

A review of Jeroen Staring's writings on the Alexander Technique

– With special reference to Alexander and the origin of the Alexander Technique

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A review and criticism of Jeroen Staring's writings on F. M. Alexander and the Alexander Technique. Staring claims that Alexander copied, plagiarised, borrowed concepts and procedures and teaching techniques from other people and many of these claims are here examined and rejected. Many of Staring's original sources are consulted and omitted context is investigated. This paper also examines and questions Staring's retrodiction methodology.

INTRODUCTION

Jeroen Staring's writings on the Alexander Technique since 1996 represent a denunciation of F. M. Alexander, the Alexander Technique, and Alexander Technique teachers. To date I am only aware of one person who has challenged some of Staring's writings.¹ In this paper I intend to review some of Staring's methodology and conclusions. As Staring's writings on the Alexander Technique comprise over 1,500 pages it would take a book to cover them all. Instead I propose to deal with some examples of Staring's approach which, no doubt inadvertently, together show a pattern of misrepresentation, misunderstanding, and plain falsehoods. Staring's argument appears to depend on multiple assumptions, on many times quoting out of context, dismissing or omitting evidence which does not fit his theory, and on misrepresenting the Alexander Technique. This paper is intended for people familiar with the Technique and Staring's writings.

Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Introduction | 1 |
| Abbreviations | 4 |
| 1. Practical procedures | 5 |
| Going up on the toes | 5 |
| Sitting and standing | 5 |
| Mechanical advantage | 6 |
| Alexander on a standing position | 9 |
| Alexander purportedly influenced by Mathias Roth | 10 |
| Deep breathing | 10 |
| Bess Mensendieck's 'forward and up' | 11 |
| Hands on the back of the chair | 12 |
| Hands on the back of the chair – 'monkey' | 13 |
| 'Door exercise' | 14 |
| The whispered 'ah' | 16 |
| Semi-supine | 16 |
| Charles Gib's lying down exercises | 17 |
| <i>The Elements of Kellgren's Manual Treatment</i> | 19 |
| The origin of hands-on work in the Alexander Technique | 20 |
| Staring's approach to Alexander's procedures | 20 |
| 2. Alexander's concepts | 21 |
| Antagonistic action | 21 |
| Inhibition | 22 |
| The origin of the phrasing 'the use of the self' | 22 |
| 3. Various historical events | 25 |
| A study of the maori in 1895 | 25 |
| Evelyn Glover | 25 |
| Alexander's actor pupils | 26 |
| Scanes Spicer | 28 |
| Racism | 30 |
| Eugenics | 32 |
| Caleb Williams Saleeby's eugenics | 33 |
| Alexander on eugenics | 35 |

| | |
|--|-----------|
| 4. Attacks on the AT community | 37 |
| Staring's self-contradictory attack on the Alexander community | 37 |
| Staring's attack for a lack of anatomy and physiology | 37 |
| Staring's attack for 'not reaching out to medical science' | 36 |
| Staring's attack for lack of 'professionalisation' | 38 |
| Staring's claim that the AT is cult-like | 38 |
| 5. Staring's methodology | 40 |
| I. Undermining Alexander's character | 40 |
| Alexander's grandparents | 40 |
| Alexander's lack of giving exact references | 41 |
| Alexander's and Glover's play | 41 |
| Staring's fault finding with Alexander | 42 |
| Staring's mistakes | 43 |
| II. Dismissing first-hand reports and other evidence | 44 |
| All other biographies than Staring's are hagiographies | 44 |
| Criticisms of Alexander deliberately omitted by Staring | 44 |
| Possible influences on Alexander ignored by Staring | 45 |
| III. Only relying on existing literature | 46 |
| Assuming all Alexander's ideas derive from literature | 46 |
| Staring's theory that Alexander knew the contents of articles before they were published | 47 |
| IV. Assuming Alexander completely changed technique | 48 |
| V. Staring's multiple assumptions | 49 |
| 6. Conclusion | 53 |
| Conclusion | 53 |
| Postscript: The zeitgeist and trope of Alexander's time | 54 |
| Appendix 1: Bess Mensendieck's 'forward and up' | 55 |
| Appendix 2: A brief overview of the books classified by Staring as hagiographies | 61 |
| Appendix 3: Saleeby's <i>Parenthood and Race Culture</i> | 64 |
| Appendix 4: <i>The Elements of Kellgren's Manual Treatment</i> | 66 |
| Endnotes | 73 |

ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|-------------|---|
| <i>CC</i> | <i>Conscious Control</i> (F. M. Alexander) |
| <i>MSI</i> | <i>Man's Supreme Inheritance</i> (F. M. Alexander) |
| <i>CCC</i> | <i>Constructive Conscious Control of the Individual</i> (F. M. Alexander) |
| <i>UoS</i> | <i>The Use of the Self</i> (F. M. Alexander) |
| <i>STAT</i> | <i>The Society of Teachers of the Alexander Technique (UK)</i> |

1. Practical procedures

GOING UP ON THE TOES

It is known in the Alexander Technique literature, before Staring, that Alexander got the idea for the procedure now known as ‘going up on the toes’ from a Delsarte exercise (as reported by Alexander himself). However, Staring rejects this, and proceeds to argue that Alexander’s origin for going up on the toes is Major Austin, a breathing and exercise teacher who was a contemporary of Alexander. Staring reaches the conclusion because, he writes, the purpose of Austin’s exercise is different from Delsarte’s (as taught by Stebbins), therefore ‘In cases of dispute the context in which Austin’s exercise is based delivers the best understanding.’² The physical execution is the same, but since the purpose is different, Austin’s version of ‘going up on the toes’ is the origin of Alexander’s version according to Staring.³ Austin writes: ‘Rise on toes, and, keeping the shoulders passive, try to push the crown of the head upwards.’ And later, ‘If we will but look after the head, the spine, chest, shoulders and abdomen will take care of themselves.’⁴ Staring then seemingly triumphantly proclaims that ‘This method of “looking after the head” to let the “spine, chest, shoulders and abdomen take care of themselves” is still the basis of each lesson in the Alexander Technique!’ This is not the case. The Alexander Technique today consists of obtaining the correct relationship between the head, neck and back, through inhibition and directions to the neck, head and back. To present this as ‘looking after the head’ is not only misleading but erroneous. And going up on the toes in the Alexander Technique does not consist of ‘try to push the crown of the head upwards’.

SITTING AND STANDING

Staring refers to *The Treatment of Tabetic Ataxia by Means of Systematic Exercise* by Dr. H. S. Frenkel (1902), to the exercise of patients coming out of the chair, in this transcript from a lecture:

Staring: His name, Frenkl [sic], is in the photocopies I passed around. Ah yes, here you have a series a photographs taken of patients coming out of the chair. They cannot feel they are coming out of the chair. Now, that is,

in fact, the Alexander Technique of today. You have to think out your movement before doing the movement.⁵

The pictures are reproduced on page 7. Staring's statement is misleading. The Alexander Technique does not prescribe a certain way of getting out of a chair and certainly does not give Frenkel's instruction (which Staring does not quote): 'Both feet should be drawn back until their heels are partly under the chair.'⁶ Frenkel writes this is something 'which a healthy subject carries out as a matter of course.'⁷ It is clear from the context that Frenkel wants the patient to stand and sit like 'normal' people. There are videos of Alexander and first generation teachers who are taking their pupils out of their chair in ways which bear no resemblance to these pictures. Furthermore, there is no stereotypical way of getting in and out of a chair in the Alexander Technique.

To say that 'You have to think out your movement before doing the movement' is the Alexander Technique today is spurious. Frenkel refers to the thinking of the movements to be performed (drawing the heels back, lean forward from the hips, etc.), whereas the thinking in the Alexander Technique is predominantly about inhibition and direction, i.e. what to prevent when performing a movement.

Staring's assumption here is that Alexander does not know how ordinary people get in and out of a chair, and therefore consults a book on treatments and excises for people with a neurological disease* for how to get in and out of chair.

MECHANICAL ADVANTAGE

Staring's interpretation of mechanical advantage is fanciful. The term 'mechanical advantage' was a common term in the 19th century, and it is still in use in physics and mechanics. It is a set-up which obtains an amplification of force. Using a lever to move a large boulder is an example of mechanical advantage. Alexander uses the term in its most general way. But Staring is inventing an extraordinary definition of mechanical

* Ataxia is an inability to generate a normal or expected voluntary movement trajectory that cannot be attributed to weakness or involuntary muscle activity about the affected joints. Tabetic dorsalis ataxia is 'a slowly progressive parenchymatous degenerative disease involving the posterior columns and posterior roots of the spinal cord. Thus, the neurologic presentation is one of ongoing loss of pain sensation, loss of peripheral reflexes, impairment of vibration and position senses, and progressive ataxia.'⁸ It may also refer to the disease which results as a consequence of syphilis.



FIG. 53.—GETTING UP FROM A CHAIR. FIRST PHASE: INITIAL POSITION.



FIG. 54.—GETTING UP FROM A CHAIR. SECOND PHASE: DRAWING THE LEGS BACK.



FIG. 55.—GETTING UP FROM A CHAIR. THIRD PHASE: THE BODY IS BEING BENT FORWARD.



FIG. 56.—GETTING UP FROM A CHAIR. FOURTH PHASE: EXTENSION OF TRUNK AND THIGHS.



FIG. 57.—GETTING UP FROM A CHAIR. FIFTH PHASE: CONTINUATION OF MOVEMENT SHOWN IN FIG. 56.



FIG. 58.—GETTING UP FROM A CHAIR. SIXTH PHASE: THE MOVEMENT IS COMPLETED.

advantage in order to show that Alexander stole his ideas of breathing and mechanical advantage from other people:

The addition of Alexander is this. At the end of exhalation, you re-contract your belly muscles. Then you have the position of mechanical advantage for breathing in again. Because if you really contract your belly muscles at the end of expiration, you just try, and then release the belly muscles in an instance, you have the air just flowing in as in a spontaneous gasp. Because the diaphragm is descending from itself. The position of mechanical advantage is doing that. And then you breathe in. This addition to the general practice, made by Alexander, he had, in fact, taken from a pupil of William Shakespeare's, William Aikin, in his 1900 book *The Voice* [revised in 1910]. If you read Alexander's 1906 and 1907 texts on breathing and study the medical journals of that period, you will see that William Aikin is Alexander's main source for those texts on breathing. Other sources are William Shakespeare's *The Art of Singing* [1898], Leo Kofler's *The Old Italian School of Singing* [1883], Oskar Guttmann, and others. That is where Alexander obtained his knowledge. But he presented it as a "new method" of breathing. It was not a new method at all. But mainly a method, at best, renewed by Alexander. When Alexander Technique teachers of today read the 1910 texts of *Man's Supreme Inheritance*, and come to the phrase "position of mechanical advantage," if they do not know the breathing literature of the period, and interpret the phrase as a position of mechanical advantage related to posture, which was Alexander's later meaning of the term, then they cannot figure out what he is saying on mechanical advantage prior to 1910. But if you know the text, you know it is in fact about breathing. And if you know what the contemporary definition of mechanical advantage in fact was, that is, the diaphragm is pushed up by the abdominal muscles at the end of expiration by the belly wall muscles, then you can see that Alexander clearly refers to the mechanical advantage for the start of inhalation. Then you understand what Alexander meant by position of mechanical advantage in those texts.⁹

The proposition that mechanical advantage is 'the diaphragm is pushed up by the abdominal muscles at the end of expiration by the belly wall muscles' does not accord with Alexander's writings.

By 'contemporary definition of mechanical advantage' Staring means his interpretation of what certain voice and singing teachers meant.

(See also 'Antagonistic action' and 'Standing position' below.)

To get around the fact that it is even more clear from Alexander's later writings that mechanical advantage is not related to breathing per se, Staring has to posit that Alexander changed his definition later, indeed changed everything he taught later (see 'Assuming Alexander completely changed technique' and 'Scanes Spicer' below).

ALEXANDER ON A STANDING POSITION

Staring quotes a passage from the 1911 *MSI* (Addenda) in which Alexander writes about 'the primary principle involved in attaining a correct standing position'.¹⁰ Alexander goes on later to say that when 'the position is assumed, it is further necessary for each person to bring about the proper widening [sic, Staring is quoting Alexander incorrectly, it should be 'lengthening'] of the spine and the adequate widening of the back.'¹¹ From this Staring deduces that the starting point for Alexander of any movement was in the ankles, and not the head-neck-back, and consequently Alexander taught something completely different from what he taught the rest of his life. This misses the point because Staring is quoting selectively, ignoring everything before this paragraph. To place the quote in context: in this section Alexander is not addressing the starting point of 'any movement'. Alexander is addressing questions people have been asking, in this instance: 'What is the correct standing position and the position of mechanical advantage.'¹² First, Alexander is at pains to state that there cannot be an identical correct standing 'position' for all because each and every person is different. Second, he states that such a position cannot be obtained by a person himself because his perceptions and sensations are unreliable. Third, Alexander carefully describes that this is not about position but of 'correct co-ordination (i.e. of the muscular mechanisms concerned)'.¹³ At no point does Alexander say that this is the starting point of 'any movement'. Fourth, Alexander then uses the example of sitting and standing to illustrate that the correct method (means) is to 'order the neck to relax, and at the same time order the head *forward* and up' (adding that these orders are preventative).¹⁴

All of this is in accordance with Alexander's earlier and later teaching. Staring omits the fact that these three points by Alexander differ from anybody else who is describing 'correct' standing positions. When read in full, in context, what is obvious is not how similar Alexander's standing position recommendation is to others, but how different it is. Alexander's point is not about 'position' but about mechanical advantage, and what he says here is in agreement with his later descriptions of mechanical advantage.

Staring also writes that “‘Correct standing position’ exercises and ‘correct sitting position’ exercises were even more widely used’ as if to indicate that Alexander is merely a continuation of the tradition of ‘posture masters’ and ‘stand up straight’ prescriptions which goes back hundreds of years.¹⁵ This has no relevance at all because Alexander’s technique presents a total break with such an approach; it is clear from Alexander’s writings, also his early writings, that he was not teaching ‘postures’, ‘positions’ or ‘exercises’. The Alexander Technique is not some touched-up exercise–treatment system as Staring will have it.

ALEXANDER PURPORTEDLY INFLUENCED BY MATHIAS ROTH

Because of the similarity of Alexander’s placing of the feet in *Conscious Control* (1912) with other writers Staring happily, without evidence, states that ‘Alexander had intensively studied the placing of the feet and its consequences – in all probability using Mathias Roth’s exercises, described in his 1885 book . . .’¹⁶ And: ‘Alexander . . . had, for instance, only used Mathias Roth’s work to solve his voice production problems.’¹⁷

The assumption that Alexander had studied Roth’s exercises comes from a statement Alexander made in his autobiographical MS, where he writes of these exercises that they were the ‘most crude, barbaric exercises I had met with’.¹⁸ ¹⁹ Somehow Staring wants the reader to believe that Alexander studied and plagiarised Roth’s exercise system while at the same considering them crude and barbaric.

Staring suggests that Alexander had read both Mathias Roth’s and his son Bernard Roth’s books. Staring writes that in Bernard Roth’s *The Treatment of Lateral Curvature* (1889) Roth recommended ‘re-education of the muscular sense of the best possible position, and methodical exercises of the muscles to enable the patient to maintain this improved position without effort, or, to put it more shortly, “treatment by posture and exercise”’.²⁰ ²¹ Staring adds that this ‘became a central aspect of teaching Alexander Technique practice’. Such exercises are not, or part of, the Alexander Technique.

DEEP BREATHING

Staring proposes that Alexander was an advocate of deep breathing exercises (of a special kind):

In the Alexander Technique literature, for instance, Fischer’s commentary in *Articles and Letters* [sic, should be *Articles and Lectures*], it is said that Alexander wrote his letter on deep breathing to the *Pall Mall Gazette* to

indicate that deep breathing is what one should not do. That is, Fischer, Carrington and others have said that Alexander's article condemned deep breathing. That is not the case.²²

That Alexander did not condemn deep breathing contradicts all evidence. Staring's citation for the letter to the *Pall Mall Gazette* is incidentally incorrect; the citation refers to an article by Alexander titled 'Why "Deep Breathing" and Physical Culture Exercises do more Harm than Good' (1908)²³ which was not published in *Pall Mall Gazette*. Staring probably meant to refer to the article published in the *Pall Mall Gazette* titled 'The Dangers of Deep Breathing' (1908).²⁴ Either way, both articles argue against 'deep breathing' (the clue is in the titles). The second article in particular consists of a long list of arguments for why deep breathing and exercises are harmful.²⁵ Alexander went on again to condemn 'deep breathing' exercises in his 1910 and his 1918 editions of *MSI*. It is perverse of Staring to argue that Alexander was not against deep breathing as such, but only against a certain style of deep breathing – that practised by Arthur Lovell and the Ars Vivendi school, when Alexander does not mention them or any particular school or practice of deep breathing in his articles. (Staring is guessing based on the sole fact that other letters discussing the Arthur Lovell and the Ars Vivendi school were published in the *Pall Mall Gazette*).

Alexander is clearly against any kind of deep breathing exercise, and this is entirely consistent with his later teaching.

BESS MENSENDIECK'S 'FORWARD AND UP'

In his 2002 lecture Staring says:

Why should the head go forward and up? You have this German book by Mensendieck in 1906, *Körperkultur der Frau*, there we have the drawings of the head going forward and up. Where is Alexander in 1906? He was a breathing teacher whose texts indicate he had very little understanding of the function of the head on balance, voice, respiration, and breathing.²⁶

Elsewhere Staring writes that the 'directing the head forward and upward' cannot be 'solely ascribed to Alexander alone. Bess Mensendieck also advised these "directions" in her *Körperkultur der Frau* (Mensendieck 1925, 169-171).'

In short, Staring quotes Bess Mensendieck's 1906 book²⁷ for proof that she had the idea of directing the head forward and up before Alexan-

der (who first refers to ‘ordering the head upwards’ in 1908).²⁸ As Alexander did not read German, Staring cannot accuse Alexander of having read Mesendieck, and so is instead arguing that the concept of directions was ‘more widely known and practised than Alexander Technique teachers may think’.²⁹

Staring provides an image from Bess Mensendieck’s book as proof that she taught the instruction ‘forward and up’. He does not provide a translation, nor does he provide the accompanying text. For the reader to make up his or her own mind the pictures are reproduced in Appendix 1, with the German text and a translation (done by a native German speaker).

In brief, *Körperkultur der Frau* is a book of exercises, the stated aim of which is to make women beautiful. Bess Mensendieck’s ‘forward and up’ consists of exercises for pulling the head forward and down, and back and up, for the purpose of achieving a correct position and for avoiding wrinkles. It has no resemblance whatsoever with Alexander’s ‘forward and up’ (which is neither an exercise, nor a position, but as Alexander states, is preventative).

