

ATTS TRAINING YEAR 3 ESSAY

IT'S THE THOUGHT THAT COUNTS – SOME COMPARISONS BETWEEN THE ALEXANDER TECHNIQUE AND PSYCHOTHERAPY

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INTRODUCTION

Much of my professional life has been concerned with the process of change - first as community worker, then as a counsellor, psychotherapist and trainer, and now as an Alexander practitioner. For the sake of brevity I am defining psychotherapy (including counselling, psychoanalysis and non-drug-based forms of psychiatry) as 'the activity of engaging in a purposeful, mainly talking relationship for the furtherance of the psychological, emotional or relational wellbeing of another'. There are many schools of thought and practice, many of which are experienced as incompatible with one another.

Just to draw some broad-brush comparisons with Alexander. Although some branches involve direct 'hands on' work with the body, most do not. The reasons for this are not necessarily methodological, but have grown out of an awareness of the dangers of re-stimulating scenarios of physical or sexual abuse. Not all psychotherapy approaches recognise the importance of developmental history (ie. the effect of childhood attachments and trauma), and not all would be concerned with the client's (or patient's) relationship with their social or spatial environment. Many approaches, but not all, consider psychological and spiritual development to be integrally linked, and might actively use techniques such as meditation as a tool. This can be unhelpful in terms of Alexander if this involves an interiorising withdrawal from the immediate environment. Finally, not all approaches would have a concept of 'psychophysical unity' as understood in Alexander, and would tend to translate the concept of 'use' to psychological, emotional and social functioning. Having said this, there seems to be growing consensus in psychotherapy, as well as in Alexander, about the relevance of neuroscience - specifically the plasticity in the shaping and re-shaping of pathways in the brain affecting change. There is also a comparable concept of *transformation*. The psychiatrist Scott Peck talks of 'bracketing' which he defines as: "the act of balancing the need for stability and assertion of the self with the need for new knowledge and greater understanding by temporarily giving up one's self - putting one's self aside, so to speak - so as to make room for the incorporation of new material into the self" (Peck, 1978: 73).

Just as psychotherapy has urban myths of "oh I don't need that, I'm not mad", when you mention Alexander in conversation the usual response is "oh I better straighten up" and the person usually stiffens like a new army recruit. Or I get, "oh I've got such back problems, can it cure me?" I then find myself 'at pains' to explain that the Technique is not really about improving posture, and isn't specifically about curing backache - although these two things are often recognisable by-products. It's about the way we 'use' ourselves, in the sense of the mind-body connection in response to stimuli and the way habits get ingrained. Just as we have mental or emotional patterns that keep repeating themselves till we have shaped a particular worldview or opinion of ourselves, we have *psychophysical* habits that eventually lead to chronic postural or mobility difficulties, or emotional problems such as anxiety and depression. By the time we reach adulthood, the constant repetition of stimulus-response has ingrained itself in our neural pathways and we can't get out of it except by re-educating these neural pathways to respond differently.

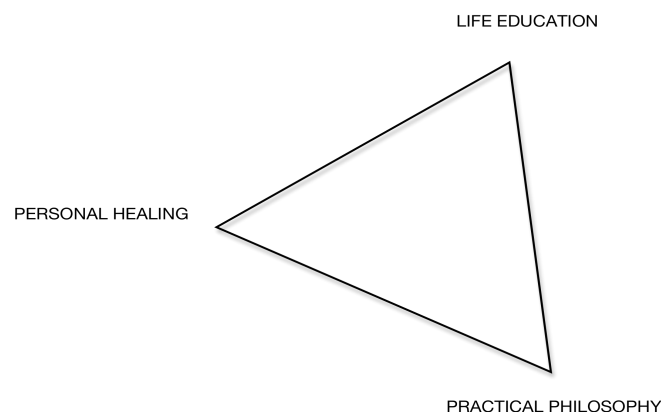
The same may be said to be true of our emotional life though. As Scott Peck commented: "To a greater or lesser degree, all people suffer from inadequacies of their flexible response systems. Much of the work of psychotherapy consists of attempting our patients allow or make their response systems become more flexible" (Peck, 1978: 65).

