PAULINE OLIVEROS October 13, 1978

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During your career in karate a what changes have ocurred in your personal attitude about your karate?

I think the only change was the first few months of the training when I started out just looking at it more specifically in terms of a the very content orientation, in which I was interested in what it seemed on the surface like a method of self defense against a surprise attack. Then after a few months, I began to see that karate could be used as an important tool to investigate human nature by having a severe feedback between people giving a deeper understanding of interactions inside of me and between people, and I became interested "seeing how that could be extended to an understanding of the inanimate world around us. I think that's the same reason why I still do it today.

So, you have held the same attitude.

I have held this same attitude for the last twenty years.

And when did you become aware of this attitude?

Within a few months of starting this training, I was seventeen years old.

Was there any specific thing that triggered that awareness?

I don't think so. It's hard to tell because when I was seventeen I was suddenly thrust into an academic environment which was like culture shock and a After being a few months at Cal Tech, I started questioning and it was a whole muddle of things, and this was one point that I happened to latch onto. I don't think there was any one thing that triggered it just the opposite, and that everything was suddenly triggered and this became a focal point.

It seems really interesting that you could make such a break you know from - because so much of the world around you was oriented toward content .

I could tell you what just one psychiatrist told me. and he said in his experience that he has met a Jewish boy who has negated his background and his family and his home, and that Jewish boy An typically negates everything else in the world around him, and so when I left New York and came out here at seventeen, that might be the best explanation for my charge.

So you turned your attention to attention. I think so. I think so. What changes have you experienced in emotional states during your work with karate?

Its been a steady progression from being a sort of manic depressive to and being going completely runned by emotional states, to negating the emotional states, to actually incorporated them as part of my own interaction in

0,5 being in a human way and accepting them and using them as part of my daily existence, instead of feeling that they interferred with them. If you ask another question now I'm not sure - I bet sorta general

Do you think you have a consistent emotional tone during your work?

It consisted of an attunal tone over a long period time - just because it didn't because of the nature of my work - maybe the nature of my background let me what to do - I find that day to day continual fluctu-ations and emotional somewhat disturbances and conflicts just having to do things the way that I do them and a possibly result because of the way I became about what we just discussed but over a longer periods of time of weeks and months and years I think my attitude is pretty consistenty by orientation towards wanting to be understandy these all concepts on a deeper level a in terms of me as an information processor and in terms of me argenerator, I have a strong desire to see such insights can really help society and that's been with me all this time and I think that's even stronger now than ever.

Well that goes back into the personal attitude aspect.

Thats the answer to the emotional states too. in otherwords, the average of emotional state leads from that attitude.

How does the range of the emotional state are in the human being how dothey play into the karate itself?

I think the same other things I do during the day its a in the karate the idea is that a emotional state is probably a kind of reason just to before engaging in karate activity, although more and more during the day I feel that everything I do has the same feeling I can't compartmentalize anymore, and I don't think that when I put on my karate uniform, then I'm doing karate all day long and so it's not really a separate activity to me, - so thats true but and so my emotional attitude is what helps or hinders me to approach a getting a little more intense to any given activities say you call a karate fashion a the way the emotional would help or hinder would be the question of inertia of getting into the an activity. Once I'm into the activity I don't really believe the emotional tone for makes that much of difference. It's a modulation over more intense interaction . The intense interaction when it takes over, tis so much more sharply fined and focused inside of it that the modulation of the emotion state I don't think really causes much difference as to what's taking place,

Well I think that's something important in the whole.

I think makes a difference in the less intense spaces between activities during the day that will dictate about how I will start entering into a activity, or if I will at all and my reflections about it, but not the more intense activity. In other words, I will define that better saying when I am getting intense into activity then I don't have a sense of myself-which is usually coupled with emotional state instead, I feel that the subject that I'm interacting with whether it be a person, or an image, or in a coda codified form whatever and the space between myself and the activity becomes the second diffuse and in that interaction-space there are no emotions per se. I don't think.

(2)

Nevertheless, you say you are sparring, do you get emotional information?

