the Alexander Technique itself. The interviewer points out Barstow's skill in demystifying the technique, and Barstow then obliges us with an example of her clarity:

Interviewer: Well, I think that you've done a great deal to help, what I will say, demystify the technique for a lot of people and make it as clear and as simple as possible, given that it is difficult. How would you talk about what Alexander called "direction"?

Marjorie Barstow: Oh, direction, what he meant by it is... Well, I'll just talk about helping a person. I first ask them to take a look at themselves. Now what does that mean? It just means, I can sit here and I can look at myself. I can just tilt myself and I can see what I'm doing. I can *feel* if my legs are stiff. I can find out, notice if I'm in a little bit of a slump, why don't I go down here? Now this is the way most everybody sits (slumped in chest). There's no harm in it if we don't overdo it. But when I do this I'm

putting a heavy downward pressure on my whole body. You can see that, can't you? All right, now that pressure has put a lot of excess tension through my whole neck, which affects my voice. It has dropped my chest so I'm robbing myself of the space that my lungs need to work efficiently. And I have a lot of heavy pressure down here in my hips and this drop-down really is wasted... it's burning up energy. So that's what I help people see. Then, when you want to stop this, instead of just sitting up straight, as most people would do, that simply transfers this heavy pressure to a thing like this (throws shoulders back and looks stiff and over-tall), see, and I say to them, "How long do you stay there?" And they laugh and say, "nah..." So, this is the thing Alexander discovered and then he said, "There must be some way that I can move to release this pressure and he finally discovered that this back and down pull of his head was the beginning of the slump and the pressure. So then I can help the person learn how to just redirect that energy. And the minute I start moving my head very easily, I'm changing the relationship of the poise of my head to my body. And I've lost what I didn't want. That's all there is to it. It's too simple, isn't it?"

Interviewer: Yes... just redirect your energy.

Marjorie Barstow: It really is. And it's much more comfortable.

Excerpt 2: Barstow discusses AT for performers versus everyone

Interviewer: One of the areas in which you have created a great impression in *this* country is in the teaching of performers. The teaching of musicians, actors, dancers, seems to have been a great love for you and something you've done a great deal of. Your background includes dance, doesn't it?

Marjorie Barstow: Yes.

Interviewer: And do you have a particular fondness for performing artists to work with?

Marjorie Barstow: No, not really. I enjoy working with just anybody. It doesn't make any difference. The man who uses a hammer and saw, or whatever act... activity. See, because it's just helping people to really live a little more comfortably. When they know that some of their problems of heavy pressure and so forth, they're putting that on themselves without realising it. and if they want to make a change, they have to realise what they are doing. Otherwise how do they know what will be of value to them? And so this is very basic to everything that anybody does.

Excerpt 3. Barstow describes the unique and delicate quality of the Alexander work

Interviewer: When you say that this is a whole new way of learning, that we have not even scratched the surface of yet, are there ways you would see this developing or into fields that you might see this being put to use that haven't yet been delved into or thought of.

Marjorie Barstow: Well, the simple procedure of noticing when you wish to improve your general manner of use, and I like that expression because it's a moving expression, rather than, I could say posture, I could say coordination, I could say balance, a variety of words could be used, we haven't been trained to observe ourselves with this same quality or delicacy of movement that is a result of the technique. It's a broader field.

Interviewer: Was Alexander delicate in his approach to you all when you were learning to teach?

Marjorie Barstow: Was he what?

Interviewer: Delicate..

Marjorie Barstow: Oh yes. It's strange since I've been here I've thought about both of the Alexanders, he and his brother, they were both excellent teachers. They were different personalities, very different, but as I think back on the work I had with them, there was a delicacy and a certain quality of delicate power in their hands in the process of their teaching. And they were very, very insistent about what they called the redirection of energy. Conservation of energy through constructive thinking.

Interviewer: When you worked with the Alexanders, were they *strong* with their corrections to students? You said they were very insistent. How did they work?

Marjorie Barstow: They were insistent with a certain amount of delicacy. In other words they were not sort of pushing and shoving a person around. They were wanting the students to go, well, let me see, how shall I explain this so that I give you the impression I'd like to give you? They were insistent on the students' thinking. Thinking of what? Noticing what their hands were doing. Noticing the *suggestion* of direction that they were giving each of the students. I think that's the best way to express it.

Excerpt 4. Marjorie Barstow begins her first workshop of the congress:

Barstow: It's great to see you here this morning and I think this is a wonderful occasion for everybody. And I don't know what I'm supposed to be doing, but I'm here and you're here, so we'd better get busy and do something, don't you think? All right, let's talk about Alexander's discoveries. He really discovered something. And I'm sure you all know that he discovered something. And I think it is such a little delicate something that people call it difficult. Now I don't quite believe that. I believe it's very little and it's delicate, but I think *we're* the things that are difficult. Why do you look so sober over there? (laughter) You wouldn't think that you were difficult, I wouldn't think that I was difficult, but I have discovered that I'm the difficult thing and not what Alexander discovered. It is so simple that I have taken a long time to comprehend it. So, what did his discoveries have to offer? A very unique approach to the study of movement. And he says in his writings that it's perhaps the first time that this approach has been in existence for the human being. Now that's a pretty big statement. But as I continue teaching, I am beginning to really agree with him. Yes, and I think that's wonderful. So what did his discoveries offer us?

First of all, they help us learn how to look at the quality of our own coordination as it is today. And he says, if you want to improve in movement, in your daily activities, in your professional performances, if you really are sure that you need some improvement because you aren't quite happy with the results of your activities, then if we are all as smart as we *think* we are, we will do that. so he even tells us how to start it. He first says, "Take a look at yourself." So that's the first thing we're going to do this lovely morning.

I'm going to ask each of you to take a look at yourself, notice how you're sitting and how you feel. Now why are you so sober about that? (laughter) Haven't you ever thought of it in that way? So, how do you look at yourself? Well, if I want to look at myself, I just tilt down and look at it. Now can you all do

that? Can you see what you're doing? Can you see, all right, now look around the room and see what you notice about everybody else. What kind of things do you see as you're sitting? Now I see everybody has their own little way of sitting, and that's great, because we're all individuals, are we not? OK. So, what are the things you see? Does anybody want to say what they see, either about themselves or about somebody else? But don't tell who you're talking about! (laughter) Because you don't like to have people tell you this and that. So who is brave enough to say what they think about themselves or what they see some others doing? (CUT)

Participant: Different ways people have their feet.

Barstow: Yes, everybody doing something a little different with their feet. Well, they can, they're their feet, aren't they?

Participant: (CUT)... How much we overdo. How much we tense, how much we squeeze when we're sitting down.

Barstow: All right, now, so what have we found out? That everybody has their own little habits the way they sit this morning, and I'm sure if you sit this way this morning, there'll be other times you'll sit this way, other times you'll sit a different way. Isn't that right? So, sitting is a flexible thing, isn't it? Only what do we do with our sitting? Do we take away any of the flexibility of our sitting while we're sitting?

Participant: Yes, we do...

Barstow: I think we do. So if I do this thing, what did you see me do?

Participant: Slump.

Barstow: Now, what does this do for me? Nothing... but make me burn up a lot of energy. Or *some* energy—I don't know how much. But what ... (CUT) I'm here and I'm going up here.. So if I'm going to keep the stiffness, why don't I stay here? (laughter) This is just logical reasoning. Ain't it pretty logical reasoning? All right. Now, this is where Alexander discovered something.

When we want to get rid of excess tension, which is stiffness, what do we do? Move into another place and keep the stiffness in a different direction? No. He says, what you can do and I can do and he did, and he said everybody can do it if I can do it, I have to move what part of my body first? I have to move my head, it's going to act as a lead, and as my head moves *very delicately* in an upward direction, so that my body follows it, then what have I lost?

Oh, come on, what have I lost? I've lost the downward pressure. What was the result of my losing the downward pressure? That I lost the excess tension through my neck, which affects my voice. I've allowed my body to lengthen so there's the space inside of me that my lungs need to have my respiratory mechanism being effective. And I've taken a great deal of pressure off of my joints: my hip joints, knee joints and ankle joints. Now, .. (CUT)..

Who had their hand up first? (laughter) Everybody put their hand up... Y'all had your hands up first! I happened to see this lady, so while she's right here, now what I'm going to do... I'm going to be able to look at it myself and see what happens. So when I start to help you a little bit with my hands, be sure you don't say to yourself, "Here she comes, I'd better sit up straight." Because if you sit up straight, what will you be doing? You'll be pushing yourself up and there's no chance in getting together a delicate habit when you do that. So, if my hands come here, they're going to suggest a very delicate...

Keep your eyes open! You can't go to sleep while I'm in this room. But when I leave this room, if you want to go to sleep and snore, that's just great! So, *you* have something *you* have to do. I'm not going to do it all. You have to decide that you're going to follow my hands just a tiny bit, now are your eyes open?

Participant: Yes.

Barstow: All right, now, what do my hands feel like when I put them there?

Participant: They were encouraging me to release.. and to go up

Barstow: All right, but I think you can talk a little bit.. so that everybody can hear.

Participant: They were encouraging me to release.. and to go up.

Barstow: So now you have to do the movement. I don't think you're quite letting me.

Participant: All of a sudden I feel very tense! (laughter)

Barstow: (Laughing) Well, you put your hand up. You asked for it, you put your hand up (with a smile).. Now you tell me what you're thinking right now. What are you saying to yourself?

Participant: I'm saying to myself to release my lower back and to release my neck.

Barstow: You release your *neck* in order for the freedom to *come into your lower back*. Now, are you sure you've got that straight?

Participant: Yes. (Smiles)

(CUT)

Barstow: I think you had your hand up, didn't you, Judith? (Judith Leibowitz, who suffered the lifelong debilitating effects of polio and has great trouble balancing and walking in this video. See People and Organisations).

Leibowitz: I always have my hand up! (all laugh)

(Barstow, laughing and turning around to the camera, then turns back and is in front of Leibowitz, puts her hands just under Leibowitz's ears with her little finger touching the jaw and throat and her thumb up towards the roof, so fingers 3 and 4 are giving the info) All right, now, here's just a tiny little ease, that's just a speck pushy. Did that seem a bit pushy to you?

Leibowitz: Yes.

Barstow: Well now,

Leibowitz: I have to stop doing.

Barstow: No, that's negative. Let's don't talk negatively. If you just say, 'Well this is, gee, I don't know what she's doing, but why don't I follow her and find out?' This is where you can experiment just a little bit. I want to move it just a tiny bit like that. Now does that do anything?

Leibowitz: Oh yes, that changed the whole poise of my head..

Barstow: Yes, now that's pretty simple, isn't it? OK.. So what's the fuss? Who else wants help, anybody? Oh, you want help! Wait a minute, now. Stay right where you are. Don't you get ready to move. Because this is where you're going to find ... Now, what are you going to think about when I help you?

Excerpt 5: Barstow teaching towards the end of the first workshop

This excerpt begins at the end of a bantering conversation in which Barstow has just asked, "Does anybody have a question about why I'm taking the time this morning just to do that little tiny bit for everybody?" The banter is cut from the example and we go directly into the leading question Barstow was looking for:

Participant: Sure. Why are you doing it?

Barstow: Why am I doing it? Because this is the very first thing that Alexander discovered about himself through the nine years he was experimenting and developing this. He kept seeing that he was doing this (throwing head back and gasping) every time he talked, and so what I'm going to ask you people to do is, part of the time during this lovely meeting we're having, is to watch yourself and you talk to other people and see how much of the time you all do this (head throw-back and gasping). Because if you begin to watch this in your daily activities, you will learn a lot about yourself. And as soon as you see you're doing this all the time... I can talk to you this way.. I don't know how long my voice would last.. But we do this. And I do it too. And when I do it to myself, what do you think I say to myself? You dummy... You know better. Why don't you quit doing it?³⁸ I have to be real severe with myself, or I can just go on and do this. You see that?

And watch.. friends.. watch television. You see a lot of it on television. And Alexander found out he did that, and then he said, "I wonder if doing that, this thing, has any effect upon the fact that I'm losing my voice. So I'm giving you the very, very beginnings of what he did. And this is all very well said in that first chapter. I don't know how many of you have that little book, *The Use of the Self*, and how long you keep it on the shelf without looking at it or let it get covered with dust, but you always learn a lot as you are either teaching or helping students if you just peruse that one chapter and I think, as I do, I find something always in that chapter that I had just forgotten a little bit about and I would use it just every once in a while, but it's a fabulous chapter. Two or three minutes. I don't know how we're set up on this schedule. How are we? Who knows? Five minutes? That's right. I haven't helped you for quite a while (Judith Leibowitz).

Now, you're going to do *exactly* what we've been talking about: just that little bit of ease up there, and then turn your head and look around and decide where you want to walk to. Now you want to walk forward. There you are. Now stop, just a minute. Now, as you take that step, just follow my hands here. There you are, now off you go. Start walking because you'll do really nicely.... How are we doing?

Leibowitz: I mostly lose my limp.. (and something inaudible).

³⁸ This appears somewhat contradictory to Barstow's relentless constructive attitude. Cathy Madden would never advocate self-talk like this. Perhaps Barstow changed this as she went on, or perhaps Madden has taken constructive and kindness to an even higher level.

Barstow: Yes, you lose a lot of your limp. So, this.. there.. did you sense that? Now, wait a minute! Wait before you take off. I've got you. I'm not going to let you fall. You do this, and I'm going to come right here. Now, what this is going to do.. My hands are about where your respiratory mechanism is.. My hands here are just going to steady you a little bit. And see what happens as you go. And I won't take my hands away.. (audience encouraging noises). All right, now, let's.. it's all right.. I've got you..I'm not going to let you fall. What did that feel like?

Leibowitz: That was really supported through the middle, where I need the support.

Barstow: That's right. That's right, so it's a little here, and this might change the stride of your legs. I don't know. But I will help you, and just take it easy. Don't be in too much of a rush. I'll help you. There. All right, now let's stop a minute. See, after 2 or 3 steps, those first 2 or 3 steps are real nice, aren't they. And I think if I can help you a little bit

Leibowitz: If we could open up a little bit..

