

RELATIONAL INFINITENESS

Partnering Class Within the Frame of the DEVELOPMENTAL EMPOWERMENT Workshop

Proposal for the ImPulsTanz - Vienna International Dance Festival 2015

Aleksandra Ścibor

I. Context - DEVELOPMENTAL EMPOWERMENT Workshop

Inspired by the research into developmental movement patterns, the workshop proposes diverse pathways towards reembodying the developmental body as a reference space from which to move into action. Nourishing ourselves with the developmental information, we go back to where we all have been and remember what our bodies already know. We shake off the dust of immobility, clear the flow within, expand inner spaces and become intimate with our developmental resources. We sense what we need to do and we do it, fully mobile and functional.

Both exploration- and set structure-based training modes facilitate a pathway towards tapping into the fullness of our developmental movement potentials. We identify key dynamic triggers; and through a set of movement tasks/situations/games, we motivate and go into action delighting in its fluidity, playfulness and joy. We invite and encourage our innate drive to return to a state of dynamic equilibrium.

The workshop is based on the inquiry within the frame of BACK HOME movement practice which I have been developing as an extension my MA research, training in the Jurewicz Movement Technique, contemporary dance and martial arts (Aikido, Capoeira), and life experiences. It applies the developmental movement classification (Basic Neurocellular Patterns) as proposed by Body-Mind Centering®, and asks *What do you know that you have forgotten that you know?*¹

¹ *What do you know that you have forgotten that you know?* - question borrowed from *A Choreographer's Handbook* by Jonathan Burrows. Jonathan Burrows *A Choreographer's Handbook* (Oxon: Routledge, 2010), 62.

II. Class - Relational Infiniteness

The class is based on the insights from my MA research into the repatterning of the navel space radiation. Within the MA thesis entitled *Stimulating Internal Core Support Through Developmental Movement Patterns*, I inquired into the reawakening processes of the first two developmental movement patterns - cellular breathing and navel radiation as defined by Body-Mind Centering®. Since then I have been further developing my perspective and understanding of the processes stimulating support from the navel space, navel space potentialities, and potentialities of all the developmental movement patterns understood as embedded in the navel space radiation.

The class is preceded by two sessions² devoted to an individual re-activation of the navel space resources.

“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 consciousness³, I expand the understanding of navel from a place into “a place of a space” - the place of the navel space. The expansion mobilises the navel transforming it into the place of the space whose formation heralds a passage from “a fluid, gravity-free environment to the one of air, gravity (...) and the world of physics.”⁴ 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.⁵ This awareness originates in movement dominant in uterus where the foetus flows between flexion of the limbs towards and their extension away from the

² Within the DEVELOPMENTAL EMPOWERMENT Workshop.

³ 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.

⁴ Andrea Olsen, *Bodystories: A Guide to Experiential Anatomy* (Barrytown, New York: Station Hill Openings, 1998), 133.

⁵ Hartley, op. cit., 40.

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.

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
and relationships within the spaces of one body with the spaces of another body

Returning to the recurrent movements between the navel and the six 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"⁶, 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"⁷, this return facilitates an access to the relational infiniteness."⁸

⁶ 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.

⁷ 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.

⁸ 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.

Aims and Intentions:

- _to reawaken, reorganise and reintegrate the navel space-six limbs relationships in a partnering context,
- _to stimulate infinite yet not manifested potentialities of movement connections within oneself in relation to a partner
- _to transition from the inner focus of the navel space radiation into the focus transitioning between the IN and OUT of the two bodies and the in-between spaces
- _to support the manifestation of movement potentialities embedded in the navel space radiation through the re-awakening of the relationships between the following developmental movement patterns (spinal, homologous, homolateral, contralateral) through a support of a partnering context

Class Plan:

task	description	intention	commentary
meditating the navel space	focusing on breathing in and out through the navel	to bring attention, intention, and breath into the navel space to release the belly into a breathing rhythm of expanding (inhale) and condensing (exhale)	individual standing

task	description	intention	commentary
stimulating the 3d navel space	activating the navel space through a self-message of the skin level all around the navel (i.e. front, sides and back of the body) and deeper, on the organ level through the skin	<p>to stimulate the focus on the navel space through the tactile information</p> <p>to encourage three dimensional sensations of the navel space</p> <p>to release the digestive organs - the guts (second brain)</p>	<p>warm-up -navel space</p> <p>individual</p> <p>self-hands-on</p>
tracing the connections	hands tracing connections from each of the six limbs (in the order of their development: head, tail, upper limbs, lower limbs) into the navel space	<p>to re-activate the connections from the six limbs to the navel space through the tactile information on the skin level</p> <p>to bring attention IN to the navel space through one's own support</p> <p>to foster an equal engagement of all the six limbs with the centre in the navel space</p>	<p>warm-up - active tracing</p> <p>individual</p> <p>self-hands-on</p>

