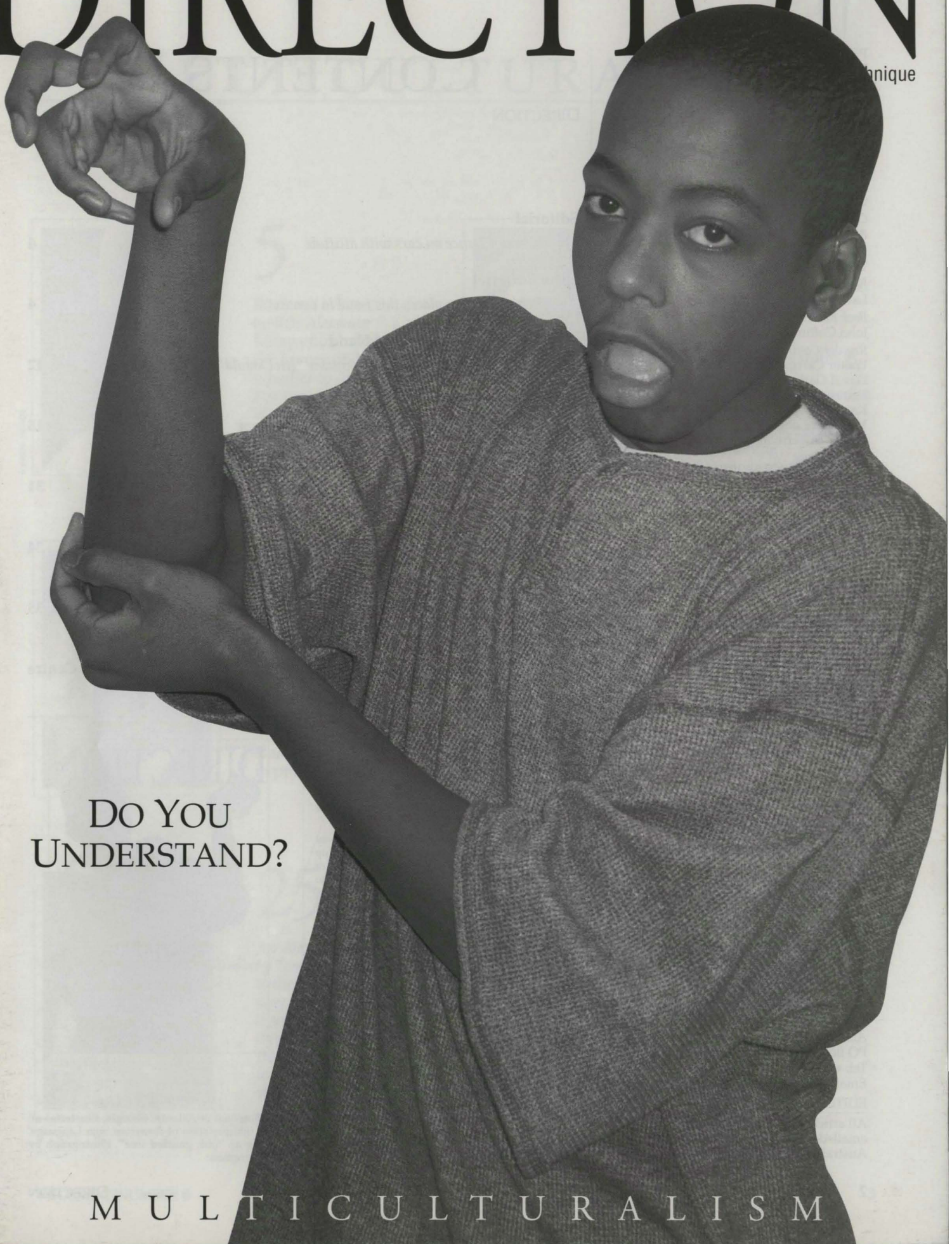


DIRECTION

Technique



DO YOU
UNDERSTAND?

