

NAVEL SPACE RADIATION

part two of the DEVELOPMENTAL EMPOWERMENT workshop

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Connected by the umbilical cord to its mother's body (...)

the foetus is suspended,

floating in the fluid within the amniotic sac;

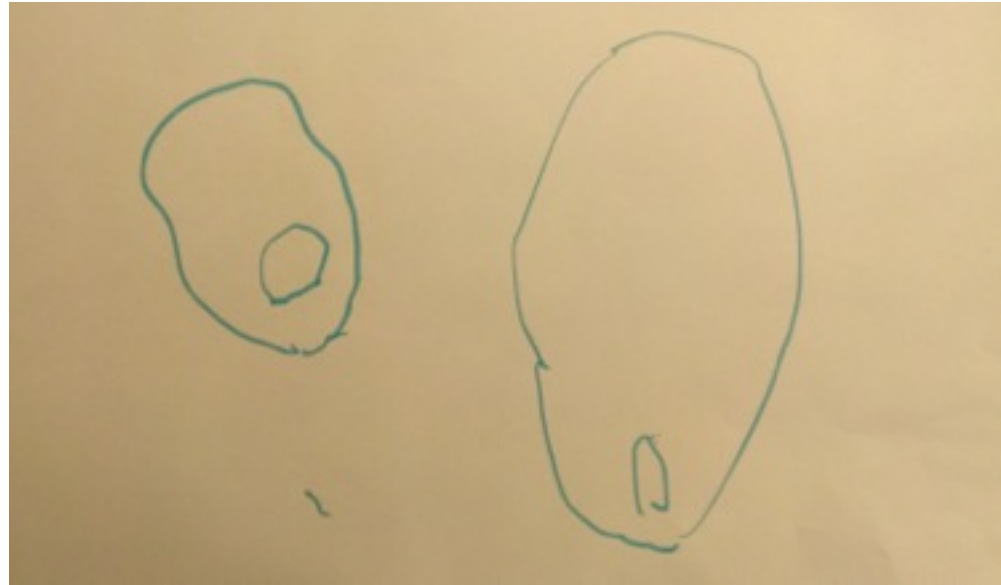
through the umbilicus all nourishment and energy needed for its growth are received,

and waste products are eliminated.

(...) its 'mouth' is located at the navel centre from where life energy flows to the whole organism.

From the centre of the human embryo and foetus six limbs develop.¹

¹ Linda Hartley *Wisdom of the Body Moving: An Introduction to Body-Mind Centering* (Berkeley, California: North Atlantic Books, 1995), 26.



navel drawn by a 3-year-old child

The **NAVEL SPACE RADIATION class** was inspired by my MA research into reawakening the potentialities of navel space and its radiation. It was held as the second part of the DEVELOPMENTAL EMPOWERMENT workshop and was preceded by the class on vibration, cellular breathing, sponging and pulsation. I applied the developmental movement classification (Basic Neurocellular Patterns) as proposed by Body-Mind Centering®.

The **words** below **on the navel space and its radiation** belong to the introduction of my MA Thesis *Stimulating Internal Core Support Through Developmental Movement Patterns* written within the MA Contemporary Dance Education, University of Music and Performing Arts, Frankfurt am Main, Germany, 2014. The text has been reworked (i.a. partly un-footnoted) for the purpose of this document.

“From which place [in the body] do we get support to be present?²” asks Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen, movement therapist and developer of Body-Mind Centering®, and responds to her own question saying: “it’s not to choose one over the other but to have (...) balance.”³ Peggy Hackney, Laban/Bartenieff Movement Analysis expert, adds: “[and] let the parts be full and interconnected.”⁴

It is the recognition of relationships within the body and within “the larger whole”⁵ that connects Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen and Irmgard Bartenieff, movement analyst and developer of Bartenieff Fundamentals. To this, Gregory Bateson, founding father of System Theory, contributes saying: “[because there are] relations between relations and relations between relations’ relations.”⁶ (...)