Barstow: Yes, you can all see just as well.. now take your time and just decide you're going to watch there..this will move up a little bit. Take your time with it, there's no rush, and I'll come down here and help you a little bit because you started so well. That's right. Now I've got you.. (laugh) That's right. Now wait a minute, maybe I helped you a little bit too much. Did I? See..

Leibowitz: Yes..

Barstow: Just a very little now.. take a few steps and then stop. Now stop. There. Now take a couple more and then stop. We're not in a rush to get any place. Now stop a minute. Because right here you're not going any place, so you don't have to... (does not finish sentence). Does that bother you too much?

Leibowitz: No

Barstow: Do you want to sit down?

Leibowitz: No, I'm fine.

Barstow: Ok, that's great. So just a little delicately with this. That's right. Now just turn your head from one side to the other. How does that *feel*?

Leibowitz: I'm comfortable standing now. Now I'm centred standing, so I can stand here, which I wasn't able to do earlier.

Barstow: Oh, great. All right.

Leibowitz: Yes, and now because I'm centred, I could also walk more easily.

Barstow: I think you will be able to too, and that's why, when you're here, if I help you take a couple of steps and then you stop just a minute to get that centred, and then you take a couple more, gradually it's going to help you. Because the first two steps you take are *very nice*. Now you just decide that you're going to let me help a little bit, and I'm going to follow you. I'm not going to tell you where to go; I'm just following your body. There you go. All right, now stop. Now let's sit down there a minute. Turn around and sit down. Now, look how nice you look. Don't you feel good? Yes, that's great.

Leibowitz: Thank you.

Barstow: You're welcome. It was my pleasure, we'll do some more. All right, now, is our five minutes up?

Leibowitz: Yes.

Barstow: All right..

GLOSSARY

Body mapping

Body mapping was the term given by William Conable to aspects of Marjorie Barstow's pedagogy. He observed that students move according to how they think they are structured rather than according to how they are actually structured. When a player's movement is based on her direct perception of her actual structure, it becomes efficient, expressive and appropriate for making music. Conable's observations are currently being confirmed by discoveries in neurophysiology concerning the locations, functions and coordination of body maps in movement. A basic course in body mapping is Barbara Conable's *What Every Musician Needs to Know about the Body* (2000). While the term was invented by Conable, he claims that the idea came from Barstow's teaching.

Chair and table school

This may be the most neutral way of referring to the school of the Alexander Technique that is other than the application approach. It avoids the controversial labels "traditional" and "non-traditional." Lessons are organised around a usually lengthy session on the table, followed or preceded by the student practising sitting down on and getting up from a chair. A table session consists of the student lying semi-supine: on his/her back, head on a small number of paperback books and knees pointing towards the ceiling. The teacher gently moves the student's head and limbs around, intending to give an experience of less effortful and more coordinated movement.

Conditions of use present

Alexander learned, through his series of experiments, that analysing the "conditions of use present" was the first step of his new rational process. Since Alexander did not clearly define or limit his definition of this step in writing, it has been open to interpretation. Madden uses it to mean the gathering of information about a situation and what is required for an activity: "Everything about the self, the situation, the needs of the activity... what is in the first chapter of *The Use of the Self*. It is everything involved" (Email 20 May 2015). One AT teacher points out that Alexander used two terms, "manner of use" and "conditions of use," and argues that the former means how we do things, and the latter means the "quality of muscle tonus ... regardless of ... use" (Armstrong, "A Crucial"). He stresses that the teaching of the AT must address both. This seems, however, another kind of Cartesian split and

surely unnecessary, because as Alexander himself says, “Change the manner of use and you *change the conditions throughout* the organism” [emphasis added] (*UOS* 80). In trying to make the case for this split, Armstrong quotes Alexander from Chapter 2 of his last book (*UCL*), yet this quote seems also to confirm that the quality of muscle tonus is changed by changing the manner of use:

Such a change could not have been brought about without the inhibition of his habitual manner of use, for this ... was indirectly responsible for much of the overaction of the muscle groups resulting in the spasm (“A Crucial”).

“Analysing the conditions of use present” was followed, in Alexander’s process, by “reasoning out the means whereby” a more satisfactory use could be brought about. One must then project *consciously* the directions required for putting these means into effect. Alexander talked about “making changes from unsatisfactory to satisfactory conditions of use and functioning” (*UOS* 35). This could be described as the ultimate aim of the Alexander Technique. What he meant here was that effective use is governed by effective conditions, those being that movement is directed by conscious thought rather than habitual feeling.

Debauched kinaesthesia, faulty sensory perception, or unreliable sensory appreciation (URSA)

These are all terms Alexander used with variable accuracy. They refer to the fact that our senses, especially proprioception and kinaesthesia, are unreliable in giving us absolute information. Alexander believed (*CCC* 97, 180) that our sensory appreciation is unreliable because of our changing world and our inability to keep up purely through instinctive adaptation. He believed that with his teaching, pupils learned reliable sensory appreciation. He believed that no learning could take place until our sensory appreciation was reliable, because our senses of right and wrong use, normal and abnormal behaviour are all unreliable. With precision and as a result of critical thinking Madden teaches that our senses are unreliable with respect to absolute information because of the nature of our sensory apparatus being relative and about the past. They remain unreliable after re-education. This is why we must rely on thought and process rather than feeling and effect.

Direction (1)

Alexander used the term “direction” in two ways. The third way (only in the plural) seems to have come later into Alexander parlance and in this sense the term “directions” is used interchangeably with “orders.”

1. **Direction (noun, with respect to motion):** The point taken by something in relation to the point towards which it is moving, as in “There is no such thing as a right position, but there is such thing as a right direction” (Alexander paraphrased by Maisel 4).
2. **Direction (noun, from the verb “to direct,” as in projecting messages):** The action or function of consciously directing one’s use.

When I employ the words “direction” and “directed” with “use” in such phrases as “direction of my use” and “I directed the use,” etc., I wish to indicate the process involved in projecting messages from the brain to the mechanisms and in conducting the energy necessary to the use of these mechanisms (Alexander, *UOS* 20).

3. **Direction (noun, as in an order or command):** What Alexander called “certain phrases employed in the teaching technique” (*CCC* 112) have come to be referred to by many teachers as “the directions,” or “the orders.” He himself also called them “preventive orders—a projected wish *without any attempt on the pupil’s part to carry it out successfully*” (*CCC* 115). Alexander’s most commonly used phrases are in the following text box. Before discussing them in *CCC*, he points out that the phrases he uses “call for comment, seeing that they do not always adequately express my meaning and that, furthermore, they cannot be defended as being demonstrably accurate” (*ibid*).

The following examples of Alexander’s orders are from *CCC*. “The pupil is then asked to give the following preventive orders. In the way of correct direction and guidance, he is asked to order the neck to relax, to order the head forward and up to lengthen the spine” (115). His orders are described below:

1. **“Relax the neck:”** Alexander believed that this was the first thing that had to happen for full coordination. He also recognized the futility of trying to relax any body part by direct means (113).

2. **“Head forward and up:”** Alexander calls this phrase inadequate, confusing and dangerous, “unless the teacher first demonstrates his meaning by giving to the pupil, *by means of manipulation*, the exact experiences involved” (113).

3. **“Lengthen the spine:”** Alexander found that by modifying the curve in the spine, the spine tends to lengthen (112). Note that this is supposed to *follow* the first two orders, which allow this third to happen.

4. **“Widen the back:”** This order rivals “head forward and up” in its shortcomings (113). “What really occurs is that there is brought about a very marked change in the position of the bony structures of the thorax.. also a permanent enlargement of the thoracic cavity, with a striking increase in thoracic mobility and the minimum muscle tension of the whole of the mechanisms involved” (113).

End-gaining principles

End-gaining principles are those that induce grasping for results without thoughtful attention to process. In Alexander’s words, “When ever a person sets out to achieve a particular ‘end’ his procedure will be based on one of two principles. The end-gaining principle involves a direct procedure to gain the desired end and is associated with

dependence on subconscious guidance and control, leading to unsatisfactory use of the mechanisms of his organism and an increase in the defects already existing. This is in contrast to “the means whereby principle.” This concept is not unique to the Alexander Technique. There is a saying, for example, in the ancient Japanese martial art, Aikido, “When one eye is fixed upon your destination, there is only one eye left with which to find the Way.”

Faulty sensory perception

See Debauched...

Inhibition

To “inhibit” means to prevent the subconscious habit from happening so that new ways of doing can occur in their place: “He must proceed to inhibit the guiding sensations which cause him to use the mechanism imperfectly” (Alexander, *MSI* 58).

Means whereby principle

This principle involves an indirect procedure towards gaining the desired end: a reasoning consideration of the causes of the conditions present, constructive conscious guidance, satisfactory use of the mechanisms, and the establishment of the conditions essential to development of potentialities. Under these conditions, defects are unlikely to be present (Alexander, *CCC* 7-8).

Orders (see Directions)

Primary control

This is the dynamic relationship of the head to the rest of the body, which organizes our movement and alertness. Alexander defines it as a control that “depends upon a certain use of the head and neck in relation to the rest of the body.” It “governs the working of all the mechanisms and so renders the control of the complex human organism comparatively simple” (*UOS* 59-60). In *UOS* (published in 1932) “primary control” came to replace the term “position of mechanical advantage,” which latter disappears from Alexander’s writings after 1923. “Though he continued to put pupils into positions, I never heard him use the terms ‘position’ or ‘posture,’ and he advised me in 1946 to avoid the word ‘posture’ in writing about the technique. (Jones, *Body* 46). According to Jones, although Alexander had described the relationship between head and spine as being of primary importance (in *CCC*), Alexander’s idea about the primary control did not crystallize until some of his medical friends had called his attention to the work of Rudolph Magnus on posture who had showed the same principle in other vertebrates.

“Procedures” and “Positions of mechanical advantage” or POMAs

In 1909 Alexander wrote a pamphlet on breathing in which seems to appear the first incidence of the term “POMA.” He describes the readjustment of the parts of the body

by a new and correct use of the muscular mechanisms through the directive agent of the sphere of consciousness: “This change brings about a proper mechanical advantage of all the parts concerned, and causes...such expansion and contraction of the thoracic cavity as to give atmospheric pressure its opportunity” (“Why We Breathe Incorrectly”). Over the years Alexander developed a variety of “procedures” and/or positions to help pupils experience and understand mechanical advantage. These were as follows:

1. Semi-supine (Lying down work, Table work, or Floor work)

The pupil lies supine on table or floor. The head is supported by a small number of thin paperbacks, and the knees are bent so that a triangle forms between thigh, lower leg and floor, hence the term *semi*-supine. The Alexander teacher moves parts of the pupil’s body around giving them an experience of good use. Alexander tended to delegate this part of teaching, sending his pupils down the hall after a lesson for table work, which was done by one of his assistants. He rarely used the technique himself in teaching. Barstow’s omission of this practice from *her* teaching is one of the causes of controversy surrounding her teaching.

2. “Monkey”

Whittaker recalls, “F.M. never used the word ‘monkey.’ It was only called that because a pupil once said he ‘felt like a monkey with his hands hanging down like that.’ And, so, it became “monkey,” but not to F.M.” (in Gounaris 132). It is a kind of half-way point between sitting and standing. Frank Pierce Jones describes first-hand the way Alexander taught this procedure:

The pupil stood with his feet quite apart and the toes pointing out. While (the pupil) directed his neck to relax, F.M. manipulated his head in such a way that the knees and hips flexed simultaneously while the back lengthened and rotated forward allowing the arms to swing. The procedure produced a state of plastic tonus throughout the extensor system (Jones, *Body* 69).

3. Hands on the back of the chair

This is a complicated procedure, which Alexander requires several pages to describe. To summarise the salient points, the *end*—holding the chair with the fingertips—is of little importance relative to the *means*—the coordinated relationship of head, neck, back, shoulders, arms, elbows, wrists and hands.

4. Whispered Ah

This is often included as one of the procedures devised by Alexander. Alexander may have adopted it from theatre training. It consists of paying attention to use—of the whole person as well as of the vocal apparatus in particular—while whispering the vowel “ah.” Wielopolska

Proprioception and the kinaesthetic sense

The process of self-sensing is called proprioception. Proprioception enables us to distinguish between light and heavy touch, to feel such things as pain or heat and cold within ourselves, to sense pressure at joints and to detect the amount of contraction or stretching in our muscles. The most important aspect of proprioception for the

purposes of the Alexander Technique is the position sense. The position sense is made up of two parts: the static position recognition sense and kinaesthesia. This latter term, kinaesthesia, has become so confused with and misapplied to the entire position sense, that it is no longer technically accurate. Kinaesthesia merely informs us about the rate at which any given movement is performed. The static position recognition sense is that sense which registers the part-to-part relationships of bones to one another at the joints. It will be seen from this that, technically, the feeling sense we are most interested in improving with the Alexander Technique is not our kinaesthesia but our static position recognition sense (Weed, *What* 69-70).

Psychophysical re-education

The discipline of unlearning maladaptive habits of use.

Self, as Alexander meant it, referred to the entire complex of body, mind and spirit (and/or emotion).

Thinking in Activity

Stony Brook Interviewer: Marjorie, when you talk about thinking in activity, what is it that you mean?

Marjorie Barstow: What do I mean about thinking in activity? Noticing and being aware of the quality of your movements as you carry on your conversation, or as you do whatever you want to do.

Unduly excited fear reflexes

Alexander believed that the poor use he observed in himself and others was caused by either exaggerated development of the inhibitory processes or a lack of the development of inhibition, “particularly in those spheres connected with the use of the psychophysical mechanisms in practical activity.” This caused a state of “unbalanced psychophysical functioning throughout the organism” and established the “unduly excited reflex” process. Alexander believed that unduly excited fear reflexes, uncontrolled emotions, prejudices and fixed habits were retarding factors in all human development, and that the process of reasoning developed more quickly in a person whose attitude to life might be described as calm and collected. It is for this reason that Alexander based his teaching on the combination of gently manipulating the student into good use, while encouraging the student to *want* “to be wrong.” Trying to “be right,” while relying on faulty sensory appreciation, merely heightened the anxiety of the student and prevented successful learning and change. (All quotations from CCC 134-136).

