

Catastrophic Mimesis in Body Posture and Resulting Postural Pain – Is there a cure in *Judeo/Christian* imagery?

ABSTRACT

A “catastrophe” in our bodies seems to be occurring. Postural dysfunction and pain has become frequent enough that one could consider it an epidemic. Nowhere in the animal world is there a similar level of dysfunction to be seen. I suggest that imitation and mimetic desire play a large and direct role in postural dysfunction. I also propose that visual and kinesthetic mental imagery, with principles of healthy structure embedded in them, can be an antidote for the postural problems that come from a degree of dysfunctional mimetic personality development in virtually all of us. This imagery is illustrated in the form of ideal and, therefore, “divine” archetypes.

While Eastern religions and disciplines of various types (Eastern meditation, tai chi, yoga, etc.) have become increasingly popular in the West as tools for coping with body discomfort and insecurity, I am recommending that Judeo and Christian imagery should be more closely considered as a means of healthy conversion within the body. Specifically, images of innocence, vulnerability, sacrifice, scapegoating, crucifixion, and boundless love will be considered in their relationship to postural health. Several illustrations and mental image exercises are included in the paper.

Finally, this paper is not a comparative, though it shows some Eastern and Western images and symbols. It is rather an introduction to a *new* approach to postural health that may be as *old* as Judeo-Christian tradition. The paper attempts to put several concepts together in the hopes there will be investigation and exploration by others.

I am a teacher of the Alexander Technique, a discipline that concerns the use of the mind in relation to the use and misuse of the body. In addition, I have developed mental imagery to “inspire” the “right brain” to move the body toward healthier posture by releasing and redistributing tension. Articles explaining my theories and use of imagery for postural rehabilitation are available on my website, <http://posturereleaseimagery.org>.

Additional background

In an effort to explain the Alexander Technique and the nature of healthy posture, and to provide students an extra tool for improving and maintaining changes during “hands-on” lessons, I have developed illustrations and imagery exercises. The use of this specific whole-body imagery is something that I call Posture Release Imagery and can function independent of the Alexander Technique.

My life-changing experience with the imagery was a part of what brought about my conversion to Catholicism. I now think that many aspects of my “discoveries” are as old as Judeo/Christian tradition. As a result, I might have wanted to title this paper, “*Hidden principles of healthy structure (posture) revealed in Judeo/Christian imagery.*” The choice probably would have been inappropriate because it is somewhat imitative of Rene Girard’s book title. However, with that title, I would have wished to suggest two things: First, that I am proposing what I consider a serious and important hypothesis that has considerable potential. Second, that the new principles of postural health that I will discuss here are related to Girard’s writings on mimetic desire as well as to several basic images from Judeo-Christian tradition.

Mimesis and structural dysfunction in the body

Back pain, lack of energy, and mimesis

I argue here that most of the aches, pains, and lack of energy we experience in our bodies have structural (postural) origins... and this structure is capable of being profoundly changed. I also suggested that these postural problems constitute a “catastrophe” in the body, due to their ubiquitous presence. Many lives, if not most, are affected by what is a less-than-ideal relationship with gravity. Posture is affected by *all* tensions in the body as well as flaccidities. This includes tension not generally presumed to be involved in posture, as, for instance, facial tension.

The concept of embodiment is being strongly addressed by many others and will be skipped over here. In this paper, the implications of mind/body unity are assumed. I do, however, hope that the hypotheses and evidence suggested here will *not* be skipped over by those others writing on the subject. Within COV&R, papers involving embodiment and an aspect of embodiment, mirror neurons, have been presented, with Hurlbut (1997) and Garrels (2006) as examples.

The catastrophe’s cause (Poor models – or mimesis of the “other”)
and solution (Ideal models – or mimesis of the ideal or “divine”)

“Like father, like son” is one of many commonly understood sayings describing mimesis within the family, whether it shows up as such or not. Frequently this mimesis is obvious posturally. I suggest that there are postural effects inherent in virtually all mimesis regardless of who is being imitated and what is being desired, father, mother, brother, sister, gang leader, or rock star. The important fact is that someone is being imitated or perhaps, as the object, someone’s *body* is being imitated. Imitating that “someone,” from a structural point of view, has several problems. First, the imitation is never conscious enough to the imitator to allow them to prevent the negative postural effects of that imitation. Second, the postural health of the one imitated is probably a good distance from ideal, despite what appearances may suggest, creating an imperfect postural model. Third, the one imitating undoubtedly has a different body/personality to start with than the one imitated, giving imitation an overlapping tonal quality that complicates their structure. And fourth, imitation, itself, invokes the wrong sets of muscles for one to truly begin to experience the other. This last point will be discussed later.