HANDS ON THE BACK OF THE CHAIR

Staring writes, ‘. . . Austin [a breathing teacher who was a contemporary of Alexander] described an exercise which is often used in Alexander Technique lessons’, and then highlights in bold an exercise where, as Austin writes, ‘the body leaning well forward from the hips and the hands resting lightly against the back of a chair or table: this brings the scapulae forward and renders passive the action of the serrati magni and other muscles which prevent the chest from assuming its normal poise.’³⁰

Apart from the physical position of leaning forwards from the hips, it is very difficult to see any similarity with the Alexander Technique procedure known as ‘hands on the back of the chair’ (HOBC). Austin solely recommends this exercise for people who are in ‘the habit of keeping the shoulders well back’ and for the purpose of assisting ‘respiratory exercises’. Austin does not specify how the hands or arms are held. HOBC is different in so many respects: 1. It does not consist of resting the hands lightly against the back of a chair or table, it is holding the back of a chair firmly with the fingers. 2. It is not for the purpose of assisting ‘respiratory exercises’. 3. It has in addition several other requirements such as pulling to the elbow, and 4. HOBC involves very specified inhibition and directions in carrying it out, and Alexander describes it as being carried out with the help of a teacher.³¹

Staring's hypothesis as to the origin of Alexander's HOBC is based on the assumption that Alexander read Austin. We do not know that. At the same time Staring disregards evidence from Alexander Technique teachers that Alexander did not invent the position involved in carrying out HOBC. Walter Carrington, who trained with Alexander, reported on the origins of HOBC:

He [Alexander] got the idea at an early stage in his teaching when he was working with a group of pupils in Australia. One of the group had picked up the idea that a good way to expand the chest – the thorax – was to take hold of the back rail of a chair with the hands and then pull on the rail. Alexander observed this and I'm sure tried it out for himself. However, he came to the conclusion that the way most people did it had exactly the opposite effect to the one intended. People didn't widen the thorax but rather narrowed it, raised the chest and hollowed the back. But he also recognised there was a possibility of carrying out the procedure in quite a different manner and one which would, indeed, be useful.³²

It is peculiar of Staring to ignore such evidence in favour of his own speculative theory as what books Alexander might have read.

HANDS ON THE BACK OF THE CHAIR – 'MONKEY'

'Monkey' was the nickname given by students to an example of Alexander's position of mechanical advantage. It has similarities with HOBC as it frequently, but not always, consists of bending forward from the hips, having knees bent (if performed standing), and may or may not include having the hands on the back of a chair.

Staring, in his 2005 PhD thesis, presents the following picture (p. 14) with the caption 'Woman Demonstrating "Monkey Exercise" from Latson's *Common Disorders*.'³³ Staring is thereby insinuating that Alexander appropriated 'monkey' from Latson. Staring is not quoting the accompanying text to the picture in Latson's *Common Disorders*. It is:

'Exercise no. 14. Stand erect, feet slightly apart. Now, allow the arms to swing directly back and forth, gently. Gradually increase the movement by bending the knees as the arms go forward until they rise as high as the shoulders. The one point in this exercise is to make the swing as large and free as possible with the least outlay of muscular exertion. (See fig. 35.)'³⁴



Fig. 35 in Latson's *Common Disorders* (1904).

The picture is therefore showing a snapshot of an exercise, captured mid-movement. Alexander's 'monkey' does not involve any swinging of arms, and there is nothing in Latson's *Common Disorders* which has any relevance or bearing to 'monkey' or any other Alexander procedure.

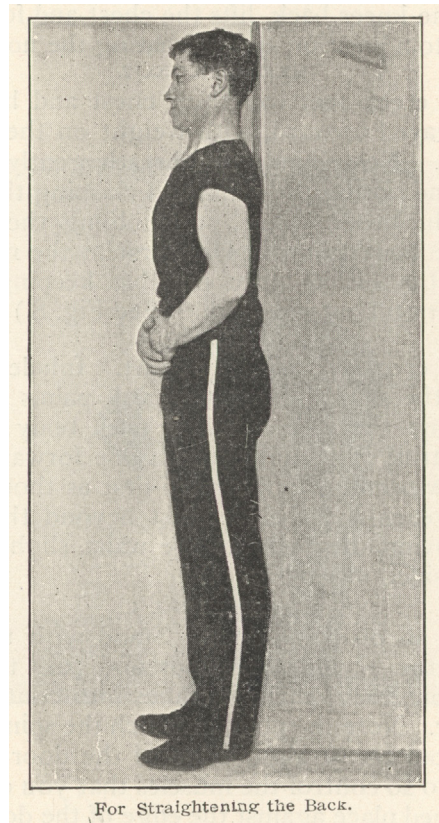
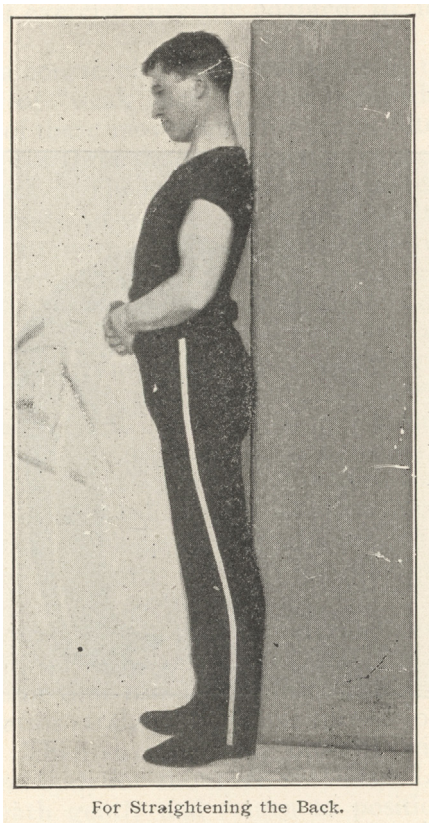
'DOOR EXERCISE'

Commenting on Alexander's 'Door Exercise (Standing)' from 1910,³⁵ Staring quotes from a letter by Major Austin to *BMJ* in 1925 in which Austin states he had followed Latson's exercise and Edwin Checkley's exercise on straightening the spine. Austin writes: 'When standing up against a straight edge with the heels touching the edge – say of an open door – my spine and back of the head are still pressed against it.' And he

adds that 'most of us do not possess the much to be desired quality of muscle, nor the knowledge necessary to make proper use of them, so the spine settles down into curves.'³⁶ Staring refers to other writers who used the door spine straightening exercise. (Latson for example writes: 'Stand with the back against the edge of the door and pass the hand along your back where it comes into contact with the door. Note the point at which the spine curves away from the straight edge of the door and endeavor to so control the muscles that you can push this curved place against the edge of the door without moving the head from its position.'³⁷)

Staring then writes that 'Alexander's Door exercise does not show the originality he intended'.³⁸

First, Alexander never claimed to have invented or originated the 'door exercise'. Second, Alexander's door exercise is not about straightening the spine, but is completely different to other people's door exercise.



'Door exercise' in Latson's *Common Disorders* (pp. 242-43).

Alexander explains how the pupil, when the hips touch the door, should bend forward from the hips at 25–30 degrees, ‘order his neck to relax and his head to move forward’.³⁹ Third, unlike other writers, Alexander is stating this should be done with the help of a teacher who is using his hands to guide the pupil.

THE WHISPERED ‘AH’

Staring spends many pages quoting from and referencing singing and vocal culture books which describes the whispered ‘ah’ before Alexander wrote about it, speculating as to whom Alexander had ‘copied’ from. The simplest of explanations is disregarded by Staring. Alexander himself said he was taught the whispered ‘ah’ by his singing teacher, a ‘Mr Lawrence’ (nothing further is known about him).⁴⁰ As the whispered ‘ah’ was widely used by singing and voice teachers in the late 19th century, and since we know Alexander took lessons in preparing him for the career of a reciter, this would be the most likely scenario. The simplest explanation for Alexander’s application of his technique to the whispered ‘ah’ is that Alexander did indeed learn the whispered ‘ah’ and then applied his own discoveries to the performance of it (as he did with other activities such as coming up on the toes and HOBC). This application of Occam’s razor (in this case meaning ‘the simplest answer is most likely the right one’) does away with convoluted speculations as to which book was the origin of Alexander’s whispered ‘ah’, based solely on written descriptions. Staring’s method of investigation seems to be to conjecture which books Alexander had read and what material – in these books – Alexander was influenced by.

SEMI-SUPINE

By the use of exclamation marks Staring makes much of the fact that a contemporary to Alexander, Austin, had an exercise in which people lie down with a pillow under their heads and their knees up:

Austin’s ‘*Diaphragmatic Drill*’ begins with the (*semi*) *supine position*! Alexander Technique teachers believe that *Alexander* developed this position – *years later*! Austin, however, preceded Alexander.⁴¹

Neither Alexander nor any Alexander teacher claims that Alexander invented the position of lying down with your knees up. Humans are and have been doing this for probably thousands of years. Walk along a busy

beach or park in the summer and you will see people lying in this position. Neither Alexander nor Austin 'developed this position'.

Furthermore, Austin's lying down on the back position is for the sole purpose of the 'diaphragmatic drill' exercise, to be practised lying down before attempting to do it standing up. The lying down serves no other purpose. In other words, apart from the physical position of the knees up and the head supported, it has nothing to do with Alexander Technique lying down which involves inhibition and direction. It has nothing to do with Alexander Technique because Alexander abhorred breathing exercises and Austin's exercise would be no exception as it consists of physically 'doing' movements (which in the Alexander Technique means using undue muscular effort).

CHARLES GIB'S LYING DOWN EXERCISES

Staring also refers to Charles Gib's lying down exercises, where a person is lying down supine while another person moves a head, an arm, a leg, while the lying down person is relaxing. Staring claims that Alexander knew of Gib's and Dally's 1911 book, which describes these lying down exercises, and that Alexander 'merely appropriated them – without acknowledgement, as ever'.⁴²

Leaving aside the fact that Alexander never claimed to have 'invented' lying down work, Staring is missing the point of the Alexander Technique here: it is not just lying down and relaxing but both the teacher and pupil apply inhibition and direction. The teacher's own use is paramount in the sensitive use of hands which is imparting the directions to the pupil. Since Alexander's first training course teachers spend a minimum of three years learning this refined skill.

Staring believes mistakenly that it is significant whether or not a teacher starts the lying down work with the head and neck, and this also shows that Staring is not understanding the Technique. Staring is missing crucial differences: Gib's and Dally's book illustrates a person lying completely flat on the back. In contrast the Alexander lying-down procedure consists of having the head supported (so the head is not pulled back and down relative to the spine), and having the knees up. This 'semi-supine' position is deliberate: it enhances and encourages the primary directions fundamental to the Alexander Technique: neck free, head forward and up, back to lengthen and widen, knees forward and away. There is no inhibition or direction in Gib's and Dally's book, only relaxation.

Staring admits there are 'differences' between Gib's instructions and Alexander's, but Staring dismisses these by writing: 'It is, however,

obvious that these differences are merely Alexander's adjustments to Gib's instructions.⁴³ This approach means that anyone who has done any work with a human being concerned with breathing, with sitting and standing, with lying down, can be the source of origin of an Alexander approach because any differences are 'merely Alexander's adjustments'.

We have no evidence that Alexander knew of Gib's and Dally's 1911 book.

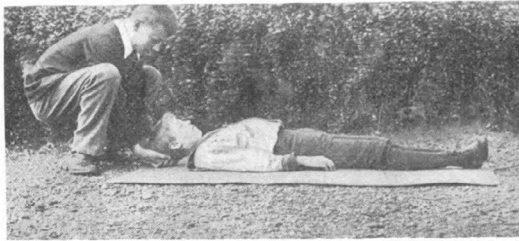


FIG. 9.

MUSCULAR RELAXATION (NECK).

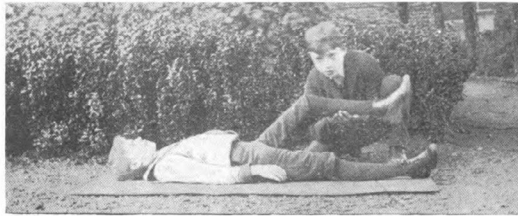


FIG. 10.

MUSCULAR RELAXATION (LIMBS).

These two illustrations show a chorister undergoing muscular relaxation, which promotes conservation of energy and helps to correct tense habits of body pose and chest poise invaluable to adult singers as well as juveniles.

Frontispiece.

Frontispiece in *Vocal Science and Art Being Hints on The Production of Musical Tone* by Chas. Gib and J. F. Halls Dally (Facsimile copy by Pranava Books, India).

THE ELEMENTS OF KELLGREN'S MANUAL TREATMENT

Staring spends some ten pages arguing a direct link between Alexander's use of the hands in teaching and Arvid Kellgren's manual treatment system.

Kellgren's system is a development of Ling's gymnastics and is medical gymnastics,⁴⁴ specific movements – passive or active – for treating specific conditions. Edgar Cyriax published in 1903 *The Elements of Kellgren's Manual Treatment*⁴⁵ (but Staring only quotes from French and German translations).

Staring is suggesting Alexander knew of Kellgren via Scanes Spicer, by guessing that Scanes Spicer knew of Kellgren. Scanes Spicer wrote in 1909 of palpating the neck and moving it from side to side. The wording used by Scanes Spicer, is according to Staring, 'a strong indication as to one of the sources of his "*technique*:" Dr Arvid Kellgren's interpretation of Ling's work'.⁴⁶ And, Staring writes, 'Scanes Spicer's words concerning palpitation and manipulation of various structures of the throat suggest that he was familiar with Kellgren's methods, . . .'.⁴⁷ In other words, we don't know. Many people did various forms of manipulation in those days. Scanes Spicer does not cite Kellgren.

It appears that a superficial similarity of hand positions has convinced Staring that the origin of hands-on work in the Alexander Technique is Kellgren's manipulation treatments. In reference to some photographs from the book, Staring writes: 'These holds, and many of the other "grips" in Arvid Kellgren's book, are also today's Alexander Technique holds.'⁴⁸

Some of these photographs with accompanying text are reproduced in appendix 4. Staring omits to provide the context for these photographs; he does not mention that these 'holds' and 'grips' are manipulative treatments, for specific conditions and for gaining specific results. See appendix 4 for details.

As Staring is suggesting that Alexander is an imitator of other people's technique, and is copying the methods which later developed into physiotherapy, Staring is arguing himself into the most peculiar suggestion that Alexander was teaching an early form of physiotherapy. Staring writes: 'People like Alexander gave the – only budding – English physiotherapy a really bad name.'⁴⁹

The Alexander Technique, then or now, has nothing to with physiotherapy, with physical manipulation, with treatment for specific conditions, and there is nothing in Alexander's early or later writings to suggest this.

THE ORIGIN OF HANDS-ON WORK IN THE ALEXANDER TECHNIQUE

Staring is suggesting that Alexander only adopted hands-on work after being influenced by Kellgren, Scanes Spicer and others, and therefore only started using hands-on work in 1911.⁵⁰

Staring has to invent a date of 1911 in order to make it fit his supposition that Scanes Spicer first advocated hands-on work and therefore preceded Alexander. However, Alexander first makes reference in his writings to the teacher's use of hands in 1908.⁵¹

Even so, just because Alexander did not write about hands-on work before 1908 does not mean he did not use hands-on work. Staring is converting an absence of evidence into the evidence of an absence.

Both Marjory Barlow (Alexander's niece) and Walter Carrington testify that Alexander's hands-on work started while Alexander was in Australia.^{52 53 54} Staring does not quote these testimonials.

STARING'S APPROACH TO ALEXANDER'S PROCEDURES

Alexander did not claim to have invented whispered 'ah', lying down, going up on the toes, a standing position, or putting hands on the back of a chair. Just as with sitting and standing, he applied his technique to these activities as a way of illustrating, demonstrating and teaching the principles of his technique.

However, Staring's approach and fundamental outlook appears to be that Alexander stole everything from everybody else, and so, even when Alexander has made no claim to have invented an activity (such as going up on the toes), Staring has to speculate as to which books Alexander may or may not have gotten the ideas from. If Alexander was a mere copyist, as Staring is suggesting, then he was not teaching the Alexander Technique in the early days. Therefore Staring has to theorise that Alexander taught something different than the Alexander Technique today pre-1911. As Staring is only looking for that which fits into his interpretation of the Alexander Technique, it means that Alexander would have had to read hundreds of books, and then only picked exactly those bits and pieces which he taught pre-1911 and then post-1911 selecting those bits which today is the integrated wholeness of the Technique.

2. Alexander's concepts

ANTAGONISTIC ACTION

Staring makes a point out of the fact that the phrase 'antagonistic action' was used by other people before Alexander:

In *Gymnastics of the Voice*, Guttman used the phrase antagonistic action. So the concept was not invented by Alexander.⁵⁵

Alexander never claimed to have invented the phrasing 'antagonistic action',⁵⁶ but like other terms (such as 'inhibition' and 'direction') he imbued it with a special meaning. Staring criticises my short note (in *Articles and Lectures*⁵⁷) on antagonistic action:

STARING TO AUDIENCE I: You are looking up the reference to antagonistic action in the Jean Fischer book. That's good because Jean Fischer is really stupid on that. AUDIENCE: Who is stupid. STARING: Fischer, because he really misinterprets almost everything. So that is a warning, not a qualification of Fischer.⁵⁸

My note on antagonistic action in *Articles and Lectures* was solely concerned with how the term is understood in the Alexander Technique, not with any history of the term or of how other people used it at the time, and my note did not claim to do so.⁵⁹ In addition the jacket of *Articles and Lectures* states that the book is 'intended for teachers of the Alexander Technique', meaning my notes are written for professional teachers.

Staring claims that Alexander's meaning of 'antagonistic action' is 'the praxis of selectively and consciously opposing the "action" of the diaphragm via a selectively and consciously controlled "releasing action" of the head of the *musculus rectus abdominalis*' and further details along these lines.⁶⁰ Alexander never wrote this or anything like it. Staring is conjecturing this because certain vague phrases used by Alexander resembles the texts of other people, and working on the assumption that Alexander copied from them, Staring assumes that Alexander copied their meaning. For example, Alexander writes:

This psycho-physical factor also constitutes a steady and firm condition which enables the Directive Agents of the sphere of consciousness to discriminate the action of the kinæsthetic and motion agents which it must maintain without [Staring omits ‘without’ in his quote] any interference or discontinuity.⁶¹

Elsewhere Staring concludes that Alexander’s ‘great principle of antagonistic action’ is the “relaxation of certain parts, tensing the muscles of others” – a quote Staring gives from Alexander, but this quote does not refer to ‘antagonistic action’.⁶² It refers to “those mechanical advantages which give atmospheric pressure its opportunity”.

It is obvious from Alexander’s writings, then or later, that he never sought to develop any specific control of individual muscles; he always considered the whole.⁶³ The due tension and relaxation of various muscles happen indirectly, by attending to inhibition and direction of the whole.

INHIBITION

Staring suggests that Alexander got the concept of ‘inhibition’ from Saleeby: ‘Saleeby explicated all ingredients of Alexander’s view on inhibition in his 1904 to 1906 works – a long time before Alexander put them to paper.’⁶⁴

The concept of inhibition was widespread in Victorian literature, in voice and breathing literature, in self-help and self-improvement articles and books. Alexander would have come across it many times, and it would be impossible to identify a single source as Staring is suggesting. ‘Inhibition’ was as current, if not more current, as ‘mindfulness’ is today. Most people have heard about it and have an understanding of it, without necessarily being able to say where they heard or read about it. (See for example *Inhibition – History and Meaning in the Sciences of Mind and Brain*.⁶⁵)

Staring generally tries to pinpoint a single source for an Alexander procedure or concept, because he can then accuse Alexander of not referencing this source and therefore of plagiarism.