It is not clear as to how much F M Alexander was influenced by psychotherapeutic ideas. Yet he did have an appreciation of the psychoanalytic effect of the subconscious. In *Man's Supreme Inheritance* he remarks: "we are confronted with the unquestionable fact that the subconscious can be "educated" below the plane of reason" (Alexander, 1918: 33). Although F M Alexander originally worked by giving verbal instructions, he quickly found that he had to communicate by direct hands-on the pupil. It was through the hands that a certain quality or state of mind-body could get transmitted and facilitate change. One of the common misunderstandings, still prevalent today, is that Alexander is a subtle form of body manipulation, a kind of ergonomic retraining. In fact it is a relational communication of good use of the self, from the teacher to the pupil. In therapy terms, this is comparable to the empathic relational field created between counsellor and client. As with psychotherapy, the application of 'fancy' techniques and interventions counts for relatively little if the empathic positive regard is not there or experienced. As we know, it takes years to develop this capacity in counselling and therapy training; equally, it takes years of developing good use on the part of the Alexander teacher to be able to transmit this to a pupil through the quality of mind coming through touch.

BRIDGES BETWEEN DISCIPLINES

Before going further, it might be useful to ask the question "Is Alexander itself a form of education or is it a therapy?" Certainly FM claimed it to be *therapeutic*, in that the pupil derived a benefit that involved healing of some kind. Arguably, it is an education rather than a 'treatment' because the pupil is active in the process. But a case could be made for psychotherapy being both educative and involving active 'work' on the part of the client. So what is the difference? In **Figure 1** below, I present my own model of 'therapeutics', which takes in a third element in addition to healing and education: philosophy.

FIGURE 1: A MODEL OF THERAPEUTICS



In this model, all three elements are connected and impact on each other. For example, the process of healing teaches us something about life, and leads to ways of being in the world which can work.

Whichever point in the triangle one chooses, it strikes me that all healers, educators and philosophers are concerned with one major question: how do we help people have a better life? Of course the term 'better' is open to interpretation - healthier, more vital, more fulfilled, more moral - this can never be pinned down definitively as it depends on personal and cultural values at a given time. However, I would argue that there are two broad approaches: a better life by design (the planned) or a better life by exposure to new and often unknown experience (the phenomenological). Psychotherapy and Alexander, I would argue, both operate from the principle of design (ie. they both have theories of the person) but also both work *phenomenologically* (ie. they do not predict the particular quality of experience or outcome - the way any cookie will crumble!).

Another common feature between healers, educators and philosophers seems to be the objective of assisting the human being to stand back from what I would loosely call 'the egoic level', and to develop the capacity to withstand or reach beyond vexating aspects of daily life, whether these be physical, emotional or situational. Disciplines have different names and styles of approach. Mindfulness Buddhists would talk of 'non attachment', psychotherapists might talk of 'containment', stoic philosophers might help us come to terms with the futility of expectations, and Alexander teachers would talk of 'inhibition' and non-reactivity. Some work primarily through the mind, others directly through the body, and others through the mind-body relationship.

Using a geographical metaphor, this is like saying there are different gates to a city. Each entry point may take you to the city centre, but some routes will be clogged with narrow alleys while some routes may have broad open boulevards which get you there quicker. I am reminded of a beginning psychotherapy client I had many years ago (who probably had Asperger's syndrome) with whom I seemed to make no progress either in finding out anything about him or how he experienced emotions. As a last resort I gave him homework to draw himself as an island. He returned the next week with a beautiful scrolled up map reminiscent of old seafarers' maps. It was detailed and very ornate. When I asked him how I would possibly land on his island, he pointed to a promontory with a university on it - through here!

TWO CONCEPTUAL ISSUES

Inevitably, as I progressed through the training, I started to compare the way Alexander worked and the way psychotherapy, my existing profession, worked. There were some conceptual problems to get over.

First of all, why is Alexander termed a 'psychophysical education' rather than a therapy? After all, both practices help people with problems and, to a large extent, you could consider psychotherapy - at least the type I do, which is psychosynthesis - as a form of life education around emotional and relational wellbeing. Similarly, although Alexander is not a medical treatment as such, practitioners can register as complementary health professionals. Indeed most pupils would report that the effects are definitely therapeutic, and F M Alexander used the term 'therapeutics'. From my point of view the court is still out on the question of education versus therapy. The issue seems to be that the Alexander practitioner is definitely *teaching* something about correct use, whether by direct

hands-on communication or by means of verbal instructions in the process. It is not a medical *treatment* in which the recipient is passive.