Fig. 1



Fig. 2

When the above mimesis creates painful and debilitating consequences, the search for ideal principles, people, and the “divine” can follow. In the western world, it generally takes place in spiritual realms, but not in “postural realms.” That is because there has not been a generally *recognized* ideal model (the “divine”) displaying recognized principles that apply to posture. In Eastern religions, the Buddha (fig.1, for example) has been viewed as displaying an ideal posture for sitting and meditation. Another image, for example, from the story of Avalokitesvara and the 1000 arms of compassion (fig. 2), suggests an image that can be of structural value (not explained here).

A suggestion of a hidden, religiously Western, model of the “divine” is proposed in this paper to inspire a new discipline for postural health.

Current thinking of therapeutic approaches to postural problems

Numerous techniques and disciplines attempt to deal with postural and muscular-skeletal problems in various ways.¹ Currently the more respected attempts to deal with postural dysfunction view the challenge as one of habitual responses that must be “unlearned.” It has also become more evident that the process of “unlearning” a reaction requires an approach more subtle than simple declarative efforts to change, e.g. “Don’t arch your back when sitting” or “Don’t pull your head back while standing up.” They require changing “pre-motor” inclinations and images (“self-image”).

Some such subtle indirect procedures have become more common in dealing with our body complaints. There is recognition now that structural pain and weakness involves much more than the specific suffering or offending area of the body. This is coming from a slow recognition that the whole body (with the mind) supports the whole body and the whole body (with the mind) moves the whole body. This is in contrast to older, more mechanistic, views of the body that did not recognize the subtle importance of all parts of the body to the whole of its support.

Specific mental imagery

Imagery and whole-body imagery

Verbally characterizing ideal structure (“divine” posture) requires words such as balanced, open, lengthened, or grounded. It can also be usefully characterized through illustration and, most importantly, through imagery. The suggested protocol here combines some of the new perspective on the need to “unlearn” with the still generally untapped resources in mental imagery. This mental imagery contains new principles of ideal posture embedded within it.

Imagery and imitation

The concepts of *imagining* and *imitating* first need to be contrasted here, though in practice it can be difficult to separate them. To *imitate* an elephant, for example, creates considerably different results than imagining that one *is* an elephant. Imagining one is an elephant temporarily changes habitual muscular patterns (and probably positively!) whereas imitating an elephant may be funny but would not bring about a new (as in non-habitual) kinesthetic experience.

¹ They include but are not limited to Yoga, Pilates, Tai Chi, Qigong, and derivatives from Buddhism such as Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction, The Alexander Technique, The Feldenkrais Method, Chiropractic, Osteopathy, standard physical therapy.

One important point is that the ideal can be *imagined*, but not successfully *imitated*. The less-than-ideal can be *imitated* but also should be *imagined* (in order to develop empathy or understanding). It is relatively easy to imitate a crooked old man (though we could easily miss including his beauty). We can imitate the misuse and overuse of his muscles and it will be recognizable as him. It is quite difficult or near impossible to successfully imitate a little baby, as we have the much greater challenge to imitate his or her innocence and current lack of habit.

In the sense described here, *imitating* the Christ can only mean carrying out some of his good works. However, he asks more than that of us. Dare we imitate Jesus to the point of imagining we *are* the Christ? The only way to *more fully* imitate the divine is to imagine being the divine. So, perhaps we should. In a postural sense, imagery is *most* effective with subjects that are impossible to physically imitate, as is a baby or Christ. If it is possible to physically imitate a particular individual, then habitual muscular use would have a tendency to interfere with any chance of acquiring new positive attributes from that model.

In the case of Jesus, many varied depictions exist to use as visual models but there is an attempted portrayal of qualities common to all depictions (if he is idealized). For instance, he loves absolutely. Imagine your body surface feeling and radiating a quality of absolute love. That may sound absurd, though it is not. What it is, however, is impossibly difficult, but worth the try.² A body can be imagined (without imitating) to radiate love, sincerity, humility, and changes, at least for the period of imagining, will take place.

Therefore, we can simplify the effort to attain a more liberated structure, less encumbered by the mimetic trappings of our individual histories. We can imagine having the observable or imagined *features* inherent in or implied by a baby or Christ, for instance, without imagining the actual beings. A baby is, compared to an adult, “unblemished.” Therefore, whatever qualities are present in the baby should be thought of as continuous over the body. On the body surface, one of those qualities of a baby would be described as “soft.” Therefore, imagine having “softness” over the *entire* body surface without blemish. Entertaining that simple image will cause a change in sitting, walking, and other activities.