THE ORIGIN OF THE PHRASING ‘THE USE OF THE SELF’

Staring berates Alexander for not giving credit to Yearsley for the phrase ‘the use of the self’:

Yearsley praised Alexander's theorizing, declaring that Magnus's findings correspond to Alexander's. Amazingly, six years preceding (the title of) Alexander's 1931 *The Use of the Self*, Yearsley already used the phrase 'the use of the self.'

Further, [Alexander's] technique provides for our psycho-physical attitude towards the familiar and simple things of life, for it is a practical process of reasoning from the known to the unknown, first in regard to the use of the psycho-physical self, and then in connection with the use of the self in meeting the demands of every-day life in the ever-changing environment of civilization. This relation to environment demands a technique in which direction and guidance shall be built up consciously and constructively, employing the real central control in the use of the self in human activity. It must be emphasized that the central control thus employed is that advocated by Magnus. (Yearsley, 1925, p. 2 . . .).

Alexander never referenced Yearsley (1925) using the phrase 'the use of the self.'⁶⁶

Staring does not consider or allow for the possibility that Alexander may have been using the phrasing in his teaching for years before publishing his book *The Use of the Self*, and, if so, why should he reference Yearsley? Alexander does give credit to other people (Dewey for 'thinking in activity'⁶⁷ and Rowntree for 'reasoning from the known to the unknown'⁶⁸), so he is not adverse to the practice. And, of course, Alexander had employed the word 'use' in other contexts in the past (use of the voice, etc.), so this was not a new concept to Alexander.

Irene Tasker reported that they were already working on the MS of *The Use of the Self* in the early 1920s. Although the title would probably not had been decided upon that early, it is likely that the concept was already in existence.

If history was only written according to surviving papers we would end up with a very distorted view of the past. History consists of considering all sorts of evidence, not least including the characteristic behaviour of the people involved. Since Alexander credits other people for certain phrases it would be unlike him not to credit Yearsley if indeed Yearsley coined it. The various papers and letters published in support of Alexander by supporters of Alexander in the period 1920s–1950s all adopted Alexander's terminology and exposition.⁶⁹ So the pattern, for which there

is clear evidence, is that Alexander's pupils used Alexander's wordings, and so Yearsley probably also used Alexander's phrasing, 'the use of the self'.

Staring also makes much of the fact the people have used the word 'use' before Alexander, citing such examples as the voice teacher Shakespeare and the breathing teacher Austin, who used such phrases as 'use of resonance', 'using the voice', 'use of the vowel "ah"', etc.⁷⁰ This should surprise no one since 'use' is one of the most common words in the English language, and applied and used widely. Nobody has claimed that Alexander invented the word 'use' or was the first to use it in connection with voice.

With reference to Shakespeare and Austin, Staring attacks my note on Alexander's developing usage of the word 'use' in connection with voice. But nowhere did I state or claim that Alexander was unique in this respect. The purpose of my note was only to make it clear that Alexander was already using the word 'use' in connection with voice or breathing before he came to the realisation that use should not be limited to voice or breathing but should be of the whole, and eventually this concept was expressed in the phrase 'the use of the self'.

3. Various historical events

A STUDY OF THE MAORI IN 1895

Staring makes a lot of the fact that ‘in his autobiographical notes Alexander failed to mention any physical anthropological study related to his New Zealand sojourn.’ And elsewhere, ‘Alexander, however, did not mention a “physical anthropological” reason for his New Zealand sojourn in his autobiographical notes – not even with one word! Was it another lie?’⁷¹ (Note the insertion of ‘another’, implying that Alexander had lied before.) Elsewhere Staring writes, ‘Alexander again claimed’ when Alexander writes about his study of the Maoris.^{72 73} What Alexander actually wrote was that, while in New Zealand, ‘he wished to study that wonderful race, the Maoris – from a breathing standpoint – in their native haunts.’ At no point does Alexander couch it in such a formal and serious language as Staring attributes to him, in terms of a ‘physical anthropological study’.⁷⁴ It was most likely an informal study, simply observing the behaviour of Maoris in their natural habitat, as and when he had some free time, between performances and teaching. Nobody, but Staring, has read into this single sentence anything as academic as Staring suggests. Yet Staring continues in several places to belabour the fact that there is no evidence for Alexander having studied the Maoris (Alexander’s own words do not count), believing that if there is no written record of an event, then the event did not happen. This is the logical fallacy of converting an absence of evidence into the evidence of an absence.

It should be added that Alexander’s autobiographical notes were brief and unfinished, which means they are also leaving out events which he had described elsewhere (such as the evolution of his technique). Staring also writes that ‘Alexander failed to mention his “embrace” of Delsartism in his biographical notes.’⁷⁵ Staring does not consider the possibility that Alexander may have come to the conclusion that Delsarte was not of much use, that it did not leave a big impression on him, and therefore was not important to mention. After all, Alexander never mentioned Delsarte again after his 1902 booklet advertising his proposed Sydney Dramatic & Operatic Conservatorium.

EVELYN GLOVER

Staring’s description of what sort of relationship Alexander and Evelyn

Glover had is pure conjecture. Staring writes:

Early in 1908, Alexander was engaged in all manner of things. He was writing a play with Evelyn Glover. She was probably his lover. They co-authored a play, *A Question of Time*, which was almost staged. Later, in her 1938 book *Cats and My Camera*, she wrote a lengthy mention of Alexander that suggests she still loved him in 1938, although she likely hadn't seen him for years.⁷⁶

This is the complete 'lengthy' mention of Alexander in Evelyn Glover's 1938 book, *Cats and My Camera*:

Obviously, true growth of the whole is only possible through the 'due activity of each part' in the physical and mental sphere alike – though even that phrase suggests a harmful conception of the separateness of the two. There is a man, Matthias Alexander, wise in his generation, who has restored and is restoring health and happiness to hundreds of sufferers by the application of a system based on this principle, and to any who desire to pursue this line of thought further I would commend his last book, *The Use of the Self* (Methuen, 6s.). The subject is too big for elaboration here.⁷⁷

It would appear that she pays more tribute to Alexander's technique than to Alexander. We have no evidence of them being lovers. This is all pretty insignificant. But it shows a consistent pattern of Staring to read into Alexander's texts his own agenda. Taking the above passage as evidence that she 'still loved him' is rather far-fetched, as is the suggestion that she had not seen him 'for years'.

The fact is, we do not know, and all historians have to accept that many episodes, events and causes cannot be established with any certainty; a historian should not use a lack of evidence as a platform for unsubstantiated claims.

ALEXANDER'S ACTOR PUPILS

In 1909 Alexander published a flyer with testimonials from famous actors,⁷⁸ and he also elsewhere made reference to actors he had taught. Staring spends a whole article, 'F. Matthias Alexander and Edwardian Actresses/Actors', discrediting actors' testimonials to Alexander for their lessons with him.⁷⁹

For example, although Constance Collier writes a testimonial in support of Alexander's teaching, Staring instantly casts doubts on this by adding: 'Yet Constance Collier (1929) did not mention Alexander in her autobiography.'⁸⁰ This assumes that an autobiography is a complete

record of a person's life, including how many lessons they had with whom when.

This line of attack is repeated with the actress Viola Tree. Although Viola Tree writes a very positive testimonial in support of Alexander's work, Staring again doubts this by stating: 'On the other hand, Viola Tree's (1926) published correspondence since the start of her singing career in the spring of 1909 does not mention Alexander.'⁸¹ Does it not occur to Staring that Viola Tree's published correspondence is a selection and not complete? And that the fact she may not have mentioned Alexander in her correspondence does not amount to evidence of her not having lessons?

Because there is no mention or reference to Alexander in Bram Stoker's *Personal Reminiscences of Henry Irving* (1906), it is taken to cast doubt on Alexander having taught Irving. (Staring mislabels this 2-volume work as a biography, which it is not; it is a personal tribute. *The New York Times*, in its review of 20 October 1906, writes of this work, 'Almost every one criticises it here because, though it is called a book about Irving, it is really a book about Stoker and Irving. There is something naively appealing in the way M. Stoker seems to suppose the public will be equally interested in himself and the great actor.'⁸²) Staring applies this argument to other biographies. The assumption is that if Alexander taught somebody it *must* be reported in memoirs, biographies, letters, and if it is not, then Alexander did not teach them.

Staring then goes on to claim that if Alexander had taught Sir Irving then he 'certainly would have enthusiastically told his mother and brother in Melbourne and Robert Young in Sydney about it in his letters to them between April and June, 1905. They, in turn, would have been equally or even more lyrical in their responding letters to him.'⁸³ Since Staring's collection of 1905 letters does not contain such references, it is used to dispute whether Alexander had taught Sir Irving. Staring does not consider that his collection of letters is not complete. Very few letters between Alexander and his family and friends exist. However, when Staring does quote letters which refer to Alexander having taught Sir Irving, he uses it to indicate that Alexander merely met Sir Irving.⁸⁴ (A friend of Alexander writing to Alexander in 1905 'your success with Sir Henry' and in a later letter, '. . . I am glad to hear that you have continued with Sir Henry.'⁸⁵)

Staring uses the testimony that the then principal of the London Guildhall School of Music and Drama, Cummings, had not heard of Alexander to cast doubt on Alexander having taught a number of actors. Staring writes:

Reports of the July 30, 1909 Westminster County Court case ‘Alexander v. Loraine’ (e.g., Watson, 1909) give an alarming picture to those who actually believe Alexander (and his followers) – by revealing that the summoned expert witness Professor Dr. William Hayman Cummings, then Principal of the London Guildhall School of Music and Drama, had never heard of Alexander or his methods.⁸⁶

In 1909 Alexander had only been in London for five years. It is unlikely everybody within the performing arts should have heard of Alexander.⁸⁷ And why should they? Even today there are people within the performing arts who have not heard of the Alexander Technique.

Staring then sums up a list of actors, with his own estimation as to the number of lessons they had, and whether they had benefited from the lessons. Given the few written sources available – and that everything Alexander writes is not believed by Staring – this is a very speculative document. Staring also assumes that the court case somehow should include a complete list of all lessons given to all actors at the time, and he fully trusts that the newspaper reports of the court case are complete and representative (the original court case documents not being available).

The 1909 flyer with testimonials from famous actors⁸⁸ is doubted solely because Alexander is not mentioned in people’s biographies or published letters. Why would Alexander publish a flyer which was not true, at a time when all these actors could have objected? (H. B. Irving, Sir Henry Irving’s son, apparently did not object to Alexander using his father’s testimonial.)

This shows that when there is written evidence in favour of Alexander, Staring does his utmost to undermine it. Only evidence *against* Alexander is taken at face value, without questioning.

SCANES SPICER

Staring, having argued that whatever he purports Alexander to have taught in his early days – namely other people’s stuff – does not fit with what Alexander describes in his four books (1918–1941) or with descriptions of his teaching by his pupils, has to explain this by inventing a completely *volte-face* on Alexander’s part: Alexander taught one technique up to 1911 and then completely changed and started teaching Scanes Spicer’s technique (plus some bits of other people).⁸⁹ Some examples of Staring’s claim:

The Alexander Technique as you [Alexander teachers] teach it today is a gathering of different things already known, not put together by Alexander, but by his mentor Scanes Spicer and then used by Alexander.⁹⁰

Now, you have Scanes Spicer, in 1909 describing what we know today as the Alexander Technique.⁹¹

This means that 'Alexander's method' as it is taught today is *not* his method as it was taught by him in 1911.⁹²

'Those who teach the Alexander technique today follow the ingenious form of instruction which' the Kellgrens, Cyriax, and especially Dr Scanes Spicer 'evolved'.⁹³

It is such a shame that Scanes Spicer stopped writing about it [his technique] in 1911! . . . Although his '*technique*' lives on, in practice, under the name of Alexander Technique, this is, of course, a cold comfort since it is now connected to eugenics, racism, *quasi* medical nonsense, and fetishism.⁹⁴

This is also based on the assumption that Alexander did not use his hands in teaching before 1911.⁹⁵

Staring is suggesting, contrary to all evidence, that Alexander plagiarised Scanes Spicer. Alexander wrote two articles (1909, 1910) accusing Scanes Spicer of plagiarising his technique. Scanes Spicer never issued a denial against Alexander's public accusations. According to Staring it was because Scanes Spicer was a 'gentleman' whereas Alexander was a 'street fighter'.⁹⁶ Staring dismisses Alexander's pamphlet, 'A protest against certain assumptions' (1910),⁹⁷ which compare various statements by Spicer with Alexander's writings, showing how Alexander's ideas predate Scanes Spicer's. Despite this evidence, Staring claims the reverse, and claims that Alexander went on to adopt Scanes Spicer's ideas and methods.

At this point it gets absurd: Staring is claiming that Alexander accuses Scanes Spicer of plagiarising a technique which, according to Staring, Alexander did not even teach at that point.

It is undisputed that when Alexander came to London in 1904, he met Scanes Spicer and Scanes Spicer, his wife and children came to Alexander for lessons, and Scanes Spicer referred patients to Alexander. Why would Scanes Spicer have lessons and recommend people to Alexander if, as Staring claims, it was Spicer who knew a more advanced method and

who then taught Alexander? Staring is proposing that Alexander, upon reading Scanes Spicer's lecture in 1909, was thinking along the lines of: 'Here is a method which I do not teach, I'll write some pamphlets, have them printed, and accuse the famous Dr Scanes Spicer, the eminent London throat specialist and throat surgeon, of plagiarism, of him teaching something which I do not teach.'

Staring does not draw attention to the fact that Scanes Spicer wrote a letter to Dr Alexander Leeper in 1908, effusively praising Alexander's technique.⁹⁸ Dr Leeper writes in his report to the Victorian Teachers and Schools Registration Board in March 1909:

They [medical specialists] one and all speak of the results [of Alexander's technique] as entirely satisfactory. For example, Dr Scanes Spicer, an eminent throat specialist and lecturer on diseases of the throat in London University, wrote to me: 'The results, not only in the production of the voice, but also in the deportment, appearance, and general health surpass anything that I have hitherto met with. Among the chief points which distinguish his practice from that of other physical educators are:

1. The absolute avoidance of physical strain, so conserving the available energy of the body;
2. the thorough emptying of the chest on expiration in such a way as to let the respiratory act be to some extent an elastic recoil;
3. the prevention of undue suction of the mucous membrane of the throat by insisting on no gasping or sniffing,
4. the better position of the thoracic and abdominal viscera, and the holding of the weight of the body to the best mechanical advantage.'⁹⁹

Staring is therefore proposing that Scanes Spicer, having been a grateful pupil of Alexander for four years, suddenly develops a new and better method, which Alexander then plagiarises. Staring does not allow for the possibility that other people may have appropriated or plagiarised Alexander, and therefore Alexander was right in his charge against Scanes Spicer.

For a second criticism of Staring's treatment of Alexander re Scanes Spicer, see area24.net.¹⁰⁰

RACISM

Alexander's *MSI* contains examples of racism which have been dealt with in the Alexander Technique literature before and after Staring's writings. (See for example the two part article, 'F. M. Alexander and evolution',

in 1990–91,¹⁰¹ and various letters in *STATNews* and *NASTAT News* in 1995–97.)

Staring writes that STAT in 1995 passed a resolution ‘to teach, expound and propagate the theory and practice of the Alexander Technique . . . as outlined in the four books of F. Matthias Alexander . . .’ and then goes on to say that: ‘The same body of Alexander Technique teachers attending this Annual General Meeting of STAT, however, did not even propose to pass a resolution that was critical of Alexander’s eugenics and his racism.’¹⁰² This is not true. A anti-discriminatory resolution was proposed (by myself) in 1995 and again in 1996 condemning, among other things, all forms of racism. The resolutions were not passed due to some intricate discussions about the nature of the Alexander Technique which derailed the main issue. The minutes of STAT contain all the details on this. (It is also important to note the wording ‘as outlined’, not ‘as stated’, not ‘as detailed’, not ‘as expressed’. All the wording was indicating was that teachers were to be informed by the general principles of Technique.)^{*}

Staring believes that ‘Alexander’s evolution theory is taught, expounded and propogated uncritically’ because teachers read *MSI*.¹⁰³ I have read hundreds of books on the Alexander Technique and hundreds of articles on the Alexander Technique by teachers of the Alexander Technique. I have not come across a single instance of anyone propagating, let alone

* A few years later STAT later adopted an Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy. I don’t have the date. However, the 2011 edition contains the following Appendix:

‘STAT deplores racism and all expressions thereof, in any form, contemporary or historical. In particular, STAT wishes to place on record its fundamental disagreement with offensive and discriminatory passages which appear in the first American edition and in other subsequent editions of *Man’s Supreme Inheritance* by F M Alexander (New York: E P Dutton & Co 1918). STAT accepts that such passages and references to “savages” and “primitive peoples”, while reflecting views that were commonly held at the time, appear overtly racist and offensive to the modern reader. These views neither expound nor define the body of practice and theory that has come to be known as the Alexander Technique; they play no part in the manner in which the Technique is taught in STAT’s schools or in the practice of the Technique by its Teaching Members. The core of F M Alexander’s evolutionary theory is “man’s transcendence to consciousness” and this continues to be central in the practice of the Technique. Needless to say, as this Policy makes clear, the principles of equality and freedom from discrimination are fundamental to STAT’s advancement of the Technique.’¹⁰⁷

accepting, Alexander's views on evolution and race. All written articles on the subject condemn Alexander's racism. (See for example the two part article, 'F. M. Alexander and evolution', in 1990–91.¹⁰⁴) It would appear that the only person in the world who believes that 'Alexander's evolution theory is taught, expounded and propogated uncritically' is Staring.

Staring nowhere states that Alexander writes that racial prejudice – among others – is a form of instinctive reaction which Alexander's technique, based as it is on conscious reasoning, will change. Alexander wrote in *UoS*:

If a technique which can be proved to do this for an individual were to be made the basis of an educational plan, so that the growing generation could acquire a more valid criterion for self-judgment than is now possible with the prevailing condition of sensory misdirection of use, might not this lead in time to the substitution of reasoning reactions for those instinctive reactions which are manifested as prejudice, racial and otherwise, herd instinct, undue 'self-determination' and rivalry, etc., which, as we all deplore, have so far brought to nought our efforts to realize goodwill to all men and peace upon earth?¹⁰⁵

This again adds to a pattern of Staring ignoring Alexander's writings when it does not fit with Staring's agenda. As Staring himself writes: 'Withholding information is *not* scholarly!'¹⁰⁶

EUGENICS

In the article 'Frederick Matthias Alexander, Born 150 Years Ago' Staring makes much of Alexander's passing reference to eugenics:

The question of Eugenics—or the science of race culture—is debated by earnest men and women; and the whole problem of contemporary physical degeneration is one which looms ever larger in the public mind. It is the problem which has exercised me for many years, and which is mainly responsible for the issue of this [book],¹⁰⁸ and in my next chapter I shall treat it in connection with the theory of progressive conscious control which I have outlined in the foregoing pages. (Alexander, 1910a-b, p. 97).¹⁰⁹

Staring quickly passes over the fact that two years later, in 1912, Alexander rejected eugenics: 'Though I am in sympathy with many principles of eugenics I reject this theory as an universal one'¹¹⁰ and, more importantly, he rejected the argument for any enforced eugenics: 'And, in the

last analysis, it is inconceivable that the prime instinct and desire for reproduction can be overruled at the dictates of any small body of men; or even that such a method, if possible, could be productive of any highly desirable results'.¹¹¹ Both of the above are also to be found in the 1918 edition. Staring is dismissive of these statements by Alexander and maintains – against this evidence – that Alexander was a 'strong eugenicist'.¹¹²

Staring does not quote the passage where Alexander says nurture is more important than nature (eugenicists would have this the other way round):

For despite the many thousand years during which some form of civilization has been in existence, no child has yet been born into the world with hereditary instincts tending to fit it for any particular society. Its language and manners, for instance, are modelled entirely on the speech and habits of those who have charge of it. The child descended from a hundred kings will speak the language and adopt the manners of the East End should it be reared among these associations; and the son of an Australian aboriginal would speak the English tongue and with certain limitations behave as a civilized child if brought up with English people.¹¹³

Staring, in his usual sensationalist writing style, claims that Alexander's evolutionary views and eugenics 'has never alarmed Alexander Technique teacher training course Directors, Alexander Technique teachers, and Alexander Technique followers.'¹¹⁴ Staring omits to say that these issues were critically addressed in a two part article in an Alexander Technique magazine in 1990–91.¹¹⁵ Elsewhere Staring lists this article in a bibliography, so he does know of its existence.

