

The Reality of Fragmentation and the Yearning for Healing:
Jungian Perspectives on Democracy, Power and Illusion in
Contemporary Politics

Movement Workshop:
Moving the Political Body toward Consciousness

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“Gaia’s Daughter” by Mara Friedman

“A body whose wisdom has never been honored does not easily trust.

An animal with a crazy trainer learns crazy habits, runs wild.”

~ Marion Woodman (Woodman, 2001, pg. 41)

Today, the body of humanity is challenged with health issues affecting vital organs such as the lungs, heart, liver, guts, and brain. The body of earth is ailing with pollution – poisoning flora and fauna, air and water. Populations are threatened with extinction. Personal and global voices cry: “I can’t breathe!”

Jung clarifies: *“The idea of the self could not exist for one single moment if there were not a body to create and maintain that distinctness”* (Jung, 1988, p. 65).

Our body holds polarities, dilemmas, deep feelings, wounds, memories, longing, and a creative potential for new life. Through the body we engage psyche-soma by participating in Jung’s urging to hold the tension between the opposites for the transcendent function to emerge, providing more than the sum of its parts.

Our daily 30-minute movement sessions offered a safe and sacred temenos for our community to come together to embody the emerging spirit of the depths. By carefully attending to even micro-movements, a connection between the individual soma and the collective body is made, affecting both simultaneously.

Our body is key to experiencing a spirituality that holds dark and light, good and evil, in conscious awareness. As we breathe into our organs, we breathe life into the imaginal to sustain healing, regeneration, and greater awakening to the present moment. We feel, reflect, and come to a sense of political responsibility connected to a strong moral compass. For every breath lost, a new breath awakens.

Our movement interludes supported listening and learning from one another while tending to self-care. Integrating breathing, sensing, and grounding, we practiced returning to our center, connecting to ourselves, and receiving one another with respect and kindness.

We were delighted that so many of you joined us as we invited in the discovery of body-psyche wisdom, explored peace in chaos, ground in uncertainty, connectivity in isolation, and supported each other in learning how to ‘dance with the times.’ No movement experience was necessary, only curiosity and a bit of courage to open up to the unknown.

Moving Activism – Tina Stromsted

“As far as we can discern, the sole purpose of existence is to kindle a light in the darkness of being.” (Jung, 1961,p. 326).

Our movement sessions sought to offer a place where body, breath, and spirit could come together to offer nourishment for the soul in our beleaguered community. The world was suffering from many long months of tragic losses associated with COVID-19, and each day surged with the building tension that preceded a US presidential election filled with division, vitriol, conspiracy theories, and a growing tide of hope for change.

As ‘sheltering in place’ necessitated shifting the conference to an online environment, we designed experiences to support participants in grounding in their bodies with a sense of safety, receptivity, and openness to help sustain them through days of screen time. Inviting ease and spaciousness, these brief movement explorations engaged inner resources, flexibility, tenderness, play, strength and resilience as we gathered in community.

In these days of global pandemics ~ cellular and social ~ we’d become that much more aware of our fragility. We knew that listening to different experiences and points of view at political conferences such as this could also be triggering, stirring deep responses that are patterned in the body/mind ~ some ancestral, others more recent, or both, seeking recognition and reconciliation. Jung’s urgent message was to practice ‘holding the tension between the opposites,’ to discover a transcendent function that engages psyche and soma; each profoundly influencing the other.

Sometimes moving to music, and at other times in quiet moments for embracing and engaging what we sensed in our bodies, we took time to ground and move – exploring in the present moment what could otherwise remain mental constructs. The body links us to the depths - our somatic unconscious - a threshold that bridges light and shadow, matter and spirit, the personal and the collective, and our interrelationships with all life forms on the planet.

As we know, when we don't do our inner work, our political actions are often inevitably driven by the power of unexamined complexes that can further divide us. Neuroscience is now telling us what we've intuited all along: that the guts contain our second brain – the enteric nervous system - and that we are triggered by what we hear or perceive liminally. Integrating the body's experience is not only necessary to make our experience conscious, but it also helps us transform and metabolize information into meaning.

As Modern dancer, Martha Graham said: *“Movement never lies. It is a barometer telling the state of the soul's weather to all who can read it”* (Graham, 1952/1998, pg. 96).

A very beautiful moment during the movement workshop was when Heba and I saw over a hundred of you dancing in your living rooms via zoom, and then shared significant gestures with the group! How wonderful it was to see our community in motion, some with your partners, kids, and/or pets - responding to one another through natural movement from different parts of the world! From the reactions and enjoyment, we perceived how fundamental it is to bring the body in as a profoundly integrative element in our awareness as analysts, and in activist work.

As the *Native American Hopi people* say: *“To watch us dance is to hear our hearts speak.”* Thank you all; it was heartwarming to share this experience with you!

The Dance of Democracy - Heba Zaphiriou-Zarifi

For Kierkegaard, an individual is in despair if he does not align himself with God or God's plan for the self. Individual despair is a misalignment of the dance of life with oneself. Dance involves a synthesis, a reconciling of a tension made conscious of itself. There is no wisdom without an inhalation and exhalation, nor

vitality without a dialectical homeostasis between the possible and the necessary. Conscious knowledge of polarities, held together in relation, runs through the body as the line between good and evil crosses each individual psyche. To dance is to hold the centre between good and evil as the still point between creation and destruction, death and rebirth.

The body is the portal to immanence and transcendence, the gateway to experiencing a spirituality of darkness and light, of good and evil, of chaos and order in conscious awareness. Dance is a balancing act, a wandering paced on a tightrope stretched between opposites – left and right, above and below, front and back. The dancer moves out from and in toward the still point, the calm abode of peace within.

When the animal body is denied its instinctual daemon, the opposing spiritual pole is concretised into addictions. Perfectionism and consumerism are addictions concretising spirit in matter whilst “riding the mount of the body” (Rumi). Racism is another lethal drive that snuffs spirit out of existence. The body becomes the tomb of the rejected spirit.

There is a nonconformist energy in the body that will not give in to collective norms, dogmas or fascism, and, if given a chance to dance, willingly creates out of its own central axis, between earth and heaven, a morality based on knowledge of good and evil, and the joyfulness to *be*. Dance, as a political act, incarnates a decision-making centre out of which emanates lawful relation to others. It takes courage to become the centre of the spinning wheel, the axis mundi of the rotating world, the point toward which we indefinitely travel.

The body is foundational to democracy: it opens dialogue and freedom of movement, engages the old in renewal, generating ethical norms to give equal rights to all our parts, integrating the neglected or abused. Dance is democratic not merely because it engages all parts of body-psyche equally without discrimination; it creates

solidarity between them. Furthermore, decency is integral to democracy. However, ‘politely’ we may impute undesirable qualities to others, it is *undemocratic* and truly indecent. The question of embodying true democracy and equality remains open. More than solidarity between the parts, it requires “the mind [to] learn compassionate love for the body” (Ostrowski, p. 25). By ‘body’ we imply the earth, the shadow, sexuality and the feminine.

We each have the freedom to call for equality and for change by reclaiming the spirit-of-a-nation to return home. The scapegoating of others because of lack of inner honesty needs to be defeated. Fragmentation occurs when others’ integrity is not respected. Colonisation of the indigenous points at a famished disincarnated spirit. When chained to our certitudes about others whom we judge, we become slaves who have forfeited their freedom. Here is a poem to the defeated who continue to dance despite the suffering inflicted upon them:

Dance, when you’re broken open.
Dance, if you’ve torn the bandage off.
Dance in the middle of the fighting.
Dance in your blood.
Dance, when you're perfectly free. (Rumi)

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