A basic image for experiencing a postural ideal is suggested below. Later, its relationship to the “divine” is discussed.

² The parallels that are drawn here between postural ideals and what we might normally think of as the “divine” were not in any sense expected or forced as they developed. The basics of the imagery were developed before I ever explored Christianity as an adult and become a Catholic.

Image exercise The most elementary example of countering the negative effects of habit and mimesis in the body, using imagery of a postural “ideal,” is to “calm *up* and tense *down*.” Without knowing what exactly is meant, give a thought to doing just that, calming up and tensing down. A slightly more complete mental image would have the following instructions: “First think of *calming* and *expanding up* and *out*, then follow that with the thought of *tensing* and *condensing down* and *in*.”

My apparent play on words may feel good to you and will probably do your structure some temporary good. As a test to the effect of these words, imagine that you are doing the opposite, *calming* and *expanding down* and *in*, then *tensing* and *condensing up* and *out*. Do not do it for long... it is not good for you... though we do it all too frequently.

By the end of this paper, I hope that it will be seen that this bit of “advice” demonstrates a valuable new principle in posture and that it visually expressed in Judeo/Christian imagery. A symbolic depiction of this “calm up and tense down” principle is illustrated in part b of fig. 3 to suggest a healthy response to a world awash in mimetic rivalry.

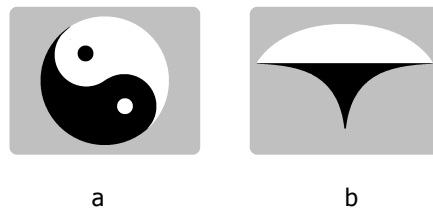


Fig. 3

Newly discovered principles of somatosensory structural control...
and their presence in Judeo/Christian images

Terms defined

By “somatosensory structural control” in this heading, I suggest that the sensations experienced on the body surface are the neurological information used by the body to structure its posture. There are many sensations that we can experience or seem to experience on the body surface. They include paired extremes such as hot/cold, wet/dry, expanded/condensed, light/heavy, thin/thick, and more from a finite list. We can imagine these sensations plus others as well, such as white/black or rubbery/fluffy. We frequently are not aware of what we are sensing on our body surface but it can be shown that the sensations provide the information for structural adjustment just the same. Specifically, imagined sensations change structure (posture).

*The ideal dorsal/ventral surface relationship –
The lamb*



Fig. 4

The earlier image exercise, “calming up and tensing down,” temporally manipulates the dorsal and ventral surface relationship. For any terrestrial tetrapod (four-legged land-bound animal), the way to respond to the most basic force encountered, gravity, is to do as the exercise suggests (see fig.4a, my depiction of an archetypal terrestrial tetrapod). The dorsal surface is expanded upward and outward. It is also depicted as fluffy and light here, suggesting the added quality of “calm.” The ventral surface of the archetypal terrestrial tetrapod is the dense “floor” upon which the animal’s internal body weight falls. The expanded dorsal surface and the condensed ventral surface give the impression of a dome-like tent with a taut stretched floor working together to maintain structure most efficiently. A tetrapod with the opposite qualities (as in fig.4b) would not have the appropriate qualities for life, at least on land.

Fig. 4a is the model of a terrestrial tetrapod with an “ideal” structure. The external view suggests a sturdy and efficient internal structure, even without seeing it. It also illustrates one of the principle ideal features in human posture. However, before being able to use the model well, we must be able to understand what is dorsal and what is ventral on humans.

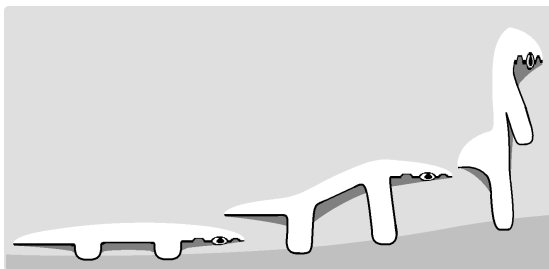
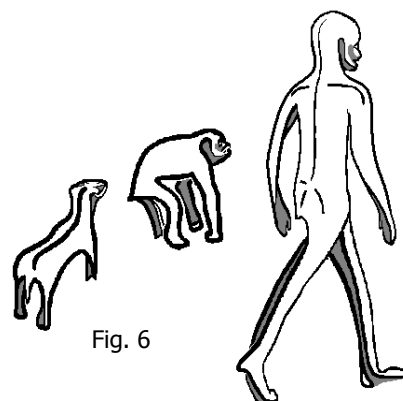


Fig. 5



Fig. 6



In the image exercise drawings above (fig. 5 and 6), the evolution of the dorsal and ventral surfaces can be seen. Fig. 6 is useful for seeing specifically how the limbs, head, and tail evolved in terms of dorsal and ventral. With this perspective, a positive posture image for humans can be constructed. For some people the depiction of the dorsal and ventral surfaces is easily understood. For others, it requires more study.