The second conceptual issue in comparing Alexander and psychotherapy is more of a philosophical one. Alexander works on the premise that if the natural use of the self is restored, the rest will take care of itself, or will at least have the best chance of doing so and thereby preventing potential future ailments. That is to say, Alexander is not concerned with fixing specific symptoms in any direct way. Is the same true of therapy? Do we simply work on the assumption that if the client looks after their psychological and emotional health, then we don't have to pay attention to individual symptoms and problems? Would such problems simply disappear in the wash? Probably not. Yet there are some protocol-based methodologies, increasingly used in mainstream therapy, which work on the premise that the strengthening of the core energy system probably does the trick and the function of therapy is not particularly to get involved in philosophical issues about the meaning of life. To mention two such methodologies: Firstly, Lifespan Integration, developed by Peggy Pace involves integrating split-off neural pathways (like branches of a tree) into one, strengthened core-self or central neural pathway. This is done by repetition of remembered time lines of experience. Secondly, Emotional Freedom Technique, originally developed by Gary Craig, works through the repeated finger tapping of meridian energy pathways so as to reverse negative energy flows. What both these techniques have in common with each other, and with Alexander, is the use of *repetition* as a working practice, and the broad philosophy of letting the human organism integrate and make sense of the resulting experience without actively trying 'to get to the deeper meaning'. This principle of repetition is named by the Jungian analyst and writer James Hillman as one of five kinds of growth (the others being: deepening, intensification, shedding and emptying). Hillman remarks: "Our common notions of repetition are so haunted by horrible fantasies of deathlike machines" (Hillman, 1995: 58), and argues "Repetition is fundamental not only to machines; it is the fundamental method in both ritual and the arts. Instead of a drive toward death, the compulsion to repeat is an instinct toward art. It shows the soul's pleasure in practice, in polishing, in precision" (Hillman, 1995: 59). What a perfect mantra to see us through 1600 hours of Alexander training!

Having said all this, I am now going to concentrate on eight specific areas of potential commonality.

EIGHT SPECIFIC AREAS WORTHY OF COMPARISON BETWEEN ALEXANDER AND PSYCHOTHERAPY

1. Awareness, mindfulness and contact

One of the major issues pointed out to me at the start of the Alexander training was the need to keep my visual attention outward into the environment. More precisely, this was about maintaining a sense of myself-in-space, as though I was part of a continuum with what was around me. Others, however, might be shown how to direct their visual attention differently, such as not staring or focusing unduly. Easy for me you would have thought, given how much Gestalt-based awareness work had made up my psychotherapeutic training. (Gestalt psychology and therapy, developed by Fritz Perls, will be discussed later.) But this was hard, not least because so much of psychosynthesis experiential work involved visualisation and meditative practices with the eyes closed. The 'going inside' which I was so accustomed to was antithetical to the type of awareness needed for

Alexander. I was most impressed by the Alexander teachers' ability to spot two no-nos: mind-wandering and over-concentration of thought, both of which could be detected by changes in muscular tone, particularly in the neck area, as well as through observation of the eyes. The levels of contact required - both externally with the environment and internally within the body - and of course through hands-on with the other, need to be very refined to be a successful practitioner.

2. Containment and challenge

Early in my third year of training, it was said to me during a turn that we only really offer two things in Alexander: (a) the quality of our own use, and (b) a stimulus. This got me thinking about the parallels with psychotherapy where the therapist provides what is called a 'safe container' to allow the client to develop. That safe container, hopefully, means that the therapist is better able to deal with their anxieties and fears than the client is at that particular moment. (ie. has better psychological and emotional use). Many psychotherapy modalities refer to this as 'secure attachment'. The therapist may then offer what are called 'interventions' which challenge the client's thinking or behaviour (ie. the stimulus). The challenge, if too great or inappropriate or badly timed, may make the client withdraw, shut down or do what is often called 'acting out'. This has obvious parallels with the Alexander idea of 'reactivity'.

