

《研究ノート》

Catatonic States and Movement Fluidity  
in Butoh Dance and Dance Movement Psychotherapy

Toshiharu KASAI

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Abstract

In butoh dance training and dance movement therapy programs in mental clinics, three types of motionlessness often occur due to 1) the low energy state, 2) the simple body fixation, and 3) the antagonistic rivalry. The muscular armor found by W. Reich and the catatonic state belongs to the second or the third type, and are keys to deepen one's own body-mind perception for butoh dance and psychotherapy. Attention distraction or "leaping" in terms of multiple reality theory by A. Schutz or the pre-therapy intervention for acute mental confusion functions to change the perceived reality for creative butoh performance or therapeutic intervention. Movement fluidity or smoothness against the body-mind fixation is important, but the intention to relax works as a dysfunction and destroys its purpose as in "end gaining" shown in Alexander Technique. The necessity of self-relativization was pointed out beyond the simple framework of cause and effect.

Keyword : muscular armor, body-mind fixation, dysfunction, self-relativization

**Introduction**

Butoh dance, an iconoclastic and avant-garde dance form originated by Tatsumi Hijikata and Kazuo Ohno in 1950s in Japan, has proliferated around the world since it was first introduced in the Western countries in 1980s. Dark and black dance ("*ankoku butoh*") and Hijikata's approach was deeply rooted in the Japanese farmers' body-mind ("*ganimata*" bowlegs, a "*nekoze*" stoop, and articular contractures, etc.) and their daily agonies brought by floods, typhoons, famines, and poverty, etc. Whereas, the aged Ohno elegantly showed a heavenly dance, although he underwent hardships as a soldier of the second World War, as if he was a gentle young lady even when he was in his 80s and 90s. From its birth, butoh dance was full of contrasting opposites.

The author has been performing as a butoh dancer Itto Morita since 1980s, but had been struggling to integrate those contradicting factors such as "butoh is a corpse desperately standing erect", one of the Hijikata's enigmatic phrases. However, after starting dance movement therapy sessions at mental clinics in 1999 as a dance therapist, I gradually became aware that there are usually contradicting factors during the session which need practical and therapeutic reactions on each occasion. It seemed to me there are some common aspects in butoh dance training and dance movement therapy. In this paper, a body-mind dimension consisting of a set of contrasting modes, "cataleptic state" versus "movement fluidity" is introduced for more effective understanding and practice both in butoh dance and dance movement psychotherapy (DMT) .

## 1. Catatonic bodymind states

### Muscular armor

Schizophrenic patients often show so-called negative symptoms which are said to be deficits of normal emotional responses or of other thought processes, rendering them emotionless and motionless. Whereas, when they are in the catatonic body-mind state and look motionless, their seeming motionlessness is not thought to be a negative syndrome, but actually it is a catatonic one with a certain amount of body-mind energy or muscle tensions. In most cases, the catatonic tension is a one-directional fixation of such as flexor muscles. It seems they need to protect themselves by fixing their arms, shoulders, neck, or other muscles to guard against unpredictable attacks from outside. According to Wilhelm Reich (1897-1957) <sup>1)</sup>, the originator of body-mind psychotherapy, the muscular armor is to be built by these chronic muscle fixations. But, once their anxieties or fears are put aside and the safety need (Maslow, 1952) <sup>2)</sup> is satisfied, the muscle fixation becomes unnecessary and the muscular armor does not grow.

In butoh dance training, physical exercises are important as other dance styles do, and any muscle fixations or unnecessary tensions are soon found and released through bodyworks including Noguchi Taiso physical exercise. It should be noted that the searching process of tense body parts is one of the essential approaches in butoh, through which butoh dancers are able to learn their own personal muscular armors and their "archaeological past" (Kasai, 1990) <sup>3)</sup> built in his/her individualized body-mind.

### Three Types of Motionlessness

In our butoh dance training, there are two ways for motionlessness, one of which is a simple motionless state with the insufficient body-mind energy to move around, and the other is an apparent motionlessness but with a collision of antagonistic factors in the body and mind.