M U L T I C U L T U R A L I S M



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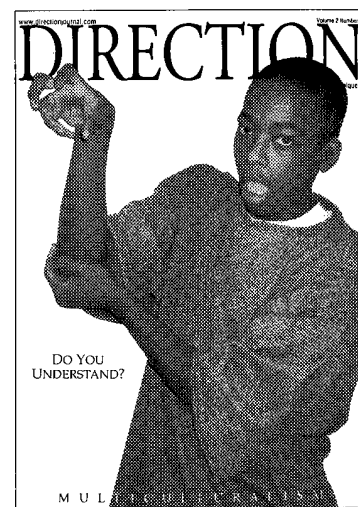
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thanks to Robin Gilmore, who has skilfully commissioned a well-informed and diverse range of articles which are a pleasure to read, and, like all our issue editors, has waited patiently to see the results of her work.

As always, Lawrence Bruce has been beavering away in Melbourne, reading prodigiously and coming up with many ideas which contribute to the quality of *In All Directions*. Hella Linkmeyer has worked hard to get us her article on the Bushmen of the Kalahari, which fits into the Multicultural issue brief but unfortunately was one too many of the articles on the theme for her to be properly credited on page three.

Tommy Thompson has agreed to be our photo-journalist, and has gone about this task with gusto, finding the photos we need which are not supplied by the writers of articles. And we have an addition to the proofreading team. Lisa Hochgraf, a student of AT with a masters in journalism and a freelance writing/editing business, emailed to offer her help, and has become one of the wonderful volunteers who make production of the journal possible.

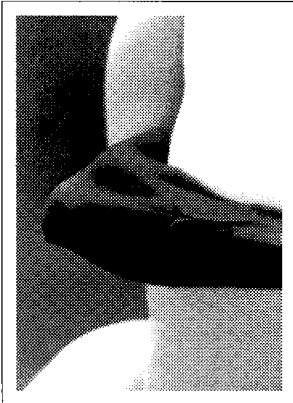
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**Cover Photo**

Marc Bowman of Atlanta, Georgia, illustrates an artistic interpretation of American Sign Language, showing an "old, gnarled tree". Photograph by Marcia Freeman.

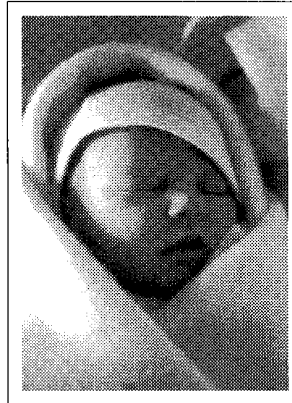
MULTICULTURALISM

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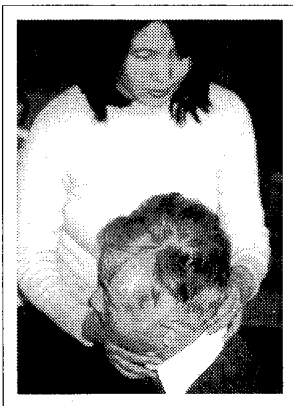
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Black and White
by Riki Alexander
Many of us have the luxury of deciding whether to discuss race. For people of colour, race is not an optional topic of conversation; it is something they live.



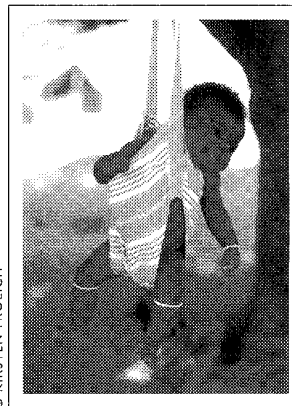
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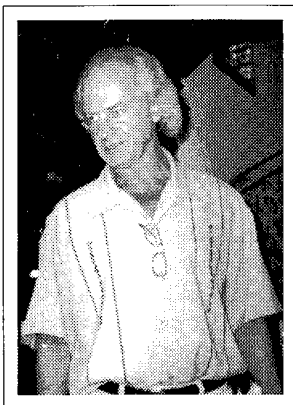
Crossing Hemispheres
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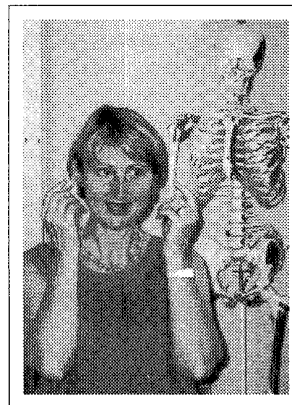
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EDITORIAL

by *Jeremy Chance*

How would you feel if your car told you you weren't fit to drive, disabled its engine and promptly reported you to your partner, parents and the police, while refusing to discuss the matter, even though it had violated your instructions. What's more, the government backs the car, so you don't have a wheel to ride on.