In an attempt to directly transfer the essence of the archetypal tetrapod (introduced earlier, fig. 4a) to that of a human, the following image (fig. 7) was created. It turned out to look like *a lamb embracing a large egg*. Like the original archetype, the dorsal surface is expanded; appearing soft, white, fluffy, and unblemished, and the ventral surface is shown to be contracted (around the egg).

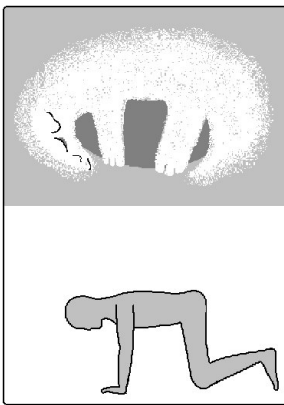


Fig. 7a

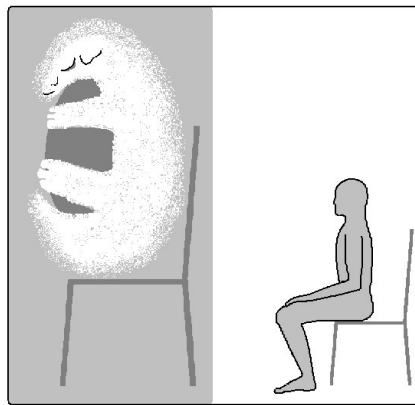


Fig. 7b

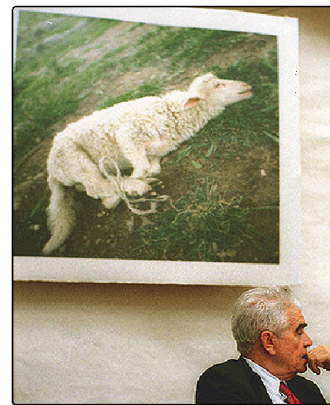


Fig. 8

Image exercise Sitting in a chair in the manner shown in fig. 7b is probably the best way to first attempt this exercise. Examine the illustration. The person is sitting forward on a chair. Follow this example by sitting yourself forward and up in a chair... far enough forward so that a slope in the seat does not make it hard for you to sit up like the person in the drawing. Uncross your legs and rest your hands on your legs. If sitting up this way is very uncomfortable for you, just approximate it as best you can.

Next, imagine that you are not, in fact, a person sitting in a chair but, rather, a lamb-like creature balanced on a chair, with its chin, limbs, and tail wrapped around a dark, cool, slightly heavy egg. This egg is something that the lamb wishes to protect. You are to imagine, but in no sense imitate that, just like this creature, you have very light and fluffy fur (If you wish, you can imagine light balls of cotton instead, if that gives you a greater sense of a light and fluffy). This light fluffy fur extends all over your back but just as importantly includes your tail (which is long and wide), back of neck, back of ears, head, upper eye lids, and nose/nostrils.

All the features of your face are very relaxed, and appear just as shown in the drawing, which includes ears flopped over at rest and eyelids, nostrils, and lips relaxed in the same manner. Imagine holding the cool, dark egg as closely

as you can, making as much body contact with it as possible, as the drawing indicates. You are attempting to cover it as much as possible, with your chin, neck, arms, chest, stomach, legs, groin, under side of tail. Take some time with the image. You may experience relaxation of body parts that do not at first seem commensurate with better posture, but be patient and let it happen.

Finally, imagine that you, wrapped around the egg, rock backward a little bit and then imagine rocking considerably forward. At this point, you can allow yourself to *actually* rock forward enough to be effortlessly over your actual feet (not the imagined ones wrapped around the egg) and then stand up. Even in the standing position, you can imagine yourself surrounding the egg as you were before. Miraculously you will be standing though your legs are still wrapped around the egg! You may experience an easy or easier trip to standing position, without the usual effort. You can get better at this image and experience its beneficial effects more, with repeated experiments. Remember, just imagine, and do not consciously physically *imitate* the illustration or directions. It is also important to endeavor to experience the qualities suggested all over your body, leaving no surface unconsidered, or “blemished.” Do not be surprised if changes take place that do not seem to be right for the illustration. The goal is to release body parts to their most relaxed and yet structurally sturdy positions... not to look like a lamb cleaving to a large egg.