Occasionally it comes in and out and that's - now with the years of training I use that as a clue, or as cue immediately that my attention is as in firectly shifted more into myself and should quickly be dispersed between me and my opponent to maximize the interaction but I'm not sparring when I'm into to much of myself or my opponent those emotional cues are information to me that when they start coming up ; instead of wallowing is to realize that cue that my attention is a little off. It doesn't mean that they don't tell me something else that I'd might look at later but the important thing is in the activity it is a

Have you • used your karate as a way of pulling your self together from emotional disruption?

Well, I have used it every day for the last twenty years pulling myself together, whether its emotional disruption, or more a positive ways to gear myself up to do the activities of the day.

What changes have occured in your philosphy about karate?

While anyone is a student, and particularly while I was a student, if you are engaged in an activity and you want to do it, you accept a certain kind of ground rules actually you accept a certain philosphy of the teaching instituion. Now although I had this attitude in philosphy s ever since I started the general philosphy that I working with was at first cultured bound in the oriental culture they also were attitutnally and philosphically bound to their own code and for some of them not all of them certainly was a pure sense of acgressive intensity and body activity and my philosphy might have included that but it was a larger framework of my way of looking at it compassed other things like im proceed attention \* But it wasn't until I really decided almost very important ethical but superfluques reasons, in a way to leave the organizations that I was involved in the away as to give feed back on attention, but d, I change the whole purpose of more towards my own center any own philosphy for the way of doing it whenever I do a technique or I'm interacting with someone if eed that its a feedback in a creative interaction that's involved in an ultimate purpose of this kind of attention whereas I could involve in an ultimate purpose of this kind of attention whereas I could proceed in an ultimate purpose of this kind of attention whereas I could proceed in an ultimate purpose of this kind of attention whereas I practice when I was still sort of a student - because of the people

that I worked out with that a general philosphy of what I had was sort of in the same like of an avocation which I had the same philosphy in academics as well. It was like a personal philosphy that I carry with me as my own private reason for doing it, but it was remained far away from the other people that I interacted with that it wouldn't do that much good to discuss it, and say hey, let's do it this way, or you know that way so, it was only in the last 10 years — in otherwords their was a split in philosphy but now not only being internally motivated I really feel I can manifest is externally and work with other people to promote a class that I'm interacting with real live people that more likely share that same point of view . Does that

Yes, I thought point that was kind of interesting that you mentioned in the beginning of your split with your family and then this philosophical question and your split with the institution, it seems like there's a parallel.

There's a parallel in a sense that the time I made there decision of that I was aware there was a decision to be made and immediately made a decision. The first thought that occurred to me was that the reasons I was leaving because it was the same type of bad family trip, and that I should leave it and It occurred to me --I don't know whether to take the time to mention how it happened -- It was a when I was a professor at StoneyBrook and one day intlate fall I decided to walk to my home to the University. and I was getting good enough and I was already a master level in karate and a professor in physics, and I had accomplished about ten years in these activities for the purpose of making myself into a creative person using these two disciplines mand I was walking to school watching a leaf fall. and I started to do it that time 'I would interact with the leaf while it was falling to catch the timing of it. At the moment, I did that something snapped in my head and made me aware of the whole orientation that had developed of asserted myself as the professor and the severand how far away it was from original purpose in breaking away and forming a new center, and it reminded me of the reason I left my family idea was that I wasn't being quite undernourished in the interests in life that I wanted to develop even though I didn't know what it was at the time. But this time I did and I realized that ~y the ties to the karate organization, and to the universities was just another bad family trip - a family I didn't want to belong to and felt it didn't really coincide with my deepest instincts, and I knew that all immediately the when the leaf was falling, and in ten days I arranged to leave the University, sell my Mercedes, and my house on top overlooking the similarity is there is an important **ximikarity** difference even though that similarity is there if t was more of a directional reason for leaving, at the time it was a focused reason, where the other was it was the first distraction came up after an overall disorientation that the first distraction came up after an overall disorientation. that I focused on the activity when I was seventeen  $\mathcal{B}$ ut around the time I was twenty-seven then it was a different orientation that I had and In some ways it was 'the same, and "some ways it was quite opposite.