The former motionless state is experienced when people are totally exhausted or starving. In old days, many Japanese butoh dancers often stopped eating or decreased the amount of foods excessively before the performance, and danced "desperately" with the unmovable body. As a legendary story of Hijikata, it was said that he once ordered one of his young butoh students not to eat anything but only one apple a day. The eldest butoh master Ohno<sup>4)</sup> told that "to keep living is training when you are 90 years old". In these cases, "*Suijaku-tai*" or the emaciated body, a Japanese term coined by Hijikata, is suitable and also pertinent when you find the following title "Jealousy over the dog's veins", that stand out against the skinny body, in his book "*Yameru Mai-hime; A sick dancing princess*" (Hijikata, 1983)<sup>5)</sup>.

The motionlessness in this sense comes from the weakness of the body, but in the other case the structure of contradiction is involved both in the body and mind. For example, when you activate simultaneously both your extensor and flexor muscle of one arm, there occurs seemingly nothing but there are antagonistic powers rivalling in the arm. This is the physical aspect of contradiction, but this works together with the mental factor by having the opposing ideas of "trying to extend the arm" and "trying to bend the arm", which might be urged by the opposite emotions such as "I want to hit him" and "I should not hit him". This is the third type of motionlessness as the outcome of physical and mental contradiction. To summarize, there are three types of motionlessness; 1) the state of fatigue or exhaustion with low energy, 2) the one-directional muscle fixation, and 3) the antagonistic rivalry within both the body and the mind.

Since the dull motionlessness is actualized by energylessness, and the antagonistic one is realized by having contradicting emotions and ideas, butoh dancers should especially pursue both the *suijaku-tai* emaciated body, and the physical-mental internal rivalry in order to experience one's powerlessness and contradictions of life.

Concerning the motionlessness of the third kind, the antagonistic physical energy tends to give birth to vibrations in the body parts involved, but no new development or change is expected without any interfering factors added to destroy the kinetic knot. Whether it is internal or external, something should occur in the body-mind and the person should be

directed to another dimension. His or her determination is one possibility to make a change, and the other is something occurring and distracting him or her in an unplanned way. During butoh training, if you open up yourself to any new stimuli coming from inside and outside such as flashbacks, pains, dizziness, anger, or sudden sounds, lights, winds, smells, texture, friends or enemies, flowers, and etc., then you suddenly find yourself totally pulled out of the previous body-mind fixation to another world. This sudden change totally affects your performance in an unpredictable way, and you have to survive in the strange and uncharted situation regardless of the past choreography.

### **Attention distraction and reality change**

In the dance therapy sessions at mental clinics, as the program is held mainly for daycare service, sometimes together with a few inmates, schizophrenic participants generally don't show severely negative symptoms, but three types of motionlessness are often observed. For the participants with the dull motionlessness, it is often necessary to energize or empower them by introducing enjoyable but simple bodymind exercises or plays if their physiological and safety needs are more or less satisfied (Maslow, 1943) <sup>6)</sup>.

The first president of American Dance Therapy Association (ADTA) in 1966, Ms. Marian Chace<sup>7)</sup> pointed out that the patients need to feel safe and protected, and she tried to have a contact with them in the warm and polite way during her sessions as theorized in the human relations approach by H.S. Sullivan (1953) <sup>8)</sup>, and utilized a circling dance frequently in order to ease their loneliness and give them the other people's energy and support.

There are many different therapeutic practices in the DMT approach since then, but in this paper the author mainly deals with its function in terms of the changed reality.

Attention distraction is a commonly used word in the daily life, but it should be noted that mental distraction is one of the important concepts about how to switch the experiencing world to another one. Alfred Schutz (1945) <sup>9)</sup>, one of the most famous phenomenological sociologists, proposed a new perspective about our "multiple realities" consisting of different social roles/positions, altered states of consciousness, etc. His basic points is that we already live in the world of multiple reality and "leap" into another reality or into "a finite province of meaning" with a specific cognitive style. Psychological terms such as dissociation, state bound memory, multiple personality, and the others should be discussed, but let us confine ourselves to the function of reality change in DMT in this paper.

### **Person-centered "pre-therapy" for another reality**

We have a practical example in psychotherapy that is in accordance with Schutz's "leaping" to another reality. When a psychiatric patient is in a disorganized mental state, totally losing a social or interpersonal contact with the people around, person-centered therapists will try to shift his/her attention to the real physical/social world from his/her dissociated mental world.