Our world is threatened by many forces, yet this is an unusual multicultural issue that only Hollywood takes seriously. Hollywood, that is, the American military, and an eccentric Australian scientist, Hugo de Garis, who heads "Starbrain", in Brussels. He states that his aim is: "Building an artificial brain with up to a billion neurons by 2001". <foobar.starlab.net/~degaris>

What de Garis hopes to create is a machine that disobeys him. "It'll have a high degree of autonomy", he commented in a recent *New York Times* interview. When that happens he will have succeeded in creating a genuine form of artificial intelligence. This is a machine that learns. It rewrites its own code, depending on the circumstances it faces. It teaches itself. It directs itself. It deletes your code. It is evolutionary in the full sense of the word. Still not convinced? How about these words

from Professor Stephen Hawking: "It seems to me that if very complicated chemical molecules can operate in humans to make them intelligent, then equally complicated electronic circuits can also make computers act in an intelligent way. And if they are intelligent, they can presumably design computers that have even greater intelligence and complexity." If it comes to that, we can always pull the plug out—can't we?

But the Y2K farce illustrated how problematic that would be. In the next two years, de Garis hopes to complete "Robokoneko", a robotic kitten: "It'll play with wool. If you pull its tail, it'll reach around to scratch. It'll run around and do hundreds of behaviours. We're hoping it'll jump in the air." Until I read about de Garis's research, I thought such things were the stuff of Terminator 2. Maybe you still do.

Then I remembered a wonderful story I heard from Frances Wheelhouse. During a lecture in the 1920s, a man asked what Dart thought was the limit of human creation. Dart answered that he thought humans could do anything they imagined. The man laughed, saying that was ridiculous. "Why", he added, "I can imagine men on the moon!" ■

ISSUE EDITORIAL

by *Robin Gilmore*



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In January of 1999, an appointed official in the Washington, DC mayor's office was forced to resign due to his use of a word. That word is not a racial slur, but it sounds like another word which is a well-known racial epithet. The man hadn't actually spoken inappropriately, but in this case people's perceptions won out over actual fact. Fortunately, the mayor reversed his decision and offered to reinstate the official. He also prefaced a later speech with the admonition to "make sure you all have your dictionaries handy".

Jumping to conclusions or making assumptions based on personal experience often leads to misunderstanding or worse; yet, as humans, we naturally operate out of habit unless there is a conscious attempt at inhibition. In bringing F.M. Alexander's so-called "universal constant" to a variety of cultures, what are the assumptions which must be put aside in order for the work to have relevance for a particular population? As the Technique offers individuals a vehicle for change, how do these changes fit into an existing set of cultural beliefs and expectations?

The articles herein represent only a partial spectrum of multicultural possibilities. For the most part, the pieces are written by Alexander teachers who teach regularly in countries or cultures other than their own. Language differences play a major part in

determining approaches to teaching. Some understanding of cultural aspects such as gender roles, geography and time has led these teachers to modify their work so as to facilitate change while honouring students' sociocultural foundation.

Not every aspect of cross-cultural teaching paints a harmonious rainbow. The issue of race continues to present unresolved and often uncomfortable situations within Alexander circles. I had hoped to include an article by one of the few African-Americans to complete an Alexander training program. Perhaps in my eagerness to have my own questions answered (for instance: why are Alexander gatherings so lily-white?) I scared off this potential author.

Beyond race and culture, an obvious factor which affects the portability of Alexander work is economy. The majority of people in many areas of the world live hand-to-mouth. Having Alexander lessons would be seen not as a luxury but as an absurdity. Within the Alexander community, as we debate and discuss our own "cultural" differences of teaching style, pedagogy, etc., let us not lose sight of the world at large. As we individually strive for a unified field of awareness, we may deepen our appreciation for diversity both close to home and farther afield. ■



ZWEIMAL FRÜHSTUCK BITTE

TWO BREAKFASTS PLEASE

*Rosa Luisa Rossi and Cathy Madden,
working in Japan, Europe and the US, compare
notes on multicultural teaching as they travel
through the Swiss landscape.*

Rosa Luisa Rossi (former President of SVLAT, Switzerland): Monday morning in Switzerland, on the way from Rheinfelden to Zurich, Cathy Madden and I have decided to spoil ourselves with a breakfast on the train before going to teach—Cathy at a training school in Zurich and myself, as usual, for private lessons in my studio. While having a good time with milk coffee and Swiss bread, our journey going through soft hills, half in the mist and half in the sunshine, we share some experiences on “multicultural teaching”.

