

VIII

This was published as a large sewn booklet (276 x 219 mm), 24 pages in length, of which 19 pages are text. It was published in 1906 by Baillière, Tindall & Cox, Convent Garden, a medical publisher, who also published IX.

This is the first time Alexander attempts a description and explanation of his technique. It is not a coincidence that this is also the first time Alexander warns the reader of the limitations of words in describing his work—a warning he was to reiterate throughout his life.

This article also introduces the concept of “use” but, as yet, not of “the self.” In order of appearance, the article mentions use of “voice,” “vocal apparatus,” “respiratory mechanism,” and of “the muscular system of the thorax, governing the correct *contraction* and *expansion of the thorax* and the dilatation of the alæ nasi.” The progress towards a term encompassing the whole organism in activity is obvious.

“Conscious control”—making its first appearance—is obtained “through the agency of ordinary volition.” The mechanisms are brought under conscious control “through re-education,” and they become “afterwards, when perfected, unconscious,” or, as he writes later, when perfected, the new “use has become second nature.”

Other terms which would become part of the vocabulary of the Technique are also introduced: “use”, “direction”, “means-whereby” (here: “indirect means”) and “antagonistic action” (for the latter: *see* note 92 and 174).

Alexander also writes of the whispered “Ah” and explains why it has to be whispered. The whispered “Ah” is discussed in CCC (part II, chapter 5), but not elsewhere in his books in detail.

As in earlier papers, Alexander describes his method of breathing as being “Nature’s,” referring to the process intended by the inherent structure and organization of the organism. It is only with *MSI* that he makes a distinction between instinctive and conscious modes of breathing.

Introduction to a New Method of Respiratory Vocal Re-Education

1906

Introductory

I am well aware of the difficulty of expressing in writing particular ideas and arguments so clearly that an exact meaning is conveyed to all. This is proved by the diversity of opinions held by those who have read even one short article on a subject with which they are not well acquainted, or upon which they have preconceived ideas.

For this reason I long refused to run the risk of being misunderstood or misconstrued concerning the details of my method, but had made them known to doctors by means of personal demonstration during the ten years I had imparted the method before bringing it to the notice of those leading London doctors in 1904 who, after most careful investigation, pronounced it the most efficient known to them.

They came to me as students, and, satisfied, have sent patients, among them eminent members of the vocal and dramatic profession who had suffered for years from throat troubles, resulting in a "loss of voice," which frequently necessitated temporary suspension of professional work.

The impossibility of continuing these demonstrations in consequence of the number of pupils studying under my direction forces me to attempt now this written explanation of my method.

I do not claim to have discovered any new method of breathing, but to understand the only true one—Nature's; to have approached the subject from the artistic standpoint, and to have formulated a new method of respiratory and vocal re-education—a fact admitted by the medical men with whom I have had the honour of collaborating.

These gentlemen knew what was required, but were unable to get practical results by restoring the desired condition in their patients, and teachers of breathing failed to help them in this connection. By their desire, also, I have promised in future publications to indicate