Recognising the relational nature of the body and the larger whole, I propose a place within the body to depart from - navel, a scar formed after the birth of the child where the umbilical cord has been attached. Inspired by Cohen’s words on the embryological consciousness⁷, I expand the understanding of navel from a place into “a place of a space” - the place of the navel space. This expansion mobilises the navel transforming it into the place of the space whose formation heralds a passage from “a fluid, gravity-free

² From an interview with Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen on the Embryological Embodiment of Space “The Place of Space” held by Nancy Stark Smith and Andrea Olsen. Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen *Sensing, Feeling, and Action: The Experiential Anatomy of Body-Mind Centering*® (Northampton: Contact Editions, 2008), 165.

³ From an interview with Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen “Sensing, Feeling, and Action” held by Nancy Stark Smith. *Ibid.*, 65.

⁴ Peggy Hackney *Making Connections: Total Body Integration Through Bartenieff Fundamentals* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 8.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁶ From an audio recording (*Gregory Bateson Lecture, 1979*), as quoted by Klien. Michael Klien, *Choreography as an Aesthetics of Change* (PhD diss., Edinburgh College of Art, 2008), 11.

⁷ Cohen defines embryological consciousness process as: “embodying space through embryological structures that don’t exist anymore but whose processes still inform us.” Cohen, *op. cit.*, 167.

environment to the one of air, gravity (...) and the world of physics.”⁸ It changes the understanding of navel as a place of separation from the mother’s womb into a place of a space filled with potentialities as movement awareness of a newly born is the one of openness, spaciousness, and infinite yet unmanifest possibilities merged with limitations and boundaries.⁹ This awareness originates in movement dominant in uterus where the foetus flows between flexion of the limbs towards and their extension away from the navel. Six limbs [head, tail, upper limbs, lower limbs] move together and apart, touching each other and separating, touching the walls of the womb, and floating suspended in fluid.

Progression of the NAVEL SPACE RADIATION class:

rocking/bouncing-based warming up - resting - cellular breathing in the whole system (spaces fully breathing and spaces not fully breathing) - cellular breathing in the navel space - breathing through the navel space - breathing into the connections from the navel space into each of the 6 limbs (head - tail - upper limbs - lower limbs) - resting - tracing the connections from the navel space into each of the 6 limbs and back - moving from the navel space - moving between the navel space and each of the 6 limbs - moving between diverse limbs’ connections through the navel space - moving from and through the navel space with a partner giving the information of a boundary/enclosure/container to the 6 limbs (limitation of the walls of the womb) - resting - drawing/writing the experience of the navel space and its radiation - exchanging

⁸ Andrea Olsen, *Bodystories: A Guide to Experiential Anatomy* (Barrytown, New York: Station Hill Openings, 1998), 133.

⁹ Hartley, op. cit., 40.

stimulating navel radiation leads to reawakening of the navel space
navel radiation reawakens in the navel space
the two become one
navel space radiation reawakened
they become an orientation space for balancing relationships within the body,
and balancing navel space relationships with other bodily spaces,
and relationships of other bodily spaces via the navel space with each other

Returning to the recurrent movements between the navel and the 6 limbs, we re-experience the reawakening of the navel space radiation in and with our adult bodies. Motivated by Bateson's proposition of "pattern which connects"¹⁰, and the recognition of the relational nature of the world and of the body whose earliest patterns are "the models, the plans for later movement experiences"¹¹, this return brings us back to where we come from.

¹⁰ Bateson asks: "What pattern connects the crab to the lobster and orchid to the primrose and all four of them to me? And me to you? And all six of us to the amoeba in one direction and to the back-ward schizophrenic in another?" as quoted by Klien. Klien, op. cit., 11.

¹¹ Hackney explains that the neuromuscular system "develops a plan or model (guide) for executing movement sequences (actions) - habitual firings of muscular pathways which come into play to fulfil an intent." Hackney, op. cit., 238.