Unreliable sensory appreciation (see Debauched)

Use

“The term ‘use’ covers the total pattern that characterizes a person’s responses to stimuli. Use is subject to a variety of influences from without and within the organism. Unlike heredity and previous experience, use can be brought under conscious control and redirected to enlarge the individual’s potential for creative development” (Jones, *Body* 46). In Chapter One, ‘Evolution of a technique’, of *UOS*, Alexander discusses the process by which he observed the manner of his “doing” both in ordinary speaking and reciting. He later refers to this manner of doing as “use,” and specifies:

I wish to make it clear that when I employ the word “use,” it is not in that limited sense of the use of any specific part, as, for instance, when we speak of the use of an arm or the use of a leg, but in a much wider and more comprehensive sense applying to the working of the organism in general (4).

APPENDIX 2: PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONS

This list gives background information about people who are mentioned in the thesis but do not have significant chapters written about them. With respect to the *Festschrift*, only those contributors who have been frequently quoted (or whom I have contacted or interviewed) appear here.

ACAT: American Center for the Alexander Technique, now AMSAT.

Jane Addams (1860-1935): A pioneer settlement worker, sociologist and public philosopher, Addams founded one of the first social settlement houses in the US, an educational and community service centre for the disadvantaged of Chicago. It attempted “to apply knowledge to life, to express life in terms of life.” This was a concrete example of applying theory to praxis, and she referred to the philosophy of Dewey and James to support her experiment. It was the experiment of her settlement that inspired Dewey to open his school. She won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1931. Her pacifistic ideas, holistic approach to social welfare, philosophy of education and belief in democracy meant that she and Dewey exerted mutual influence on each other, but not without significant debate and disagreement.

AmSAT: See ATAS

Amy Alexander (1879-1951) was Alexander’s sister. FMA trained her to teach his method, which she continued to do in Melbourne after his departure for London. She and her mother eventually followed him to England, where they remained. She married George Mechin and had two daughters, Marjory (later Barlow) and Joan (later Evans).

A.R. (Albert Redden) Alexander (1873–1947) was the fourth of ten children of John and Betsy Alexander, of which F.M. Alexander was the first. ARA was one of the first teachers trained by his brother, FMA. See Chapter 4 for more details.

ATAS: Alexander Technique Affiliated Societies comprises eighteen national societies (listed below), and their collected member-teachers number approximately 3000. The Affiliated Societies “maintain and assure training standards.” These standards include a minimum of 3-year training courses with an average of 36 weeks per year, of 5 days a week, 3 hours per day. All training course directors and assistants are certified to have the necessary skills and experience to train other Alexander teachers. Affiliated societies include those in Australia (AUSTAT), Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada (CanSTAT), Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Israel, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, UK and Ireland (STAT) and the United States (AmSAT).

ATI: Alexander Technique International was formed to recognize teachers who had trained in legitimate ways that did not necessarily accord with STAT’s quantitative prescriptions involving numbers of hours, days, years and frequency of training. ATI’s members, rather, satisfy qualitative standards. ATI was formed in

1992 with 28 teachers as an open organization. By 2004 it had twelve regional offices around the world serving over 300 teachers in nineteen countries. It accepts members of the Affiliated Societies and other AT societies.

AUSTAT: Australian Society of Teachers of the Alexander Technique. See ATAS (Affiliated Societies, above) for more details.

Sarah Barker (DOB unknown) began studying with Marjorie Barstow in 1971. In 1978 she published *The Alexander Technique*, to which many in the Alexander world took exception because of her implication that one could learn the technique without a teacher. She is currently Associate Professor of the Acting and Movement at the University of South Carolina and a nationally recognized leader in movement training for actors. She coaches and choreographs movement professionally for the theatre and has also acted professionally and in the academy.

Marjory Barlow, née Mechin (1915-2006), was F. M. Alexander's niece, his sister Amy's daughter. She joined the first training course in its second year (1932) and qualified as a teacher in 1936. She was the first graduate of the Ashley Place training program to start her own teacher-training program.

Wilfred Barlow (1915-1991) trained with FMA from 1938 to 1945 while studying medicine simultaneously. As a principal witness in 1948 he helped Alexander win the defamation case in South Africa. With his wife, Marjory, he ran an Alexander teacher-training course (1952-1982) while practising as a rheumatologist. In 1958 he founded The Society of Teachers of the Alexander Technique (with Joyce Wodeman and Marjory Barlow). He was editor of STAT's *Alexander Journal*. He published an influential book on the AT from a medical point of view, *The Alexander Principle* (1973) and an edited book, *More Talk of Alexander* (1978).

Philomene (Dolly) Barr, née Dailey (1904-1994), trained with A.R. Alexander in Massachusetts in the early 1940s. In 1944 she started a class based on Alexander's principles at the Media Friends School in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She and Esther Duke were the founding members and Barr was its first director. Like Barstow, she was from Lincoln, Nebraska (and is buried there).

Arro (Anthony) Beaulieu (1942-2010) was a professional pianist and piano teacher. He began studying the Alexander Technique in 1973 with Marjorie Barstow and Frank Pierce Jones. In 1978 he moved to Lincoln, Nebraska, to study more intensively with Barstow. He and his wife Aase spent six years in Lincoln.

Goddard Binkley (1920-1987) trained first with Dolly Dailey (Mrs Norris-Barr) in the United States. He then spent almost two years studying with FMA in London towards the end of FMA's life. His lessons began in 1951. He then entered the training course in the summer of 1953. *The Expanding Self* is the diary Binkley published, which tells the story of his introduction to the AT, his own process of discovery and healing, and his lessons with FMA.

Deborah Caplan (1931-2000) trained with Alma Frank, her mother, from 1950–1953. Her father was the writer, Waldo Frank. Caplan was a dancer, with an MA from Hunter College and a master's degree in physical therapy from NYU. She ran a

private practice specializing in back problems and teaching body use and movement to many performers. She was also a co-founder of ACAT. She was the author of many articles for medical journals and wrote a book, *Back Trouble*.

Walter Carrington (1915-2005) trained with Alexander in London from 1936 to 1939 and was one of four teachers who took over Alexander's London training course in 1955 when Alexander died. Carrington trained several hundred teachers during his lifetime and his training school has continued on since his death in 2005. Carrington published two collections of lectures, *Thinking Aloud* (1994) and *The Act of Living* (1999), as well as his diary, *A Time to Remember* (1996).

Jeremy Chance began studying the Alexander Technique in 1969. He began training in London in 1976 at the Carrington-based School of Alexander Studies with Paul and Betty Collins. He began studies with Barstow in 1986. He organised Barstow's three teaching visits to Europe in 1988-1990 and continued studying with her until one of her last winter workshops in 1992. He currently runs the world's largest Professional Teacher Education School for Alexander Technique Teachers in Japan, with studios in Osaka, Tokyo. The BodyChance school is based on Barstow's approach.

Barbara Conable (DOB unknown) studied with Marjorie Barstow from 1963. In 1989 she published what I have referred to in this thesis as *The Festschrift: Marjorie Barstow, Her Teaching and Training, A 90th Birthday Offering*. She now resides in Portland, Oregon. The Conables are well known for their innovative work in body mapping, and Barbara's book, *What Every Musician Needs to Know About the Body*, is extremely popular. Now retired from teaching, she continues to develop the theory and practice of Body Mapping. At the recent International Congress of Voice Teachers there were more papers and workshops on body mapping than on the Alexander Technique.

William (Bill) Conable (DOB unknown) is a professional cellist and is Professor Emeritus of Music at Ohio State University, where he taught from 1972 to 2008. He studied with Marjorie Barstow from 1962 and also received some teacher training from Frank Pierce Jones and Walter Carrington. He now lives in Spokane, Washington, still teaches the Alexander Technique and runs workshops in Columbus, Ohio, and Spokane. The Conables are well known for their innovative work in body mapping. Together they wrote *How to learn the Alexander Technique*. At the recent International Congress of Voice Teachers there were more papers and workshops on body mapping than on the Alexander Technique.

Emile Coué (1857-1926) was the father of Couéism, which promised self-cure with auto-suggestion and positive thinking. He is remembered for his famous mantra, "*Tous les jours à tous points de vue je vais de mieux en mieux*" (in English, "Day by day in every way I am getting better and better").

Dolly Dailey—see **Philomene Barr**.

Raymond Dart (1893-1988) was an Australian anatomist and anthropologist best known for his involvement in the discovery of the first fossil of *Australopithecus africanus* (in 1924). He is responsible for the Dart Procedures (having collaborated with Alex and Joan Murray). According to Marjory Barlow Dart's contribution did

not add anything valuable to the Alexander Technique and were simply a way of making the AT seem more scientific and complicated. They are a series of exploratory poses and movements relating to the sequence of human developmental movement from infant to adult and are to be done while applying the Technique.

Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) was an American philosopher and poet who influenced transcendentalism and related reforms in education. The transcendentalists developed model communities intended to unify the practical with the ideal. Emerson was an important influence on William James, John Dewey and Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900). Some of Nietzsche's aphorisms can be seen as virtual translations of Emerson's prose (Hanson 224). René Berthelot, writing in 1911, even called Nietzsche a German pragmatist, tracing the romantic roots of pragmatism back beyond Emerson to Schelling and Hölderlin, and the utilitarian roots to the influence of Darwin and Spencer (Richard Rorty, "Pragmatism" 21).

Moshé Feldenkrais (1904-1984) was an Israeli physicist who developed a method to improve human functioning by increasing self-awareness through movement. Similarities have been drawn between the Feldenkrais Method and the Alexander Technique.

Martha Fertman (DOB unknown) began her professional dance training in 1965 at the School of Pennsylvania Ballet. She studied and trained for one year with Kitty Wielopolska and then began studying with Barstow in 1976. She attended every summer workshop for nine years. Her doctoral dissertation is a somatic study of the art and pedagogy of Isadora Duncan (Temple University). After a 10-year apprenticeship with Barstow, she began teaching dancers and other performers. She was instrumental in establishing a successful and innovative training program for teachers of the technique in 1983 at which Barstow taught twice a year for many years. She continues to direct this program today, known as the Philadelphia School for the Alexander Technique.

Bruce Fertman (DOB unknown) trained as a gymnast and was a professional modern dancer for twelve years. He has a Master's in movement re-education. He apprenticed with Marjorie Barstow for 16 years and has extensive training in Aikido. He co-founded the Alexander Alliance International, an intergenerational, multicultural community/school dedicated to training Alexander teachers. He is the Director and Senior Teacher for the Alexander Alliance International, for the Alexander Alliance Germany, and for his new school – The Peaceful Body School, in Coyote, New Mexico.

Michael Frederick was the founding director of the first three International Congresses on the Alexander Technique. He played an active part in attempting to have Barstow's trainees recognized by the American professional associations. An actor, he trained first with Walter and Dilys Carrington and studied for many years with Barstow. He studied in the U.S. and Israel as a Feldenkrais Practitioner with Dr. Moshe Feldenkrais. He lives in California and continues to teach.

Margaret Goldie (1904-1997) was a part-time member of the first training course, although it appears that she was already teaching with Tasker in the Little School when the training course began. She travelled to the US with FM on several of his

teaching visits and in later years they became very close, cohabiting when he was in London. The nature of their relationship is unknown. After FM's death and the fall-out over who should teach at Ashley Place, Goldie shared premises with Irene Stewart, John Skinner and Walter Carrington.

Richard M. "Buzz" Gummere, Jr., (1912-2007) was an American educator who trained in the first American training course and was a colleague of John Dewey. He was acquainted with F.M. and A.R. Alexander, Frank Pierce Jones, and Marjorie Barstow.

ITM: The Interactive Teaching Method is, according to its creator, Don Weed, "a revolutionary approach to the Alexander Technique." The ITM Teacher Training Programme is a four-year professional training course leading to certification as a teacher of the ITM for teaching the AT. Classes are held on weekends, usually once a month. During the Use of Hands in Teaching Modules I and II and the exams in the last year, weekends are held more frequently. Weed believes that the most effective way for most people to learn Alexander's work is through intense periods of input followed by time in which to assimilate and process the information.

William James (1842-1910) was Professor of Philosophy and Psychology at Harvard from 1885 to 1907. He is known as the father of modern psychology. His psychology represented the scientific study of the mind. He was strongly influenced by Darwin. One of the hallmarks of his pragmatism was his strong belief in the power of individual agency. James was the first prominent philosopher to recognize Dewey as an important philosopher in the pragmatist tradition.

Frank Pierce Jones (1905-1976) was the first of only a handful of people who graduated from the U.S. training course. His certificate was signed by ARA, as FMA had already returned to England by this time. He remained in contact with FMA. A professor of classics at Brown University (his dissertation was on Greek participles), he was an unlikely candidate for the role of scientific researcher, which he ultimately became at Dewey's urging. It had also been with Dewey's encouragement that Jones had decided to train with the Alexanders in the 1940s.

Judith Leibowitz (1920-1990) studied first with Alma Frank, trained with Westfeldt, returned to lessons with Frank and studied with FMA in two 6-week stints in London. Despite suffering the severe long-term symptoms of polio from the age of 15, she became a practising chemist before encountering the Alexander Technique. She was a founding member of ACAT in 1964 and taught the technique at the Juilliard School for twenty years. She is the author of *Dare to be Wrong*.

Anthony M. Ludovici (1882-1971) was a prolific author who started out as an illustrator, worked as secretary to Auguste Rodin and later as translator of and lecturer on Nietzsche's philosophy. In 1927 he began Alexander lessons and in 1933 wrote the first introduction—apart from Alexander's own books—to the Alexander Technique, *Health and Education through Self-Mastery*.

Eric David McCormack (1911-1963) was a Father of the Catholic Order of St Benedict. His doctoral thesis was completed in 1958 and was the first thesis to link

the work of Alexander and Dewey. It was published recently (posthumously) by Mouritz in 2014 and by Alex Murray in 1992.

Patrick Macdonald (1910-1991) joined the first training course in its second year, 1932, having had lessons in the AT since the age of ten. After qualifying in 1935, he became the first paid assistant teacher at Ashley Place (according to Kaminitz). Having also taught in Birmingham and Cardiff, he began to train teachers at Ashley Place in the late 1950s. He continued training teachers for much of his life, perhaps most notably Shmuel Nelken, through whom many Israelis learned of the technique and came to train with Macdonald. Nelken started the first Alexander training school in Israel, continuing to train with Macdonald, and Macdonald visited Israel many times. In 1989 he published *The Alexander Technique as I see it*.