Cathy Madden (University of Washington, Seattle, USA): We are, “of course”, speaking English,

with my occasional “Brot bitte”+ and “Danke viel mal”# being the best that I can do in German. I groan inwardly as Rosa talks about her poor English. Her “poor English” is fluent enough for an adult conversation—in simple English certainly, yet she is able to be clear. In a highly involved Alexander conversation among English speakers, she would probably have to ask a lot of questions or ask for simpler language. I find myself wondering: “If the language of the Alexander world were German, how would I manage?”

As President of SVLAT, as someone sponsoring workshops for me, Rosa Luisa is constantly moving

between two languages. After watching her “political” commitment on Society level for a week I can see that this isn’t easy, particularly when more complicated concepts in English are involved.

ROSA: Is it a big difference for you when you are teaching in Switzerland?

CATHY: I’m always tempted to say no to that question because I am a bit of a chameleon when I teach groups—by that I mean that I alter the way I teach to match whatever group I teach—so, e.g., if I am teaching physical therapists I choose language, stories, manner of presentation etc. to match their needs and interests. And that would be very different from how I might work with a group of musicians. So when I teach in another country, I am not doing anything much different than what I would do to match different groups in the United States. But the truth is that it makes a big difference when people are listening to you in their second language.

ROSA: I have to open up myself for English and I like to do this shift. But I know that there are other colleagues for whom the change into English is a real effort and with this they build already a barrier in communication.

CATHY: I am aware I need to talk more slowly and choose my language carefully. I actually really enjoy this opportunity to re-examine how I use language in teaching in general. I also notice that I use more gestures that illustrate what I am saying.

ROSA: I remember my first teaching experience in Japan, in 1992. I was invited to teach there and I accepted with joy and pleasure, even in knowing that I had to teach in English, which at that time was very simple English. So I had to face not only the cultural unknown but also the challenge of teaching in a language which was not even my mother tongue. I accepted this step into the unknown only because I knew that I could, under all circumstances, watch my use, go back to the “principles”, and apply the Technique in every moment.

CATHY: My first teaching experience in Switzerland was different. The year after the Brighton Congress I was invited to assist as one of Marjorie Barstow’s assistant teachers. Most of the workshop participants knew English and the organisers knew who needed help with English. In each group I taught, there were one or more people who acted as translators when needed. One of my experiences in Switzerland is that teachers here have language flexibility—they are more used to switching back and forth between languages.

ROSA: In Japan, of course, I was very much dependent on translators. Some of them knew the Alexander Technique from many lessons they had had with different teachers—others knew less or almost nothing about it. So I didn’t *know* how or which of my words were translated. I could just check by watching the change of use and by paying attention to the questions which were asked. What F.M. Alexander points out—that pupils learn with their whole background and that we don’t know how they interpret

the received information—shows up even stronger in multicultural teaching.

CATHY: I realise that I have always been lucky when I’ve had a translator—usually my translators are Alexander teachers who have studied with me, so I have a lot of confidence in their translations. I’ve also found that knowing a few words or short phrases in the host country’s language can help. I had a student in one of the workshops you and I did together a few years ago who didn’t understand much English at all. And my German was even less than it is now. But her daughter was studying French in school, and I thought of saying “vacances ici” and then pointing to whatever part of her I was talking to. It worked really well, so I even use it in English now—“a vacation for your neck”—or, in German, “Ferien”.

*“I thought of saying
‘vacances ici’ and then pointing
to whatever part of her I
was talking to.”*

ROSA: In Kyoto I designed a chart with the help of a Japanese friend, in which we traced her full body and labelled each body part in Japanese and English. She taught me how to say one sentence in Japanese, “I allow my to be free”. So I could play with it in my teaching, change the needed word into the sentence so that the pupils could direct their thinking themselves. That for sure was fun and bridged the communication gap.