The person-centered "pre-therapy" in the psychiatric setting is known well among Rogerian therapists. Carl R. Rogers (1957)<sup>10)</sup> stated that "for constructive personality change to occur, it is necessary that these (six) conditions exist and continue over a period of time".

The conditions are: i) Psychological contact between counsellor and client, ii) The client is incongruent (anxious or vulnerable) , iii) The counsellor is congruent, iv) The client receives empathy from the counsellor, v) The counsellor shows unconditional positive regard towards the client, vi) Client perceives acceptance and unconditional positive regard. These six conditions are "the hypothesized conditions by which the therapist facilitates constructive personality change".

However, different therapeutic measures were often needed in psychiatric wards when treating critically ill patients who don't reach the very first condition of "psychological contact". The pre-therapy (Prouty, 1990; 1994)<sup>11:12)</sup> was so named because it is aimed at those patients who need to have "psychological contact" before the therapeutic counselling becomes possible. By using the reflection techniques such as described in Wilkins' paper (2007)<sup>13)</sup> , therapists try to show the client what is actually going on about the general situations ("the sun is shining", "you are in my office", etc.) , the client's facial expressions ("you smile", "he looks angry", etc.) , and the client's bodily situations ("you have your hand up", etc.) , and also employ the word-for-word reflection by repeating what the client said, and the reiterative reflection by repeating previously successful reflections.

Once these reflections are successful, the client is expected to recapture the physical/social reality and the personal contact with the therapist. This is not a simple attention distraction, but the client's reality is shifted as a whole from their confused internal reality to the "here and now" reality where the client can reach the outside world physically and the other people verbally.

In butoh dance training and dance movement therapy settings, it is rather advantageous in trying to direct people to the physical and tangible world than in verbal counselling because the first three reflections are intrinsic factors in the physical training using one's

own body.

## 2. Movement fluidity

The movement fluidity is one of the motion qualities seen in a sequential and continuous movement characterized by its smoothness, and is opposite to the muscle fixation or motionlessness described above. This term is applicable to the situations when a part of the body sways softly, or swells or shrinks with elasticity as the chest or abdomen does in breathing. The autonomic nervous system controls breathing, and it is one of the typical movements of fluidity where no mental interference is necessary. When you carefully observe a cat sitting in the same place for a while, it is discernible that its head is swaying softly according to its breathing. It might not be known well, but when a tea ceremony master sits in the formal *seiza* position on *tatami* and prepares *matcha* tea to serve, his/her head usually sways. This gentle head swaying is not rare among Japanese arts' masters; when a Noh actor slowly steps forward, his head is not always fixed rigidly but sways delicately, and its movement usually synchronizes with breathing. The amount of head/neck swaying is very little, and the movement remains unnoticed without having a close look.

In butoh dance training, when you try to keep your upper body straight but with the least amount of muscle tension, the body delicately sways. Although this is unspectacular at all as a dance, but is significant as a practice to nurture the sensitive body perception<sup>14)</sup>.

### Noguchi Taiso and the waving body

Hence, it is clear why Noguchi Taiso (physical exercise) has been important in butoh; Noguchi frequently mentioned to *ne-nyoro* lesson and its relationship with the snaky or whip movement; Sankaijuku dancers often showed their worm's crawling movement, lying on the stomach and moving the spinal column like a slowly changing whip. P. Esposito (2017)<sup>15)</sup> wrote about the caterpillar movement in the abstract that "(her) video-paper illustrates the process of 'metamorphosis' as mediated by a reconfiguring of the practitioner's kinetic structures." Because it is difficult to move the backbone intentionally, the practice of caterpillar movement gives us an opportunity to perceive the vertebral column precisely, and to learn how much awkward our movements are when using insensitive body parts.

In old days, Japanese butoh dancers often covered the mirrors on the wall with black clothes or newspapers before practice, and tried to minimize the visual recognition of the

body. This was in accord with Noguchi's ideas; he emphasized the necessity to put aside both the visual body image and the idea of the muscle-skeletal system, and introduced *ne-nyoro* lesson in the lying position for a new body image as "a leather bag filled with water" or simply "a water bag" in which bones, muscles, and viscera are floating. When the water bag body is shaken for a while, the ego-centric cognition of the body is gradually weakened, and the sense of the body boundary is lost to some extent as if you are put in the isolation or floating tank for sensory deprivation. In most cases, both in butoh dance and dance therapy session, *ne-nyoro* movement makes people relax and peaceful with the waving body, but there are some people who are not good at it because of tensions in the body or mind. (Note: This lesson is not suitable to the schizophrenic people whose ego boundary is very loose.)