CALEB WILLIAMS SALEEBY'S EUGENICS

Staring is convinced that Alexander's eugenic views originated from Caleb Williams Saleeby's eugenics, again only on the basis of some similarities in wordings. (In those days topics such as evolution, race culture, eugenics were written about and debated by so many people that it would be impossible to guess as to the people who influenced Alexander on this subject.) But what does Alexander mean by 'eugenics'? Staring is not certain: 'The core of Alexander's eugenics in *Man's Supreme Inheritance* seems to center around the phrases 'adaptability' and 'man's power of adaptability'.¹¹⁶

Staring goes on to list the pages where Saleeby used the word 'adaptability' in his 1908 book, (i.e. pp. 4, 22, 59–60, 106–107, 127, 200, and

249).¹¹⁷ From this flimsy evidence Staring is certain that Alexander's usage of 'adaptability' originates from Saleeby and writes that Alexander 'appropriated' this phrasing from Saleeby.¹¹⁸

The concept of human and animal 'adaptability' was widely discussed in the context of evolution. Even before Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species* naturalists were observing and discussing how adaptable animals were to their environment.¹¹⁹ After Darwin such discussions accelerated, in evolution and in the discussions of the implications of natural selection for humans and human society. For example, Herbert Spencer who was widely read in the 19th century, refers to the principle of adaptation several times in his *First Principles* (1863) and his *The Principles of Biology* vols. 1–2 (1866).

Also, because Alexander used the words 'earnest', 'earnestly', Staring concludes that Alexander is addressing eugenists, and specifically, 'in all probability' Saleeby.¹²⁰ To reach such conclusion based on the observation that Saleeby and Alexander both used the words 'adaptability' and 'earnest' is palpably absurd. It is certainly not forensic linguistics.

Staring only gives two options for Alexander's and Saaleby's 'lines of thought' being 'astonishingly' similar: 'These are the options: Alexander comprehensively "borrowed" from Saleeby (as ever: without acknowledgement), or Saleeby edited Alexander's book and/or (even) ghost-wrote large parts of the book.'¹²¹

Later, in a separate article, Staring states this as an undisputed fact:

English eugenicist and founder of the Eugenics Education Society Caleb W. Saleeby – as Editor responsible for the 'New Library of Medicine' at Alexander's publisher Methuen in London (*Eugenical News*, 1916) – had exclusively aided Alexander in publishing *Man's Supreme Inheritance* in 1910.¹²²

There is no evidence that Saleeby 'exclusively aided' Alexander in publishing his book or that they even met. That Saleeby was an editor at Methuen which published Alexander's *MSI* does not turn Alexander into a copyist or a puppet of Saleeby; it does not mean that Alexander was incapable of independent thought, ideas and aims.

Upset at the fact that two US professors (who both trained in the Alexander Technique) do not see Alexander's *MSI* as a eugenics tract, Staring writes: 'Perhaps, one day, U.S. philosophers and educators will begin to use their intelligence, and recognize "Alexander's ideas" as Saleeby's –

appropriated by Alexander.¹²³ Staring appears to struggle with the fact that other people are reaching different conclusions.¹²⁴

Staring makes much of the fact that a chapter in Alexander's *MSI* is called 'Race culture and the training of children' but fails to mention that almost all of this chapter is about early malnourishment of children and a criticism of an educational method called 'free expression'.

If you study Saleeby's books, e.g., his 1909 *Parenthood and Race Culture*, which is on eugenics, on physical exercise, you can see that Alexander is in fact parroting Saleeby in *Man's Supreme Inheritance*. The first edition of *Man's Supreme Inheritance* is not on the Alexander Technique at all. It is on evolution, on eugenics. Because Alexander had the idea, if you help people change their habits of inhibiting, then they can have better children. In fact, that is what Alexander is saying in *Man's Supreme Inheritance*.¹²⁵

Saleeby's *Parenthood and Race Culture* is fundamentally on the importance of the health of the parents (especially the mother), the freedom to select whom to marry, the potential of every child (almost irrespective of parents), and that the most important feature of bringing up children is love. Alexander is not 'parroting' Saleeby as there are very few similarities; in fact, it is obvious how different Alexander's approach is compared with Saleeby's. The only thing they appear to have in common is the recommendation of training women for motherhood. (I could not find any reference to the subject of changing 'habits of inhibiting' in Saleeby's book, in fact, he does not use the word 'inhibit' in this book, although he does in some articles.)

Since Saleeby's *Parenthood and Race Culture* is a long book I have made some notes of the more salient points in Appendix 3 to which the reader is referred for more details.

ALEXANDER ON EUGENICS

Staring accuses Alexander of seeing his method as 'applied race culture, that is applied eugenics'. On paper, to the uninitiated, this sounds frightening, but Staring omits to say that what Alexander means by this is recommending educating the individual's reasoning capacity in the use of him- or herself. But that would sound reasonable and therefore defeat Staring's purpose which is to implicate all teachers of the Technique and their teaching as eugenics.

Staring spends a very long time on Alexander's 1910 *MSI*, interpreting everything he possibly can as eugenics on behalf of Alexander. To see

everything as eugenics Staring's argument gets increasingly convoluted and far-fetched.

Staring claims that only he understands Alexander, he several times makes references to Alexander teachers 'not understanding' Alexander. For example Staring writes, 'It is rather strange, to say the least of it, that since 1931, when the first prospective Alexander Technique teachers were trained, not a single Alexander Technique teacher (ever) came up with a correct analysis of Alexander's first book.'¹²⁶ Staring several times makes it clear that it is only Staring who understands Alexander, no one else does, including friends and family and teachers who trained with Alexander. In my some 35 years of discussing Alexander's books and texts with other Alexander Technique teachers, I have not come across anyone who is claiming that Alexander's purpose is eugenics. (Whereas almost everybody agrees on the racist part, but that was addressed before Staring wrote about it.) Staring is tilting at windmills.

4. Attacks on the AT community

STARING'S SELF-CONTRADICTIONARY ATTACK ON THE ALEXANDER COMMUNITY

Staring attacks the Alexander community 1. for not properly researching its origins,¹²⁷ and 2. for being obsessive about its founder to the point of being a cult. So if the Alexander community researches Alexander and his history, then it can be accused of 2. If it does not, then it can be accused of 1. Either way the Alexander community is damned.

STARING'S ATTACK FOR A LACK OF ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY

Staring writes that 'There still exists no standardized internationally accepted Alexander Technique teacher training course core curriculum covering basic psychology, anatomy and physiology.' And that 'this state of affairs forms an obstacle in the path to further professionalization'. And that this leads to 'a block to communication with medical professionals'.¹²⁸

The Alexander Technique is a specialised skill for which knowledge of anatomy, physiology and psychology is useful, but not essential. Alexander did not use anatomy, physiology and psychology in his lessons, and yet he convinced many doctors and some scientists of the value of his technique. The ATEAM study published in 2008 in the *British Medical Journal* does not need to refer to anatomy, physiology and psychology for its investigation of the Alexander Technique's benefit for people with chronic low back pain.¹²⁹ The relevance of anatomy and physiology in the Alexander Technique is still debated. But Staring, though no Alexander teacher, sets himself up as the judge of what should be taught in Alexander teacher training courses, and what constitutes professionalism.

STARING'S ATTACK FOR 'NOT REACHING OUT TO MEDICAL SCIENCE'

Staring attacks the Alexander Technique community for not reaching out to medical science, completely disregarding the many attempts which were done during and after Alexander's lifetime. (Staring contradicts himself when he later writes on Alexander's failure to 'impact' medical science.¹³⁰) During Alexander's lifetime Alexander and several doctors wrote in medical journals, drawing attention to the Technique, and positively encouraged research in this field. Dr Wilfred Barlow wrote several letters and papers for medical journals in the 1940s and 1950s, and conducted

his own research into the Technique.¹³¹ F. P. Jones conducted research in the 1950s and 1960s,¹³² and later others, and this is well documented.

STARING'S ATTACK FOR LACK OF 'PROFESSIONALISATION'

Staring attacks the Alexander Technique community for presenting 'obstacles to professionalisation', which is assuming that the Alexander Technique is not professional. Staring does not define what professionalisation means.

STARING'S CLAIM THAT THE AT IS CULT-LIKE

Staring writes of Alexander Technique teachers as follows:

They are perceived as belonging to a sect or cult (Becker, 1976; Staring, 2005) with its own closed, estranged vocabulary, and its own, also closed citation community, while they are never worried about the lack of critical transparent communication with scientists, pedagogues, physicians and physiotherapy practitioners.¹³³

Staring quotes Ernest Becker's *The Denial of Death* as evidence of being perceived as 'belonging to a sect or cult'. What Becker wrote in 1973 was a passing reference to the Alexander Technique, quoted here in full:

Even reconditioning body-therapies like that of the once-noted F. M. Alexander today liberally sprinkle their therapy with ideas from Zen and cite their affinity to people like Gurdjieff. There seems no way to get the body to reintegrate without giving it some kind of magical sustaining power; at least, there is no better way to win full discipleship to a religion than by making it frankly religious.¹³⁴

As evidence of this Becker cites Alexander's *The Use of the Self (UoS)* and G. C. Bowden's *F. Matthias Alexander and the Creative Advance of the Individual*. *UoS* contains no reference to Zen or Gurdjieff or any mysticism. Bowden's book though contains plenty of such references. He was an enthusiastic pupil of the Technique who wrote on the similarities – as he saw them – between the Technique and Eastern and Western religions and mysticism. His book, *F. Matthias Alexander and the Creative Advance of the Individual* (1965)¹³⁵ has not and is not considered an exposition of the Technique. It is rarely ever referred to, and it has long since been out of print. It really seems strange to quote a 1973 book which in turn is relying on a 1965 book by someone who was not a teacher of the Technique,

as evidence that the Technique is being perceived (note the present tense used by Staring) as 'belonging to a sect or cult'. Becker's book is not an examination of cults and sects, let alone religion.

Staring uses Becker to argue that there is 'a fusing of the Alexander Technique practice with excessive, *quasi*-religious adoration of its putative founder.'¹³⁶ Becker does not say that; he writes the above, based on Bowden's book and *UoS*. Omit Becker and you only have Staring referring to himself as evidence. Staring writes in his 2005 book that 'More than once, observers have attributed sect-like characteristics to Alexander's followers and Alexander Technique practitioners.'¹³⁷ ('More than once' means Becker and Staring himself. No other reference is given.) He then goes on to interpret Becker's statement, but he does not mention anyone else.

With reference to Becker's observation that disciples often display a picture of their guru, Staring purports that Alexander teachers frequently prominently display pictures of Alexander in their teaching room.¹³⁸ Do they indeed? I much doubt it. Since there is no research on this it remains a postulate. Staring is struggling to come up with evidence that the Alexander Technique is having a '*quasi*-religious adoration of its putative founder'.

Staring accuses the Alexander Technique community for being 'sect-like' or '*quasi*-religious', without providing further evidence. It is difficult to address these accusations since these made-up terms are not defined.

5. Staring's methodology

I. Undermining Alexander's character

ALEXANDER'S GRANDPARENTS

Staring writes that 'Alexander denied his grandparents' past'¹³⁹ because Alexander said he was of Scottish descent (when, in fact, his family originated from Wiltshire).¹⁴⁰

It is difficult to imagine what Alexander would have gained by claiming his family to come from Scotland rather than Wiltshire. Besides, is it not possible that Alexander himself was misinformed? Alexander was the son of a farmer and a blacksmith in a rough and pioneering Tasmania. He left school early and he left home at 16. His family's ancestry was probably not uppermost on his or his parents' mind. The fact is that we don't know. But by writing 'denied' Staring is saying this was a deliberate lie on Alexander's part.

Staring quotes Cunningham et. al. for writing 'Alexander felt ashamed of his ancestry and he lied about it.'¹⁴¹ The article by C. Cunningham, et al.,¹⁴² is called 'Dewey, Women, and Weirdoes', where Alexander is one of the 'weirdoes'. The section referred to is 'Shared explorations of body-mind: The reciprocal influence of Dewey and F. M. Alexander' by Craig A. Cunningham. Cunningham is writing there is 'evidence that Alexander was actively homosexual' (I have never come across this suggestion, let alone any evidence). Either way it is disturbing that Cunningham is using Alexander's sexuality (whatever it was) as part of his argument that Alexander was a 'weirdo'. Cunningham furthermore accuses Alexander of 'hucksterism and exaggeration', having 'a lack of tact in interpersonal relationship' (what is the evidence for this?), a temper which would 'greatly intimidate employees, associates and even patients [sic]'. Cunningham goes to to accuse Alexander of having 'unusual personal

* This is of course assuming that people in London in the early 20th century would assume that an Australian by birth is the child or grandchild or great-grandchild of convicts. As some convicts – around 5% – also came from Scotland, claiming Scottish descent would not necessarily discharge one from suspicion. It is also assuming that that people in London in the early 20th century would castigate people of Australian descent; neither Staring nor Cunningham provides any evidence for this.

notions and habits revolving around gambling, dining habits and money'. Unusual dining habits? I have never heard about this before. Money? What is Cunningham referring to? Cunningham provides no reference or source for all these accusations, but uses these allegations to feel justified in calling Alexander a 'weirdo'.¹⁴³ Cunningham aside, Staring is referring to someone who claims, without providing any evidence whatsoever, that Alexander felt ashamed of his ancestry and lied about it.

ALEXANDER'S LACK OF GIVING EXACT REFERENCES

In his early writings Alexander did not always give references and in some cases copied or paraphrased from other people. Staring attacks Alexander for this: 'Is quoting from a book without delivering exact references not plagiarism?'.¹⁴⁴ This is correct by today's standards. By the late 19th century's standards, in various advertising flyers and pamphlets, standards were different. Staring admits this himself in a lecture given six years later, saying, 'Borrowing from other people and presenting it as coming from himself was not so uncommon at that time, especially in newspaper advertisements to promote one's teaching practice.'¹⁴⁵

It is possible to berate Alexander for – in various flyers and pamphlets 1895–1906 – not giving full and complete references to phrasings borrowed from books, but this has to be seen in context: Alexander was largely self-educated, he was not an academic, and he was not aiming for a career in writing or for literary exchanges. Later – probably after some advice from people more educated than himself – he would give references for his quotes.

ALEXANDER'S AND GLOVER'S PLAY

Somehow Staring wants to cast doubt on Alexander's character because he did not talk about a play (*A Question of Time*, a minor one-act humorous sketch) he co-wrote with Evelyn Glover in 1908. Staring writes: 'Alexander never told his students about the existence of this play.'¹⁴⁶ And elsewhere: 'It is striking, perhaps ostentatious, that since that time Alexander never mentioned his and Glover's *A Question of Time* in his stories about Welch, or while telling other anecdotes, and only once referred to Evelyn Glover in his writings.'¹⁴⁷

Somehow Staring wants to cast doubt on Alexander's character because he did not talk about this trifle of a play. But why should Alexander tell everybody about everything he ever did in his life? Is it not likely that Alexander did not consider it important? Or that he may have mentioned it, but his 'followers' did not think it important and so did not write about

it?¹⁴⁸ (Alexander also wrote a poem in the 1890s, ‘Dream of Matthias the Burgomaster’, which he also did not talk about. And why should he?)

The fact that Alexander did not mention or write about this play is used by Staring to cast aspersions on Alexander. Such tactic is also used with Glover: ‘. . . Evelyn Glover also never mentioned *A Question of Time* and only once referred to Alexander in her writings.’ What Staring does not mention is that Glover’s existing writings is mainly fiction (a few plays and some stories). Why would she refer to the play or Alexander in her writings? Staring is using the lack of written evidence to insinuate something sinister.

STARING’S FAULT FINDING WITH ALEXANDER

Staring always highlights any mistake, however minor, Alexander may have made in his writings. For example Staring berates Alexander for misspelling Magnus’s first name in a letter to a newspaper in 1932, writing indignantly, ‘Not only did he “misspell” Magnus’s first name, Randolph instead of Rudolf, . . .’¹⁴⁹

This is of no consequence to the newspaper letter, but it testifies to Staring’s incessant fault finding with Alexander; any fault, however small, has to be noted, recorded and displayed. The purpose appears to be to throw doubt on everything Alexander wrote and to undermine Alexander’s credibility. However, all Staring can find are tedious minor mistakes and in the process Staring sometimes gets it wrong himself. (See ‘Staring’s mistakes’ below.)

Staring also accuses Alexander of not correcting newspaper reports which described him as a doctor or a professor.

‘Yet, for all we know, Alexander more often behaved like a physician, and he did not object when the press insinuated he was a “Dr.” At least, he never corrected the media.’

And, in another episode:

‘On both occasions there were no reports from Alexander that he did not hold medical degrees. Diverse books, journals, magazines and newspapers would later call Alexander “Dr.” or even “Professor” . . . No journal, however, or magazine, or newspaper ever printed a correction by Alexander.’¹⁵⁰

It may well have been the case that Alexander did write to the newspapers in questions, correcting them, but that they did not publish a

correction because they did not consider it significant enough to print. Or that Alexander considered such mistakes immaterial. We don't know, but Staring uses the lack of evidence to slyly impugn Alexander's character.

STARING'S MISTAKES

Genuine mistakes do happen and Staring makes them too.

For example, in the 1932 newspaper letter referred to above,¹⁵¹ Staring rebukes Alexander for not giving a correct reference: 'N.B. Alexander stated his quote stems from page 40; however it is in page 57.'¹⁵² Alexander's reference is, however, correct: he is quoting from the 1918 Methuen edition of *Man's Supreme Inheritance*. (The Dutton and Chaterson 1941 editions have the quote on page 57, but these did not exist in 1932.)