The purpose of this image is to promote appropriate or ideal postural sensations, which are, first, a sense of expansion on one’s dorsal surface (the fluffy side) and, second, a sense of contraction on the ventral side (the side in contact with the egg).

“Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world” is part of a cherished prayer among Christians. The lamb, when fully imagined, has the potential to reach into our habitual body and take away our postural sins. In our own bodies, imagined vulnerability (like being a lamb, for instance) is posturally (or psychophysically) healthy.

Ideal freedom in the body for lateral movement –

The sacrifice of the lamb

Graceful movement requires well-ordered recurring impulses. The movement can have different rhythmic patterns but it must be orderly. In the simple act of walking, there is more than one rhythm or type of impulse. The most important one, however, is probably lateral undulation, which ultimately provides the impulses that bring about opposition in limb movement. This is where the arms swing at opposite times, the legs swing at opposite times, and the arm and leg of each side swing at roughly opposite times.

The best way to promote lateral wave impulses and the graceful motion it induces (though not necessarily showing

up as swinging hips and shoulders) is *not* to interfere with what the body is already programmed to do. While taking a walk, for instance, one can imagine that the right and left sides are nearly split in half and, therefore, incapable of interfering with each other. This, like other seemingly odd “right brain” visualizations, can bring a more open stature and graceful gait by promoting a loss of control. Fig. 9 is a top view of a tetrapod cleaved nearly in two. This is used as a model for the exercise just mentioned. Is it not also like a model of the sacrifice God asks for when making his covenant with Abram? (Genesis 15: 7-21). To imagine being cleaved in this manner has the effect of releasing voluntary musculature that can and does interfere with graceful movement and posture. As this happens, it is important to have faith that another natural involuntary or non-volitional system will take over. Is it so different in the Biblical image and story?

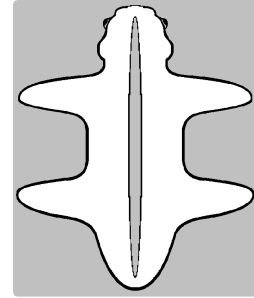


Fig. 9

With this perspective, one can now imagine having a healthy dorsal and ventral surface, in shape and experienced sensations, as well as being cleaved in half. The sensation of being “unblemished,” with an *entire* dorsal surface that is expanded, soft, and fluffy, as well as being vertically cleaved can bring about a considerable “conversion” of the body and sensations. Diligence is required in these exercises, just as it is in any discipline requiring some faith that change will come.

“Unblemished,” “sacrificial lamb,” and “conversion” are not terms that I have previously used to describe the above image for postural change and reduction of pain or discomfort, but they could be.

*Ideal relationship and independence of
the three functional segments of the body –
The crucifixion*



Fig. 10



Fig. 11

The perceived separation of other portions of the body is also valuable in promoting a well-supported body and a flexible yet upright movement quality. As can be seen in the simplified drawing of evolution (fig. 10), some aspects of earlier tetrapods' development through evolution continue. Three functional portions or segments of the body can be discerned. The "director" segment overhangs the front limbs and can move about. The "motor" segment is supported by both the front and back limbs and does most of the "work." Finally, the "rudder" segment hangs behind the back limbs and can also move about and affect direction, from the rear. What is observable in the illustrations, and confirmed in the kinesthetic effect of imagery, is that only the "motor" segment changes orientation (to the vertical plane) through the evolutionary process. Imagining and perceiving a distinct separation and change of direction between these segments helps improve both self-support and movement. The changes feel strange, which they would to our habituated mind/bodies, but the change is for the good.

Fig. 11 gives a more complete look of how the three segments exist on humans.