3. False sensory appreciation

One of the most difficult 'sacred cows' that go out the window in Alexander is the idea that what we feel is reliable, particularly in respect of sensory feelings such as "I feel I'm standing straight". By 'feeling' here we are not talking of emotions such as happy or sad, but a *kinaesthetic* sensory feeling of rightness in space. What is new and unfamiliar may feel wrong at the beginning. This can be upsetting when we are taught as therapists to value and respect our feelings and experiences and those of our clients. But there is a parallel with therapy in that what we claim to feel is frequently misjudged or misplaced through such processes as projection (attributing our own unowned feelings to others), deflection (pushing away or withdrawing from what we do not like) and displacement (taking out our frustrations on someone or something else as a substitute). As in therapy, coming to know ourselves better, those feelings can be relied upon with greater accuracy - what in Alexander we think of as an improved sensory register.

4. Habit, inhibition and end-gaining

Earlier I mentioned the importance of recognising habits. Closely connected with this is one of the key Alexander principles of inhibition. The capacity to *not do* something we habitually do. In many ways this is the key. It is not about actively doing something new, but allowing in what happens when we stop doing something. Here I found a direct parallel with therapy work. In fact I regularly use this strategy with my therapy clients and supervisees. In Alexander, the inhibition may be something that to the outsider seems quite small, for example, not throwing the head back in a gesture each time we sit down. In therapy the inhibition might be something like not withdrawing from eye contact when someone offers a 'hello' in the street or in a bar.

One of the key paradoxes in this experience, and which is also connected to the idea of negative capability discussed later, is the principle of not end-gaining. We all know this as

the effect of trying too hard creates the opposite result. If I force a key to turn in a tight lock in a raging hurry, it's more likely to jam or snap off! This is not about saying that we don't aim for a goal in what we do or want in life. It's more to do with our micro-actions - many undetectable to the lay person or onlooker - which contribute to misuse of the self. To have the freedom not to react in particular habitual or set ways to certain stimuli, such as things which startle us, gives the organism a choice.

5. Direction and the will

In psychosynthesis we put great store on working with Assagioli's concept of the will. By this, we don't necessarily mean just 'strong will', but something akin to the appropriate use of one's life force to survive in the world, make appropriate changes, and realise one's goals in a relational and ethical manner. The tendency to give up, be weighed down by life's woes and past conditioning is immense, as any therapist well knows. There is a direct parallel in Alexander work where we are constantly in relation with the force of gravity, which for some people may act to drag them down unnecessarily in ways that are unhelpful to good use. This is about our vitality or chi energy reflected in our poise. An example of this is the tendency for many people to slump, causing a shortening of the head-neck-back relationship. Thus Alexander emphasises something called 'direction', or 'the up'. By this I am not referring to the commonly-held *stiffening* up mentioned at the start of this article, but a type of subtle direction of the head which most people are likely to get wrong unless shown through the hands-on of the teacher. We work with the relationship between gravity and anti-gravity. Exactly what constitutes the 'up' in Alexander is not straightforward to describe given that the human body may follow various trajectories of movement and direction in daily activity. This may seem paradoxical in that we might be moving down in space whilst being directed up, but the flow of vitality is the important objective.

6. Emptiness, doing less and negative capability

Here is the bit that is possibly harder to explain because we are describing a sort of negative skill set - the ability to empty oneself and do less, not more. In therapy, the more the therapist or counsellor gets their ego out of the way, the more the client can fill the space and do the necessary work. The silence and calm that a therapist creates in the consulting room also models or creates the conditions for the client to explore issues from a more centred place inside themselves. In Alexander this translates into modelling or facilitating a stillness that allows the pupil to recover or remember the correct use of the mind-body system. What we are taught in Alexander is, in fact, to do less and less! This does not mean passivity or doing nothing, but not interfering with our natural optimum state. This stillness, in turn, also encourages the pupil to do less, which calms the nervous system and fosters the best chance to be able to inhibit habitual responses to stimuli. The idea of negative capability, probably originating from the poet Keats, is about creating the conditions for something new or unknown to be received. Hillman states this beautifully, and is worth quoting fully:

"Patterns emerge and grow out of the empty, much as the potter's jar forms itself around the active presence of a hollow. Each container - pot, vase, jug, cup - is simply the external shell of a specifically shaped void. The power is in the void. That nature abhors a vacuum can only be a modern Western idea of nature. Different schools of Buddhist thought, for instance, consider the seeds of all existing things to be contained in a substratum void, so that care for emptiness is what allows the seed to emerge. Absence takes precedence over presence, or better said, is the first form of presence" (Hillman, 1995: 61).