Do you consider your philosophy to be public?

Yes, in fact we/a public in which way you mean possibly to be public? yes - do you make it public or do you keep it as a private matter?

-Interesting, when I write stuff - I guess it's been private for a long the

(4)

and I guess its hard to understand people assume that it's kind of a personal philosophy, and maybe it reaks with that for them to try to when they approach it." When I work with people in the flesh, then I'm very careful not to make it personal, because my conviction is not to that my general philosophy being"that the most practical way of people to getting along with each other is also the most harmonious, and that way is simply involves of being aware of each other's attention and being aware of mutual kind of attention of interaction between people, that can lead to the best world. I believe that so when 'I'm working with people, so I don't say anything about philosophy, or try not to, because & I believe I'm right, I can just teach them about this attention and this interaction and if I'm opptimistic and if I'm correct about people, then my philosphy will, naturally ensue and so I spend a lot of time in different disciplines just making up specific exercises and specific disciplines as I have in karate to give that feedback in of attention and whenever, I feel people are slipping away, I'll just bring out the point that there not maximizing there interaction between each other that's why there failing and that homes in very quickly and it seems to work they may not only much more proficient in physical autside chase technique which I think is an important corallary of what I'm doing, but they are simultaneously become aware of this rhythmic interaction thats necessary for good sparring and the students that have done while gains in half the time then propint the normal teaching methods. \_ people who would normally get close enough to do it are also doing it

What do you consider a creative event in your work?

Hotif

for Opponent, have many possible ways of interacting and possible ways of strategic interacting with me with more experience, alot of the ways can be statistically be determined by me, or felt by me, and Still, there is no certainty about it likewise given my own physical and attentional balance given at any given moment a humber of possible ways for me to interpret and respond in all kinds of information, and to a large extent, with more and more experience, more of those are known statistically to me but not without absolute certainty and then there is do possible interaction on top of all this, between me and my opponent or you can read environment or more than one opponent or a kache and the creative event is when that interaction happens, and somehow directed by me to without not swampingthe interaction one focused, technique which is not created an often that would be a mechanistic response, but to allow these various statistically patterns of myself and my opponent to have a chance to really work with each other say in a very short amount of time but work through each other that the maximal kind of response can ensue that will also allow me to have a little bit of the edge of the rhythmic interaction. and if that so happens, I feel that of would have a creative interaction.

Well is there any way you can produce this event?

No, a lot of this takes place unconsciously, alot of it is just allowing myself to be open and allowinit to take place unconsciously. I have more and more capability of strategically allowing a different mixtures of attention to take place, coming to a diffused of focused kind of attention, so that given an opponent given myself, I can give a little different kind of weights to the information processing of my attention states in to have a better chance for a creative interaction taking place in my favor.

You are referring to sparring? That's right. That's vight.

What about nacata?

I feel it's the same kind of way + what I do to decate what I do is in exercise the idea is "feeling the distance between your eyes and realizing that there's a whole space there = well, one way to Kat express this is if feel myself as a centered "I "and the opponents is as a centered" I' but what I'm doing is a the space between" the eyes I I's."I could be a real opponent, or "I" could be an imaginary opponent, and I try to pick up that interaction the same way. I have more control of the emotion attention of the nacata but the nacata has more rhythm, but close to the same feeling as a very opponent.

Tell me how your attention processes are distinguished from your content or work.

Part of the reasons are brought up by the other activities that I do. I think the best ways of becoming aware of it is sort of try in a few activities, that the attention activities go with you, and the content goes with the activity, and one way of separating, out is by doing two or more activities and finding out what's common, and so, one reason that I do karate all day, is that when I do other things I don't feel that I'm "sparring"with what I do, in the sense of what people would think is "sparring" and its two physical beings interacting but the attentional processes and feelings are "sparring" I feel I try to apply to people in general, as well as to the things I might be studying or researching.

What are the attentional activities that you are talking about?