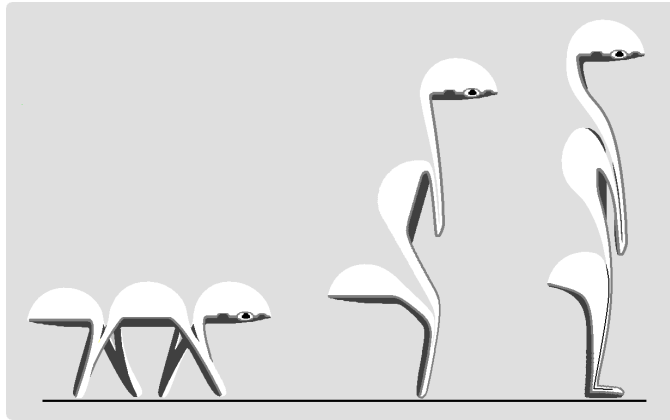


Fig. 12

Fig. 12 shows the above principles in another (perhaps more comical) way. In significant ways, the early relationship of the dorsal and ventral surfaces to the earth and gravity is preserved.

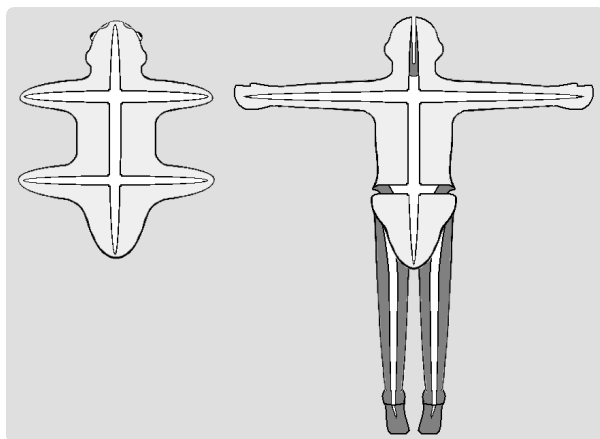


Fig. 13a

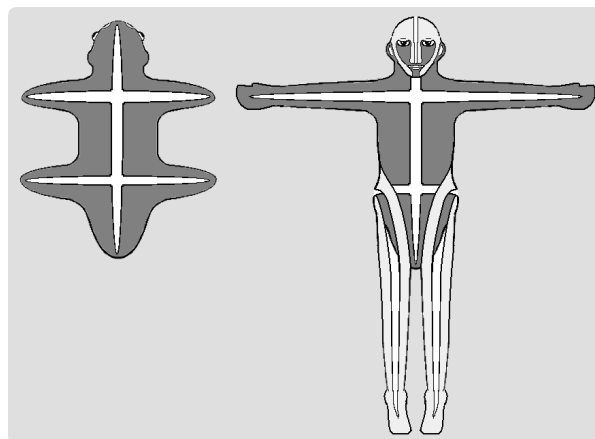


Fig. 13b

Fig. 13a&b illustrate the imaginary “cleaving” of the body, for the promotion of posture and movement with less effort. 13a represents, on the left, the top view/dorsal view of the tetrapod archetype and, on the right side, the back (and predominantly dorsal side) of a human. 13b represents the underside/ventral side of the archetype and, on the right side, the front (and predominantly ventral side) of a human. Successfully imagining that one’s body has the features shown in these drawings can bring about potentially massive, though initially temporary, postural change.

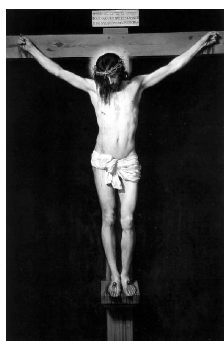


Fig. 14

There is a feature of the above illustrations that are used for image exercises that suggests a strong parallel with imagining crucifixion (fig. 14). That feature is the point on the arms and legs where the splits stop. The imagined splits in the image end close to the edges of the body. In healthy use of our bodies, the outer edges become the places that hold the body together and experience the tension. This is appropriate and indicates a body able to do work and showing healthy “intention.” Tension experienced toward the core of the body, such as found in neck or back pain, is dysfunctional. These endpoints where the separated segments are held together are also where the spikes were driven in Christ’s crucifixion. Imagining being crucified, though largely “unimaginable,” can be systemically valuable to the extent the image is. It could be life-changing.



Fig. 15

In our bodies, imagined self-sacrifice (including crucifixion) is likewise a psychophysically healthy endeavor/discipline. It shuts down what is structurally unnecessary and dysfunctional, musculature that is attempting to convince others and ourselves of our invincibility. Healthy postural change requires “giving up,” “unlearning,” and then “reconstructing” ourselves with the principles here. In this sense, it requires a conversion to allow a new structure to spring forth.

Expressing love through welcoming, beseeching, and supplicant gestures is discussed next. Both the crucifixion and the risen Christ (fig. 15) are the ultimate models for these next “posture” exercises.