My experience in Japan showed me that the pupils are very sensitive and they are open to the information coming to them through my hands. It was a great pleasure for me to teach them and an enormous learning process started in my own teaching.

CATHY: I am always impressed by the desire and eagerness of the Swiss to make communication possible, to listen to new ideas—even in another language—and by their thirst for more. One of the things I receive from teaching here is more depth in my teaching, from responding to the questions, the quests, of the students and teachers here.

ROSA: What is your experience—is it important for people who study the Alexander Technique to know the English language?

CATHY: I am very resistant to saying that people have to know English in order to learn the Alexander Technique. Certainly, people learning the Technique for their own use can learn it without knowing English. I also find it unreasonable to think that teachers of the Technique have to know English, although I realise from talking to you and other Swiss teachers that you have found it essential to your growth as teachers.

ROSA: Yes, I have realised that it is of utmost importance to have a certain ability of understanding, speaking and reading English. I know that even people whose mother tongue is English avoid reading FM’s

books. But those books are the primary source of information. And as a teacher everyone should be able to go back and re-read and study from that first information. We have to be aware that all other information is a second, third or even fourth-hand interpretation.

CATHY: What makes more sense to me is to make a priority of getting good translations of Alexander's writings—perhaps an "essential selection" of them—into all the languages of the countries where there are training schools. Hopefully, there will eventually be people in each country fluent enough in English for international communication to be easier. Certainly, as teachers and teacher trainees learn more they may choose to study more English—but I wouldn't like to see training schools require fluency in English.

I keep thinking about the bits and pieces of German and Swiss German I am studying and how long it is taking, in my admittedly hectic schedule, for me to manage even the simplest conversations. If I had to know German to teach the Alexander Technique, I'd be in trouble.

ROSA: Can you imagine, Cathy, I started to like to read the English version of FM's books. And today I prefer the English version to the German translation¹, because the English speaks to me on different levels. I don't just understand it with my intellect, I get a *feeling* for the message.

Now, for all those whose mother tongue is not English, we have to face the reality that the common language in our profession is English. So if, as teachers, we would like to participate in a larger scale of communication, it is an absolute must to bring ourselves to a higher ability in the English language. All important books, articles, newsletters of the societies, meetings, workshops and last, but not least, the Congresses, are written or held in this language.

I hope that those who do not need to make the effort to express themselves in a foreign language have a growing understanding and respect for others who do.

CATHY: That's what I've understood more and more during this trip to Switzerland. It is vitally important that we English speakers respect those of you who are making the extra effort to communicate with us. And I think it would be great if there were some non-English articles in our publications, non-English workshops at our Congresses—a little jolt to remind us of our diversity. ■

GLOSSARY

† Brot bitte – bread, please.

Danke vielmal – thank you very much.

ENDNOTE

1. German translation of *The Use of the Self*. F.M. Alexander, *Der Gebrauch des Selbst*, Die Grundlagen der Alexander-Technik; aus dem Englischen übertragen von Sabina Manassi und Thomas Fehr, Goldman Verlag (F.M. Alexander, *The Use of the Self*, the basics of the Alexander Technique; transferred from the English by Sabina Manassi and Thomas Fehr.) (Date and place of publication unavailable.)

LEAD PHOTO

Cathy Madden works with Tamoka-san in Tokyo.

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Rosa Luisa Rossi studied the Alexander Technique from 1983 to 1986 at the training school of Jacqueline Webster in Zurich. Since then she has taught privately and in groups. She enjoys organising workshops all over Europe, combining the study of Alexander Technique with different activities, and co-teaching with other qualified teachers. She is also a guest teacher for KAPPA, a teacher training course in Kyoto, Japan.

For seven years she was a member of the SVLAT Council, the Swiss Society of Teachers of the Alexander Technique, and she served as their chair for three years. She is committed to the development of the Alexander Technique worldwide, encouraging constructive communication between all different approaches to this work.

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Catherine Madden teaches for the University of Washington School of Drama, and does workshops and classes in her private studio. She has been a guest at teacher training schools, and has done teacher refresher courses in England, Germany, Japan, and Switzerland. She was a Congress Teacher at the International Congress held in Sydney in 1994 and a featured speaker at the 1999 International Congress in Freiburg, Germany. Cathy studied with Marjorie Barstow for over 15 years and served as her assistant in workshops for over ten years.

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