### **Contradictions in the body-mind relaxation**

Based on our butoh dance method (kasai, 1999) <sup>16)</sup> and on our "body learning" experiential approach, we have a conclusive understanding about the body-mind relaxation and tension (Kasai, 1994; 1996a; 1996b) <sup>17:18:19)</sup> ; If you need to relax, you should not try to relax, and all you do is to cease any intervention about the process of relaxation and to become aware of what is going on in the body-mind, and then the body starts moving with fluidity.

Throwing away the intension to relax sounds paradoxical, but the similar propositions were found, for example, such as in Zen Buddhism and Alexander Technique. In the book "Zen in the Art of Archery" (Herrigal, 1953) <sup>20)</sup> , the master cried, "The right art is purposeless, aimless! The more obstinately you try to learn how to shoot the arrow for the sake of hitting the goal, the less you will succeed." F.M. Alexander (1932) <sup>21)</sup> , the originator of Alexander Technique, proposed "end gaining" as one of our erroneous reactions in the body-mind control. It is our general tendency not to pay attention to the necessary process for the body-mind task, but excessively cling to the imaginary end results of the process. End-gaining was one of the revolutionary findings about how to deal with the body-mind process properly, but its importance was not well accepted because of the Western philosophical tradition of Descartes' mind-body separation. About butoh dance, the author believes that it should be performed, at its best, in an altered state of consciousness where the egocentric controlling subject or "I" is put aside as in the phenomenological epoché or bracketing. In this research note, however, it would be sufficient to remark that the movement fluidity is related to our passive attitude toward the body-mind process, or to listening to the voice of "God of gravity" as in Noguchi Taiso. In this respect, we are stimulated by our self-actualization

need of Maslow's hierarchical theory, and need to realize it in our own tangible bodies through the contemplation of a higher level and self-relativization.

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舞踏ダンスおよびダンスムーブメント・セラピーにおける緊張状態と動きの流動性

葛西俊治

要 約

1980年代からの暗黒舞踏手としての経験とダンスムーブメント・セラピストとしての精神科領域での経験から、「動きのない状態」3種類を、衰弱型・固着型・拮抗型として捉え、土方巽の言う衰弱体、単純な硬直やライヒの「筋肉の鎧」である固着型、そして、衝突する二つの拮抗筋肉群とともに心理的衝突(「すべきである」「すべきではない」)による「矛盾」を含む拮抗型について、舞踏と身体心理療法の観点から把握を試みた。さらに、そうした状態からの離脱について、「注意を逸らす」という関わりには、直面している「現実の切り替え」という構造があることを現象学的社会学者シュッツによる多元的現実論から把握するとともに、ロジャーズによる人間中心のアプローチから発展した「プリ・セラピー」、すなわち、「治療的なパーソナリティ変化」についてロジャーズが提言した6原則の第1原則である「心理学的接触」に至らず精神病的なパニックなどの恐慌状態にある者を、社会的および対人的現実場面に引き戻すプリ・セラピーの中に、シュッツのいう他の現実への「リープ」の構造を見いだした。

動きの流動性とは、動きの無い固着状のあり方の対極として、自然な呼吸による胸郭の動きや、茶の湯の師の佇まいの中に呼吸とともにわずかに揺れる首・頭の動きや、能の舞い手の歩みとともに揺れる首・頭のように、動きの自然な流れを見いだせる。そうした身心のリラクセーションには矛盾構造があることが報告されている(葛西, 1994他)が、この点は日本の弓道を禅師から学び「的を狙って射るのではない」という報告(1953)や、アレキサンダー・テクニクの創始者による「エンド・ゲイニングend-gaining」(1932)の指摘によって、目的的で意志的な実践方法が逆効果である点は古くから知られている。これは、現象学的エポケーのように「私」をどのようにして相対化していくかという、心身のあり方についての高次の「自己実現的」な制御方法として、あらためて身心の実際によって超え出ていくべきことである。

キーワード：筋肉のヨロイ、身心の固着、逆機能、自己相対化

(かさい としはる 札幌学院大学人文学部 臨床心理学科)