Vivien Mackie (DOB unknown) is an English cellist and Alexander teacher who studied with Pablo Casals and Walter Carrington. She observed great similarities between Casals's teaching and the Alexander Technique, and her book, *Just Play Naturally*, describes these in detail.

Cathy Madden (1952-) studied with Barstow from 1975 after completing a B.A. in theatre arts and a Master's degree in drama and literature. She moved to Lincoln, Nebraska, for seven years and began teaching the Alexander Technique in 1980. She worked for many years as Barstow's teaching assistant. She is currently Principal Lecturer for the University of Washington's School of Drama, Director of the Alexander Technique Training and Performance Studio in Seattle, a former chair of Alexander Technique International, and an Associate Director for BodyChance. She teaches workshops for performers, and Alexander Technique teachers in Australia, England, Germany, Japan and Switzerland.

Alexander Murray (DOB unknown) began Alexander studies with Charles Neil in 1955 and continued after Neil's death in 1958 with Walter Carrington. The Murrays (Alex and his wife Joan) spent nine years working with Carrington. In 1967 they met Raymond Dart and with him developed the Dart Procedures. In 1977 they opened a training course, the Alexander Technique Center Urbana.

Margaret Naumburg (1890-1983) was a progressive educator. As a student at Barnard (New York), Naumburg roomed with Evelyn Dewey. At Columbia she did graduate work with John Dewey. In Europe, she studied economics at the London School of Economics, the Dalcroze method of music with Alys Bently, child education with Maria Montessori in Rome and the Alexander Technique with Alexander in London. She returned to New York in 1914 and led a Greenwich Village life with her husband (for eight years) Waldo Frank. Naumburg opened the first Montessori school in the US and a year later founded a school based on her own educational philosophy, the Walden School. The school used Freudian psychoanalysis as a foundation and used music and art extensively to stimulate children's originality and passion. In the 1930s, Naumburg pioneered the field of art therapy, and greatly enlarged it through her books and lectures during the next three decades. She is the author of many articles as well as the book, *The Child and the World* (1928).

Charles Neil (1917-1958) began training in 1933 at the age of 16. Bloch describes him as "an asthmatic teenager in whom F.M. took a fatherly interest" (148). After his

training and a short spell of teaching at Ashley Place, he set up on his own in London, eventually teaching “what Alexander regarded as a bastardised version of his Technique” (153). He called himself a “kinaestheticist” and combined elements of the AT with physiotherapy. When FMA failed to establish a professional society in 1948, the wealthy Cripps family (Sir Stafford and Dame Isobel) decided to give their financial support instead to Neil (235).

Frank Ottiwell trained with Judith Leibowitz in the 1950s, co-founded the American Centre for the Alexander Technique (ACAT) in New York in the 1960s and then ACAT-West in San Francisco. He ran a training course in San Francisco and used to go to Barstow’s workshops. He was responsible for much of the publicity surrounding her teaching.

PAAT: Professional Association of Alexander Technique Teachers is based in Birmingham, UK. Its training course claims to be the only four-year training course in the world and “has been successfully training teachers to the highest standards for 25 years.” Qualification is strictly by examination only.

Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914) was a natural scientist and philosopher. While James acknowledged Peirce as the originator of pragmatism, in fact it was a movement that had input from many sources. Peirce’s greatest philosophical influence was Kant. Peirce described himself as a logician and saw himself “as constructing the philosophical system that Kant might have developed had he not been so ignorant of logic” (Hookway, *ODP* 648).

Robert Rickover (DOB unknown), originally from Toronto, graduated as an economist at Yale and MIT and worked as a research economist for eight years. He was halfway through his training course with Carrington in London when he met Barstow in 1978. He completed his training with Carrington in 1981. He has written extensively on the Alexander Technique for the general public and has been a regular contributor to *Direction Journal* and *The Alexander Review*. He is also the author of *Fitness without Stress—A Guide to the Alexander Technique* (1988). He lives in Lincoln, Nebraska.

STAT: Society of Teachers of the Alexander Technique was the first society of teachers of the Alexander Technique, founded by Wilfred Barlow in 1958. Barlow worked closely with Alexander to set up a professional body in the 1950s and had even paid the lawyers to help work out a constitution. F.M. did not ultimately go ahead with it. Marjory believes that FMA was worried about what would happen to the technique with the advent of a society. After F.M.’s death the need grew, however, and the society was formed. STAT now claims to be “the oldest and largest professional society of teachers of the Alexander Technique” and offers “*the* definitive guide to the Alexander Technique” [emphasis added]. Their website claims that “all STAT registered teachers have completed an approved three-year training course or have reached a standard approved by STAT... STAT training courses are regulated through a system of external moderation.” Their publications include *STATnews* and *The Alexander Journal*.

Irene Stewart (dates unknown) was a member of the first training course. She remained teaching as a staff member at Ashley Place at least until the late 1950s.

With Carrington and Peggy Williams she fought Beaumont Alexander for the right of all Alexander teachers to use the name Alexander Technique after FMA's death.

Irene Tasker (1887-1977) completed studies at Cambridge before training with Montessori in Rome, where she met Ethel Webb. Webb recommended Alexander's work to Tasker, who began lessons in 1913 and became his assistant in 1917. She met the Deweys at about this time and travelled with them from Chicago to California, discussing in detail with John Dewey the Alexander work and the book he was writing at the time, *Human Nature and Conduct*. In 1924 her tutelage of a young boy in her guardianship evolved into her running of the "Little School," where Barstow frequently assisted during her own training. Tasker and Webb gave Alexander a great deal of assistance with his own publications. Tasker emigrated to South Africa in 1935 and was the teacher whom Ernst Jokl encountered and to whom he took exception before writing his inflammatory criticism of the Alexander Technique that resulted in the major court case. She returned to England permanently in 1949.

Tommy Thomson (DOB unknown) studied with Frank Pierce Jones and began teaching in 1975. He is the only known AT teacher to have trained unofficially and exclusively with Jones. He is the founder and Director of the AT Center at Cambridge (MA), training teachers since 1983. He is on the faculty at Harvard University, at the Institute for Advanced Theater Training. Thomson is a co-founder, charter member, and first Chair of the Executive Board of Directors of ATI and has earned the ATI Life Time Membership Award.

Sir George Trevelyan, 4th Baronet (1906-1996), was one of the first three members of Alexander's first training course, which he began after his studies in history at Cambridge. He attempted to set up a teaching practice after qualifying but without success. He worked as a school teacher, college principal and in adult education before forming the Wrekin Trust, an educational foundation concerned with the spiritual nature of humanity and the universe. He re-established contact with the AT community in the 1980s. In addition to writing (and publishing) a wide variety of his own works, his diary of lessons in the technique is published in Fischer's *The Philosopher's Stone*.

Lilian Twycross (1874-1943) was a contralto and voice teacher. She was an early student of FMA's who taught the technique in Melbourne from 1898.

Ethel Webb (1866-1952) was the first non-Alexander to work closely with FMA. While studying piano in Berlin she befriended the New Yorker, Alice Fowler. This connection was later to help Alexander during his wartime stays in America. She began Alexander lessons in 1913 after reading *CCC*. She then became his secretary and assistant, subsequently devoting her life to the Alexander Technique and giving up the piano. In Rome, while studying with Montessori, she met Irene Tasker and Margaret Naumburg and introduced them to the Alexander Technique. Tasker and Webb gave Alexander a great deal of assistance with his own publications.

Don Weed (DOB unknown) began his study of the Alexander Technique in 1971 with Marjorie Barstow. He has degrees in music and drama as well as biology and chiropractic. He worked closely with Barstow from the time of her early experiments in 1971 until 1993. He also studied with Frank Pierce Jones and Margaret Goldie. He

is the creator of the Interactive Teaching Method for the Teaching of the F. M. Alexander Technique (ITM).

Lulie Westfeldt (1895-1965) was a member of the first training course. Originally from New Orleans, she majored in English at college and worked as a social worker in a settlement house. She was drawn to the technique having suffered from poliomyelitis as a child. A series of orthopaedic operations had aggravated her difficulties in walking. She studied with Alexander for four years and taught the AT for 26 years. She is the only teacher from that course to write extensively about her experiences both as a student and a teacher.

Erika Whittaker, née Schümann (1911-2004), was born in Germany to a German father (musician and author, Hans) and English mother (Elsie Webb). When her mother died in 1927, her father went to America and Erika moved to England to be with her aunt (Ethel Webb). Having had lessons from her aunt since the age of eight, she began studies with Alexander himself in 1929. She was one of the first three members of the first training course. In the late 1950s she moved to Australia, where her older brother resided. In 1985 she was invited to give the STAT Annual Memorial Lecture in London. The following years saw her assisting Marjorie Barstow in Australia and supporting the International Congresses in New York (1986) and Brighton (1988). According to John Hunter, Barstow had a hand in influencing Michael Frederick to invite Whittaker to give the Keynote Address at the Brighton Congress.

Catharine “Kitty” Wielopolska (Countess Wielopolska), née Merrick (1900-1988), attended Alexander’s first teacher training course and then later retrained with Patrick MacDonald from 1969 to 1972. She suffered from schizophrenia and is believed to have made an extremely rare recovery. She credited the Alexander Technique in great part for this recovery. Her book, written “in conversation with” Joe Armstrong is called *Never Ask Why: The Life-Adventure of Kitty Wielopolska (1900-1988): Her Experience with the Alexander Work, Schizophrenia and the Psychic State*.

APPENDIX 3: DATA COLLECTION

This appendix includes the collection methods and evolution of the data collection from various episodes. This appendix is included because some data, albeit a small amount, is drawn upon in the thesis.

Data Collection Episodes (DCEs) and Evolution of Design

Episode 1. Dunedin, May/June 2010. Short-term exposure

Description

Madden had the opportunity to visit Dunedin in May 2010 for a week as part of a larger teaching trip. This was only six months after the beginning of the project. The research direction had not yet been finalised. To take advantage of Madden's visit, however, and in case this generated useful data and/or a direction for the project, classes were organised in the Music Department and the Higher Education Development Centre (HEDC) at the University of Otago (UO). Madden also taught an elite community choir (Southern Consort of Voices), a group of physiotherapists, a class organised by the UO Clubs and Societies Centre and a weekend workshop open to the public.

Ethical approval was sought to video participants' turns in the classes and later conduct interviews using an open questioning technique. Members of all classes were invited to participate. *The research aim, as described in the ethical approval application, was:* "to understand better what happens when Madden helps a student to make a change in his/her chosen activity," with the research question being, "Why is Madden's method of teaching effective, and can teachers of voice learn and adopt some of the skills used by Madden?"

Data Collected

Table 1 shows the source and number of participants, the exposure each group had to Madden's teaching, the approximate class size (this was not officially measured at the time, but is estimated by watching the videos). Appendix DC contains the ethical approval application (including full description of data collection method), the information sheet (for participants) and the consent form. Ethical approval was granted.

Table 1: DCE1 Participants, Exposure and Class Size

Pool of Participants	Exposure	Participants	Approx. class size
Music students	2hrs	7	30
Academic staff	3hrs (some with previous experience)	6	25
Choir	2hrs	1	40
Physiotherapists	3hrs	0	25
OU Clubs & Societies	2hrs	0	7
Weekend workshop, general public	12hrs	3	6-7
Total	n/a	17	n/a

Table 2: DCE1 Type and Quantity of Data

Data Collection Tool	Quantity of data	Time Span
Video of teaching	19hrs	Over one week
Interviews audio-recorded	17	Over 4 weeks
Transcribed word count:	22,781	Over several weeks

Method of analysis

Only the interviews were analysed, and the analysis was qualitative. They were evaluated to give an indication of whether this kind of data collection produced data that could do one or more of the following:

- inform a quantitative project investigating Madden's teaching
- reveal the value and limitations of short-term exposure to Madden's teaching
- reveal any other unexpected outcomes

The data collection aimed to gauge the short-term impression of Madden's teaching on university lecturers/professors, undergraduate music students and the interested general public. It was designed to test the value and find the limitations of reports on Madden's teaching after only short-term exposure.

How the data connects with the research question

The data engages only *indirectly* with the current research question, which emerged much later than this data collection episode, by supplying examples of a second-generation Barstowian AT teacher and the evaluation of such teaching by undergraduate music students, academic teaching staff, two amateur musicians, one AT teacher and one physiotherapist.

Problems or issues: It was concluded that in general, the academics who participated in the study gave more considered evaluations than the undergraduate-level students who participated. It also emerged that such a short exposure to Madden's teaching could give people only limited and in some cases very superficial impressions. Since the data came from three such diverse groups, and each group had a different amount of exposure to Madden's teaching, the data gave more information about these differences than about the teaching itself. This information helped in the design of the second round of data collection.

Episode 2. Dunedin, Feb 2011: Professional musicians in ensemble

Description

Discussions with Madden and Murachver about the requirements, problems, superficiality and limitations of a quantitative research project led to the decision to continue with qualitative methods. This episode took place nine months after the first.

Using the conclusions from the previous data collection episode, the exposure of participants to Madden's teaching was increased. In addition, the field from which participants were drawn was narrowed to professional musicians so that participants could experience both Madden's AT teaching and her AT-informed and -integrated performance coaching. Ensemble sessions were designed to allow every participant to be playing and learning for the entire duration of the session, rather than only during their "turn" in class. Having the sessions in a recording studio gave an element of performance to the playing while not causing quite the pressure of a live performance with audience. This was designed to give Madden's performance coaching an

immediate application while still allowing learning to take place. Participants agreed to be filmed and recorded during the session and then interviewed in exchange for the sessions with Madden.

The main question was still, What makes Madden's teaching effective? And a secondary question was, How familiar are musicians with performance coaching and how do they value it? Now the aim was, "to understand better what happens when Madden helps a musician to make a change in his/her playing or performance in a recording session, and also in ensemble." This episode of data collection was designed to provide more in-depth reporting by participants of the quality, characteristics, value and importance of Madden's teaching to performers.