Well the first thing is the prime and it takes me sometimes a few minutes to orientate me to the sphere of interaction that involves either the language or the content that I'm working with and then Once that's ascertain and once I'm locked into that then I can applying more the attention at to the attention to something to the right sphere and once I can lock into that sphere then the attentional processees then I have some control over the attentional processees \* so I feel and what I feel at times and that I can allow myself on the one hand, to give more space that patterns of information merging with what I'm interacting with what is to take place and give more precedence over to directed templates of things for myself that I want to enforce on the material, and I can allow more fluctuated interactions to take place. or less - That's sort of if I'm conscious of it at the time I can break this the balance, of course, somewhat but I've acquired sort of some feelings to copepresetting with that while I'm moving with that and IF things go wrong, and dire there not Elicking, then, I'm just from experience, then I'm a little more aware of what aspect might be wrong so I can shift a little bit into to some of things a just previously mentioned to make that interaction better w is that clear - partly

I would like you to define - you are making distinctions between different states

The I go back to an opponent Instead of opponent, you can always substitute a person, page of reading, and replace sparring with interaction with it

whatever that means to you so just In karate, as described to you or sometimes I have to get to be more aware of an opponent's possible patterns of movement, and sometimes I feel that the interaction can best be done by me enforcing a given template on the interaction. of my emotions a sometimes I have to allow us to interact a bit before interaction will come out and It depends on the person and to a the specific read activity as to what is the most strategy to use to gain and create information.

Its obvious that you have been able to apply these attention processes to different mediums and different forms ..... Are there particular activities that emphasize the processes ?....

That's part of my main interest continuing interest in karate. I feel that's an activity that emphasizes better than most activities, It's a little easier to understand the attention processess if the content can so really understood that allows you to sorta-separate, what might is the left over in a certain sense so that The type of karate I practice is so stark and clean that sometimes it is little easter to see the kinds of attentional strategy that are going on, and you can get very direct feedback, and sometimes very painful, but "get very direct feedback of what's happening in the interaction. and so for those couple reasons I think that karate is a very prime way of doing it. The other things that I do - I found ways working with students in academic situations where It was somewhat clear where you get into the content, that is new and that's true to some extent with karate or true in an more abstract disciplines, it's a little bit harder to separate the - content and process the language and the attention is mixed. help me to reason that people to this day many activities don't think of it in neve fim those terms it's not quite clear, it's difficult some people may feel that its not even appropriate but I think that its appropriate but I do agree it's not always so clear, and I have a real confidence, is given any activity interaction sufficient depth, with someone or with an activity I can clearly point out these processees are taking place in most dramatic way s.

In your karate work it is very obvious that you say a lot about of technique and about the interaction conscious alot that's not particularly verbally described and other ... and I thing that it's probably important in the kind of evolution of your work - I wonder if you can go back and talk about your work and the evolution of your consciousness of your technique and acquisition of the skills

8

I think I kind of disagree a little bit with that Instead of thinking there was an evolution of my thought different to these other do joss '' I really honestly look at it everytime I started where I had this purpose, even though they didn't and so it was just a better a more aware organization of what it was that what I was getting out of it that I didn't Although I certainly went into get that feedback from my other teachers and my other disciplines including karate ; I don't really feel that I did get it from there that was a good grounds for me to develop and learn

How did you get the skill?

by loo tring By looking for it for a very long period of time, and Avery hard, and a It's probably a question of internally theorizing from time to time, and an of discussing it myself with one or two other people from time to time of something that might be happening I was looking for how could we examine that do you think this happened, this or that feeling? Even when trying with the physical aspects which probably which were much less speculative and I worked with other physcists who were also were like evel black belt in karate and the laws that I developed were quite simple and obvious to anyone no one knew what was happening . I worked with the masters and some had faint ideas but was no wheres nearly precise or articulated to the form you could discuss it with physical principles like body motion, and in terms of mental things I can only think of recall a couple when I was a karate instructor school for one year . It was 7 hours a day is was quite intense we were doing and It was intense enough that many days I was the only one there but a coupl ut a couple instuctors and for months, I was like sleep-walking and something managed to pull me through.

