

## **“Enhancing Healthy Neurobiological Development for Children: Modern Applications of Isadora’s Myth Stories”**

“Free animals when placed under false restriction, lose the power to move in harmony with nature and adopt movement which is expressive of this restriction.” Isadora Duncan’s statement has such relevance today: We are a culture that now models and passes on, for and to our children, expression and social engagement that has become truncated and superficial. As we relate to one another through technical devices and utilize social media to communicate, we increasingly truncate our gestural language. Co-regulation, which is necessary for healthy relationship building in neurobiological development, requires body, breath and gaze: Co-regulation requests reciprocity; Digital connection is never reciprocal.

The reflective aspect of the dyadic relationship provides the blueprint for future relationships, the foundation for attachment and the initial experience of security and may be disrupted by digital communication. The high relationship between disordered attachment and increased risk for violence must not be overlooked, locally or globally. The latest neurobiological research, which explores both the Mirror Neuron and Polyvagal systems, supports the efficacy of movement based interventions for: 1) social engagement and attachment, 2) resiliency development, 3) trauma recovery and 4) empathy building, in cases of diverse need including autism.

James Hillman, in the following statement, expressed what he saw as our devolution as a creative and unified species: “

“A culture as manically and massively materialistic as ours creates materialistic behavior in its people, especially in those people who've been subjected to nothing but the destruction of imagination that this culture calls education, the destruction of autonomy it calls work, and the destruction of activity it calls entertainment.”

All life forms (human, plant, animal) respond rhythmically to the cycles of nature, the most primary of these rhythms being the action rest continuum. In health, life forms are responsive to the solar clock (Circadian Rhythm). Calendar time (linear perspective), contradicts biology as it teaches us to compete, to isolate, and to perceive any present action as isolated having no connection to the past or to the future. As individuals, we have become alienated from our bodies; as a culture, we have become alienated from the larger body of nature. We are out of touch with consciousness transforming practices which have the potential to put us in touch with ancestral and archetypal patterns.

The perception of self an integral rather than isolated contributes to a child's sense of empowerment and self esteem. The sense of self as component to a greater reality, is easily experienced in Nature. There is a parallel to be made between the disconnect from the physical body, as we engage in digital rather than face to face, body to body communication, and the disconnect from the larger body of Nature.

Wordsworth. A child of trauma, made the *perceiving self* central to perception: Nature was meaningful because of how it interfused with the mind, forming the basis for imagination.

“Nature does everything to prepare you, to make you immune, or to gentle the shock.” He doesn’t say there is no shock, or surprise, but that nature aims at a growth of the mind which can absorb or overcome shock”. (Hartman interpreter of Wordsworth). Imagination is fostered by play and creative activities. It contributes to a child’s own formation of depth of understanding, solution generation, and recovery.

Those of us launched as children in schools of Duncan Dance understand certain components of Isadora’s work, that she may not have articulated as such. Formulaically her etudes include the following which give them a deep and three dimensional social emotional quality: 1) *form* (the architecture and physical steps), 2) *feeling* (the emotional intention of the steps), and 3) *gaze* (how it is that dancer interacts with the physical or social environment). The face to heart connection is bidirectional, and a core neural component of social engagement present at birth. Digital relationships are promoting acute disconnection.

What we bring to children, through the embodied myths and archetypal stories Isadora danced, is a reconnection to the natural world, to our unconscious imagery, and to each other. We can not remove social media and digital relationship from their world; We can however, offer ,to our children, experiences which provide balance. Experiences which assist them in developing full bodied relationships to their peers, literally or symbolically immerse them in Nature, and provide them with a vehicle to express their narratives, move them toward this balance. Embodiment of narratives that source unconscious imagery and archetypal material is a means by which we understand depth of time and origin.. This understanding negates the



