

## **MEETING IN THE FLESH: Somatic experience in psychotherapy and psychoanalysis**

### Chapter 6: Rough and Tumble: Play and maturation

*We are not accustomed to thinking of nonsymbolic processes, including somatic and sensory processes, that cannot be verbalized or even symbolized..., as systematic and organized thought. It changes our understanding of pathology and treatment when we are able to make this shift. (Bucci, 2008, p.58)*

My colleague, Mark Ludwig, and I were leading a series of body-centered workshops for men. We designed a "warm-up" exercise to get the participants interacting and moving physically. We divided the large group room into four "wrestling rings," within which two of the participants would play wrestle like father and son with a third man as "referee". Mark and I were both fathers to young sons and were well accustomed to various forms of rough and tumble play, especially wrestling matches in which we always managed—at the very lasting, exciting moment—to be overpowered by and lose to our boys.

We made what proved to be a seriously unwarranted assumption that all the guys in our group had had experiences like these with their own fathers. What we envisioned to be a simple, fun, interactive "warm-up" proved to be frightening, infuriating, and/or humiliating to most of the men in the group. These men had not had this kind of experience with their own fathers (or if they did, it was the father rather than the child who always won). Almost all associated this kind of physical play not with pleasure but with fighting, competing and intimidation. It also uncovered intense longing for male-to-male play, physical contact, pleasure, and intimacy. Our opening "warm-up" heated up the group in ways we hadn't even considered, providing the context for all of the work that weekend. While I had grown up largely alone with creeks and woods, I had always envied what I imagined other boys had with their fathers and friends. It was something I had been determined to correct as a father to my sons. I learned that weekend that I was not alone in my experience of feeling both isolated from and intimidated by other guys as a boy, an adolescent and young adult. That weekend Mark & I had the challenge and the pleasure of watching twelve

men struggle with bringing their physical bodies one to another in "rough and tumble" action, gradually discovering the joy and intimacy of this kind of contact.

Play is central to Winnicott's theories of child development and of the psychoanalytic process itself. Like so much of Winnicott's writings, his theories of play were fluid, his own writings often being a form of playing with ideas:

...it is play that is universal, and that belongs to health: playing facilitates growth and therefore health; playing leads into group relationships; playing can be a form of communication in psychotherapy; and, lastly, psychoanalysis has been developed as a highly specialized form of playing in the service of communication with oneself and others.

(Winnicott, 1971, p.41, emphasis in the original)

"Play" for Winnicott found expression in two rather different but interconnected realms of mental development, play as an imaginative and interpersonal ("transitional") space and play as the child's physical/bodily exploration of his/her own body and the physical environment. In his most formal treatise on the topic, **Playing and Reality** (1971), we find a complex exploration of the forms and meanings of "play" in the exploration, discovery and emergent meanings of "reality".

I have written earlier in this book of the profound relevance of Winnicott's object relational theories for body psychotherapy. In this chapter I wish to discuss Winnicott's perspectives on the child's developing relationship with his/her own body through movement, play and exploration of the physical environment.

Winnicott's use of language was often quite idiosyncratic as he sought to find an unusual word or turn of phrase that might capture of sense of something more "sensed" than "thought" and rather intentionally ambiguous so as to evoke multiple layers of unconscious meaning. His use of language is often more suggestive, evocative, or paradoxical, so as to create a sense of something rather than define or label it.

In his discussions of movement and play, Winnicott drew a distinction between *mobility* and *motility*. "Mobility" has to do with movement from one place to another and the use

of one's muscles and movement to get something. "Motility" refers to the literal experience of movement in and of itself, the experience of what Winnicott called "muscle pleasure". What is central in motility is not the goal of the action, but the pleasure, the learning in the movement itself—here echoing what is so often described in sensate and movement practices I discussed in the previous chapter. It is a body sense, a body pleasure, a body learning, a body knowing—which can remain quite distinct from verbal, cognitive, symbolic forms of knowledge. Symbolization does not necessarily enhance or improve this form of knowing. I think of a recent experience at an extraordinary transactional analysis conference in South Africa. We were dancing to a marimba band, whose sounds and rhythms were novel to my ears and body. I felt awkward at first. At first, I imitated the movements of some of the more experienced dances, like trying things on for size. It helped a bit but fell short of the magical. Gradually I let the music sink into my body, I began to hum and vocalize with the percussion. My body began to "get it," muscle pleasure. Then I could shift from one partner to another, each couple finding its own way to dance together and with the music, no words ever spoken. This is an example of what Winnicott would call motility.

Winnicott sees movement (motility) as fundamentally linked to aggression, as in one's capacity to explore one's environment (both impersonal and interpersonal), and inherent in the pleasures of play. Lichtenberg ( ) and Panksepp ( ) expand on Winnicott's observations of play, linking play and the evolution of sensori-motor competencies as essential to the healthy development of language, symbolic capacities and socialization.