In Alexander terms, for the new experiences of the self to emerge requires the capacity for non-doing and non-reacting. There may well be useful comparisons which can be made with forms of meditative practices such as vipassana.

7. Relationship, opposition and the intersubjective

It is very hard to convey the quality of 'empty touch' offered in Alexander. In some ways this is the most loving form of touch one could imagine, because the teacher is not wanting anything from the pupil. This quality of touch is very special as it works not simply on the structures of the visible body, but also at the subtle level. But we know from therapy that to be in relation with the other requires not just empathy, but a 'meeting' of the client's energy, so that the client experiences themselves as real by coming up against 'the other'. In Alexander, this is called 'opposition', where the pupil lengthens and widens in response to meeting the 'direction' of the teacher.

Another aspect of relationship, where there is a direct comparison between therapy and Alexander is the unknowability of the subjective experience of the other. One can infer it by the client or pupil reporting a feeling of wellbeing, but we never really do know the other's inner experience. As practitioners, we never know what it is actually like to be on the receiving end - what others are really experiencing of us; in Alexander this is no different. In both activities we are working with the intersubjective. The idea of the intersubjective, although common in the humanistic and integrative therapies, is gaining currency in psychodynamic therapies, owing a lot to the work of Stephen Mitchell and Jessica Benjamin. Put simply, it involves the creation of a 'third' – the energetic space created by two people working together.

8. First-order and second-order change

According to systemic therapists Watzlawick et al: "there are two different types of change: one that occurs within a given system which itself remains unchanged, and one whose occurrence changes the system itself" (Watzlawick et al, 1974: 10). We might say an example of the first is 'rearranging the deck-chairs on the Titanic', whereas the second would be spending the time looking for the lifeboats! Referring to these as first-order and second-order change, Watzlawick et al say:

"We find that in deliberate intervention into human problems the most pragmatic approach is not the question *why?* but *what?*; that is, what is being done here and now that serves to perpetuate the problem, and what can be done here and now to effect a change? In this perspective, the most significant distinction between adequate functioning and dysfunction is the degree to which a system (an individual, family, society, etc.) is either able to generate change by itself or else is caught in a Game Without End" (Watzlawick et al, 1974: 86).

They go on to say: "In psychotherapy it is the myth of knowing this *why* as a precondition for change which defeats its own purpose" (Watzlawick et al, 1974: 87). This systemic change approach is very relevant to Alexander where a pupil often comes having tried to compensate for one habit by creating another (first-order). What we go for as teachers is quietening the system, and offering a completely new 'means whereby'.