In 1996 Staring quotes Alexander for writing, 'When the position is assumed, it is further necessary for each person to bring about the proper widening of the spine and the adequate widening of the back.'¹⁵³ This is of course nonsense as Alexander never referred to the 'widening of the spine', he wrote 'lengthening of the spine'. (Staring repeats this misquotation in his 2005 thesis.¹⁵⁴)

Staring quotes Alexander for having written: 'This psycho-physical factor also constitutes a steady and firm condition which enables the Directive Agents of the sphere of consciousness to discriminate the action of the kinæsthetic and motion agents which it must maintain any interference or discontinuity.'¹⁵⁵ Here Staring is omitting a word ('without') which changes the meaning. It should read: ' . . . which it must maintain without any interference or discontinuity.'

The above mistakes by Staring are not terribly important; mistakes happen, but whenever Alexander may have made a mistake, such as misquoting or not giving a correct date, then Staring either assumes it is a deliberate act, intended to mislead the reader, or to throw doubt on Alexander's writings in general.

Incidentally, commenting on a book review of *The Use of the Self* by William Soskin in 1932, Staring states that the review was written by the 'famed research psychologist William Soskin'.¹⁵⁶ I am unable to establish whether the book reviewer writing in the *New York Evening Post* in January 1932 (and who later wrote reviews in the *New York Herald Tribune*) is the same person as the psychologist William Soskin. The latter was born in 1916 and so would have to have been prodigious to write book reviews for a New York newspaper at the age of 18. As Staring does not give a source for this information it is not possible to verify his claim.

II. Dismissing first-hand reports and other evidence

ALL OTHER BIOGRAPHIES THAN STARING'S ARE HAGIOGRAPHIES

Staring cannot accept that other biographers reach a different conclusion or even that biographies are not considering early influences on Alexander, no matter how dispassionate their biography may be. You don't get more matter-of-fact and dry than Jackie Evans' biography:¹⁵⁷ it is almost only a year-by-year list of what Alexander did and when. Evans makes no judgements and there is hardly an adjective in her book; occasionally she might say that something was 'good news' or 'bad news', but there is nothing to even indicate whether Alexander was a good man, a great man, or anything about his technique. However, for Staring, Evans' biography is still a hagiography simply because it does not contain the criticism of Alexander which Staring so deeply and desparately yearns for.

Staring's criteria for what constitutes a biography and what is a hagiography are inconsistent and conflicting. For more details see appendix 2: 'A brief overview of the books classified by Staring as hagiographies'.

CRITICISMS OF ALEXANDER DELIBERATELY OMITTED BY STARING

Staring is not referencing or discussing much criticism of Alexander by people who actually knew him. If you comb the Alexander Technique literature you'll be hard put to find anyone who revered Alexander. Probably Dr Mungo Douglas (whom nobody reads today) and Louise Morgan. Perhaps Margaret Goldie, but we have only second-hand reports of this. Lulie Westfeldt and Wilfred Barlow were critical. Walter Carrington and Marjory Barlow openly admitted that Alexander had his faults. Patrick Macdonald is quiet on Alexander. F. P. Jones's biography reveals between the lines that Alexander might not have been an easy character. Several people fell out with Alexander during his lifetime; and relations with John Dewey cooled. It is very difficult to find any evidence of 'hero-worshipping' of Alexander during his lifetime beyond three or four people. And this trend continues: today the criticism of Alexander outweighs any admiration for Alexander. It is fashionable to criticise Alexander; after all there is no risk and everything to gain: it exhibits your credentials as an independent-thinking person, capable of having your own opinions (whereas if you admire Alexander you risk being classified as a mindless, gullible, guru-worshipping idoliser).

Staring has to omit all these criticisms because otherwise they would undermine his argument that the Alexander Technique community is 'idolizing' and 'fetishizing' Alexander.

POSSIBLE INFLUENCES ON ALEXANDER IGNORED BY STARING

Staring's methodology is limited to a certain kind of literature – medical, voice, breathing – and excluding other possible influences. There is no doubt that Alexander talked about his technique with his pupils, which included doctors (Alexander socialised with many of his pupils). We know from later books that people would read his manuscript and offer feedback and give suggestions (including the misguided advice that Alexander's primary control equated Rudolph Magnus's central control). There is no reason not to assume that Alexander, through conversations, received suggestions and feedback in the early days as well. There is plenty of evidence that Alexander changed his vocabulary, partly as he developed the concepts of the Technique, partly in response to how pupils and readers reacted to his wording.

A mere quote or reference in Alexander's writings is not by itself proof that Alexander had closely studied the source. Take the example of Alexander quoting from J. G. Frazer's *The Golden Bough*, in *MSI*.¹⁵⁸ Nobody – not even Staring – is suggesting that Alexander read the entire 3 volume (or the 12 volume) edition of *The Golden Bough* in order to obtain that quote. Alexander probably heard of this quote, or saw it quoted, or someone suggested it to him in connection with a discussion of the theme of his book. Alexander also quotes Herbert Spencer who wrote many thick volumes; again no one, to my knowledge, is suggesting that Alexander would have read all of Spencer and then picked out one or two quotes.¹⁵⁹ Or that Alexander read Baron Tennyson's memoirs of Lord Tennyson because he quotes from it.¹⁶⁰ Or F. W. H. Myers's book *Human Personality*, or Münsterberg, or several other books mentioned in Alexander's writings. Like Frazer, Spencer was probably widely quoted as he was popular at the time, and Alexander heard of these quotes. This process may indeed have been the origin of many of Alexander's quotations – and even of ideas. This scenario is more likely as we don't have to assume that Alexander did nothing but read stacks of books. However, if you were to make assumptions about what books Alexander had read, then one would start with the books Alexander actually quotes. Staring ignores this material in favour of a method of surmising what books Alexander *might* have read based on shallow similarities in wording.

III. Only relying on existing literature

Staring is conducting a purely textual analysis where everything is interpreted according to written sources, and there is no allowance for anything else, such as people who knew Alexander personally for many years.

For example, Eric David McCormack's 1958 thesis includes many interviews of people who knew Alexander, conducted by letter. McCormack cites a pupil of Alexander, Horace Kallen (who started having lessons with Alexander shortly after 1918), for stating that Alexander read William James and was inspired by James's concept of 'ideo-motor action'. Although this was in writing, by a person who knew Alexander personally, Staring dismisses it by saying: 'But McCormack also stated that he had this information from hearsay. Since Alexander did not refer to James, this is only speculation and arbitrary.'¹⁶¹ (Staring repeats this elsewhere,^{162 163} and adds that 'Alexander may have read James, but he certainly made no use of James's ideas.'¹⁶⁴) McCormack does not write it is 'hearsay', but that Horace Kallen knew Alexander well.¹⁶⁵ (By the way, Alexander does refer twice to William James in *CCC*.^{166 167})

ASSUMING ALL ALEXANDER'S IDEAS DERIVE FROM LITERATURE

The above examples of Staring speculating as to the origin of Alexander's procedures and language appear typical of Staring's approach: to find out who used an exercise or a term before Alexander did, to claim that therefore Alexander read this person, and to claim that Alexander appropriated the term with the same meaning or the exercise in the same way. As Alexander could not have known in advance whether a book or an article would influence him, he would have had to have read a prodigious amount of literature. It assumes that Alexander was incapable of developing any ideas or approach himself.

This is one example of Staring's list of influences:

Much of the content and language suggests that Alexander was likely influenced by various performing arts pedagogic and functional anatomical tests in addition to the blurb from Huxley's 1888 *Lessons in Elementary Physiology*. Those probable influences include Dr Frenkel's 1902 *The Treatment of Tabetic Ataxia by Means of Systematic Exercise*; Dr Bennett's 1907 *The Re-education of Co-ordination Movements: with special reference to Locomotor Ataxy*; Saleeby's 1904 essay on volition, movement, and inhibition; Clouston's 1906 *The Hygiene of Mind*; and Worcester, McComb and Coriat's 1908 views on psychic and motor re-education in *Religion and Medicine*.¹⁶⁸

And another:

We have seen that Alexander – in his 1909 pamphlet on ‘kinæsthetic systems’ – had developed a ‘theory’, based on William Carpenter’s insights in hypnosis, the views of Mathias Roth on self-straightening exercises, Bernard Roth’s view on re-education exercises, Caleb Williams Saleeby’s theory of ‘volition’ and ‘inhibition’, and perhaps James Mark Baldwin’s ideas concerning ‘ideo-motor suggestion’ which were based on his understanding of hypnosis . . .¹⁶⁹

If the reader to this adds all the other possible influences Staring mentions in his books (see ‘Staring’s multiple assumptions’ below), the reader will end up with a very long hypothecial list of where Alexander had ‘cobbled’ together his technique.

A list which include books Alexander could not even read: Staring quotes the Dutch elocution teacher Aafje Kuijpers and her 1898 book for similarities to Alexander’s inhibition and non-doing in breathing.¹⁷⁰ And French literature, as Staring also speculates that Alexander read Michel Dentz’s *Le Traitement Manuel Suédois dans les Maladies internes* because ‘although Alexander could not read French, he could “read” the photographs in Dentz’s book.’¹⁷¹

By this logic Alexander would not have had time to do anything but scouring other people’s literature in order to find just those bits which constitute the Alexander Technique.

Staring is so obsessed with possible similarities between Alexander’s writings and other people’s writings, that if anything remotely looks like what Alexander wrote, then Alexander stole it from them.¹⁷² And if the similarity is rather weak, if it looks like Alexander is not copying, then Staring assumes that Alexander intended to copy but did not understand properly the other person’s writings, or that Alexander ‘transformed’ it.¹⁷³ Using this strategy there is of course no way Alexander is allowed to be the originator of a single independent thought.

STARING’S THEORY THAT ALEXANDER KNEW THE CONTENTS OF ARTICLES BEFORE THEY WERE PUBLISHED

Whenever someone had published something remotely resembling what Alexander later writes about then Staring assumes that Alexander read it and subsequently plagiarised them. Staring is pursuing this line of argument to the preposterousness of claiming that Alexander knew the context of an article *before* it was published, because otherwise Alexander

could not have copied from it. When Major Austin publishes an article three months *after* Alexander had published an article which bears many similarities to Alexander's article then Staring suggests that Alexander knew the contents of this article *before* it was published:

In fact, it appears that Austin had had knowledge of the practice of Alexander's method, directly or indirectly. Knowing, however, that it can take a long time before an article is published after it is accepted for publication in a specialist journal, we may ask ourselves: did Alexander know the contents of Austin's article, and did he use the manuscript of Austin's article when writing his 1907 booklet! Austin may have finished his 1907 article as early as January 1907!¹⁷⁴

And later this supposition is turned into a 'fact': 'It is highly likely that Alexander knew Austin's letter to the BMJ! He *never* disclosed this fact!'¹⁷⁵

There is no evidence as to when Austin finished his article or when it was submitted, and there is nothing to suggest that Alexander should somehow have had inside information on forthcoming articles and so know of the contents of Austin's article.

Note that Staring never extends the same possibility to other people. And at no point does he allow for the possibility that some people, who knew of Alexander's teaching, wrote about it before Alexander wrote about it (e.g. Scanes Spicer). It is a pattern in Staring's writings that the benefit of the doubt is given to everybody else but Alexander.

IV. Assuming Alexander completely changed technique

Because Staring is trying to reverse-engineer what Alexander taught only from Alexander's pamphlets and brochures pre-1910, he ends up proposing that Alexander taught one thing before 1910 and then completely changed and taught something new after 1911.¹⁷⁶ (See also 'Scanes Spicer' above.)

Alexander teachers see no incongruence between the early writings and later writings. When you know the Alexander Technique the gradual development of Alexander's thinking and terminology over the years in the early writings are obvious, becoming gradually clearer and better explicated. This was a trait of Alexander which continued later in his

books and is well documented.* But Staring does not allow for character traits. There is nothing to suggest by anybody who knew Alexander or by a reading of Alexander's letters that he was an incorrigible liar which Staring makes him out to be. It was not a character trait of his to lie. (This is not to say that there are no character traits one might criticise, e.g. for example his need to be in control. This trait explains why Alexander was guarded about describing his technique, because he did not want other people to steal his ideas. In Staring's analysis this trait cannot be allowed as it would explain why Alexander is not giving away too many details about his technique in his early writings.)

V. Staring's multiple assumptions

Staring makes multiple assumptions throughout his book (many, many more than any of the biographies he describes as hagiographies). Staring's writings are full of phrases such as 'appears', 'might', 'probably', 'perhaps', 'infer', when it comes to guessing as to whom Alexander might not only have read, but also copied from. Some examples:

- 'It appears that Alexander knew the contents of Scanes Spicer's March 1908 letter to Dr Leeper in July 1908.'¹⁷⁸
- 'Leeper had – in all probability – brought to Alexander a copy of the 1905 edition of *The Syllabus of Physical Exercises for Public Elementary Schools*, . . .'¹⁷⁹
- 'We may infer that Alexander and Leeper exchange views on the syllabus...'¹⁸⁰
- 'Alexander's July 1908 flyer appears to be the result of these discussions.'¹⁸¹
- 'It is highly likely that Alexander knew Austin's letter to the *BMJ*! He *never* disclosed this fact!'¹⁸² [Notice here how Staring turns a 'highly likely' into a 'fact'. Does it not occur to Staring that perhaps Alexander

* Alexander made it clear in 1910 that his writings were not finished, final, complete statements on his technique, because he continued to make discoveries and develop his vocabulary.

1. I do not profess to offer a finally perfected theory . . . I say frankly that we are only at the beginnings of understanding . . .

3. I wish it to be clearly understood that this treatise is not finally definitive.¹⁷⁷

does not ‘disclose’ this because it was not a fact; he did not know Austin’s letter?]

- ‘Alexander’s Butlerian understanding of the inheritability of habits, and his phrasing of this understanding in the above citations, might stem from Lloyd Morgan’s *Animal Life and Intelligence*.’¹⁸³
- ‘Perhaps Alexander too was influenced by Arnold’s cultural theory’¹⁸⁴
- ‘. . . it is very probable that this chapter [fourth chapter in the 1910 *MSJ*] contains references to the prolific “New Thought” writer William Walter Atkinson . . .’¹⁸⁵
- ‘It is possible that Alexander was (also) influenced by the physician who introduced the term “depression” into English medical literature on melancholia, hypochondria and neuresthenia: Dr Adolphus Edward Bridger . . .’¹⁸⁶
- ‘Another likely theory of learning which Alexander could have had in mind is the theory on playing by Karl Groos . . .’¹⁸⁷
- ‘Alexander closely paraphrased [Dr Susanna Way] Dodd’s views.’¹⁸⁸
- ‘Now we know that Alexander was conversant with the singing pedagogy literature of his time, we can infer that the concluding part of his January 1906 pamphlet *Mr F Matthias Alexander’s New Method of Respiratory and Vocal Re-Education* is also based on the writings of Aikin and Shakespeare – without acknowledgement.’¹⁸⁹
- ‘Alexander’s third claim indicates that he had begun studying Scanes Spicer’s work, and in all probability had discovered Rev. Charles Gib’s and Dr J. F. Halls Dally’s *Vocal Science & Art . . .*, Dr. Arvid Kellgren’s *The Technic of Ling’s System of Manual Treatment as Applicable to Surgery and Medicine*, Dr. Edgar Cyriax’s *The Elements of Kellgren’s Manual Treatment*, or even Michel Dentz’s *Le Traitement Manuel Suédois dans les Maladies internes . . .* (for, although Alexander could not read French, he could ‘read’ the photographs in Dentz’s book).’¹⁹⁰ [Dentz’s book was published in 1912, the same year Alexander published *CC* which Staring claims is based on all these other books.]

The above listing of Staring’s suppositions is far from complete. Then these assumptions later become ‘fact’ by using the phrase ‘we have seen’:

We have seen that Alexander – in his 1909 pamphlet on ‘kinæsthetic systems’ – had developed a ‘theory’, based on William Carpenter’s insights in hypnosis, the views of Mathias Roth on self-straightening exercises, Bernard Roth’s view on re-education exercises, Caleb Williams Saleeby’s theory of ‘volition’ and ‘inhibition’, and perhaps James Mark Baldwin’s ideas

concerning 'ideo-motor suggestion', which was based on his understanding of hypnosis. . . .¹⁹¹

There is no evidence for Alexander being influenced by these people (we know Alexander knew Scanes Spicer and Leeper, but what they talked about and shared is unknown). In addition, Alexander may have read them, but that does not mean he was influenced by them. We know that Alexander was familiar with Bernard Roth's exercises which he thought were 'crude' and 'babaric' – hardly evidence for being influenced by them. Staring is obsessed with guessing as to where Alexander had his ideas from because, in Staring's world, Alexander cannot even use words such as 'volition' and 'inhibition' – although these were very common concepts at the time – without having read and used somebody else's concept of these words (Staring suggests Saaleby for Alexander's origin of these terms).

The entire structure of Staring's approach to Alexander appears to consist of multiple assumptions; Staring assumes

1. that Alexander's writings were completely up-to-date descriptions of his technique and how he taught it. If Alexander did not describe inhibition and direction, then Alexander did not teach it. If Alexander did not describe hands-on work, then Alexander did not use hands-on work, and so on;
2. that Alexander was a liar, to his pupils, to his friends, to his family, because he did not develop his technique himself. A lie which Alexander would have had to have kept up for the rest of his life. And that only Staring has discovered that Alexander was lying;
3. that Alexander had made no original discoveries whatsoever, anything remotely original was only misunderstanding other people's writings;
4. that Alexander had plagiarised Scanes Spicer;
5. in addition to 4., that Alexander had all the trouble and expense of publishing two articles in which he accuses Scanes Spicer of plagiarism, (even though Staring cannot list any benefit for Alexander to do this), and that Scanes Spicer did not respond to these accusations only because he was 'a gentleman';
6. that Alexander read an enormous amount of medical and voice and breathing books and articles, also consulting foreign literature in languages he could not read;

7. that out of everything Alexander read he selected just those bits which just happen to make up a unified whole, and judiciously ignoring everything else;
8. that since all this material was available for everybody to read anybody could have put together the same whole which is now Alexander Technique but somehow it was only Alexander who did it.

The above assumptions would all have to be true for Staring's house-of-cards argumentation.

Every person who knew Alexander and every other historian of the Alexander Technique has a different, more simple, and – to the best of my knowledge and judgement – more in accordance with the evidence and with Alexander's independent character: that the technique evolved gradually, starting with some fundamental key discoveries Alexander made himself.

6. Conclusion

Whereas F. M. Alexander biographers are careful in making judgements about Alexander, Jeroen Staring's writings on Alexander and the Alexander Technique have no such reservations. Staring is cavalier in his attempts to extrapolate what Alexander taught from Alexander's early writings and as these contain sparse information on Alexander's praxis, Staring engages in fantastical, far-fetched conjectures as to what Alexander taught according to descriptions of *other* people's teaching which Alexander *might* have read based on the faintest of similarities in wording. This leads Staring to present the view that Alexander taught a hodge-podge of methods until 1911 and then completely changed and taught something entirely new from 1911 onwards.

The overall effect of Staring's writings reads like prosecution documents for the sole purpose of finding Alexander guilty on all counts. The conclusion is foregone: no mitigating circumstances allowed, and no allowance for mistakes or for a work in progress. Staring wants the reader to believe that Alexander consciously and premeditatingly set out to lie, to deceive, and to pursue his own unscientific agenda. (At least Staring admits that his premise is that Alexander is a conman: 'Loisette [a teacher of a memory system in Australia in the 1890s] was a con man. Alexander befriended him and learned the tricks of conning.'¹⁹²) In Staring's world Alexander has no original thought of his own, is incapable of having his own ideas: everything Alexander taught was stolen from somebody else according to Staring.