	<p><b>skip and cross</b>  (social engagement-gaze-honor-good manners-change roles)</p>	
<p><b>SLIDES AND FILM ORIENTATION</b>  2:10- 2:35 PM</p>		
<p><b>Experientials/Myth Based</b>  2:40- 3:15 PM</p>		
<p><b>GAIA:</b> coming together of Earth and Sky</p>	<p>1)Step Touch Stars Dance (a little improvisation dance where children are prompted to imagine they have magical fingers that when they reach, can touch the stars).  2) Duncan’s Scarf Dance</p> <p>Quick telling of myth-all do “step touch dance”-scarf dance-focus on integration :sky and earth, sea and land</p>	<p>Schumann</p> <p>Schubert</p>
<p><b>Daphne and Apollo:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“Daphne tells her father, Peneus (a river god), that she wants to always be a virgin like the goddess Artemis-thanks to Cupid’s shenanigans Apollo is now totally in love with Daphne. He chases her all around the woods, trying to convince her of how completely</i></li> </ul>	<p>Daphne Apollo Chase freeze dance (self regulation-control of impulse/make eye contact.  Daphne and Apollo chase: chased stops and turns into tree to avoid being caught; reverse parts.</p>	<p>Brahms Serenade</p>

<p><i>awesome he is- Daphne just keeps on running.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Eventually, Apollo catches up with the beautiful nymph. When he just about has her, Daphne calls out for her father to help her- Peneus turns his lovely daughter into a tree.</i></li> <li>• <i>Yep, before Apollo can get to her, Daphne is encased in bark, rooted to the ground, and has sprouted leaves.</i></li> <li>• <i>Apollo's ladylove becomes a laurel tree.</i></li> <li>• <i>Apollo says that he will wear a crown of laurel on his head and decorate his bow and lyre (a harp-like musical instrument) with laurel leaves.</i></li> <li>• <i>The grief-stricken god swears to the laurel tree that it will always stay green and never rot.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>The laurel tree bows its head in gratitude</i></p>		
<p><b>Demeter and Persephone :</b> Persephone, daughter of Demeter, goddess of the harvest, full of joy, always on mom's lap in golden Olympian throne, and , on earth, danced and flowers</p>	<p>Dances: The Brahms "Lullaby" is Demeter's dance (Mother:Baby is axis mundi) Persephone brings on beauty and light of spring</p>	<p>Brahms #2 Brahms #1</p>

<p>sprang up in her path. Demeter tending to her trees/fields. Full of grace, loved by all, She brought the spring ,flowers, and joy each year after having spent the winter sleeping in the dark under world. Spring when light footsteps of Persephone heard..all earth burst into bloom.</p>	<p>and the “Greeting” is Persephone’s, both choreographed by Duncan.</p>	
<p><b>Hecate:</b> Triple goddess-3 directions :mother-maiden-crone (all encompassed in time) Companion to Persephone (Maiden)-Demeter (Mother)-Hekate (elder) Crossroads-light- entrance ways (from dark world..unconscious) Coming together of 3 parts of time:Past-present-future (3D integration of self in time)</p>	<p>Hecate Dance trios</p> <p>1) Time: Trio back to back- arms entwined-move together rotating right, this represents safe place, union. When prompted, they separate and move ot one of three places, which represent: child/maiden, mother, and elder/crone. At that placee they dance the imagined self in that placw and time.. When prompted, move backward to return to entwined trios. Each will have a turn at each location.</p> <p>2)Roles in family: Children are prompted to go to one of three corners and each corner is assigned a number:1,2,or 3. When the teacher calls the number, dancer move to one of three motifs expressed by the music: Each of the motifs are associated with one of the</p>	<p>1)Beethoven</p> <p>2)Schubert Andante #9</p>

	following: Mother (step toss)-child(open close/free)-father (strides)	
Ending : Marche Militaire (Leader/follower); integration/community: importance of all parts: no leader without followers ,vice versa: focus, and peripheral gaze	Children adorn selves.and teacher is the leader for the first round. Duncan’s “Marche Militaire”, a favorite of young dancers is danced. The dance follows a serpentine path and is composed of: marching in place, skips, and polka.	Schubert

Younger version of Persephone

IMPROV For a wild and large group this is a nice option to the Brahms dances.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Rolling on ground as winter</li> <li>2) Persephone dancing with little scarf flowers</li> <li>3)Leaping over rope</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Chopin</li> <li>2) Mendelssohn</li> <li>3) Mendelssohn</li> </ol>
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