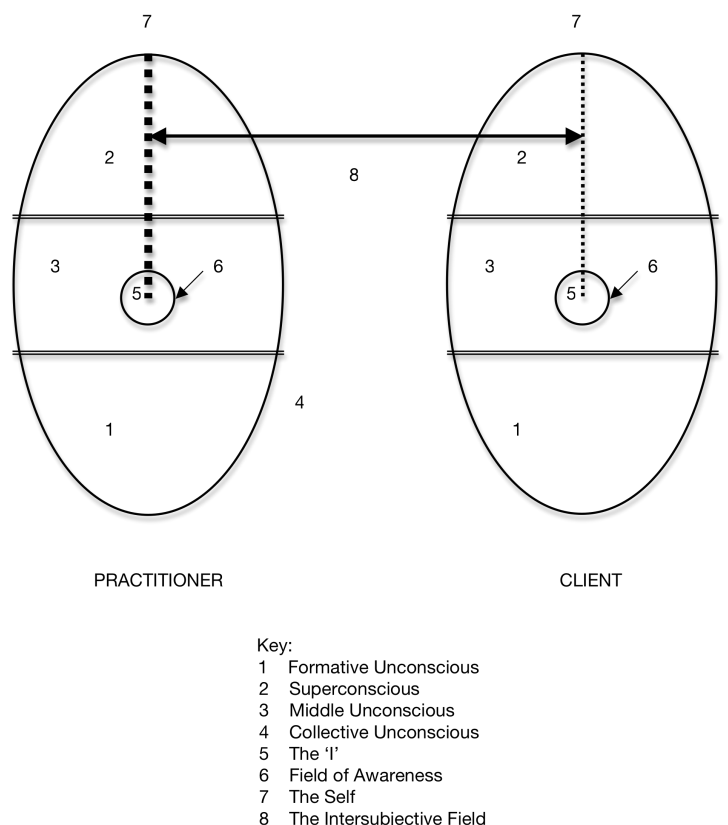
COMPARISON WITH THREE THERAPY MODELS

1. Psychosynthesis

The first comparison I would like to make is with psychosynthesis. There are two models that speak to Alexander, the first being affectionately referred to as the 'egg diagram', developed by its founder-thinker, Roberto Assagioli in the early years of the twentieth century. Assagioli started out as a psychoanalyst, and his defining contribution was the differentiation between 'lower' and 'higher' unconscious. Broadly speaking the former contains material usually related to early emotional and psychological drives, whereas the latter contains human qualities such as creativity, compassion and inspiration.

From **Figure 2**, the important feature is the increasing alignment of the 'I-Self'. The stronger that alignment in an individual, the more authentic is the life-affirming experience. This is similar to the idea of 'vitality' as I have heard it used by Anthony Kingsley in the ATTS. One of the things I teach is that the I-Self alignment in the therapist has a therapeutic impact on the I-Self alignment of the client. As a supervisor, particularly of trainee counselors and psychotherapists, I have started to give more attention the I-Self alignment of trainees than the apparent clinical diagnosis of the client as the agent of change. This has been a great influence of the Alexander training.

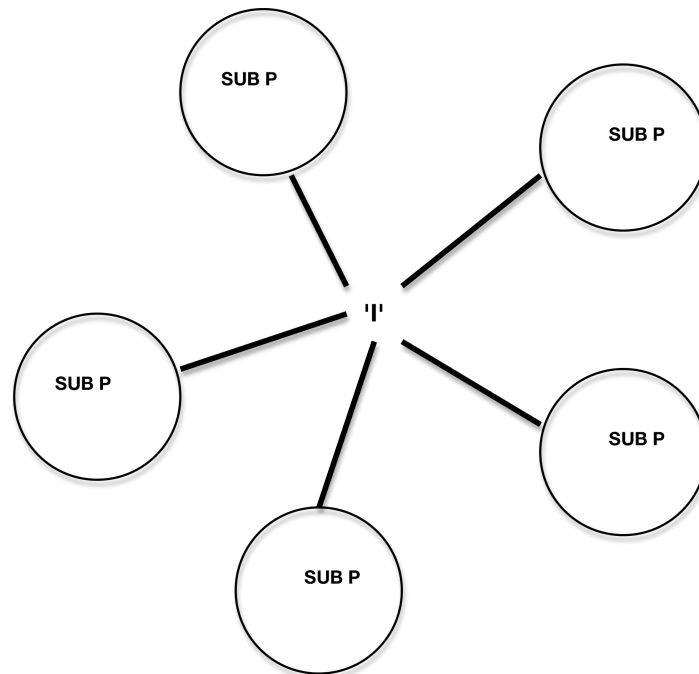
FIGURE 2: THE EGG DIAGRAM IN A TWO-PERSON SYSTEM



In this two-person system, the development of the link between 5 and 7 (the 'I'- Self connection) is paramount. It is assumed that the practitioner has a stronger sense of this link than the client. The same might be said in Alexander between the teacher and pupil.

