

|| ELÆ ||
Sonic-Somatic
Disruptor Mechanism
|| SCORE ||

This is a score for you to experiment with on your own time. If you'd like, and are interested in becoming part of a social practice archive around this work, please send me your results, whether written, audio, or video, and/or if you post it to social media please tag me at @thetroublewithbartleby and use the tags #alchemicaldisruptormechanism and #sonicsomaticscore.

I hope using these tools is a productive and generative process for you. Please play, and give yourself permission to be messy and unsure.

In solidarity and possibility,

Elæ

The “materials” for this process / experiment are these:

- * found sounds (ex: recordings of ambient environments and nonhuman allies)
- * auto-voiced / sounded tones and percussion, breathwork (sung / sounded, body percussion)
- * a consideration of somatic / cellular / energetic relations, players, and processes, including but not limited to: blood, lung, heart, oxygen, thymus (producing T cells for the immune system), lymphatic system, skin, fascia, bone marrow.
- * language / text, either improvisationally voiced or previously selected. It need not be your own. Playing with a variety of words and forms will influence the texture of the experience.

This process suggests that, the above together become mechanism for intention, articulation, stimulation, adaptation, growth, evolution, resilience. That the movement, sounding, of the body, here in tandem with language and thereby neural pattern, CREATES rather than ILLUSTRATES the somatic experience / tone.

Recommendations / before you begin:

This score can be used in an entirely exploratory way in which you tune in to your body's polyphony, tones and tempos, without previous information.

However, you may find it may also be productive for deeper work with visualization and neuro/cognitive repatterning to look at diagrams and videos, as well as reading up a bit around the functionality and movement types of certain somatic/bodily systems, paths, and processes.

The examples given here (thymus, blood, lymphatic system, etc) have been chosen primarily based on Body Mind Centering practices focusing on supporting immunity, and are informed by other somatic work around trauma, but you needn't have any prior awareness or experience to benefit from it.

Even understanding the simplest principles around stimulating the Thymus (where your T-cells are trained), around moving and oxygenating blood through the body and then the journey back through the lymphs (which clean the blood on its way back to the heart), or around thinking about the skin as an organ serving an immune function (regulating and in conversation with microbiomes that change from one region to the next), etc., can help give you a point of entry as you move sound and language through and over your somatic systems. Visuals may help you begin to re/train a familiarity with your form.

SCORE:

[Optional: Play/run any visual accompaniment or pre-recorded audio. Consider visuals that illustrate invisible/erased internal processes, as well as internal sounds of the body, and/or recordings of non-human allies.]

I. Begin by playing solely with sound and breath, before bringing in language. Work with tempo, stress, tone. Move your mouth and experiment with placement of your tongue, your teeth and jaw. If you can, record this to play back or loop layers over each other to create an initial soundscape.

Begin to explore and move the body as you sound.* Tap, percuss, shift your weight, bend, swing, balance, reach, close and open, and breathe in tandem with or in opposition to movements. If it's safe to do so, close your eyes and move your attention through your body as you move / sound. Continue to play with shifts of stress, volume, tempo, matching vs. differentiating sound and body.

Visualize moving the sound to and through your body's systems / parts / channels. Stroke, tap, knock, sweep, knead, or bring hands near surfaces of your body, seeking to become informed by and responsive to this contact or energetic nearness. Follow their lead as much as possible, or attempt a sort of call and response.

*accessibility note: score can be done sitting or lying down, or entirely as a visualized / internally voiced program.

[Variation: if you have the capacity to record your sounding, play your soundscape, as a loop if short, while you complete the next part of the score. If not, experiment with playing different accompanying sounds or music during this section.]

II. Here you will begin to bring language into the practice. You might read from a text and then move, or improvise producing words in response to your movements, or from observing the quality of your experience or environment. You might speak text you've memorized, or be able to read off a prompt screen or card.

Continue to integrate movement, touch, sounding and breath with your reading. Play with pacing, pitch, and moments of rest, both silence and stillness.

Can you move the language into, through, your organs? Over your skin? Can the body itself, or a part of the body, be understood as the speaker, with your voice as conduit or vessel?

[Variation / extension]

III. You may find that your experience changes with every iteration of this practice, and you may wish to record it, or produce a sort of “score within a score” to follow or to extend to others. This may be a way in which you can identify specific somatic explorations you wish to pursue.

Try a variation where you entirely improvise text, or begin with a concept that you “edit” with your body, shifting and adding words and phrases. How would this translate to the page or document?

For my public version of this score, after working with text that was derived *from* body, I went in and made a more specific score, pairing phrases with more explicit movement prompts, which I then worked from. It’s a push pull of instruction vs. play. The balance can continue to shift.

What you’ll find in the next pages is the sample score I used for a performance at the Body in Language series, online / during quarantine, in May of 2020. I was in Brooklyn, NY at the time.

TEXT:

BODY:

For years I slept
closed, hands tight
fists, toes curled,
wound. A crab.

Tight, closed,
inward. Hands
over eyes, over
head.

The scared animal
returns home
whether home is
safe or frightening.

Tentative touch,
reaching

TEXT:

BODY:

Later I found I was
both animal and
also water: not
only simile but also
cell: self/same

Open, flow

Small movements

Opening the sea of
qi with growing
circles

TEXT:

We are slow-stone-
eroder, ground mover,
rapids, typhoon,
snowdrift, icesheet,
dew

A formal tendency to
take the shape of our
container (shifter)
shouldn't be construed
as lack of spine

BODY:

Match word with
tone and speed of
movement

Poses, shifts,
swings

Sounding /
breathwork

TEXT:

Aspiring to flow, my
blood moves from
heart to lung,
welcomes oxygen,
back and through
again, lymph and vein
return through mycelial
repair, stagnated by
the world's detritus,
needs help finding its
way

BODY:

Sweep and
palpate, tone, sea
of qi grows bigger

Lymphatics

Thymus sounding

TEXT:

BODY:

Wading other
human waters I
drown a little,
ecstatic, aware of
overwhelm,
softened to
avoidances, a
deluge of myself

Open and close,
seeking, face
touching, fast
breathwork, heater

TEXT:

Invited in, working
the room, the blood
says YES, pooling at
the root, fiery
anchor: you are
animal, you are
animal, boiling
water, welcome
home. Welcome
home animal,
welcome home.

BODY:

Working with
pelvis, root chakra,
moving sea of qi
until close with
hands over sacral
chakra.

Cooler, ground.

[Writing prompt / documentation / extension]

IV. This type of attention / intention / relational engagement with your body and its systems may be relatively or entirely new for you. Whether or not that's case, I encourage you to record your experiences, with no expectations about what that looks or sounds like on paper (or in whatever form you prefer). It could be audio or video recordings, voice to text, etc.

What language comes out of the movement? What can you observe in yourself? What shifts in relationship to language you bring to the body? What shifts in relationship to your surroundings, before and after? What changes when you focus explicitly on one part of the body or system vs. another, and/or when you more fluidly move across or between?

Begin to articulate and work with combinations: speed and heat and blood, cool and lymph and slow, with different sounds and rhythms, different language. What changes? Does it shift something in the rest of your day, beyond the time in process?

If you are interested in further exploration, performance, or to engage collectively with this work, with ELÆ, or through upcoming programming at The Operating System / Liminal Lab, please feel free to email lynne@theoperatingsystem.org for more information.

Follow E at @thetroublewithbartleby on Instagram for other somatic disruptor / speculative solidarity protocol.

IN POSSIBILITY
ELÆ