An amendment was made to the original ethical approval application (containing further descriptions of the process of data collection) and resubmitted. The amendment, information sheet and consent form are in Appendix DC. The amendment was approved.

Data Collected

Table 3: DCE2 Participants, Exposure, Class/Group Size, Data Collected

Pools	Exposure	Participants	Ensemble size	Session-hrs video and audio-recorded DCT**	Session-hrs transcribed: word count DCT**	Interviews recorded DCT**	Interviews transcribed: word count DCT***
Dunedin professional musicians Gp A: 2 voices & piano	2.5hrs	2	3	2.5	7,324	2	10,514
Dunedin professional musicians Gp B1: Voice, Violin, Viola, Organ, who had two sessions. Session 1:	2hrs	3	4	2	5,558	3	14327
B1 session 2 (with B2)	See B2 exposure	Already reported above	6	Reported with B2	Reported as B2	Reported above (3)	Reported above
Group B1 total	(Sessions 1&2 =4.5hrs)	Reported above	4 and 6	(B1+B2)	Reported at B1 and B2	Reported above (3)	Reported above (14327)
Dunedin professional musicians Gp B2: B1 + cello and oboe	2.5hrs	2	6	2.5	3,179	2	9171
Dunedin professional musicians Gp C: Violin, Cello and piano as orchestra	2hrs	2 (one already encountered in GpA)	2 for first half, then 3 for second half	2	4752	2	13981
Total	Various	9	Various	9	20,813	9	47,993

How the data was analysed

After transcribing the sessions and the interviews, my main intention was to use the data to illustrate the effect of Madden's teaching on musicians other than myself, as reported by the participants. A summary of the data is included below. It highlights the themes that began to emerge.

Justification of research method

As for Episode 1 above.

How the data connects to the research question

These reports were to provide the raw material for the analysis of Madden's teaching, which was originally to constitute one third of the thesis. This analysis was to illustrate how Barstow's teaching had manifested in a second generation of her

teaching style and how musicians rated its difference from traditional music pedagogy, as well as its value and importance. In the current iteration of the research question, this data provides examples of second generation Barstowian teaching.

Pointers to problems or issues that arose

Some musicians had had no previous exposure to the Alexander Technique and so did not necessarily grasp what (if anything) was different about Madden's teaching from other Alexander teachers.

The Bach ensemble (group B in Table 3) was designed to meet three times during Madden's week-long visit in order to give musicians time between rehearsals to assimilate new information and have time for questions to arise. People's schedules did not permit this, and in the end there were only four (out of nine) participants who encountered Madden's teaching on more than one occasion. The study was supposed to involve three sessions with Madden while working on ensemble repertoire, but it was not possible to timetable three sessions in under a week for seven musicians with already busy schedules. Dunedin being a small town, the pool of professionals is not large. Two of the musicians included in this study did not, in the end, meet professional standards of playing. The core group, then, had just two sessions with not all participants available. This was supplemented by two other ensembles who worked just once with Madden for 2-3 hours each. The exposure to the depths, subtlety and variety of Madden's teaching was once again limited.

The data was frustrating and limited for the reasons given above. The following episode focussed on collecting data from students who had studied with Madden for a significant period.

Episode 3. Seattle, Nov 2011. Long-term students

Description

While the first two episodes of data collection may provide valuable data about first and superficial impressions of Madden's teaching that may inform other projects, they did not provide data that informed the in-depth analysis and consideration of

Madden's teaching that I wished to do. The third episode involved the recording of twenty-six almost-daily lessons with Madden in Seattle and five interviews with students who had studied with her for at least a year.

Table 4: DCE3 Data collected and transcribed.

DCT	No.	No. transcribed	Word Count
Private lessons audio-recorded DCT2	26	25 (one deleted in error)	84,174
Long-term students interviewed DCT4 and DCT2	5	5	25,553

Length of time students had studied with Madden:	Years	Year begun	Year stopped or on-going (OG)?
Student 1, lessons transcribed	6	2005	OG
Student A	1.1	2010	OG
Student R	14	1997	OG
Student J	1	2010	OG
Student E	2-3	2005	2007
Student T	~25	1980s	OG

The interviews and lessons were transcribed mostly by the researcher. Although this data was the closest to that which I was seeking because of the depth of experience and understanding people had of Madden's work, it was not formally analysed. During the transcription period, the Dewey question arose and was settled upon, offering a framework and method. This meant that historical data, data directly related to Barstow's teaching (even more than Madden's) and familiarisation with Dewey's pragmatism now became the priority. As with the data from episodes 1 and 2, the data from episode 3 will be used to furnish examples of Madden's and Barstow's pedagogy and illustrate some of the salient characteristics.

Problems and pointers

A possible bias of the data was that I interviewed only those students who were enthusiastic enough about her teaching to give up their time to discuss it. The data was again limited by the number of participants (5) compared, for example, with the number of long-term students of Barstow's who wrote essays on her teaching (39).

The new research question emerges

At this point Terry Fitzgerald's doctoral thesis (2007) came to my attention. Fitzgerald uses "Deweyan pragmatism" as a method for analysing his data on Alexander teacher training. While the thesis did not really explain what critical pragmatism is, his bibliography pointed to writings on critical pragmatism, which in turn led to the discovery that Madden and Barstow's teaching of the Alexander Technique contains the essence of Deweyan pragmatism. The current research question finally emerged, allowing an in-depth evaluation of Barstowian pedagogy and offering the chance to give it a philosophical, cultural and educational context.

Once the possibility of symmetry between Dewey's pragmatism and Barstow's pedagogy had been ascertained, the writing of such a project required a deeper understanding of pragmatism in general and Dewey in particular.

In addition to the new research question, there was still a second(ary) question that attempted to make maximal use of the data collected to date, namely,

What are the defining features of a Barstowian/Deweyan approach that have led—through Madden—to a present-day application of the Alexander Technique that teaches the indispensable and fundamental features of successful performance?

The project was still too big for a doctoral study and, despite the large amount of data collected to inform this second question, it was eventually dropped in favour of focussing on the first question. The rationale for this change of focus was that the main question seemed to offer a greater opportunity for real and original discovery. The secondary question had already been partially answered by my master's thesis, while the main question opened up an entirely new area of research that offered, as *Konstellationsforschung* does, philosophical, historical and cultural links heretofore untouched, undiscovered and unconsidered.

The new focus required more direct and long-term longitudinal data on *Barstow's* pedagogy now, rather than Barstow's pedagogy as gleaned from Madden's pedagogy.

Episode 4. Dunedin, Feb 2012. Long-term perspective

By the time Madden's visit was planned for 2012, the final research question for this project had been formulated. No further data of Madden's teaching was required to answer this question. For completeness's sake, however, I recorded my three lessons with her, particularly as their content followed on from the recent lessons in Seattle. Basic data was also collected on how many of the musicians from the previous visit wanted to work with Madden again of their own accord. This information will only be used in a future research project. In accordance with the evolution of the research question as described above, Cathy Madden was interviewed about her teaching.

For Madden's interview I used the summary of the data, as presented in Appendix DC, to guide my questions. I used comments that people had made about her teaching and asked her to comment on each aspect that participants had observed. I asked questions such as whether she did this intentionally, had learned it (and if so from whom), did it intuitively, and whether the comment made her think of anything she wanted to clarify or explain about her teaching.

Preliminary Data Analysis: a Summary (DCE1&2)

Response to the *What*: The Alexander Technique and Performance Coaching

The Alexander Technique

Almost all the professional musicians (2011) who worked with Madden were bowled over by her observations of what they were doing when they played or sang, and how they could stand, sit, play or breathe differently. Even those who had had some experience of the Alexander Technique were surprised by how much they learned from her and how useful the new information was. It is probably true to say that the longer people worked with Madden, the more impressed they were with what they learned and how their playing changed. No one had experienced the Alexander Technique as applied to music before.

“The Alexander Technique is the doorway,” said one musician (into her whole approach).

The students from 2010 were less awestruck, though all thought Madden was a good teacher or that the changes they made “felt good”. They had a much shorter time frame to work with Madden and understand her work, as well as being generally less articulate, less reflected and reflective about their technique and about music performance and teaching in general. Most of the students commented on how short the time was that they had to work with her, and that they needed more time with her to apply and integrate what she was teaching them.

Many of the instrumentalist students commented that they had never before been taught how to sit or stand, and that they had tended, probably, just to imitate their teachers. One professional, who also teaches, revealed that she had never understood how to sit, herself, and this could explain such an omission on the part of instrumental and singing teachers: simply a lack of precise and accurate information (see my master’s thesis for more detail...). This particular teacher gave me examples of what she used to teach her students, without really understanding how to sit comfortably or

to sit for optimal and efficient movement. Her instructions to students are now clear and precise. Many of the singers gave examples of mutually contradictory instructions they had been given, sometimes by the same teacher, as to how to stand while singing, which suggests the same confusion around how the body works as a whole. Perhaps a lack of instruction in this area is safer than mis-instruction.

There is a trend that indicates the subtlety and depth of what Madden teaches, and which points to the nature of the skills she teaches. Many of the participants seemed to understand this aspect of the work. Madden does not teach “quick fixes” or magic tricks with limited lifespans, although several people did remark on the magical nature of her hands, and immediate change is certainly possible with both the Alexander Technique and her performance ideas. But most participants seemed understood that the changes Madden teaches take time to practise and make into habit.

1. The academics

gave responses that repeated and grouped together:

- How subtle it is..
- Very subtle adjustments and huge changes
- A tantalising glance into something helpful, and they wanted more

2. An AT teacher

The “immediacy of the technique” and the “primariness of the head leading the body into movement;” how Madden uses words *and* hands rather than just hands; and the impact of our thoughts on our movement. “It was lovely to relate the music to AT so directly”, she said.

3. Other long workshop participants

Noted how much more applied Madden’s pedagogy is compared with previous AT tuition. “This stuff is vital for instrumental teachers,” said one, “but they don’t know it”.

Performance coaching

People who had deeper or more prolonged contact with Madden noticed the synergy of the two broad aspects of what she teaches: the Alexander Technique and performance coaching. One musician noted that without the concrete and obvious improvements he made thanks to her suggestions about how to move, he would not have given her suggestions about the musical performance any credence. So, for him, establishing his trust in her abilities and skills using the Alexander Technique was vital to the whole process, and, in particular, vital for the performance coaching to work.

While acknowledging the vast benefits of the Alexander Technique as taught by Madden to her particular situation, one musician observed that it is Madden's performance ideas, using verbs, actions and objectives rather than adjectives, which free players from tension. Such a comment is particularly significant given that this player has had no pain since working with Madden in April 2011, after suffering debilitating pain that prevented practice, and having made major changes to her movement with Madden's help. (But actually she has pain again and has damaged her back).

Another musician believed that the *combination* of the two approaches (Alexander Technique and performance coaching) was necessary. She believed that one without the other would not have worked. This is, incidentally, probably what Madden would say, herself, which is why she combines the two.

The unique thing, for many, was Madden's use of verbs for performers. No one had ever come across this idea in playing music.

Many people, when asked, could not say whether one approach was more interesting or important for them than the other. But some – mostly those who had only a short interaction with Madden – only had time or space to take in one of the approaches.

“The performance ideas changed the character of the music and the way we played.” Another observed that the ensemble changed when he did what Madden suggested. In fact, in the session with this ensemble, I was not aware what Cathy had just told this particular musician at one moment, but immediately after, as witnessed by the

recording, I sang the phrase better than at any other time that night. Musically speaking, the phrase is not difficult, but I had had trouble until that point with precise tuning, and immediately that Cathy gave this suggestion, without my knowledge of anything having changed in any concrete way, I sang it perfectly in tune. I found out during the interview that the note Cathy had given was “to key into Amanda” (or words to that effect). The pianist’s habit, he then realised, had been to “key in” to the top line. It would be interesting to see if Cathy can recall what prompted her to give this coaching.

This same performer learned from Madden that doing your own thing in ensemble is very important: taking care of your own intention, rather than focusing entirely on what everyone else is doing and trying to match that or fit in with it somehow.

There was also one performance suggestion that this musician disregarded during the interview, saying that he didn’t actually do what Madden suggested. But he later sent me an email saying that he realised that the reason we sang and played so beautifully in that particular take must have been because of the performance suggestion, because it evoked all the emotions that that particular action would evoke. He compared his experience of working with Madden to working with Joseph Gingold (acknowledged by cellist Janos Starker as “the greatest violin teacher I have ever known” and by Pinchas Zuckerman as “the kind of man who comes along once in a century” (“A Gold Coin,” *New Yorker*, February 4, 1991, p34).

General comments

In point form, the things other people mentioned in response to several different questions, such as, “What stayed with you?” “What did you think of the performance coaching/suggestions?” “Did you notice any change in the way you or others played as a result of her performance suggestions?”:

- “The two-fold approach is rare and perfect.”
- “I liked the ‘hello’s,” “Alexander hellos,” “Music hellos”
- Nice ways of thinking about things, and noticed changes in other players.
- Definitely affected the way we played (an approach from outside the music)

- The performance intentions help the performer own the performance and the music
- They also help the performer be present and active.

None of the professional musicians said that they had been taught *how to perform*.... That is, they all said that they had had to learn on the job, or had had intimations from teachers, or picked up things from dancers, etc... Those who had had some experience tended to have had it in the interpretation area and not the audience relationship area..

Response to the *how*, or to Madden herself

What is it that people noticed most about Madden herself? I have put some headings here to try to group the responses. Some of the points (such as ‘how softly she said things’, or, ‘persistent’) could go in a variety of categories.

Personal manner (or otherwise uncategorisable qualities)

- Cathy Madden is non-threatening³⁹ and able to put people at their ease, so that they could learn effectively
- “very intimate and makes you comfortable”
- ‘I wish she was listening to me instead of my [singing] teachers’
- Non-threatening and challenging together
- I trusted her, and she made sense (also in communication)
- Her presence, very low-key
- Sense of humour
- How softly she said things, light touch with words and occasional contact
- A sense of being in the presence of greatness
- aura of gentleness
- Energy (does she transmit or change people’s energy?) This is more a what.. which is why it doesn’t fit down here!