Before leaving psychosynthesis, a further model is extremely useful - that of subpersonalities. In my view this model, shown in **Figure 3** below we could say that each part of us has its own psychophysical habit - eg. the slumper, the rigid sergeant-major, the supplicator, the dreaming mind-wanderer. In psychosynthesis, much of the work involves developing the capacity for stepping-back or what we call 'disidentifying' from each sub. This disidentification capacity, in my view, is so analagous to the process of 'inhibition' in Alexander I would be prepared to say that the process of creating stillness, non-reactivity and quietness in the person is, in effect, 'the disidentification of the body'.

FIGURE 3: SUBPERSONALITIES



The self may be thought of as a mixture of parts or mini-identities which all have needs, desires, characteristics and habitual mind-body behaviours. We live in these most of the time. But we can also 'disidentify', to a greater or lesser extent, experiencing the 'I' as relatively empty of those mini-identities.

In psychosynthesis we also talk of 'maintaining cycles' (similar to what in Transactional Analysis might be called games or rackets). These maintaining cycles invariably involve shifting in and out of different subs in habitual ways which, unless there is some ability to disidentify from, are experienced as endlessly trapping. In Alexander, we would recognise these as 'patterns of reactivity'. It is not that identification with subs is bad - we live these all the time - but that if over-identification is part of an unconscious habit or maintaining cycle then it can restrict the self-system. This is comparable to Alexander where no one posture or movement is right or wrong - it is the reactive habit that causes the problem.

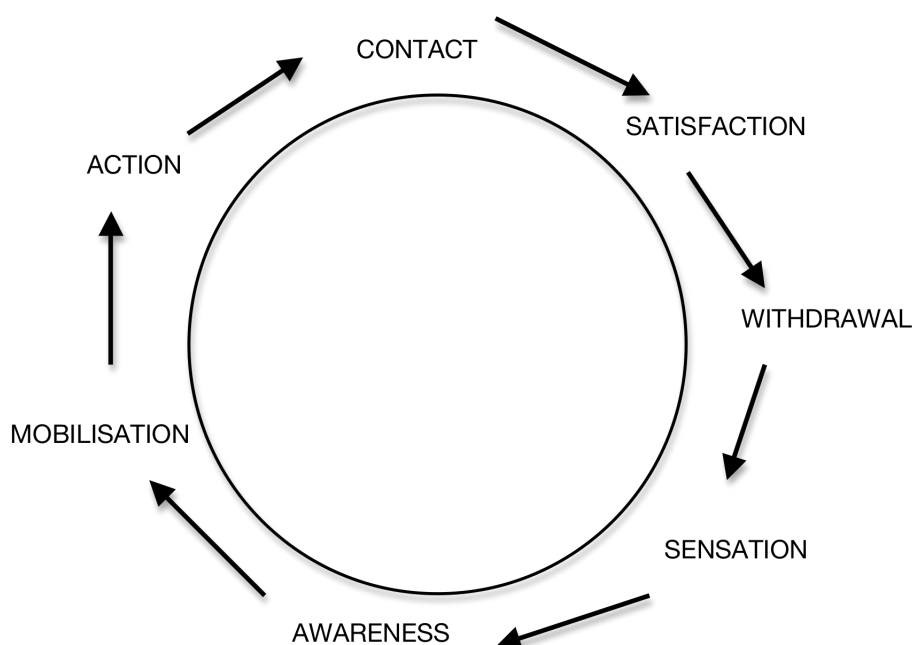
2. Gestalt

The second comparison is with Gestalt Cycle of Experience, developed by Zinker and others. One of the defining features of Gestalt is the idea of 'figure' and 'ground', which we might describe as changing states of attention to self in its environment. Here-and-now experience may be thought of as following a movement or development through a cycle.

This cycle can be used to describe experience either over long period of time, or equally with respect to a brief moment or encounter.

The cycle, shown in **Figure 4** has a number of reference points: sensation - awareness - mobilisation - action - contact - satisfaction - withdrawal. Each of these has certain potential dysfunctions which we will not go into here. But in Alexander terms, we might think of 'sensation' as stimulus, 'mobilisation' as habit and 'action' as reactivity. It seems to me that if these three stages were experienced with greater capacity for inhibition, then the 'contact' and 'satisfaction' stages of the cycle would be experienced in a different way thus forming a new Gestalt. It is debatable whether this is a sequence, or whether it is all simultaneous – in much the same way as we might wonder whether an Alexander 'slump' or mind-wandering occurs prior to or after the loss of primary control. My discussions with various Alexander teachers on this point have proved inconclusive. My view is that this is best understood as a micro-sequence, rather like rapidly moving film-frames, too fast for the human eye to catch. On this cycle, I believe Alexander has much to observe and say about the various stages, and how particular actions give rise to particular forms of contact with inner vitality (or not).