*The origin of graceful movement along the dorsal-ventral seam –
Welcoming and beseeching arms*

To be graceful is to have grace, which can imply everything from refinement to poise to charm to kindness to mercy to charity. We understand this interesting word despite a large variety of connected meanings. In the sense of movement and posture, gracefulness comes when movements are generated from the body’s “edges.” The flight direction of a soaring bird, for instance, is gracefully changed by changes to the very tips of its wings. This principle is just as true with the “flight” of a beautiful dancer. The “edge” of the body is the border or seam between the dorsal and ventral surfaces, as shown on fig. 16, and is the location of the major sensors of the body.

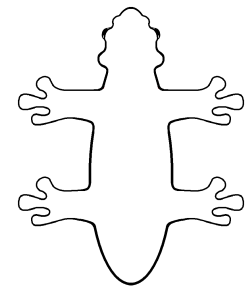


Fig. 16

All movements that are sensed or imagined to commence somewhere along this borderline have the potential to be “graceful” and “effortless.” Movements that are instigated by muscles not located along this line will be more awkward, involving unneeded effort.

This last principle of posture and movement that finds its place in Judeo-Christian heritage is in the use of the arms. Significant here are the various orans, prayers, and welcoming and loving gestures commonplace in the traditions with the individual standing with head and hands uplifted, palms open and out. The variety of subtle meanings that can be attributed to arms open in one position or another seems infinite. By simply opening up one’s arms in a small gesture or a grand gesture, with palms up or out or down, forming a large arc across the back or one across the chest, one can communicate and experience a range of feelings. What is very interesting posturally is that slowly practicing (in private) honest expression of the various sentiments that can be expressed with the arms and hands is very good for the body. It is not an easy exercise either. One can easily perceive and improve the level of sincerity internally experienced with each gesture, even when only practicing. The exercise may become physically painful (as well as emotionally). The body is stretched anew by honest, open, and loving expression, even in private.

The photos (fig. 17) here of a dear friend of mine shows the immediate expansion and expression that is possible from someone comfortable with being welcoming, loving, hopeful, and so forth. The photos were posed, but still somehow “candid.” I asked Ed to imagine welcoming or showing love to *a.* the whole world, *b.* a group, and *c.* small children... and, voilà, he instantly showed examples with real and honest expression.



Fig. 17



Fig. 18

The little girl in the photo above (fig. 18) is “exercising” her expressiveness in a most important way. Her whole body is present and benefiting because she is moving and gesturing with meaning. All postural exercise, of any sort, benefits from having “meaning,” like this, attached to it. She is also developing her body with a model that represents and, in several postural features here, demonstrates “divine.”³

³ This wonderful picture and the story that goes with it can be seen at <http://www.mgardens.org/> and more specifically at <http://www.mgardens.org/C-US-LA-NO-AAJD-030324.html>.

Expressing a sense of freedom and expressing love, most especially with the arms, is very similar. A small movement of the arms (and perhaps the head as well) can produce a change from one to the other. In addition, they both involve the challenge of overcoming habits and mimetic entanglements, which relate to the physical, emotional, and mental. Years ago, I developed a logo (fig. 19), thinking to express the sense of freedom possible from practicing the Alexander Technique and my imagery. I only later discovered that reaching that goal of greater freedom in the body requires working on the ability to express love (illustrated in fig. 20) as well. The model for that came from the “divine.”



Fig. 19

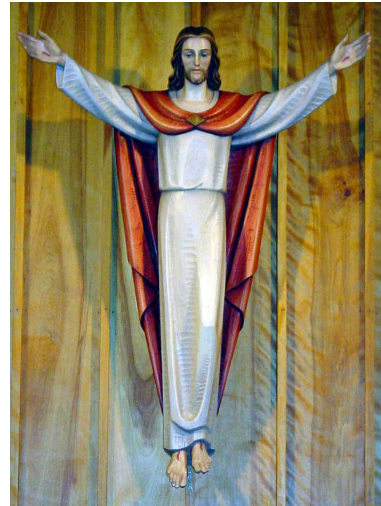


Fig. 20

Concluding remarks

In concluding remarks, I would like to describe posture and postural dysfunction in the larger context it requires. To that end, the following paragraphs are each independently included.

Terms like “good posture” and “bad posture” perhaps should be stricken from discussion. This is until the internal (somatic) experiences of people are considered more important than the usual index of outward appearances. A goal of seeking good posture or even seeking an end to pain or discomfort can also be shortsighted. A healthy posture is beyond pain relief. It is a posture that allows us to more fully express and more fully experience. This sort of posture requires a “conversion,” since what prevents us from being posturally alive is a generally subconscious imitation of less-than-ideal models. I believe that the preceding description of a relationship between postural health and Judeo/Christian imagery is worth consideration. On the surface this may seem to be making light of the spiritual and moral power of the traditions. In fact, it is an attempt to elevate the status of how we carry ourselves, our posture, to the significant status it deserves.