But it was very difficult. At night, I would reflect back on problems that I had I felt. that I could afford to do that because the class was so structured and I was being so disciplined that all of the aspects of the physical technique and timing, and what I was supposed to do in the activity, were being taken care of by the instructors and they were giving me that feedback and that gave me room to find out what I could do and so I would work on things like flow charts and theories of my emotions and my attitudes and I used that so if I did something wrong , or if I wasn't doing something right, and I'd go in with the next morning what could I go in with what could start with that morning what could Intest, and in addition to what I was supposed to be doing It got down to the level where everytime they'd count for me to do something, I would try to cut that time down in half, before and give myself to command to do it, instead of taking their command, and I got more and more to direct myself and then if indidn't work, see what might is wrong with it the clam. I kept tring things and ideas. Then one of the biggest break-throughs - undoubtedly there alot of them of the few that I really remember happening, was one day I just happened to hit on the attitude, after a few days working with concepts of fear then finally getting some sacuridas insight roots into seeing how it really involved interactions; somethings there, and somethings not there. Then realizing what looking at it more abstractly, and I went intonit more with the idea that when I would do a technique, Infelt there would be a purpose of doing the technique someplace out in space, and that what I would do was unite the feeling of purpose. with inside my body with that feeling out there all at once. Then the technique would be an automatic consequence, and I went into to do that usually we have these warmups where we would do hundreds and hundreds of kicks and arms and legs for a few minutes, to start the day. and The first five that I did where striking to the instructors, and they stopped me right there and saved that was fine and Just a few exercises in that first morning class would be a rigorous hour was like over and they didn't get into the mind trip something had already connected and that I understood something different attention-wise and that night, as a reaction my whole body froze up, all my internal organs and my muscles got so cramped and stiff, so I had to go to the hospital UCLA Medical Center and They didn't know what it was some toxins and It was really crazy and I couldn't sleep all night and then the next day it was horrible it was like rubber legs all day. But it was reaction to that

but it made a tremendous difference in insight I realized that the attention made a difference in my physical technique made a difference from then on as a dramatic turning point in my technique as others would see it--'was more fluid, more spontaneous, use it more creatively. and it made a click for me started that I really knew that I was close to my goal-the reason I was doing all this shifting, punching and kicking all those years.

The proof of the pudding that's what's nice about Acontent and activity. If you have and idea and it works, it might for alot of reasons, but if it doesn't work then its like negative test of it and that's himportant • If its a positive test, then its worth going on more and more.

Now you had this breakthrough and a dramatic improvement in your skills - Has there been any changes the way you use that skill? Yes. I found ways of developing exercises to be more specific feedback . on that My own morning workouts and I'd pick attentional feelings to work with more less and have my own routines, and things like that and I'm always conscious of trying to develop that Aand & working with people in karate or "whatever, trying to give that kind of feedback . My experience has been just making attention the focal point of an interaction, consciously or unconsciously, and invariably essentially there They've always is such a rich interaction with people, that a T amazed that in short time we've been able to hone in on the issues, issue in any no matter what the/subject. It just seems to work. I think it goes beyond the being is not the being a the specifically observant and all knowing. Quite the opposite It's a question of being willing to interact with them that level that allows them to interact at that level with me, that allows them to interact with that issue or that

10

problem and gives rise to that feedback, makes us and them aware of the issue in the light it really can be solved and that the same feeling in karate.

Has there been anymore drama in the use of the skill? Drama is usually suspect plus If a drama happens or something dramatic happens maybe everyday previous before ..... wasn't working out hard enough. and so For the first ten years I worked to the level where I could experience that, and the next ten years I've just been working out regularly, just working out, and obviously every year of my life I've really feel there's been a dramatic changes but I don't feel Some days you get a high and in retrospect you can see it was productive and If I didn't do something for awhile, and jumper in, it would have seemed s like a tremendous difference - I soon realized that I was wasting my time if the object was had it to get the best grade on it and the object would be goal-oriented, getting the best grade on a test or seeing what I can do # to do the best thing Sometimes, after awhile you get the means to the end, and the means to this end over your regular practice-Regular awareness of what your practicing for there's been drama in that in the sense that it works o There's been drama in the sense that everyday whore I've worked with people gotten tremendous improvement and gotten tremendous awareness. Because of that I think alot of people would call for a long time, that drama is like having not anyone touch you and all of sudden going and getting a massage would feel that there would be a tremendous breakthrough But the point is, a so in that sense there's been tremendous have some new anareness, awarenesses I think the day has really been dead if I don'thbut maybe I've come to expect that everyday, and I feel very disappointed if I don't have that,