FIGURE 4: THE GESTALT CYCLE




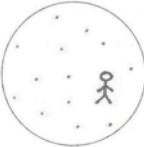

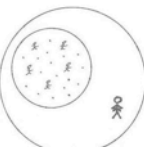
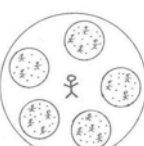
Although each stage of the cycle is experienced in Alexander, the mobilisation stage is usually the one most concentrated on, as it forms the basis of inhibition.

3. Constructive Developmental Theory

The third comparison is with a psychology model known as Constructive Developmental Theory (CDT) developed by Robert Kegan, and based on the work of Jean Piaget, Lawrence Kohlberg and William Perry. In summarising Kegan's work, Peter Pruyn has explained the basic principles: "There are those aspects of experience which we can perceive, take responsibility for and problem-solve around. These can be thought of as

what we are able to hold *as object*.... Meanwhile, there are also aspects of experience which we are not aware of, which we cannot take responsibility for and can therefore not problem-solve around. These aspects of experience we can consider being *subject to*" (Pruyn, 2010). He goes on to say: "We can therefore think of the subject/object relationship as describing what we *have* in our perceptions, versus what *has us*" (Pruyn, 2010). The essence of Kegan's model consists of five orders of mental development where the subject of one level (the structure of one's knowing - ie. what one is working on) becomes the object of the next level (the content of one's knowing - ie. what is now within acquired experience). This model is reproduced below as **Figure 5**.

FIGURE 5: KEGAN'S FIVE STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

Developmental Stage/ Order of Mind (typical ages)	What can be seen as <i>object</i> (the content of one's knowing)	What one is <i>subject to</i> (the structure of one's knowing)	Underlying Structure of Meaning-Making
1st Order: Impulsive Mind (~2-6 years-old)	one's reflexes	one's impulses, perceptions	Single Point 
2nd Order: Instrumental Mind (~6 years-old through adolescence)	one's impulses, perceptions	one's needs, interests, desires	Categories 
3rd Order: Socialized Mind (post-adolescence)	one's needs, interests, desires	interpersonal relationships, mutuality	Across Categories 
4th Order: Self-Authoring Mind (variable, if achieved)	interpersonal relationships, mutuality	self-authorship, identity, ideology	Systemic 
5th Order: Self-Transforming Mind (typically > ~40, if achieved)	self-authorship, identity, ideology	the dialectic between ideologies	System of Systems 

Adapted from Robert Kegan, *In Over Our Heads: the Mental Demands of Modern Life* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), pp. 314-315 by Peter W. Pruyn, <http://developmentalobserver.blog.com>.

This model (which we could take equally as a mind-body model) has tremendous implications for Alexander work, because we are re-working the early stages for our pupils, and probably working to develop the higher-order stages for trainees becoming practitioners. In some renderings of Kegan's model, there is a Stage 0, where there is no object and the reflexes are the subject. I believe we address this stage too.

FINAL REMARKS

Inevitably, it is very difficult, perhaps impossible, to use words to describe a psychophysical process, without the actual experience of the 'hands on'. It is even harder to convey the type of inner transformation that occurs - emotional, physical and energetic. I have found the actual training process in Alexander to be profound, and at times both

liberating and disturbing. Like therapy, it is not a linear process. Systemic change always involves shifts and adjustments which can be uncomfortable.

In my view there are some interesting parallels between the processes of change that go on in therapy and those in Alexander. Both aim to create some sort of quietness of the mind-body system through the modelling, transference or the interventions of the practitioner. This quietness or emptiness creates potential for a different 'order of mind' (in Kegan's terms) to come into play allowing more 'conscious control' (in Alexander's terms), and thus more 'direction' (I-Self connection in psychosynthesis terms).

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