Virtually all humanity has experienced and perhaps frequently experiences empathetic responses to the news that others are in pain. At times, this empathy reaches a strong level we consider “visceral.” When this happens, we are experiencing, in a much-reduced form, what the person or persons in pain may very well be experiencing. We perceive their situation with more than our eyes or ears. We perceive them *through our own bodies*. This empathetic capacity is the same capacity required to experience and eventually maintain the freedom of released postural tension. Only in this case, it comes from imagining or “empathizing with” ideal principles of posture. In illustration, some of those principles of posture appear very similar to basic spiritual and moral ideals in Judeo/Christian imagery.

To be in grace implies being kindly, compassionate, thankful, light of spirit, and more. To be posturally graceful suggests being elegant and beautiful in movement. However, graceful posture undoubtedly benefits from a portion of the first form of grace as well. The reverse must also be true; being gracious and thankful puts one on the road to being more physically graceful. These are suppositions that I suspect would not be argued.

The tensions that interfere with grace do not release upon command. It requires grace or a seeming outside source to allow the release to happen. One cannot order tension released. All we can *do* is contract. Release, which is the other half of life, requires grace, a wish, hope, longing, faith. Should we not consider that faith and conversion, involving the Judeo/Christian imagery suggested, might help rid us of our mimetically driven identity crisis and reward us with a whole body as well as a full heart?

Description of more parallels between postural health and Judeo/Christian imagery are possible. A future paper will involve the subject of the postural health inherent in “living beyond ourselves.” I welcome any questions, interest, and interest in developing the theme presented here. Thank you.



Figure Credits

Fig. 1 – Available on <http://www.buddha-images.com/sitting-buddha.asp>

Fig. 2 – Available on <http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/history/guanyin.htm>

Fig. 8 – © 1999 Dietmar Regensburger/Innsbruck available on
<http://www.uibk.ac.at/theol/cover/gallery/>

Fig. 14 – Diego Velasquez, Christ on the Cross, Museo del Prado, Madrid
Available on [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Image:
Diego_Velasquez,_Christ_on_the_Cross.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Image:Diego_Velasquez,_Christ_on_the_Cross.jpg)

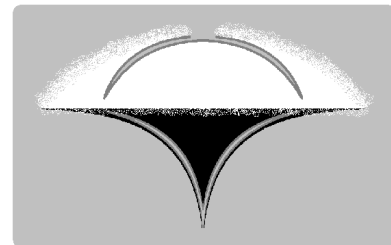
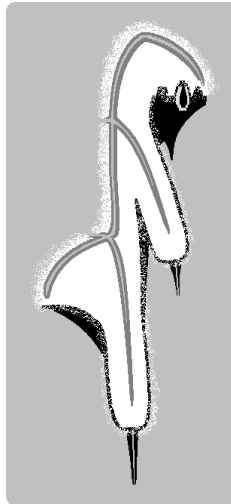
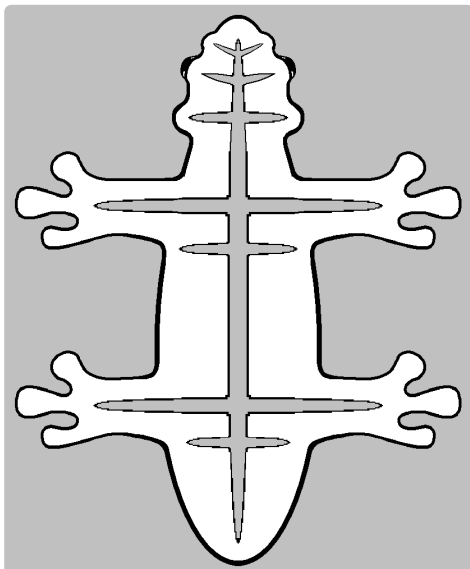
Fig. 15 – Available on <http://www.saintagnescathedral.org>

Fig. 17 – My photos of Edward Farrell, Springfield, Missouri, USA

Fig. 18 – Photo by Amy DiMaggio, mother of Anna Maria shown here.
Photo, story, and viewer comments available on
<http://www.mgardens.org/C-US-LA-NO-AAJD-030324.html>

Fig. 20 – Available on <http://www.ststephenelca.com>

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