However, Staring is so weighed down by the volume of what he considers evidence against Alexander that he misses that much of this evidence actually exonerates Alexander from his charges of plagiarism. When Staring quotes at length from a doctor or a singing teacher with the purpose of showing how Alexander got this exercise, or that word, from this or that person, he fails to see how different Alexander's technique is. These long quotes, contrary to Staring's intentions, demonstrate that Alexander was teaching something substantially different. However, by purporting to show that Alexander was teaching something he clearly was not, Staring has created a straw man which he is liberally attacking. Staring's work is a diatribe against Alexander and the Alexander community. Staring's books and articles read like such an enormous tome of score-settling that

one cannot help wonder what score he has to settle with Alexander, his work, and with the Alexander Technique today.

Despite so many deficiencies Jeroen Staring has to be congratulated on having discovered material of relevance to the history of the Alexander Technique, such as texts by Alexander, Glover and Alexander's play, reports in newspapers court cases involving Alexander in 1908 and 1909, and similar sources. The Alexander Technique community is indebted to Staring for his diligent research.

Postscript

THE ZEITGEIST AND TROPE OF ALEXANDER'S TIME

There is a worthwhile study in examining the zeitgeist of Alexander's time, but Staring's writings fall short on this point. Staring only considers voice and breathing books, medical texts, and discussions of eugenics, somehow assuming that Alexander restricted his reading to just these topics or was only influenced by these topics. Other topics which also might have influenced Alexander's thinking could have been the new fields of psychology (Wilhelm Wundt, William James), progressive education, and self-help books, but to mention a few. At the same time we know that Alexander was fond of the theatre, would see plays, and so it would be instructive to know about the themes explored in plays of the time. In addition there are more subtle influences in terms of mores and manners, how people were expected to behave, how the socio-economic system made people act and think about themselves (at least Michael Bloch touches on this in his biography of Alexander), to what extent people viewed themselves as independent agents, responsible for their own life and fortune, etc. All of these subjects and themes, no less important, are ignored by Staring. A study of contemporary trope and Alexander's intellectual milieu remains to be done.

Appendix 1

BESS MENSENDIECK'S 'FORWARD AND UP'

[Page 170, in *Körperkultur der Frau* (München Bei F. Bruckmann, 1920), caption for fig. 20]

dem Antlitz beilegt, wird die Haltung seines Trägers, des Kopfes, eigentlich von niemand respektiert. Im Gegenteil. — Je „geistiger“ der Mensch, desto schlechter seine Kopfhaltung. Niemand denkt, daß auch für den Kopf eine gute Linienführung anzustreben wäre: um der Atmung sowohl

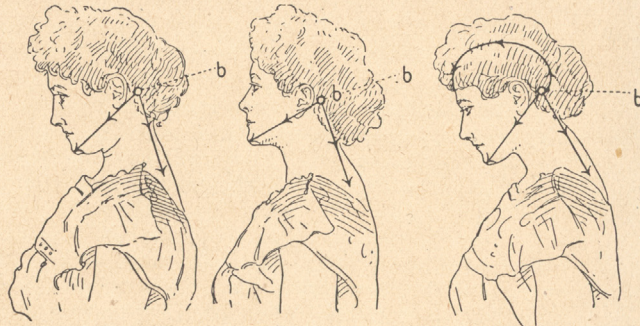


Fig. 20. Fehlerhafte Kopfhaltung, welche Doppelkinn und verhäßliche Wangenfalten bedingt. Ist dadurch zu eliminieren, daß durch eine Doppelbewegung (von b aus) [gleichzeitig nach hinten abwärts und zum Kinn vorwärts] der Schwerpunkt des Kopfes richtig verlagert wird.

Dadurch erlangte richtige Kopfhaltung. Vgl. Übg. S. 143 und II. Teil Fig. 62, 63 u. 64.

In vollkommener Linienführung übergeneigte Kopfhaltung ohne Doppelkinn, ohne Wangenfalten, ohne Druck auf den Kehlkopf. Wird dadurch erreicht, daß man den Kopf langsam in der Richtung der Pfeile von b aus nach rückwärts hintenüber gleiten läßt, und ihn dann auf demselben Wege in umgekehrter Richtung vom Nacken aus wieder hochstellt bis zu b. Durch Forterhaltung der Spannung bei b und weitergeführtem Druck von b in der Richtung nach vorn (vgl. S. 87) entsteht die vollkommene Linienführung des Kopfüberneigens.

als um des ästhetischen Gewinnes wegen. Selbst die Künstler vermögen ihren Modellen nicht die praktische Unterweisung zu geben, mit welchen Muskeln eine liebliche Nackenlinie und schöne Kopfstellung zu erreichen ist. Seitliche Wangenfalten und Doppelkinn sind nur dadurch zu eliminieren, daß der Kopf von den richtigen Muskeln

The wrong head carriage which leads to double chin and ugly cheek wrinkles. You can eliminate it by a double movement (from b.) (at the same time backwards and downwards and forwards to the chin) by which the center of gravity of the head is shifted correctly. This is the right carriage of the head achieved by this, compare exercises p. 143 and the second part fig. 62, 63 and 64.

This is the head carriage which the head bent down in a perfect line without double chin, without jowl creases, without pressure on the larynx. You achieve it by letting the head slowly slide backwards and downwards in the direction of the arrows from b., and then put it up again on the same path in reverse direction from the neck (back of the neck) until b. By continuation of the tension at b. and continued pressure from b. in the direction forward, compare p. 87, the perfect line of the head bent forward comes into being.

[page 171]

Starting from Fig. 62 look at the creases under the chin and in the front of neck. To eliminate them, one should change the carriage of the head.



Fig. 62. Fehlerhafte Kopfhaltung, welche Doppelkinn und verhäplichende Wangenfalten bedingt



Fig. 63. Durch richtige Kopfhaltung vom Nacken aus werden Doppelkinn und seitliche Wangenfalten eliminiert (b)



Fig. 64. Vollkommene übergeneigte Kopfhaltung ohne Doppelkinn, ohne Wangenfalten, ohne Druck auf den Kehlkopf

Figs. 62, 63, 64 in *Körperkultur der Frau*.

a) Slowly and with resistance let the head hang backwards into the neck. To get a sense of the direction of the work, start with the pressure backwards and downwards from the point behind the ear marked b. Now, in the same amount you are pulling *downwards* from B, you are *at the same time* from B pushing the chin forward - in the direction of the arrows.

gehalten und bewegt wird. Beide Verhäfflichungsmomente hängen mit der nachteiligen Verlagerung des Schwerpunktes des Kopfes zusammen.

Man gehe von Fig. 62 aus und betrachte sich die Falten unter dem Kinn und vorne am Halse. Um sie zu entfernen, ändere man die Stützhaltung des Kopfes.

a) Man lasse den Kopf langsam und mit Widerstand in den Nacken hintenüber hängen.

Um ein Richtungsgefühl für die Arbeit zu bekommen, beginne man den Druck nach hinten abwärts von der hinter dem Ohr mit b bezeichneten Stelle. Im gleichen Maße nun, wie von B aus nach unten gezogen wird, wird auch gleichzeitig von b aus das Kinn nach vorne geschoben — in der Richtung der Pfeile.

b) Von Mitte des Rückens aus zwischen den Schulterblättern beginne man nun einen Druck nach dem Kopf zu auszuüben. [Man hat das Gefühl, als ob die Haut hart würde.] Dieser Druck setzt sich über die Mittellinie des Nackens bis zum Kopf weiter fort, drückt den Kopf von hinten in die Höhe und endigt als Druck hinter dem Ohr. Dabei bleibt das Kinn immer nach vorne gestellt wie beim Abzug. Am Kinn darf nicht nach vorne gezogen werden!

Nunmehr steht der Kopf seinem anatomischen Aufbau entsprechend korrekt auf dem Halse. Fig. 63. Doppelkinn und Wangenfalten, die auf Fig. 62 vorhanden waren, sind verschwunden. Der Kehlkopf wird nicht vom Kinn bedrückt. Das Gewicht des Kopfes wird von hinten gehalten. Der Hals bleibt in der Front zunächst schmal.

Will man eine geneigte Kopfhaltung mit der vollkommensten Profillinie verbinden, wie sie uns in Gemälden alter Meister entgegentreten, so läßt sich diese vollkommene Neigung des Hauptes auf folgende Weise [ohne Doppelkinnbildung!] erreichen:

a) man wiederhole a.

b) man beginne wieder zwischen den Schulterblättern, inmitten des Rückens einen Druck nach oben auszuüben, mittels dessen der Kopf in die Höhe gedrückt wird und welcher hinter dem Ohre endigt. Seite 80 (b erste Grenze). Diesmal hört man aber nicht hier auf, sondern setzt den

b) From the middle of the back, between the shoulder blades, start to make a pressure in the direction of the head. (You will have the feeling as if the skin gets hard.) This pressure is continued through the midline of the back of neck up to the head and pushes the head up from behind and ends as a pressure behind the ear. At the same time the chin always stays put forward like from the beginning. Do *not* pull the chin forward! Now the head sits correctly on the neck according to its anatomical structure. Fig.

Druck sofort aufs neue von dieser Stelle aus bei a_1 ein (zweite Ansatzstelle) und

c) drückt nun über die ganze Kopfhaut quasi unter den Haaren weiter nach der Stirne zu und über dieselbe herab, bis der Druck inmitten der Augenbrauen aufhört (b_1)¹⁾. Alsdann ist Kopfhaltung Fig. 64 mit der schönen Nackenkurve erreicht.

Man betrachte sich Fig. 63. Hier ist (b) erste Grenze des Kopfaufzugs mit Ansatz des Druckes von Mitte des Rückens aus. Für Fig. 64 ist zweiter Ansatz a_1 und zweite Grenze b_1 zwischen den Augenbrauen anzuwenden.

Ist das Gefühl für die Arbeitsfähigkeit dieser Gruppe der Kopfmuskulatur durch Übung entwickelt, so ist es nicht mehr nötig, den Kopf erst zurückzuwerfen, um ihn richtig stellen zu können. Man kann dann mit dem kleinsten Druck die Kopfstellung regulieren.

Übungen zur Stärkung der Bauchmuskulatur²⁾

XIII. Übung

1. Relaxierte Rückenlage

Fig. 65, 66

a) Man lege sich auf den Boden³⁾ mit der Absicht, alle Körperspannung zu lösen. Man überzeuge sich, daß Fußgelenk, Waden, Kniegelenk, Oberschenkel, Bauchdecke, Arm, Hals keine Muskelspannung mehr aufweisen. Fig. 65 u. 66. Man lasse den Kopf seitlich lose liegen.

b) Man atme langsam und ruhig ein und aus. Stellt man das eine Bein im Knie hoch, so wird das Gefühl der Erschlaffung noch erhöht. Der einzige feste Punkt, den man fühlt, sind die Schulterblätter. Um auch den Geist von jeder Spannung zu befreien, beschäftige man sich nur mit dem Rhythmus der Atmung. [Nach der Geschwindigkeit des Pulsschlages zähle man etwa drei Pulsschläge zur Einatmung, einen auf die Atempause, drei auf die Ausatmung.]

2. Stramm energisierte Rückenlage

a) Angriffsstellung Rückenlage mit ausgestreckten Beinen. Fig. 68. Arme liegen seitlich wie bei Fig. 66.

¹⁾ Vgl. S. 87. ²⁾ Vgl. S. 100—103. ³⁾ Nach Übung LIII, S. 200.

63. Double-chin and cheek wrinkles which one could see in fig. 62 are now gone. The larynx is not pressed upon by the chin. The weight of the head is carried from behind. The neck in front stays still slim. If you want to combine a head carriage which is bent forward with the most perfect profile like in the paintings of old masters, you can achieve this perfect bending of the head in the following way (without double chin!)

die Mundpartie präsentiert sich ohne Scham. Verfällt man in den Sprechfehler der Hamburgerin und Hannoveranerin: mit nahezu geschlossenem Mund durch fast ganz geschlossene Zähne zu sprechen, so bekommt dieser Muskel und seine nächsten Nachbarn zu wenig Gelegenheit zur Be-

Mund

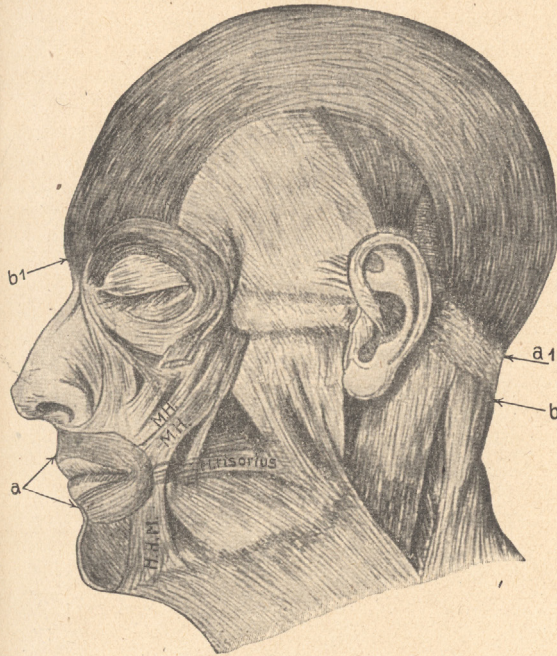


Fig. 13. Die Muskeln des Kopfes

- a = Runder Mundschließmuskel
- b = Grenze des Kopfaufzugs
- M. H. = Mundwinkelheber
- H. d. M. = Herabzieher des Mundwinkels
- M. risorius = Lachmuskel [erzeugt das Grübchen der Wange]

weglichkeit, er verdickt sich nicht unter der Haut — und die Partie um Mund und Nase weist Flächen auf statt Relief und gibt dem unteren Teil des Gesichtes etwas Steifes, Hartes. Grazie und Schönheit aber wohnen nicht in geraden Linien und Flächen.

a) Repeat a.

b) Again start between the shoulder blades in the middle of the back to make a pressure upwards with which the head is pushed upwards and which ends behind the ear. Page 80 [sic, should be page 87, see fig. 13] (b first border). This time you don't stop here but continue the [page 172]

pressure immediately from this point at a1 (second starting point) and c) press now across the whole head-skin under the hair in direction of the forehead and down the forehead until the pressure ends between the middle of the eyebrows (b1). Then the head carriage Fig. 64 with the beautiful neck curve is achieved. Look at fig. 63. Here (b) is the first border of the head lift with the pressure starting from the middle of the back. For fig. 64 a second starting point a1, and a second border line b1 between the eyebrows is to be applied. Once you have developed a feeling for how this group of head musculature works through exercise, then it is not necessary anymore to first throw the head back to be able to put it correctly. Then you can regulate the carriage of the head with the smallest pressure.

As can be seen from the above Bess Mensendieck's – in Staring's phrasing – 'forward and up' is a neck and head exercise. It is in no shape or form comparable to the 'forward and up' in the Alexander Technique which is not an exercise and not a position, but is a consequence of attending to the means-whereby in terms of inhibition and direction.

Appendix 2

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE BOOKS CLASSIFIED BY STARING AS HAGIOGRAPHIES

Staring has decided that seven out of nine books which contain some – actually, any – information on Alexander's life are hagiographies, i.e. an admiring or idealised biography. To be a hagiography you first have to be a biography, and most of the books on Staring's list fails on this first criteria. The listing will surprise anyone familiar with the literature.

Louise Morgan's book, *Inside Yourself* (1954), is not a biography. It is an attempt to make Alexander's discoveries more available by presenting it in terms of easy how-to-do steps. It contains a brief reference to Alexander's own story and discovery of the Technique, but at no point sets itself out to be biography or to examine Alexander's origin. It is however effusive of Alexander and so, if it was a biography, would be a hagiography.

Lulie Westfeld's book, *F Matthias Alexander: The Man and His Work* (1964)¹⁹³, has by the title the appearance of a biography. In reality it is her memoirs of training with Alexander and her own understanding of the Alexander Technique. There is no way it could qualify as a biography. Even if one were to accept it as a biography, it is very critical of Alexander and so could not possibly qualify as a hagiography. Staring catalogues it as a hagiography because 'she fails to question Alexander's work' and, among other things, 'fails to address Alexander's eugenics'.¹⁹⁴ In other words, because she failed to address the issues Staring wants to address it is a hagiography.

The same criticism applies to F. P. Jones and his *Freedom to Change [Body Awareness in Action]* (1976).¹⁹⁵ Jones' book introduces the Alexander Technique by way of Alexander's own story and of Jones' training to be a teacher with the Alexander brothers. It is not a biography, but contains biographical parts of Alexander's life. But again, because it does not examine what Staring is interested in, it is a 'failure to question Alexander's unsupported claims of origination', and so it is a hagiography.¹⁹⁶

Up From Down Under by Rosslyn McLeod (1994)¹⁹⁷ is classified as 'a non-hagiographic biographical storyline', which is extraordinary given the criteria Staring is applying to other books. McLeod's book provides a biography of Alexander's life and career until he left for London in 1904. It does not contain any attempt to question Alexander's work or his

claims of origination. Somehow, this book is judged according to other criteria than other books.

Articles and Lectures by F. Matthias Alexander, edited by Jean M. O. Fischer,¹⁹⁸ is also classified as a hagiography. First, it is not a biography and does not set itself out to be a biography in any way, shape or form. It is a collection of articles, letters, lectures and miscellany by F. M. Alexander with notes on people and events referred to, and on the evolution of Alexander's language. Second, Staring dismisses it by saying it is 'largely built on McLeod's earlier findings' which is counterfactual: The vast majority of *Articles and Lectures* is concerned with post-1904 writings by Alexander and the evolution of Alexander's concepts, topics completely untouched by McLeod's *Up From Down Under*. I conducted a lot of original research and Staring relies on my research for his own works. While McLeod wrote her book she and I collaborated by freely exchanging historical Alexander information between us.¹⁹⁹

Frederick Matthias Alexander – A Family History by Jackie Evans²⁰⁰ is also a hagiography according to Staring. This biography is dry as dust, and is only a factual list of events; where people went, what they wrote, whom they married, etc. Nevertheless, according to Staring it is a hagiography because the genealogical material Evans cover 'does not relate that material to the history of the Alexander nor to his or contemporaneous writings'.²⁰¹ Again, because it does not consider subjects Staring is interested in, it is a hagiography.

F. M. the Life of Frederick Matthias Alexander by Michael Bloch,²⁰² an experienced and professional biography, is also – according to Staring – a hagiography. The chief misdeed appears to be that it does not relate that Alexander was in some way influenced by his contemporaries.²⁰³ Bloch is however critical of Alexander and considers whether Alexander could be classified a 'guru'. This is not good enough for Staring: because Bloch's biography does fit Staring's view of Alexander it is a hagiography.

Staring judges his own two-volume work on Alexander (*The First 43 Years of the Life of F. Matthias Alexander*²⁰⁴) to not be a hagiography. But it cannot be a hagiography because it is not a biography in the first place; apart from stating some biographical details it is a long textual analysis of Alexander's early writings, comparing them with contemporary writings, and conjecturing as to what Alexander might have read and whom Alexander might have taken ideas from.