task	description	intention	commentary
tracing the connections - exchange	<p>A tracing (with hands, and then with any of the six limbs)</p> <p>B's connections from the navel space into each of the six limbs (in the order of their development: head, tail, upper limbs, lower limbs)</p> <p>B is free to respond through movement motivated by the tactile information from A</p> <p>change of roles</p>	<p>to encourage the connections from the navel space into the six limbs through the tactile information on the skin level</p> <p>to invite the connecting sensations of the 3d body through motivating the spaces hard to reach on one's own - the back and the sides, and the in-between spaces</p> <p>to bring attention OUT to the limbs through the support of a partner</p> <p>to foster an equal engagement of all the six limbs with the centre in the navel space</p> <p>to connect the inner mind of the navel space radiation to the outer environment</p> <p>to initiate a partnering work</p>	<p>warm-up - active tracing</p> <p>with a partner</p> <p>roles: A and B (doer and receiver)</p> <p>hands/limbs-on</p>

task	description	intention	commentary
initiating and sequencing movement from and into the navel space	A initiating movement from the navel space through any of the six limbs and sending it to B	to particularise movement initiating and sequencing from the navel space through the limbs and through the limbs into the navel space	structured exploration with a partner roles: A and B (both: doers and receivers)
	B receiving the information with any of the six limbs and sending it to the navel space	to encourage movement flow through joint spaces (understood as mobilisers) on the pathways between the navel space and the six limbs	IN-OUT-OUT-IN transitioning
	change of roles	to invite the exchange between the navel spaces and limbs of A and B	
initiating and sequencing movement from and into a given limb	A initiating movement from a given limb, sequencing it through the navel space and another limb to B's limb	to particularise movement initiating and sequencing from out (limbs) through in (navel space) towards out (limbs)	structured exploration with a partner roles: A and B (both: doers and receivers)
	B receiving the information with a given limb, sequencing it through the navel space and another limb back to A	to bridge the inner connections with one's self with the outer connections with the partner	OUT-IN-OUT-OUT-IN-OUT transitioning
	change of roles	to expand the range of the navel space - six limbs connections	

task	description	intention	commentary
<p>encouraging the developmental movement patterns embedded in the navel space radiation</p>	<p>A initiating and sequencing movement with the engagement of the navel space within the four main patterns that follow the navel space radiation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - spinal (head-tail) - homologous (upper limbs - lower limbs) - homolateral (left arm and left leg; right arm and right leg) - contralateral (left arm and right leg; right arm and left leg) <p>B supporting A with the tactile information given to the ends of the limb spaces engaged in movement (i.e.in spinal: soft pressure to top of head and tip of tai, in homologous: soft pressure to tips of both upper/both lower limbs)</p> <p>change of roles</p>	<p>to stimulate the developmental connections that follow the navel space radiation</p> <p>to strengthen them through their re-connection to and support from the navel space</p>	<p>structured exploration with a partner</p> <p>roles: A (doer) and B (receiver)</p>

task	description	intention	commentary
releasing into the moving body	A and B dialoguing through movement of their navel spaces and limbs	to release the focus	free exploration
	staying in physical contact through any configuration of their six limbs with each other (at a later stage opening to the physical contact through any of the body surfaces with the support of the navel space and limbs reconnected)	to open the so far tasks to the participants' understandings and transformations to encourage the creative potentials anchored in their navel spaces to let the absorbed information work on an unconscious level	with a partner roles: A and B (both: doers and receivers)
	navel spaces meditation	all standing in a circle	together
	breathing in and out through their navels	to weave together the individuality of the developmental experience and the universality of the developmental process	standing in a circle
	bringing the focus into their navel spaces	to unite in the space of the human origins	

The class is followed by another partnering class in which partners meet within the frame of yield-push-reach-pull patterns supported by their navel spaces-six limbs reintegration, and further within the frame of set movement propositions as a structural framework for the DEVELOPMENTAL EMPOWERMENT explorations.

The class content is open to readjustments if required by the progression of the DEVELOPMENTAL EMPOWERMENT Workshop.

References:

my experiences, intuitions and research as well as the following writings:

Aposhyan, Susan. *Natural Intelligence: Body-Mind Integration and Human Development*. Baltimore: Williams and Wilkins, 1999

Bainbridge Cohen, Bonnie. *Sensing, Feeling, and Action: the Experiential Anatomy of Body-Mind Centering*. Northampton: Contact Editions, 2008

Bateson, Gregory and Catharine Bateson. *Angels Fear*. New York: Bantam Books, 1988

Bateson, Gregory. *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*. London: University of Chicago Press, 2000

Bertalanffy, Ludwig., *General System Theory*. New York: George Braziller Inc., 1969

Brook, Ann. From Conception to Crawling. Body-Mind.Net (Incomplete publishing data available), 2001

Burrows, Jonathan. *A Choreographer's Handbook*. Abington, Oxon: Routledge, 2010

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

Klien, Michael. *Choreography as an Aesthetics of Change*. PhD diss., Edinburgh College of Art, 2008

Olsen, Andrea, in collaboration with Caryn McHose. *Body Stories. A Guide to Experiential Anatomy*. Barrytown, New York: Station Hill Openings, 1998