Let's take a different approach now - what do you look ahead for

where would you like to go with your work in the future?

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Well there's probably two parts to that and I think they are obviously interwined one is personal and the other is the work itself, of As far as work itself is concerned, I would like the work to be used and enhanced for example as you've done with other people. I would like it to take it in two directions: one is in a research orientation and i'm which the fundamental principles would be codified better so that the attention essence of the dynamic Ainteractions could be testable, verified, and accepted as more of a fundamental axiom form of life, of existence. and the other is accepted, tryed and proved to be invaluable techniques in other artistic, physical and educational activities. Then, on the personal front, I feel that somehow although there has been a steady improvement from where I've started from improvement is really far short of the expectations and I really believe the realistic standards that I would expect of myself, but a being distracted to much by things and that I'm outside or inside of me, just not applying the very thing that I'm have mentioned. teaching in a more intense way everyday the activities that I myself want to which are the activities that I mentioned.

Within the framework as you described, as a artist, karate, or martial artist, I would say is there anything you want to reach for within that, just in performance of karate?

No, I guess I look at the essence of the activity as a training  $\oint$ understanding of these attention archtypes, and a and not to the physical performance per set the physical per se should reflect and be improved by these attention archtypes, but the physical performance per senever really was a sort of a nature kind of a goal in itself for me.

Just for the record, what are the attention archtypes?

Just what you said in your preamble a sense of a attention archtypes ast one, as a more or less a kind of a diffused parallel-processing unconscious method of mechanism of information-processing; and the other, of a 4/ a template method of information-mechanism of processing that selectively and codifies information. The interplay between these is the essense of attention.

So after all of this you are really doing what you say your doing.

That's true, yes right that's the reason have plenty of strength you know that I really feel essentially ..... to continue what I'm doing.I don't question that because I'm doing what in doing that's true.

When you handle a karate class you're dealing with group attention, I think that the interesting to know how you feel you handle that, and a bringing the group into the proper attention space for the proper activity.

The first thing, I do a especially that karate, is good for that because I set up the right physical environment. In otherwords, I have classes and a even though somewhat unstructured eventually I have them doing a common activity, so there all doing the same physical thing. Then, for example if someone doing something wrong, I really see the whole class as a unit, and then if something going wrong in one part its easy to spote the like it's easy to see the apple on the tree . I don't look on every branch to find the apple and so

13

in this case I can easily spot who's doing something wrong physically, and quickel and start correcting it and so there's a way in which I view the class as correcting those physical techniques okay then by the way I start the class, and the way I count and set up a rhythm-I don't consciously think of it because I'm preset to do it-I treat the class as I would an opponent in which but the purpose though doesn to compete but to work with the class sometimes to compete, to to work toward a common objective Depender on the situation, then I will set up a Kadance in the count the exercises with make the sharpness of my feedback to what their doing right or wrong. I'll interject it the number of times appropriate illicit a kind of attitude or feeling from the class that will wave and focused to what I feel is essential to the activity, and then the similar happens with the physical technique and as with an opponent. I can generally feel a spot from the class if attention is off, and then my attention can be directed there, toward bringing that part into play with the group, then-Finally when the group starts getting going, I really do feel especially. the more advanced students also get the feeling from the rest of the group in a similar way that I'm getting it, so that there getting that feedback as well that is helping them for the exercise and their attention . There's ways of we working with the class, and then if I do my job well enough, then the class helps itself with that same concept, Then but to a lesser degree I would be responsible for directing it, more or direct my self in our minteraction. as I wish to

14