It would seem that anything which Staring does not agree with is a hagiography. It never occurs to Staring to question himself, to consider

the possibility that when friends, family, teachers of the Technique – people who knew Alexander – have reached a different conclusion than Staring, that they might be right.

Appendix 3

SALEEBY'S PARENTHOOD AND RACE CULTURE

Saleeby's *Parenthood and Race Culture* is fundamentally about a) what we now call public health issues, b) the potential of all newborns (whatever the 'characteristics' of the parents), and c) that love is the most important feature of bringing up children.

Saleeby is keen 'to protect the expectant mother from alcohol, lead [poisoning] or syphilis' (p. vii), and devotes a whole chapter to the dangers of alcohol (chapter xiii, p. 205), and lead, narcotics, syphilis (chapter xiv, p. 246). He is keen for the mother to know 'how to care and guard her body' (p. xiii).

He holds that all children (bar serious diseases), poor or rich, 'are splendid little specimens of humanity' (p. 20), and therefore all have potential. He is 'strenuously' against eugenics in the sense of allowing infant mortality to continue (p. 22) and instead advocates provisions of 'proper shelter, food and training' (p. 25). He believes a mother should be educated for 'motherhood' because 'it demands the most assiduous preparation of body and intellect and emotions' (p. 33). And that the most important aspect of motherhood and raising children is love. Therefore, the aim is that 'children are born only to those who love children and who will transmit their high measure of the parental instinct and the tender emotion which is its correlate (p. 70). And again, 'Mr. Galton desires that we breed for physique, ability, and energy. But we also need more love, and we must breed for that' (p. 153). And again: 'The first requisite, then, for the mothers of the future, the elements of physical health being assumed, is that they should be motherly' (p. 153). It is quality of life, not quantity, which is important (p. 79).

As regards fitness muscles should be the instrument of the mind: 'So far as true race-culture is concerned, we should regard our muscles merely as servants or instruments of the will. Since we have learnt to employ external forces for our purposes, the mere bulk of a muscle is now a matter of little importance. Of the utmost importance, on the other hand, is the power to co-ordinate and graduate the activity of our muscles, so that they may become highly trained servants. This is a matter, however, not of muscle at all but of nervous education. Its foundation cannot be laid by mechanical things like dumb-bells and exercises, but by games, in which will and purpose and co-ordination are incessantly employed. In

other words, the only physical culture worth talking about is nervous culture' (p. 62). And, again against muscle building: 'Every year hundreds of young soldiers, originally healthy, have their hearts and lungs and other vital organs permanently injured by the imbecile attitude of chest – that of abnormal expansion – which they are required to adopt during hard work. Army doctors are now protesting against this, but it is in accordance with the fitness of things that the cult of muscle as against intelligence should be unintelligent' (p. 63).

Much of the book discusses statistics, other people's opinion on eugenics (Shaw, Galton, Spencer, Darwin, Balfour), and what sort of characteristics are inherited. A chapter is devoted to 'negative eugenics' (pp. 171-83), which is discouraging the breeding of the 'deaf and dumb', the 'feeble-minded' the 'insane, the 'born criminal' and various diseases which are inheritable (e.g. hæmophilia).

He quotes approvingly Wallace for his suggestion that eugenics will improve 'when a greatly improved social system renders all our women economically and socially free to choose' (p. 194). He suggests that women and men should have more choice of marriage partner, especially in circumstances in which they examine each other's fitness, such as 'the mixed hockey field' (p. 196). 'Surely all the foregoing suffices to show, first, that eugenics or race-culture is compatible with marriage, and secondly, that it is compatible with the love of the sexes—two conclusions of the most cardinal and fundamental importance' (p. 187).

For Saleeby, 'the whole of this [his] book is really concerned with parenthood' (p. 3).

The book is freely available to read and download online, and so every reader can draw their own conclusion.²⁰⁵ Saleeby's eugenics have nothing to do with the horrors of eugenics which happened later in the 20th century.

Appendix 4

THE ELEMENTS OF KELLGREN'S MANUAL TREATMENT

Staring reproduces a number of pictures from *The Elements of Kellgren's Manual Treatment* by Edgar Cyriax (from German and French translations), but does not provide the context. This is the context for fig. 45 in the 1903 original British edition:

The assistant places one hand on the patient's forehead and the other over his occiput (as in fig. 45). Applying traction upwards all the time, the patient's head is first turned to one side, and then to the other, passively or with resistance as the case demands. The movement chiefly affects the joint between the atlas and axis. In order to prevent over-extension of the spinal cord, the head sinks somewhat during the rotation, and becomes elongated again during the reverse movement.

The muscles used to perform the turning are those which rotate the joint mentioned, and those which rotate the cervical vertebræ.²⁰⁶



FIG. 45.

This is context for fig. 55.

'The assistant, fixing the patient's shoulder, grasps the patient's hand and brings his arms into yard position. He then draws the patient's hand directly away for a few seconds (fig. 55). The result is stimulation of the whole extremity. The cords of the brachial plexus as they lie in the axilla be felt to become very tense during the application of the traction.

The movement may also be administered as partly duplicate, in which case the assistant first performs traction of the patient's arm as above, and then the patient, keeping his trunk still, tries to draw the arm towards himself with AR [assistant resisting]. At first stimulation of the arm results from the traction, after which almost all the muscles that pass from the clavicle and scapula to the humerus are actively contracted. This movement is very suitably made use of just after reduction of dislocation of the humerus.²⁰⁷

Arm Traction Sideways, PP.

The assistant, fixing the patient's shoulder, grasps the patient's hand and brings his arm into yard position. He



FIG. 55.

then draws the patient's hand directly away from the trunk and maintains this traction for a few seconds (fig. 55). The result is stimulation of the whole extremity. The cords of the brachial plexus as they lie in the axilla can be felt to become very tense during the application of the traction.

This is context for fig. 65.

'Sitting head lifting, PP. The patient assumes the sitting position. The assistant places one of his hands on the patient's forehead, and the thumb and forefinger respectively (or else the whole palmar aspect) of his other hand on each of the occiput just below the superior curved line.

Performing traction of the hand away from the trunk, the assistant simultaneously extends the head a little backwards, after which he lifts up the posterior part and flexes it a little forwards, keeping meanwhile his anterior hand as still as possible. He then partially releases the traction upwards and brings the patient's head to the vertical once more. The process is repeated several times. Particular care must be taken to flex the head on the cervical vertebræ, and not the latter on one another (fig. 65).

From the alternating elongation and shortening of the bloodvessels, the circulation through the brain is promoted, just as in the case of head flexion, PR [patient resisting], and extension AR [assistant resisting] (p. 72). The venous return is also furthered by the special anatomical mechanism that exists in the attachment of the walls of the internal jugular vein to the

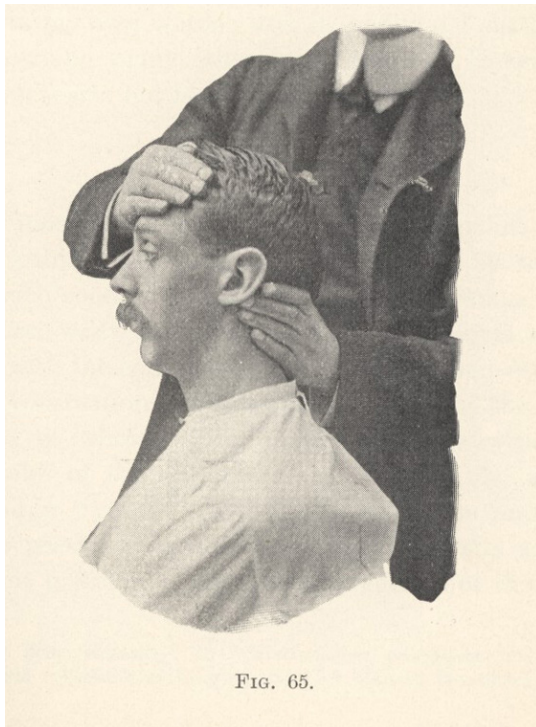


FIG. 65.

sterno-mastoid (see p. 48); this exercise is therefore depleting for the head. the actual movement should be confined to the occipito-atlantal joint. the cervical part of the spinal column is stimulated, as is also the same portion of the spinal marrow. During the actual lifting there occurs in most patients some dilation of the both pupils.²⁰⁸

Staring reproduces some pictures from the French edition, but although similar these pictures are not identical to the British edition. However, four of these pictures in the British edition appear to refer to the same treatments as shown in the French edition.

Fig. 40 (looks like the fig. 390 in the French edition) illustrates an exercise in which the assistant, while keeping up traction away from the shoulders, presses over the upper parts of the elbow joints so as 'to cause adduction of the upper arms through a right angle . . . the patient continually resisting and keeping his elbows well back.'²⁰⁹

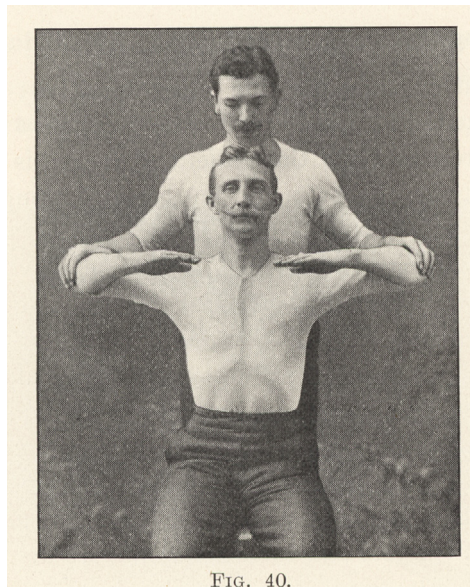


FIG. 40.

Fig. 48 (looks like the fig. 388 in the French edition) illustrates an exercise in which the assistant holds the patient's shoulder firmly in place with one hand, and with the other hand grasps the forearm and performs traction away from the shoulder and moving the elbow gradually in increasing circles.²¹⁰ The purpose is to increase 'venous and lymphatic flow' and prevent 'adhesions and inflammation' around the shoulder joint.

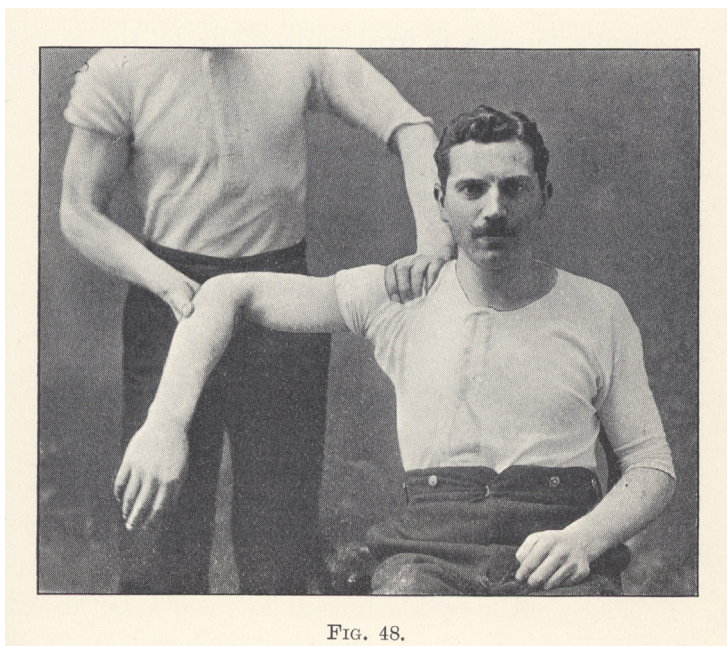


FIG. 48.

Figs. 49 and 50 (looks like the figs. 302 and 303 in the French edition) illustrates the the patient's forearm (in fig. 49) or the hand (in fig. 50) being held fixed, while the assistant grasps the fingers and perform traction and then various rotations and flexions.

It is noteworthy that Staring is only reproducing pictures which bear a resemblance (however faint) to the hands-on work in the Alexander Technique. The vast majority of pictures are of gross exercises and manipulation. Half of Cyriax's book on Kellgren's manual treatments consist of describing diagnostic exercises, and case histories (providing examples of which manipulative treatments to adopt in cases of specific conditions and diseases). As an example the below pictures (figs. 1-3) are some of the starting positions to be adopted before any treatment. It is 'emphati-

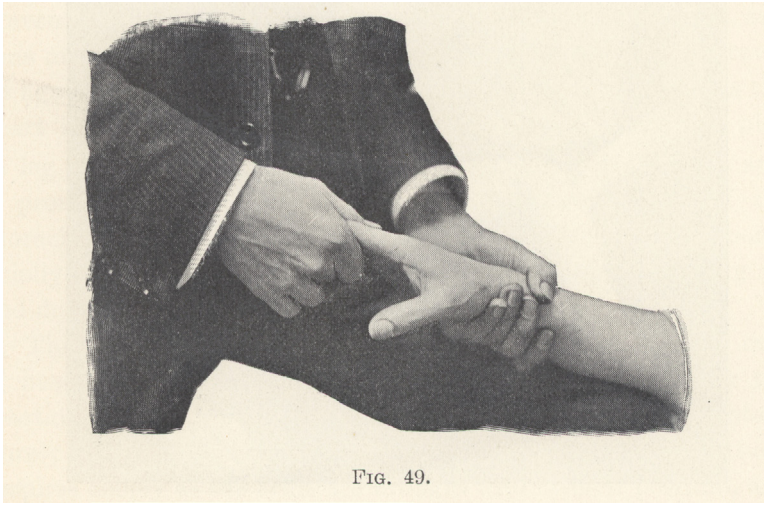


FIG. 49.

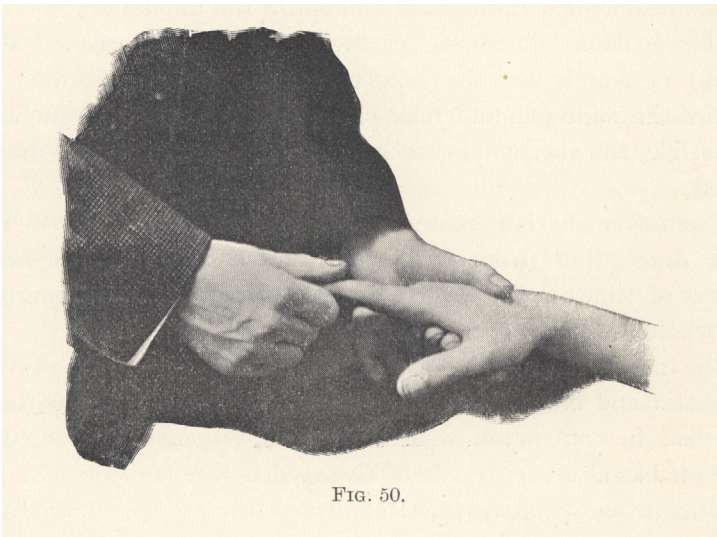


FIG. 50.

cally insisted upon that the accuracy of any such position is absolutely essential to the proper performance of the movement or movements to follow.²¹¹ Why would Alexander even glance at such a book when the very set-up for any of the exercises and treatments goes against anything Alexander taught?

Staring puts forward the extraordinary claim that *'Those who teach the Alexander technique today follow the ingenious form of instruction which' the Kellgrens, Cyriax, and especially Dr Scanes Spicer 'evolved'*.²¹² However,

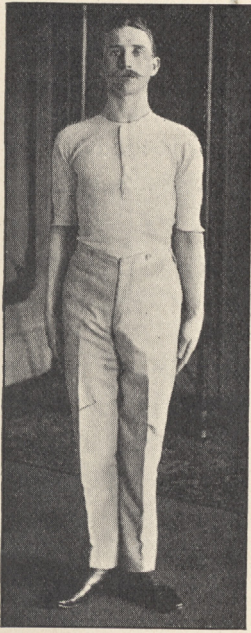


FIG. 1.

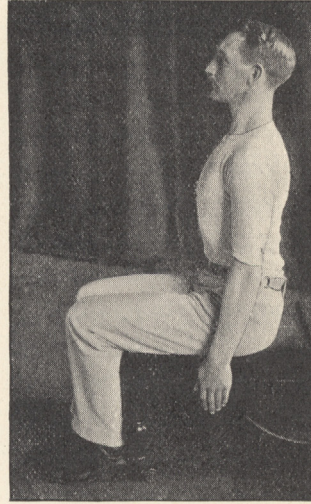


FIG. 2.

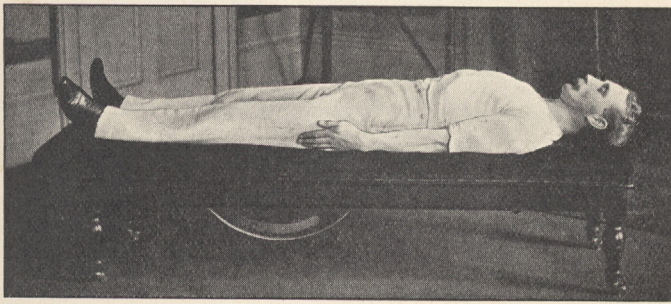


FIG. 3.

as can be seen from the above examples there is nothing in Cyriax's book on Kellgren's manual treatments which has any semblance to Alexander's technique, as described by Alexander or as described by his pupils.

Movements in the Alexander Technique involve conscious inhibition and direction by both the teacher and the pupil for the purpose of coordination and integration of the whole.