³⁹ Several works endorse the importance of establishing a humanistic environment for effective learning based on the principle that learning was easiest and most effective when it occurred in a non-threatening environment.

Communication skills (hands and words) (overlaps with psychology)

- Madden is an excellent communicator
- Clear, simple, communication.
- Great communicator
- Manipulation more instructive than words (cf what MS said)
- MS:
- Efficient and practical: minimal discussion, clear
- I trusted her, and she made sense
- Magical hands/very gentle with her hands, her touch, delicate touch
- hands, spirit, freeing of own energy, magic
- Minimalist: small things, subtle hands, but big differences (cf Pina Bausch)
- Pace and rhythm of teaching a large group very sophisticated, her way of presenting, manner, accessible chunks of info (also in group class)
- Asked helpful questions

Group class skills

People in larger classes noted that Madden was fair, spending time with each student, and also giving each her undivided attention, while still teaching the class. One participant of the longer workshop found this particularly important and unusual in group classes in her experience, and noted repeatedly how Madden treated us all equally.

Group class is helpful because you see and hear others making changes for the better, [and you can also see that when people think they are about to fall over or are leaning forward after Cathy's ministrations, they are actually standing or sitting upright and look well balanced. This teaches the principal that our senses are relative and therefore not absolutely reliable, even though Madden did not tend to address this concept directly, given time constraints.]

- Pace and rhythm of teaching a large group very sophisticated, her way of presenting, manner, accessible chunks of info

- Skilfully held effective conversation with the group while teaching individuals, and this put the individual at ease, while still teaching everyone.

Psychological skills (including language and ?extrasensory perception)

- Psychic
- Persistent
- empathic
- hands, spirit, freeing of own energy, magic
- Gets right to the core of what's going on, physically and psychologically
- Pure working: no ego that gets in the way
- Very constructive: not negative or critical or judgmental
- Encouraging, focuses on praise
- Made the group constructive as well;
- Constructive thinking,
- Softens language
- Not prescriptive or dictatorial
- Allows you to find things out for yourself
- Very inviting
- Towards self-teaching
- Asks for achievable steps \Rightarrow sense of achievement in student, confidence
- Points out small changes/successes
- Good at meeting objections/difficult people
- Psychologically insightful
- A master psychologist, and is able to work with people who have difficult personalities
- Comparison between CMP and psychoanalytic psychotherapy
- Skilfully held effective conversation with the group while teaching individuals, and this put the individual at ease, while still teaching everyone (also belongs in group skills)

Modelling of Alexander Technique

- Moved beautifully
- Her voice travelled easily and clearly,

Observation skills

- Very precise observations
- “Getting it right” all the time
- Perceptive,
- Her seeing ability of other music teachers,
- Took time to observe,
- Gets right to the core of what’s going on, physically and psychologically,
- She is a great kinaesthetic knower

The Cathy Madden effect

One participant observed:

I think some of the moving around in the room was quite interesting, but I’d be pushed to say in precisely what way. I found Cathy herself fascinating to watch and to listen to, and I think she had an effect, you know how often top practitioners in whatever field, they personally have an effect that’s indefinable (...) so I think there was a Cathy effect going on there (...) and that’s not to say there wasn’t an Amanda effect [when you taught us last year]... I found it very soothing.

Misconceptions

There were many misconceptions (and misquotations) of what Madden said, and also a great desire for more contact with her, particularly amongst those who only had a short spell. Participants seemed to understand that this is a process that takes time and committed practice, and understood that the more contact you have with the teacher, the better will be your understanding. One example of a misconception, by an undergraduate student is: “She didn’t talk to me about movement; she talked about posture.” Madden does not use the word posture and talks often and specifically about movement. When I asked her for ideas about why people misremember things and mistranslate them into their own language, her response was as follows:

When you ask them to report back, they're probably going to report back on the things that match what they already know most, because that's where they can slide new knowledge in best and fastest. So it's not surprising that they report back on the physical first, because a lot of musicians think of the physical first, you know, where is my finger, etc... (June 2011, private correspondence).

This suggests another limitation of the data collected from participants who had only one short class with Madden and highlights the value of the impressions of long-term students.

APPENDIX 4: ATTACHMENTS

The following documents are attached below:

1. Application to the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee (UOHEC) for Ethical Approval of a Research or Teaching Proposal involving Human Participants (DCE1)
2. Information Sheet for Participants (DCE1)
3. Consent Form for Participants (DCE1)
4. Letter to UOHEC: Amendment (DCE2)
5. Application to the UOHEC for Ethical Approval of a Research or Teaching Proposal involving Human Participants (DCE2)
6. Information Sheet For Participants (DCE 2)
7. Consent Form For Participants (DCE2)
8. Ethics Amendment letter #2 (DCE3)
9. Information Sheet For Participants (DCE 3)
10. Consent Form for Participants (DCE3)
11. Preliminary Data Analysis: a Summary (DCE1&2)

1. Application to UOHEC (University of Otago Human Ethics Committee) (DCE1)

1. **University of Otago staff member responsible for project:** Dr Tamar Murachver
2. **Department:** Psychology
3. **Contact details of staff member responsible:** tamar@psy.otago.ac.nz; x8351
4. **Title of project:** Teaching change with the Alexander Technique
5. **Brief description in lay terms of the purpose of the project:**

Cathy Madden is a master teacher of the Alexander Technique and is particularly skilled and gifted at coaching performers. The researchers wish to understand better what happens when Madden helps a student to make a change in his/her chosen activity. Later research will address whether teachers of voice can learn and adopt some of the skills used by Madden.

6. **Indicate type of project and names of other investigators and students:**

Student Research: Amanda Cole

Co-supervisor: Professor Henry Johnson, Music

Collaborator: Cathy Madden (University of Washington, USA)

7. Is this a repeated class teaching activity? No.

8. Intended start date of project: May 2010

Projected end date of project: June 2010

9. Funding of project: Internally funded

10. Aim and description of project:

AIMS: To understand better what happens when Madden helps a student to make a change in his/her chosen activity. Why is Madden's method of teaching effective, and can teachers of voice learn and adopt some of the skills used by Madden?

DESCRIPTION: This first part of data collection involves videotaping "turns" or lessons with Cathy Madden of students who agree to participate in the study. The video will then be discussed with the student and the discussion will be audio-recorded for analysis.

11. Researcher or instructor experience and qualifications in this research area:

Dr Murachver has over 20 years of experience conducting research with human participants. This research includes both quantitative and qualitative methods. She has supervised over 30 post-graduate thesis students and over 70 Honour's dissertation students.

Professor Johnson has been conducting ethnographic research in music for the past two decades.

Amanda Cole is a PhD candidate in music and psychology. She has experience in voice teaching and performance and has worked with Cathy Madden for several years using the Alexander Technique.

12. Participants

12(a) Population from which participants are drawn:

The participants will be drawn from people who enroll in one of Cathy's

classes during her visit. This includes students and staff at the University of Otago, Alexander teachers from around New Zealand, as well as members of the general public in classes at Amanda's house. No minors, prisoners, hospital patients, or anyone whose capacity to give informed consent is compromised in any way, will be participating.

12(b) Specify inclusion and exclusion criteria:

People who sign up for a class will be asked if they wish to participate.

12(c) Number of participants:

The research is qualitative, so the number of participants will be the number of people who agree to participate and will be less than twenty.

12(d) Age range of participants: 18 years and over

12(e) Method of recruitment:

People who sign up for a class will be asked if they wish to participate. Classes will be advertised within the university media and there may be a feature in the Otago Daily Times in early May.

12(f) Please specify any payment or reward to be offered:

Participants will be offered a \$10 petrol or book voucher as thanks for their participation in the research.

13. Methods and Procedures:

Participants will be in a class situation. They will be asked to give consent to be video-taped during their turn in class. Within a week of the class filming, participants will be individually invited to watch the video with the researchers and discuss aspects of their turn in the class. The general line of questioning includes:

- What was happening for you at that point?
- How did you respond to the way Cathy asked you that

question/suggested this experiment?

- Was this a new experience for you?
- How did this learning experience differ from others you have had in the same field, or in other fields?
- What did you notice about Cathy Madden's teaching, or teaching style?
- What did you like about it?
- What did you not like about it?
- Did you feel enabled and helped in your chosen activity by Madden's approach, or did you feel something else?

The reason we are researching Cathy Madden's pedagogy is because it is so positive, supportive, clear and constructive, particularly when compared to many traditional voice-teaching methods. We do not see any potential for harm or discomfort from Cathy Madden's teaching or from the interview process.

14. Compliance with The Privacy Act 1993 and the Health Information Privacy Code 1994 imposes strict requirements concerning the collection, use and disclosure of personal information. These questions allow the Committee to assess compliance.

14(a) Are you collecting personal information directly from the individual concerned?
YES

14(b) If you are collecting personal information directly from the individual concerned, specify the steps taken to make participants aware of the following points: all points will be specified in the information sheet for participants.

14(c) If you are not making participants aware of any of the points in (b), please explain why: n/a

14(d) Does the research or teaching project involve any form of deception? NO

14(e) Please outline your storage and security procedures to guard against unauthorised access, use or disclosure and how long you propose to keep personal information:

All transcripts and back-ups of digital recordings will be stored in a locked room within the Psychology Department. Computer files containing digital recordings will also be stored on the student's

laptop computer and will be accessible only with a password. Raw data will be kept for the standard five years after publication, and then may be destroyed. After the five-year period, recordings may be erased. This will be the responsibility of Dr Murachver.

14(f) Please explain how you will ensure that the personal information you collect is accurate, up to date, complete, relevant and not misleading:

All personal information collected from the participants is recorded at the time of testing. Only questions that directly pertain to the present study are asked.

14(g) Who will have access to personal information, under what conditions, and subject to what safeguards against unauthorised disclosure?

Only the researchers will have access to the data: Amanda Cole, Tamar Murachver, Cathy Madden and Henry Johnson. Participants will be given access to the data in its raw format upon request. The results of the research will be made available to participants when the project is completed. Participants will not be identified by name once the recordings have been transcribed. Personal information about individuals will not be published.

14(h) Do you intend to publish any personal information and in what form do you intend to do this? NO

14(i) Do you propose to collect information on ethnicity? NO

15. Potential problems: We do not foresee any harm or discomfort to participants (other than the mild awkwardness that some people feel when watching themselves on video).

16. Informed consent *(attached)*

17. Fast-Track procedure Do you request fast-track consideration? NO

18. Other committees: n/a

19. Applicant's Signature:

Date:

20. Departmental approval: *I have read this application and believe it to be scientifically*

and ethically sound. I approve the research design. The Research proposed in this application is compatible with the University of Otago policies and I give my consent for the application to be forwarded to the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee with my recommendation that it be approved.

Signature of *Head of Department:

Date:

2. Information Sheet for Participants (DCE1)

TEACHING CHANGE WITH THE ALEXANDER TECHNIQUE

Thank you for showing an interest in this project. Please read this information sheet carefully before deciding whether or not to participate. If you decide to participate we thank you. If you decide not to take part there will be no disadvantage to you of any kind and we thank you for considering our request.

What is the Aim of the Project?

This project is being undertaken as part of a doctoral degree in music and psychology.

You have been asked if you are interested in participating in the study because you have enrolled in a class with Cathy Madden. The researcher wishes to investigate the skills that Madden uses to communicate with students so that some of this information can be further analysed and used to train teachers of other skills, such as singing and performing.

What Type of Participants are being sought?

Participants are students and staff at the University of Otago, and any other member of the general public who has enrolled in a class with Cathy Madden. There are no exclusion criteria.

What will Participants be Asked to Do?

Should you agree to take part in this project, you will be asked to allow the researchers to videotape your “turn” or lesson (usually of 5-10 minutes duration in a group class). You will be invited to watch the video with the researcher the following week (or at a time that suits you) and discuss your learning experience with Cathy Madden. This discussion will be audio-recorded so that the principal researcher may refer to the discussion at a later date. The video watching and discussion will take no more than an hour of your time. As thanks for your participation, you will be offered a \$10 book or petrol voucher.

The researcher foresees no potential harm to participants. Slight discomfort may be experienced upon watching oneself on video. The potential benefits are:

- by watching the lesson, you may understand more about your learning style and deepen your learning experience;
- you may understand more deeply the lesson taught by Madden, perhaps hearing things more clearly the second time and without the pressure to respond;
- you may identify habits pertaining either to the activity you want to refine or to your pattern of learning that you would like to change (for example, when I [the researcher] listen to a singing lesson on a tape, I hear myself talking more than I would like and make the decision to listen more and talk less when in a learning situation; OR, when I watch a video of myself performing I see myself doing things that my teacher may not address, and that I can change them on my own simply by seeing them).

Please be aware that you may decide not to take part in the project without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind.

Can Participants Change their Mind and Withdraw from the Project?

You may withdraw from participation in the project at any time and without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind.

What Data or Information will be Collected and What Use will be Made of it?

Participants will be videotaped. The tapes will be watched in the presence of the participant and discussed with the researcher. This project involves an open-questioning technique. The general line of questioning includes:

- What was happening for you at that point?
- How did you respond to the way Cathy asked you that question/suggested this experiment?
- Was this a new experience for you?
- How did this learning experience differ from others you have had in the same field, or in other fields?
- What did you notice about Cathy Madden's teaching, or teaching style?
- What did you like about it?
- What did you not like about it?
- Did you feel enabled and helped in your chosen activity by Madden's approach, or did you feel something else?

The precise nature of the questions which will be asked have not been determined in advance, but will depend on the way in which the interview develops. Consequently, although the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee is aware of the general areas to be explored in the interview, the Committee has not been able to review the precise questions to be used.

In the event that the line of questioning does develop in such a way that you feel hesitant or uncomfortable you are reminded of your right to decline to answer any particular question(s) and also that you may withdraw from the project at any stage without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind.

Your turn during your class with Madden will be videotaped, and your interview will be audiotaped. The interview will later be transcribed and viewed only by the researchers directly involved in this study. You will be identified by an arbitrary code, not by name, and all transcripts and computer files will be kept confidential. Results of this project may be published, but any data included will in no way be linked to any specific participant.