Endnotes

- 1 An anonymous writer whose articles appear on <http://alexander.area24.net/>.
- 2 *The First 43 Years of the Life of F. Matthias Alexander*, Volume 1, by Jeroen Staring (Jeroen Staring, 1996), p. 219.
- 3 This is assuming that Alexander read Austin's version, which we don't know.
- 4 *The First 43 Years of the Life of F. Matthias Alexander*, Volume 1, by Jeroen Staring (Jeroen Staring, 1996), pp. 216-17.
- 5 Transcript of a lecture, 'The Early History of F. M. Alexander: Jeroen Staring Talk at the American Center for the Alexander Technique', 13 February 2002, p. 21.
- 6 *The Treatment of Tabetic Ataxia by Means of Systematic Exercise* by Dr. H. S. Frenkel (P. Blakiston's Son & Co., Philadelphia, 1902). Facsimile reprint by Franklin Classics Trade Press 2020, p. 132.
- 7 *The Treatment of Tabetic Ataxia by Means of Systematic Exercise* by Dr. H. S. Frenkel (P. Blakiston's Son & Co., Philadelphia, 1902). Facsimile reprint by Franklin Classics Trade Press 2020, p. 131.
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- 10 *Man's Supreme Inheritance Addenda* by F. Matthias Alexander (Methuen, 1911), p. 14.
- 11 *Man's Supreme Inheritance Addenda* by F. Matthias Alexander (Methuen, 1911), p. 15.
- 12 *Man's Supreme Inheritance Addenda* by F. Matthias Alexander (Methuen, 1911), p. 11.
- 13 *Man's Supreme Inheritance Addenda* by F. Matthias Alexander (Methuen, 1911), p. 14.
- 14 *Man's Supreme Inheritance Addenda* by F. Matthias Alexander (Methuen, 1911), p. 19.
- 15 *The First 43 Years of the Life of F. Matthias Alexander*, Volume 2, by Jeroen Staring (Jeroen Staring, 1996), p. 238.
- 16 *The First 43 Years of the Life of F. Matthias Alexander*, Volume 2, by Jeroen Staring (Jeroen Staring, 1996), p. 42.
- 17 *The First 43 Years of the Life of F. Matthias Alexander*, Volume 2, by Jeroen Staring (Jeroen Staring, 1996), p. 227.
- 18 'Autobiographical Sketch' (c. 1950) in *Articles and Lectures* by F. M. Alexander (Mouritz, 1995, London), p. 239.
- 19 *The First 43 Years of the Life of F. Matthias Alexander*, Volume 2, by Jeroen Staring (Jeroen Staring, 1996), p. 33.
- 20 *Frederick Matthias Alexander 1869-1955 - The Origins and History of the*

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- 21 *The First 43 Years of the Life of F. Matthias Alexander*, Volume 1, by Jeroen Staring (Jeroen Staring, 1996), p. 283.
- 22 Transcript of a lecture, ‘The Early History of F. M. Alexander: Jeroen Staring Talk at the American Center for the Alexander Technique’, 13 February 2002, p. 25.
- 23 ‘Why “Deep Breathing” and Physical Culture Exercises do more Harm than Good’ (1908) in *Articles and Lectures* by F. M. Alexander (Mouritz, 1995, London), pp. 73–77.
- 24 ‘The Dangers of Deep Breathing’ (1908) in *Articles and Lectures* by F. M. Alexander (Mouritz, 1995, London), pp. 69–71.
- 25 ‘Why “Deep Breathing” and Physical Culture Exercises do more Harm than Good’ (1908) in *Articles and Lectures* by F. M. Alexander (Mouritz, 1995, London), pp. 73–77.
- 26 Transcript of a lecture, ‘The Early History of F. M. Alexander: Jeroen Staring Talk at the American Center for the Alexander Technique’, 13 February 2002, p. 36.
- 27 To be exact, since Staring is not, the 1906 book was titled *Körperkultur des Weibes*. Later editions were titled *Körperkultur der Frau*.
- 28 ‘Why “Deep Breathing” and Physical Culture Exercises do more Harm than Good’ (1908) in *Articles and Lectures* by F. M. Alexander (Mouritz, 1995, London), pp. 73–77.
- 29 *The First 43 Years of the Life of F. Matthias Alexander*, Volume 2, by Jeroen Staring (Jeroen Staring, 1996), p. 238.
- 30 *The First 43 Years of the Life of F. Matthias Alexander*, Volume 1, by Jeroen Staring (Jeroen Staring, 1996), p. 223–24.
- 31 *Constructive Conscious Control of the Individual* by F. Matthias Alexander, (Mouritz, 2004), pp. 112–25.
- 32 *Explaining the Alexander Technique* by Walter Carrington, Seán Carey, (Mouritz, 2004), p. 104. First published in 1992.
- 33 *Frederick Matthias Alexander 1869–1955 – The Origins and History of the Alexander Technique* by Jeroen Staring (Integral, 2005), p. 263.
- 34 *Common Disorders with Rational Methods of Treatment* by W. R. Latson (Health-Culture Co., New York, 1904), pp. 58, 60.
- 35 ‘Supplement to Re-Education of the Kinæsthetic Systems’ (1910) in *Articles and Lectures* by F. M. Alexander (Mouritz, 1995, London), pp. 104–05.
- 36 *Frederick Matthias Alexander 1869–1955 – The Origins and History of the Alexander Technique* by Jeroen Staring (Integral, 2005), p. 126.
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- 38 *Frederick Matthias Alexander 1869–1955 – The Origins and History of the Alexander Technique* by Jeroen Staring (Integral, 2005), p. 127.
- 39 ‘Supplement to Re-Education of the Kinæsthetic Systems’ (1910) in *Articles and Lectures* by F. M. Alexander (Mouritz, 1995, London), p. 104.
- 40 *A Time to Remember* by Walter H. M. Carrington (The Sheildrake Press, 1996), p. 27. Diary entry for 20 May 1946.

- 41 *The First 43 Years of the Life of F. Matthias Alexander*, Volume 1, by Jeroen Staring (Jeroen Staring, 1996), p. 221.
- 42 *The First 43 Years of the Life of F. Matthias Alexander*, Volume 2, by Jeroen Staring (Jeroen Staring, 1996), p. 236.
- 43 *The First 43 Years of the Life of F. Matthias Alexander*, Volume 2, by Jeroen Staring (Jeroen Staring, 1996), p. 236.
- 44 *The Elements of Kellgren's Manual Treatment* by Edgar Cyriax (John Bale, Sons & Danielsson, London, 1903), p. 10.
- 45 *The Elements of Kellgren's Manual Treatment* by Edgar Cyriax (John Bale, Sons & Danielsson, London, 1903).
- 46 *The First 43 Years of the Life of F. Matthias Alexander*, Volume 2, by Jeroen Staring (Jeroen Staring, 1996), p. 215.
- 47 *The First 43 Years of the Life of F. Matthias Alexander*, Volume 2, by Jeroen Staring (Jeroen Staring, 1996), p. 225.
- 48 *The First 43 Years of the Life of F. Matthias Alexander*, Volume 2, by Jeroen Staring (Jeroen Staring, 1996), p. 218.
- 49 *The First 43 Years of the Life of F. Matthias Alexander*, Volume 2, by Jeroen Staring (Jeroen Staring, 1996), p. 228.
- 50 *Frederick Matthias Alexander 1869–1955 – The Origins and History of the Alexander Technique* by Jeroen Staring (Integral, 2005), pp. 260, 261.
- 51 'Re-Education of the Kinæsthetic Systems' (1908) in *Articles and Lectures* by F. M. Alexander (Mouritz, 1995, London), pp. 82–83.
- 52 *Alexander Technique: The Ground Rules* by Marjory Barlow, Seán Carey (HITE, 2011), p. 47.
- 53 *An Examined Life* by Marjory Barlow, Trevor Allen Davies (Mornum Time Press, 2002), p. 65.
- 54 *Personally Speaking* by Walter Carrington, Seán Carey, (Mouritz, 2001 [1986]), pp. 12–13.
- 55 Transcript of a lecture, 'The Early History of F. M. Alexander: Jeroen Staring Talk at the American Center for the Alexander Technique', 13 February 2002, p. 10.
- 56 Herbert Spencer uses the phrase 'antagonistic organic actions' in his *The Principles of Biology* (1910, first published 1866), Volume 1, p. 92.
- 57 *Articles and Lectures* by F. Matthias Alexander, edited by Jean M. O. Fischer (Mouritz, 1995).
- 58 Transcript of a lecture, 'The Early History of F. M. Alexander: Jeroen Staring Talk at the American Center for the Alexander Technique', 13 February 2002, p. 12.
- 59 It is strange to have to state the obvious, but a note is a note, a brief comment or explanation on a certain subject, with references to further sources, and not an in-depth study.
- 60 *The First 43 Years of the Life of F. Matthias Alexander*, Volume 1, by Jeroen Staring (Jeroen Staring, 1996), p. 391.
- 61 Quoted in *The First 43 Years of the Life of F. Matthias Alexander*, Volume 1, by Jeroen Staring (Jeroen Staring, 1996), p. 391.
- 62 *The First 43 Years of the Life of F. Matthias Alexander*, Volume 1, by Jeroen

- Staring (Jeroen Staring, 1996), p. 241.
- 63 In *MSI* Alexander writes 'It must always be remembered that Nature works as a whole and not in parts . . .' Citing the example of a yogi who could control his heart beat, Alexander goes on to say that he has 'no sympathy with these abnormal manifestations'. *MSI*, pp. 34–35.
- 64 *Frederick Matthias Alexander 1869–1955 – The Origins and History of the Alexander Technique* by Jeroen Staring (Integral, 2005), p. 246.
- 65 *Inhibition – History and Meaning in the Sciences of Mind and Brain* by Roger Smith (Free Association Books, 1992).
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- 67 *The Use of the Self* by F. Matthias Alexander (Methuen, 1939, London) p. 29.
- 68 *The Use of the Self* by F. Matthias Alexander (Methuen, 1939, London) p. 87 fn.
- 69 *A Means To An End – Articles and Letters on the Alexander Technique 1909–1955* edited by Jean M. O. Fischer (Mouritz, 2015).
- 70 *The First 43 Years of the Life of F Matthias Alexander*, Volume 1, by Jeroen Staring (Jeroen Staring, 1996), p. 109–10.
- 71 *The First 43 Years of the Life of F Matthias Alexander*, Volume 1, by Jeroen Staring (Jeroen Staring, 1996), p. 96.
- 72 ST p. 842.
- 73 'Frederick Matthias Alexander and the Bureau of Educational Experiments' by Jeroen Staring in *Case Studies Journal*, volume 4, issue 9, September 2015, p. 2.
- 74 *The First 43 Years of the Life of F Matthias Alexander*, Volume 1, by Jeroen Staring (Jeroen Staring, 1996), p. 96.
- 75 *The First 43 Years of the Life of F Matthias Alexander*, Volume 1, by Jeroen Staring (Jeroen Staring, 1996), p. 221.
- 76 Transcript of a lecture, 'The Early History of F. M. Alexander: Jeroen Staring Talk at the American Center for the Alexander Technique', 13 February 2002, p. 24.
- 77 *Cats and My Camera* by Evelyn Glover (Micheal Joseph, 1938), pp. 37–38.
- 78 *Articles and Lectures* by F. Matthias Alexander, edited by Jean M. O. Fischer (Mouritz, 1995), reproduced on the jacket back cover.
- 79 'F. Matthias Alexander and Edwardian Actresses/Actors' by Jeroen Staring in *Case Studies Journal*, volume 7, 2 February 2018, pp. 9–26.
- 80 'F. Matthias Alexander and Edwardian Actresses/Actors' by Jeroen Staring in *Case Studies Journal*, volume 7, 2 February 2018, p. 13.
- 81 'F. Matthias Alexander and Edwardian Actresses/Actors' by Jeroen Staring in *Case Studies Journal*, volume 7, 2 February 2018, p. 15.
- 82 <http://www.bramstoker.org/nonfic/03irving.html>. Retrieved 19 June 2020.
- 83 'F. Matthias Alexander and Edwardian Actresses/Actors' by Jeroen Staring in *Case Studies Journal*, volume 7, 2 February 2018, p. 19.
- 84 'F. Matthias Alexander and Edwardian Actresses/Actors' by Jeroen Staring

- in *Case Studies Journal*, volume 7, 2 February 2018, pp. 17–21.
- 85 'F. Matthias Alexander and Edwardian Actresses/Actors' by Jeroen Staring
in *Case Studies Journal*, volume 7, 2 February 2018, p. 20.
- 86 'F. Matthias Alexander and Edwardian Actresses/Actors' by Jeroen Staring
in *Case Studies Journal*, volume 7, 2 February 2018, p. 22.
- 87 Even today there are professors of singing or of music who have not heard
of the Alexander Technique. I am not sure that that proves that many actors
and musicians have not had lessons.
- 88 *Articles and Lectures* by F. Matthias Alexander, edited by Jean M. O. Fischer
(Mouritz, 1995), reproduced on the jacket back cover.
- 89 Staring is arguing that Alexander started from the feet up, not neck and
head, in 1909, 1910 and 1911, and therefore this Alexander technique is
not what was taught later. (*The First 43 Years of the Life of F. Matthias Alexander*,
Volume 2, by Jeroen Staring (Jeroen Staring, 1996), p. 32).
- 90 Transcript of a lecture, 'The Early History of F. M. Alexander: Jeroen Staring
Talk at the American Center for the Alexander Technique', 13 February
2002, p. 17.
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- 92 *The First 43 Years of the Life of F. Matthias Alexander*, Volume 2, by Jeroen
Staring (Jeroen Staring, 1996), p. 42.
- 93 *The First 43 Years of the Life of F. Matthias Alexander*, Volume 2, by Jeroen
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- 94 *The First 43 Years of the Life of F. Matthias Alexander*, Volume 2, by Jeroen
Staring (Jeroen Staring, 1996), p. 226.
- 95 *The First 43 Years of the Life of F. Matthias Alexander*, Volume 2, by Jeroen
Staring (Jeroen Staring, 1996), p. 507.
- 96 *The First 43 Years of the Life of F. Matthias Alexander*, Volume 2, by Jeroen
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- 97 'A protest against certain assumptions' (1910) in *Articles and Lectures* by F.
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- 99 Up From Down Under by Rosslyn McLeod (Mouritz, 2017), p. 126.
- 100 <http://alexander.area24.net/ScanesSpicer.htm>.
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vol. 1 no. 6 (*Direction*, 1990), pp. 239–44, and Part 2 in *Direction* vol. 1 no.
7 (*Direction*, 1991), pp. 287–91.
- 102 *Frederick Matthias Alexander 1869–1955 – The Origins and History of the*
Alexander Technique by Jeroen Staring (Integral, 2005), p. 8.
- 103 *Frederick Matthias Alexander 1869–1955 – The Origins and History of the*
Alexander Technique by Jeroen Staring (Integral, 2005), p. 7.
- 104 'F. M. Alexander and evolution' by Jean M. O. Fischer, Part 1 in *Direction*
vol. 1 no. 6 (*Direction*, 1990), pp. 239–44, and Part 2 in *Direction* vol. 1 no.
7 (*Direction*, 1991), pp. 287–91.

- 105 F. Matthias Alexander *The Use of the Self* (Methuen, 1932), pp. 119-120.
- 106 *The First 43 Years of the Life of F. Matthias Alexander*, Volume 2, by Jeroen Staring (Jeroen Staring, 1996), p. 331, footnote 10.
- 107 STAT Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy, version 2011. Retrieved from <https://alexandertechnique.co.uk/document/equalities-and-diversity-policy>. Retrieved 24 June 2020.
- 108 Note that Staring has here censored Alexander, who wrote “brochure”, and Staring has put in its place “[book]”.
- 109 ‘Frederick Matthias Alexander, Born 150 Years Ago, on January 20, 1869. A Fierce Comment Regarding Interpretations of Alexander’s Texts by Alexander Technique Teachers’ by Jeroen Staring in *Case Studies Journal*, volume 7, 12 December 2018, p. 112.
- 110 *Conscious Control* by F. Matthias Alexander, (Methuen, 1912), p. 8.
- 111 *Conscious Control* by F. Matthias Alexander, (Methuen, 1912), p. 9.
- 112 *The First 43 Years of the Life of F. Matthias Alexander*, Volume 2, by Jeroen Staring (Jeroen Staring, 1996), p. 362.
- 113 *MSI*, p. 68.
- 114 ‘Frederick Matthias Alexander, Born 150 Years Ago, on January 20, 1869. A Fierce Comment Regarding Interpretations of Alexander’s Texts by Alexander Technique Teachers’ by Jeroen Staring in *Case Studies Journal*, volume 7, 12 December 2018, p. 112.
- 115 ‘F. M. Alexander and evolution’ by Jean M. O. Fischer, Part 1 in *Direction* vol. 1 no. 6 (Direction, 1990), pp. 239-44, and Part 2 in *Direction* vol. 1 no. 7 (Direction, 1991), pp. 287-91.
- 116 *The First 43 Years of the Life of F. Matthias Alexander*, Volume 2, by Jeroen Staring (Jeroen Staring, 1996), p. 359.
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- 121 *The First 43 Years of the Life of F. Matthias Alexander*, Volume 2, by Jeroen Staring (Jeroen Staring, 1996), p. 443.
- 122 ‘F. M. Alexander, *The Use of the Self*, and a 1932 Book Review + Discussion in the Yorkshire Post: A Failure to Impact Medical Science.’ by Jeroen Staring in *Case Studies Journal* vol. 4, issue 10 – Oct. 2015, p. 31.
- 123 *The First 43 Years of the Life of F. Matthias Alexander*, Volume 2, by Jeroen Staring (Jeroen Staring, 1996), p. 456.
- 124 It is regrettable that such belligerent language is typical of Staring’s writings, a language which is not commensurate with writings which have pretensions to be scholarly.
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- 129 Paul Little et al., 'Randomised controlled trial of Alexander technique (AT) lessons, exercise, and massage (ATEAM) for chronic and recurrent back pain', *British Medical Journal*, August 19, 2008.
- 130 'F. M. Alexander, *The Use of the Self*, and a 1932 Book Review + Discussion in the *Yorkshire Post*: A Failure to Impact Medical Science' by Jeroen Staring in *Case Studies Journal* vol. 4, issue 10, Oct. 2015, p. 26–43.
- 131 See the compilation *Postural Homeostasis* by Wilfred Barlow (Mouritz, 2014).
- 132 See the compilation *Collected Writings on the Alexander Technique* by Frank P. Jones. Edited by Theodore Dimon Jr. (Alexander Technique Archives, Inc., 1998).
- 133 Jeroen Staring "F. M. Alexander, *The Use of the Self*, and a 1932 Book Review + Discussion in the *Yorkshire Post*: A Failure to Impact Medical Science" in *Case Studies Journal* ISSN (2305-509X), Volume 4, Issue 10, Oct 2015, pp. 40-41.
- 134 *The Denial of Death* by Ernest Becker (Souvenir Press, 2011), p. 275.
- 135 F. Matthias Alexander and the Creative Advance of the Individual by George C. Bowden (L. N. Fowler & Co, 1965).
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- 137 *Frederick Matthias Alexander 1869–1955 – The Origins and History of the Alexander Technique* by Jeroen Staring (Integral, 2005), p. 7.
- 138 Staring writes, 'Initial evidence of this process occurring among teachers and students of the Alexander Technique are the frequent depictions of Frederick Matthias Alexander prominently displayed on walls of Alexander Technique teaching rooms.' *Frederick Matthias Alexander 1869–1955 – The Origins and History of the Alexander Technique* by Jeroen Staring (Integral, 2005), p. 336, note 63.
- 139 *Frederick Matthias Alexander 1869–1955 – The Origins and History of the Alexander Technique* by Jeroen Staring (Integral, 2005), p. 344, note 113.
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- 141 'Frederick Matthias Alexander and the Bureau of Educational Experiments' by Jeroen Staring in *Case Studies Journal*, volume 4, issue 9, September 2015, p. 2.
- 142 'Dewey, Women, and Weirdoes' by C. Cunningham, D. Granger, J. F. Morse, B Stengel, and T. Wilson in *Education and Culture*, volume 23, no. 2, (2007), pp. 27-62.
- 143 'Dewey, Women, and Weirdoes' by C. Cunningham, D. Granger, J. F. Morse,

- B Stengel, and T. Wilson in *Education and Culture*, volume 23, no. 2, (2007), p. 49.
- 144 *The First 43 Years of the Life of F. Matthias Alexander*, Volume 2, by Jeroen Staring (Jeroen Staring, 1996), p. 45.
- 145 (Transcript of a lecture, 'The Early History of F. M. Alexander: Jeroen Staring Talk at the American Center for the Alexander Technique', 13 February 2002, p. 7.)
- 146 *Frederick Matthias Alexander 1869–1955 – The Origins and History of the Alexander Technique* by Jeroen Staring (Integral, 2005), p. 94.
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- 173 ‘Alexander transformed Austin’s idea into his own concept concerning breathing.’ *The First 43 Years of the Life of F. Matthias Alexander*, Volume 1, by Jeroen Staring (Jeroen Staring, 1996), p. 105.
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