The data collected will be securely stored in such a way that only those directly involved in the project (Amanda Cole, Tamar Murachver, Henry Johnson, Cathy Madden) will be able to gain access to them. At the end of the project any personal information will be destroyed immediately, except the raw data on which the results of the project depend, which will be retained in secure storage for five years. This is a requirement of the University's research policy, and all recordings may be destroyed after this compulsory five years.

The results of the project may be published and will be available in the University of Otago Library (Dunedin, New Zealand) but every attempt will be made to preserve your anonymity.

You are most welcome to request a copy of the results of the project should you wish.

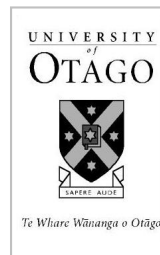
What if Participants have any Questions?

If you have any questions about our project, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact either:-

Amanda Cole
Departments of Music & Psychology
Email: amandina@xtra.co.nz

Dr. Tamar Murachver
Department of Psychology
Email: tamar@psy.otago.ac.nz
University Telephone Number: 479-8351

This study has been approved by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the Committee through the Human Ethics Committee Administrator (ph 03 479 8256). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated and you will be informed of the outcome.



3. Consent Form for Participants (DCE1)

TEACHING CHANGE WITH THE ALEXANDER TECHNIQUE

I have read the Information Sheet concerning this project and understand what it is about. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I am free to request further information at any stage. I know that:-

1. My participation in the project is entirely voluntary;
2. I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without any disadvantage;
3. Personal identifying information (video- and audio-recordings) will be destroyed at the conclusion of the project but any raw data on which the results of the project depend will be retained in secure storage for five years, after which they may be destroyed;
4. This project involves an open-questioning technique. The precise nature of the questions which will be asked have not been determined in advance, but will depend on the way in which the interview develops and that in the event that the line of questioning develops in such a way that I feel hesitant or uncomfortable I may decline to answer any particular question(s) and/or may withdraw from the project without any disadvantage of any kind.
5. I understand that I will be given a \$10 book voucher or petrol voucher as a token of thanks for participating in this project.
6. The results of the project may be published and will be available in the University of Otago Library (Dunedin, New Zealand) but every attempt will be made to preserve my anonymity.

I agree to take part in this project.

.....
(Signature of participant)

.....
(Date)

This study has been approved by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the Committee through the Human Ethics Committee Administrator (ph 03 479 8256). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated and you will be informed of the outcome.

4. Letter to UOHEC: Amendment (DCE2)

17 February 2011

Gary Witte
University of Otago Human Ethics Committee
University of Otago
PO Box 56
Dunedin 9054

Dear Gary

AMENDMENT TO ETHICS APPROVAL

Our second process of data collection is very similar to the first, but this time we are examining professional musicians.

The points we have changed in the original application are as follows, and these only slightly:

- 4. Title (changed to Performance Coaching and the Alexander Technique)
- 5. Brief description
- 8. Start- and end-dates of project
- 10. Description of project
- 12. Participants (a), (b), (c), (e), (f)
- 13. Methods and procedures
- 14. (g) and (h): Access to and publication of data
- Information sheet
- Consent form

Yours sincerely

Amanda Cole

5. Application to UOHEC for Ethical Approval (DCE2)

1. **University of Otago staff member responsible for project:** Dr Tamar Murachver
2. **Department:** Psychology
3. **Contact details of staff member responsible:** tamar@psy.otago.ac.nz; x8351
4. **Title of project:** Performance coaching and the Alexander Technique
5. **Brief description in lay terms of the purpose of the project:**

Cathy Madden is a master teacher of the Alexander Technique and is particularly skilled and gifted at coaching performers. The researchers wish to understand better what happens when Madden helps a musician to make a change in his/her psychophysical technique or approach to performance. Later research may address whether teachers of voice can learn and adopt some of the skills used by Madden.

6. **Indicate type of project and names of other investigators and students:**

Student Research: Amanda Cole

Co-supervisor: Professor Henry Johnson, Music

Collaborator: Cathy Madden (University of Washington, USA)

7. **Is this a repeated class teaching activity?** No.

8. **Intended start date of project:** March 2011

Projected end date of project: June 2012

9. **Funding of project:** Internally funded

10. **Aim and description of project:**

AIMS: To understand better what happens when Madden helps a musician to make a change in his/her playing or performance in a recording session, and also in ensemble. How and why is Madden's method of teaching effective, and can teachers of voice learn and adopt some of the skills used by Madden?

DESCRIPTION: The data collection involves video taping a recording session of musicians who agree to participate in the study, which involves working with Cathy Madden between and during takes. The video will only be shown to and discussed with the participants videoed. The discussion may be audio-recorded for analysis. The reason the researcher has chosen to carry out the research in a recording session is to get as close as possible to a live performance, while still maintaining practical circumstances for collecting data. The potential for there to be a future audience is important for much of Madden's performance coaching. Therefore, the aim of the musicians must be to create a recording that (with every participant's approval and consent) may be used for future public broadcast or access.

The recording may be used in the same way as the video, that is, privately played to the participating musicians involved, but it may also be used for comparative analysis. In this case, the players may elect to be anonymous. It may be played to a small number of professional musicians, teachers and/or lay people, individually and in private, and the auditor asked to evaluate one take as compared to another take.

The video will not be shown to anyone but the person or persons actually playing in any particular take or excerpt.

11. Researcher or instructor experience and qualifications in this research area:

Dr Murachver has over 20 years of experience conducting research with human participants. This research includes both quantitative and qualitative methods. She has supervised over 30 post-graduate thesis students and over 70 Honour's dissertation students.

Professor Johnson has been conducting ethnographic research in music for the past two decades.

Amanda Cole is a PhD candidate in music and psychology. She has experience in voice teaching and performance and has worked with Cathy Madden for several years using the Alexander Technique.

12. Participants

12(a) Population from which participants are drawn:

The participants will be selected from the population of professional musicians in Dunedin. No minors, prisoners, hospital patients, or anyone whose capacity to give informed consent is compromised in any way, will be participating. The main researcher will also be a participant, as a musician (Amanda Cole).

12(b) Specify inclusion and exclusion criteria:

Participants are selected based on professional recommendations and Amanda's personal experience of performing with Dunedin musicians.

12(c) Number of participants:

The number of participants will be between three and twelve, depending on availability of musicians and whether one, two or three different ensembles can be organised.

12(d) Age range of participants: 18 years and over

12(e) Method of recruitment:

Personal invitation.

12(f) Please specify any payment or reward to be offered:

Participants will not be offered any payment, as they are being offered a significant learning experience by having access to one of the world's most respected teachers of the Alexander Technique and performance.

13. Methods and Procedures:

Participants will be in a recording session.

After each interaction with Cathy Madden and/or after each take, participants will be asked to record (either on paper or any other format of their choice) their responses to Madden's teaching, whether they did what she suggested, or what they did instead, what they were thinking or otherwise experiencing, anything else they noticed that changed or didn't change, and why they thought that was.

They will be asked to give consent to be video-taped during each take. Within three weeks of the session, participants will be individually invited to watch the video with the researchers and discuss aspects of Madden's teaching. The questions will be:

- How did you respond to the way Cathy suggested this idea?
- How did this learning experience differ from others you have had?
- What did you notice about Madden's teaching or teaching style?

The reason we are researching Cathy Madden's pedagogy is because it is so positive, supportive, clear and constructive, particularly when compared to many traditional voice-teaching methods. We do not see any potential for harm or discomfort from Cathy Madden's teaching or from the interview process.

14. Compliance with The Privacy Act 1993 and the Health Information Privacy Code 1994 imposes strict requirements concerning the collection, use and disclosure of personal information. These questions allow the Committee to assess compliance.

14(a) Are you collecting personal information directly from the individual concerned?
YES

14(b) If you are collecting personal information directly from the individual concerned, specify the steps taken to make participants aware of the following points: all points will be specified in the information sheet for participants.

14(c) If you are not making participants aware of any of the points in (b), please explain why: n/a

14(d) Does the research or teaching project involve any form of deception? NO

14(e) Please outline your storage and security procedures to guard against unauthorised access, use or disclosure and how long you propose to keep personal information:

All transcripts and back-ups of digital recordings will be stored in a locked room within the Psychology Department. Computer files containing digital recordings will also be stored on the student's laptop computer and will be accessible only with a password. Raw

data will be kept for the standard five years after publication, and then may be destroyed. After the five-year period, recordings may be erased. This will be the responsibility of Dr Murachver.

14(f) Please explain how you will ensure that the personal information you collect is accurate, up to date, complete, relevant and not misleading:

All personal information collected from the participants is recorded at the time of testing. Only questions that directly pertain to the present study are asked.

14(g) Who will have access to personal information, under what conditions, and subject to what safeguards against unauthorised disclosure?

Only the researchers will have access to the data: Amanda Cole, Tamar Murachver, Cathy Madden and Henry Johnson. Participants will be given access to the data in its raw format upon request. The results of the research will be made available to participants when the project is completed. Participants will not be identified by name once the recordings have been transcribed. Personal information about individuals will not be published.

If the researcher or any other participant wishes to use any part of the recording for any purpose other than this research, then the purpose must be specified, and agreement from each member of the ensemble will be sought. Each contributor will also have the option of being named or anonymous.

Although it is not the main intention to use the resultant recordings for other purposes, it is possible that the researcher or participant may wish to use the recording for another purpose in the future. And, as described above (10.), the intention of the performers must be to create a performance that is worthy of a future audience.

Parts of the recording may form a part of a larger project within the next 2 years, but this will only happen with the approval of all members involved.

14(h) Do you intend to publish any personal information and in what form do you intend to do this? NO. See also 14 (g) above.

14(i) Do you propose to collect information on ethnicity? NO

15. **Potential problems:** We do not foresee any harm or discomfort to participants (other than the mild awkwardness that some people feel when watching themselves on video).

16. **Informed consent** (*attached*)

17. **Fast-Track procedure** Do you request fast-track consideration? NO

18. **Other committees:** n/a

19. **Applicant's Signature:** **Date:**

.....

20. **Departmental approval:** *I have read this application and believe it to be scientifically and ethically sound. I approve the research design. The Research proposed in this application is compatible with the University of Otago policies and I give my consent for the application to be forwarded to the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee with my recommendation that it be approved.*

Signature of *Head of Department: **Date:**

6. Information Sheet For Participants (DCE 2)

PERFORMANCE COACHING AND THE ALEXANDER TECHNIQUE

Thank you for showing an interest in this project. Please read this information sheet carefully before deciding whether or not to participate. If you decide to participate we thank you. If you decide not to take part there will be no disadvantage to you of any kind and we thank you for considering our request.

What is the Aim of the Project?

This project is being undertaken as part of a doctoral degree in music and psychology.

You have been asked if you are interested in participating in the study because you are a professional musician. The researcher wishes to investigate the skills that Cathy Madden, a performance coach and master teacher of the Alexander Technique, uses to communicate with practising musicians so that some of this information can be further analysed and used to train others.

What Type of Participants are being sought?

Professional musicians are being sought to form one of three small ensembles:

- oboe, keyboard, string quartet, voice, OR
- two voices and piano, OR
- solo voice and piano

What will Participants be Asked to Do?

1. Should you agree to take part in this project, you will be asked to attend one or two sessions of 2-3 hours' duration during the week of the 21st March at the University Recording Studio. These will be at a time convenient to all members of the ensemble. The aim for players is to record a piece of music, with the intention being a performance worthy of being heard by a future audience, but also to learn from and experiment with the ideas of a performance coach and teacher of the Alexander Technique.

Between takes, Madden will address either the group as a whole or each member individually and privately, and offer information, an idea or a suggestion, or she may ask you a question. This interaction may have some impact on you during the following take, and you will be asked to make a brief note of this impact as you perceived it (notebooks and pens provided).

- How did you respond to the interaction?
- Did you do what Madden suggested, or did you something else?
- What differences did you notice in this take, either in yourself, your playing, others' playing, the ensemble as a whole? And what do you put them down to?

2. Within a month of the recording, you will be invited to listen to the recording and discuss your impressions with the researcher (see below for more detail). The discussion will take no more than half an hour of your time, unless you wish to discuss things further.

The researcher foresees no potential harm to participants. The researcher believes, rather, that this is an ideal situation in which to learn what Madden teaches. There is no charge for her tuition in these sessions. It is an opportunity to learn the subtle yet crucial information that Madden holds, and a chance to explore some ideas rarely used in classical music performance.

Please be aware that you may decide not to take part in the project without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind.

Can Participants Change their Mind and Withdraw from the Project?

You may withdraw from participation in the project at any time and without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind.

What Data or Information will be Collected and What Use will be Made of it?

A. VIDEOTAPES OF SESSIONS

The session(s) will be videotaped, so that both you and the researcher may watch more closely how Madden teaches. The videos will not be seen by anyone other than the ensemble members and the researchers. You will be invited to watch the video in the presence of the researcher, and this step is provided simply as a service to you. Participants will only be invited to watch parts of the video that pertain specifically to them individually, or to the group as a whole.

B. AUDIO-RECORDINGS OF TAKES DURING THE SESSIONS

1. The recordings will be used for participants to assess and compare the various takes. They will be numbered so that participants may match up takes with their notes from the session. You will be asked to refer to your notes. In addition to the questions above, the answers to which you will have noted down, the questions you will be asked in the interview are:

- How did you respond *to the way* she suggested this idea?
- How did this learning experience differ from others you have had?
- What did you notice particularly about Cathy Madden's teaching, or teaching style?

In the event that you feel hesitant or uncomfortable in the interview, you are reminded of your right to decline to answer any particular question(s) and also that you may withdraw from the project at any stage without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind. During the interview, you may request that any one of the researchers NOT have access to any part of the raw data that involves or identifies you, or that your contribution be anonymous.

The interview will be audio-recorded and later transcribed and viewed only by the researchers directly involved in this study. You will be identified by an arbitrary code, not by name, and all transcripts and computer files will be kept confidential. Results of this project may be published, but any data included will in no way be linked to any specific participant.

2. The music recordings may be used for blind evaluation and comparison. This means that a small number of people (between 5 and 15) *other than the participants* may be asked to compare the various takes with one another. The participants will be anonymous in this exercise.

3. The music recordings may only be used for other purposes with the full consent and approval of every member of the ensemble. Players will have the choice to be anonymous

or named.

The data collected will be securely stored in such a way that only those directly involved in the project (Amanda Cole, Tamar Murachver, Henry Johnson, Cathy Madden) will be able to gain access to them. At the end of the project any personal information will be destroyed immediately, except the raw data on which the results of the project depend, which will be retained in secure storage for five years. This is a requirement of the University's research policy, and all recordings may be destroyed after this compulsory five years.

The results of the project may be published and will be available in the University of Otago Library (Dunedin, New Zealand) but every attempt will be made to preserve your anonymity.

You are most welcome to request a copy of the results of the project should you wish.

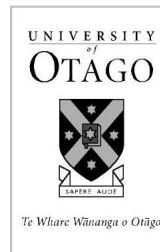
What if Participants have any Questions?

If you have any questions about our project, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact either:-

Amanda Cole
Departments of Music & Psychology
Email: amandina@xtra.co.nz

Dr. Tamar Murachver
Department of Psychology
Email: tamar@psy.otago.ac.nz
University Telephone Number: 479-8351

This study has been approved by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the Committee through the Human Ethics Committee Administrator (ph 03 479 8256). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated and you will be informed of the outcome.



7. Consent Form For Participants (DCE2)

PERFORMANCE COACHING AND THE ALEXANDER TECHNIQUE

I have read the Information Sheet concerning this project and understand what it is about. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I am free to request further information at any stage. I know that:-

1. My participation in the project is entirely voluntary;
2. I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without any disadvantage;
3. Personal identifying information (video- and audio-recordings) will be destroyed at the conclusion of the project but any raw data on which the results of the project depend will be retained in secure storage for five years, after which they may be destroyed;
4. In the event that I feel hesitant or uncomfortable during the interview, I may decline to answer any particular question(s) and/or may withdraw from the project without any disadvantage of any kind.
5. I understand that the opportunity to have significant professional contact with Cathy Madden, a master teacher of the Alexander Technique and world-renowned performance coach, is the “payment” (or thanks, or ***) I will receive for participating in this project.
6. The results of the project may be published and will be available in the University of Otago Library (Dunedin, New Zealand) but every attempt will be made to preserve my anonymity.

I agree to take part in this project.

.....
(Signature of participant)

.....
(Date)

This study has been approved by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the Committee through the Human Ethics Committee Administrator (ph 03 479 8256). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated and you will be informed of the outcome.

8. Ethics Amendment letter #2 (DCE3)

22 September 2011

Gary Witte
University of Otago Human Ethics Committee
University of Otago
PO Box 56
Dunedin 9054

Dear Gary

AMENDMENT TO ETHICS PROPOSAL # 10/080

I am writing to seek approval for some further amendments to our original human ethics proposal, "Teaching change with the Alexander Technique".

Our third phase of data collection is much simpler than the first and second in that it consists of interviewing only. This time I am interviewing students of Cathy Madden's, mainly based in Seattle. I am also going to record my private lessons with her and transcribe these as another record of her teaching.

The points we have changed in the original application are as follows, and these are very minor. For sections that are short, I have pasted in the previously approved section and then the amended one so you can see the changes at a glance. For longer sections, I have pasted only the new version. The headings refer to the numbered sections in the original proposal.

5. Brief description

WAS

... what happens when Madden helps a musician to make a change in...

NOW

... what happens when Madden helps a performer to make a change in...

10. Description of project

WAS

AIMS: To understand better what happens when Madden helps a musician to make a change in his/her playing or performance in a recording session, and also in ensemble. (followed by a long section on audio and video recording and then interviewing..)

NOW

AIMS: To understand better what happens when Madden helps a musician or actor to make a change in his/her playing or performance.

DESCRIPTION: This final collection of data involves interviewing people who have been studying with Madden in a more profound and on-going way than the previous set of interviewees. These students may be private students from Madden's studio or drama students at the University of Washington. The main researcher (Amanda Cole) will also have private lessons with Madden, which will be audio-recorded and transcribed, as a detailed record of the ways Madden teaches.

12. Participants (a), (b), (c), (e), (f)

NOW:

12(a) Population from which participants are drawn:

The participants will be selected from Madden's studio or university classes. No minors, prisoners, hospital patients, or anyone whose capacity to give informed consent is compromised in any way, will be participating. The main researcher will also be a participant as a private student (Amanda Cole).

12(b) Specify inclusion and exclusion criteria:

Participants will be invited to take part in a short interview (up to one hour). Amanda attaches a letter to this amendment that will be forwarded to Cathy Madden, and Cathy herself will distribute them amongst her students either in hard copy or email. Interested parties may email Amanda with their contact details.

12(c) Number of participants:

The number of participants will be no more than twelve.

12(d) Age range of participants: 18 years and over

12(e) Method of recruitment:

Personal invitation via letter/email distributed by Cathy Madden.

12(f) Please specify any payment or reward to be offered:

Participants will be offered a \$20 voucher from <amazon.com>.

13. Methods and procedures

The interview will take place face-to-face and will be audio-recorded only. Sample questions are given in the information sheet.

14. (g) and (h): Access to and publication of data

Information about how the music recordings may be used has been deleted, as it does not apply to this part of the project. It now reads:

Only the researchers will have access to the data: Amanda Cole, Tamar Murachver, Cathy Madden and Henry Johnson. Participants will be given access to the data in its raw format upon request. The results of the research will be made available to participants when the project is completed. Participants will not be identified by name once the recordings have been transcribed. Personal information about individuals will not be published.

Information sheet: Please see attached.

Consent form: Please see attached.

Thank you for your consideration of this amendment.

Yours sincerely

Amanda Cole

9. Information Sheet For Participants (DCE 3)

PERFORMANCE COACHING AND THE ALEXANDER TECHNIQUE

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS

Thank you for showing an interest in this project. Please read this information sheet carefully before deciding whether or not to participate. If you decide to participate we thank you. If you decide not to take part there will be no disadvantage to you of any kind and we thank you for considering our request.

What is the Aim of the Project?

This project is being undertaken as part of a doctoral degree in music and psychology. You have been asked if you are interested in participating in the study because you have studied for some time with Cathy Madden. The researcher wishes to investigate the skills that Cathy Madden uses to communicate with performers so that some of this information can be further analysed and used to train others.

What Type of Participants are being sought?

Musicians, actors, and/or any other type of performer.

What will Participants be Asked to Do?

You will be invited to discuss with the interviewer your learning experiences in the Alexander Technique and performance. In particular, the researchers wish to know how Cathy Madden's teaching has differed (or not) from other teaching you have experienced. The discussion will take no more than half an hour of your time, unless you wish to discuss things further.

The researcher foresees no potential harm to participants.

Please be aware that you may decide not to take part in the project without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind.

Can Participants Change their Mind and Withdraw from the Project?

You may withdraw from participation in the project at any time and without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind.

What Data or Information will be Collected and What Use will be Made of it?

The project involves an open-questioning technique. The general line of questioning includes:

How long have you studied with Cathy Madden?

Have you learned the Alexander Technique from anyone else before or since?

In what ways, if any, did you find that Cathy's teaching of the Alexander Technique helped your performance or technique?

Did you find that you benefited more from the physical things that Cathy taught you or from the psychological/constructive thinking/performance coaching side of her work, or

do you think that they work best together?
 What makes Cathy's teaching effective for you?

The precise nature of the questions which will be asked have not been determined in advance, but will depend on the way in which the interview develops and, if the line of questioning develops in such a way that you feel hesitant or uncomfortable you may decline to answer and/or withdraw from the project without any disadvantage of any kind. During the interview, you may request that any one of the researchers NOT have access to any part of the raw data that involves or identifies you, or that your contribution be anonymous.

The interview will be audio-recorded and later transcribed and viewed only by the researchers directly involved in this study. You may ask to be sent a copy of the transcription for your approval. You will be identified by an arbitrary code, not by name, and all transcripts and computer files will be kept confidential. Results of this project may be published, but any data included will in no way be linked to any specific participant.

The data collected will be securely stored in such a way that only those directly involved in the project (Amanda Cole, Tamar Murachver, Henry Johnson, Cathy Madden) will be able to gain access to them. At the end of the project any personal information will be destroyed immediately, except the raw data on which the results of the project depend, which will be retained in secure storage for five years. This is a requirement of the University's research policy, and all recordings may be destroyed after this compulsory five years.

The results of the project may be published and will be available in the University of Otago Library (Dunedin, New Zealand) but every attempt will be made to preserve your anonymity.

You are most welcome to request a copy of the results of the project should you wish.

You will be offered a \$20 voucher from <amazon.com> as a token of thanks for your participation in this project.

What if Participants have any Questions?

If you have any questions about our project, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact either:-

Amanda Cole
 Departments of Music & Psychology
 Email: amandina@xtra.co.nz

Dr. Tamar Murachver
 Department of Psychology
 Email: tamar@psy.otago.ac.nz
 University Telephone Number: 479-8351

This study has been approved by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the Committee through the Human Ethics Committee Administrator (ph 03 479 8256). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated and you will be informed of the outcome.



10. Consent Form for Participants (DCE3)

PERFORMANCE COACHING AND THE ALEXANDER TECHNIQUE

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS

I have read the Information Sheet concerning this project and understand what it is about. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I am free to request further information at any stage. I know that:-

1. My participation in the project is entirely voluntary;
2. I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without any disadvantage;
3. Personal identifying information (audio-recordings) will be destroyed at the conclusion of the project but any raw data on which the results of the project depend will be retained in secure storage for five years, after which they may be destroyed;
4. In the event that I feel hesitant or uncomfortable during the interview, I may decline to answer any particular question(s) and/or may withdraw from the project without any disadvantage of any kind.
5. I understand that upon completion of the interview I will be offered a voucher as a token of thanks for my participation.
6. The results of the project may be published and will be available in the University of Otago Library (Dunedin, New Zealand) but every attempt will be made to preserve my anonymity.

I agree to take part in this project.

.....
(Signature of participant)

.....
(Date)

This study has been approved by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the Committee through the Human Ethics Committee Administrator (ph 03 479 8256). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated and you will be informed of the outcome.



11. Interview Questions (DCE3)

Can you tell me a little bit about yourself, your training/study etc (this info will not be attached to anything you say in the interview so as to identify you. It's just so I can get an idea of where my sample comes from, as a whole.

How long have you studied with Cathy Madden?

Classes or individual lessons.

Have you learned the Alexander Technique from anyone else before or since?

If so, how was/is that experience different?

In what ways, if any, did you find that Cathy's teaching of the Alexander Technique helped your performance or technique?

Did you find that you benefited more from the physical things that Cathy taught you or from the psychological/constructive thinking/performance coaching side of her work, or do you think that they work best together?

Could you give an example of something that helped you physical, and something that helped you with performance? What has stayed with you since Cathy...

Have you ever heard of using verbs as a performer/musician rather than adjectives from other teachers, and what's your experience of the idea?

What makes Cathy's teaching effective for you?

Are there things about Cathy herself that help to make her teaching unusual or different from other learning experiences (especially in music) you've had?

Performance teaching before

How did it differ from Marjorie Barstow (if applicable)

APPENDIX 5: PRIMARY SOURCES AND WORKING BIBLIOGRAPHY

This appendix has two parts. The first part lists all the primary sources consulted on Marjorie Barstow and her work. The second part constitutes a list of works on the Alexander Technique that were not cited in the thesis.

Marjorie Barstow Primary Sources: Complete List

- 1) Published transcribed interviews in which Barstow describes her work.
Citations from these sources can be considered primary sources as they consist of Barstow's words transcribed verbatim:
 - a. Stillwell, Janet O'Brien. "Marjorie Barstow: An Interview." *Somatics* 3.3 (1981): 15-21. Print.
 - b. Paludan, Marsha. "Dancing." *Direction Journal* 1.10 (1993): 383-4. Print.
 - c. Retzlaff, Kay, et al. "Lincoln, Nebraska: Helen Barstow DePutron and Marjorie L. Barstow." *Neighborhood Oral History Project*, Office of Neighborhood Assistance, 1980. PDF
- 2) Videos of interviews:
 - a. "Barstow, Marjorie. Interview." Interviewer unnamed. *The Alexander Technique: A Worldwide Perspective. The First International Congress, Stony Brook, New York, 1986*. David Reed Media 2011. DVD. Transcribed by Amanda Cole.
- 3) Videos of her appearing as part of a panel (Stony Brook Congress)
 - a. "Panel of First Generation Teachers." *The Alexander Technique: A Worldwide Perspective. The First International Congress, Stony Brook, New York, 1986*. David Reed Media 2011. DVD. Transcribed by Amanda Cole.
- 4) Videos of her teaching:
 - a. Chance, Jeremy and Bernadette Flynn (Dirs). *Marjorie Barstow in Australia*. 1986. Fyncot Films. Web. 10 November 2012
 - b. "Marjorie Barstow Workshop 1." *The Alexander Technique: A Worldwide Perspective. The First International Congress, Stony Brook, New York, 1986*. David Reed Media 2011. DVD. Transcribed by Amanda Cole.
 - c. "Marjorie Barstow Workshop 2." *The Alexander Technique: A Worldwide Perspective. The First International Congress, Stony Brook, New York, 1986*. David Reed Media 2011. DVD. Transcribed by Amanda Cole.

- 5) A documentary about her showing very brief snippets of her teaching and talking about the Alexander Technique:
 - a. Geyer, Joel and Rod Bates. *Moving Naturally: A Portrait of Marj Barstow*. Series: *Grand Generation*, Nebraska Educational Television Network. 1982.
- 6) Two letters, one published and one (a copy) sent to me by William Conable.
 - a. "A Letter from Marjorie Barstow." *The Alexander Review* 1.1 (1986): 42-45. Print.
 - b. Letter 22 October 1986 to the Board of Directors, the American Center for the Alexander Technique, Western Region. 1986. Print.
- 7) Aphorisms collected and transcribed during workshops:
 - a. Miller, Marion, and Jeremy Chance. "Aphorisms of Marjorie Barstow." *Direction Journal* 2.4 (1996): 16-18. Print.

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