Winnicott delineates three patterns of motility. In the first, which he defines as a state of health, "the environment is constantly discovered and rediscovered because of motility" (p.211). The environment to which he is referring is both the human and the nonhuman physical world. When all goes well, "the summation of motility contributes to the individual's ability to start to exist" (pp.213-214), i.e. to experience one's self as a separate source of interest, initiative, and agency. The infant or individual in this aspect of motility has what Winnicott characterizes as "*an experience of the individual*" (p. 211, italics in original), which is to say a healthy narcissistic gratification of being able to impinge upon and create something in relation to an aspect of the

environment be it human or non-human. Often for infants and toddlers, this is the manipulation of the physical environment or the experimentation with one's own body. This is the experience of "muscle pleasure". There is no so much an expression of psychological meaning or intent per se, but more a purely somatic, self-organizing experience.

In "The Role of Play in Things Human," Lichtenberg and Meares observe:

In every caregiving cycle moments occur during which the awake baby is fed and diapered, has been played with and talked to and has been put down on the floor or play enclosure. During these moments of disengagement, the infants will actively explore their surroundings—grabbing, grasping looking, listening, mouthing any object available, and will assert a preference for one object or mode of exploration over another. Significantly *the motivation for exploratory-assertive play does not derive from the caregiver, that is, from attachment, but from the infant's innate repertoire of responses. ...The exploratory-assertive system is the fundamental source of the motivation for play, the exercise of educative skills, and work.* (1996, p.8, italics added).

They emphasize that the exploratory-assertive motivations arise from the infant's *interest*, and that in the pursuit of these interesting phenomena, the infant (child or adult) develops efficiency and competence.

One's relationship to the nonhuman environment is a rather underdeveloped arena in psychoanalytic theory, which I had attempted to underscore in my discussion of Lew Aron's paper. Searles (1960), writing in a personal voice, says, "As far back as I can recall, I have felt life's meaning resided not only in my relatedness with my mother and father and sister and other persons, but in relatedness with the land itself—the verdant or autumn-tapestried or stark and snow-covered hills, the uncounted lakes, the rivers" (p.ix). He continues in a more theoretical voice to underscore, "The thesis of this volume is that the nonhuman environment, far from being of little or no account to human personality development, constitutes one of the most basically important ingredients in human psychological existence" (pp.5-6). Our capacities to move, so as seek and explore the physicalities of the world

around us, are fundamental to our sense of having an alive self.

Winnicott further describes patterns of motility within the interpersonal environment, the crucial ways in which an infant's exploratory, often "unintegrated" movements are perceived, received and given meaning by within a primary relationship—which may involve parents, friends, lovers, or therapists among the central cast of characters. Winnicott emphasizes the child's (or patient's) delight and relief in having someone to come up against with aggression (as distinct from hostility), so as to feel the force and boundaries of one's own body against the body of another that can welcome the contact, stay put, and keep its own form without punishing. "In health...the individual can enjoy going around looking for appropriate opposition" (p.212), the kind of playful, oppositional experience that Mark and I had attempted in our wrestling matches in the men's body therapy group. It is within this realm of body-to-body interaction and meaning-making that Winnicott wrote that, "The true self is bound up with bodily aliveness. It comes from the aliveness of the body tissues and the working of the body functions... The spontaneous gesture is the true self in action"(1960, p.147).

Absent from Winnicott's accounts, as was so often the case in his writing, was any description or acknowledgment of the erotic qualities of these aggressive, bodily interactions. This is the area where we find such a striking contrast with Reich, who saw the erotics of the mother-infant relationship as essential to the development of wellbeing and emergent sexuality. For Reich, the baby's experience of his/her body being a source of delight to the mother's body enduring vitality.

Healthy development and healthy relationships embody a capacity to constantly shift back and forth between somatic and self experiences that have little to nothing to do with others and the desire and capacity to be deeply *received by* and *responsive to* others. It was Winnicott's conviction that for the psyche to be truly vital it needed to become fundamentally rooted in the soma, and that for the actions of the "spontaneous gestures" to be sustained as a source of self agency, these bodily movements, patterns of motility, need to be recognized as healthy and meaningful in the caretaking environment.

The second pattern of motility delineated by Winnicott is what he describes as "*reactions to impingement*" of the environment upon the individual (p.211), be it intrusive, unresponsive, shaming, abusive, seductive, needy, controlling, etc. Play so often occurs in interpersonal environments (think of schools) that are less than receptive to curiosity, excitement, experimentation and learning by trial and error. Again we see a dialectical tension in which play involves solitary pursuits of self-interests intermingled with play with others, a life-long swinging between self and mutual regulation or dysregulation. Variations of impingement are vividly described by Lichtenberg and Meares:

Insufficient or lifeless play is a common experience of children with depressed, withdrawn, apathetic, and drugged mothers. ...Parents may put toddlers in swings or pools and push them beyond their comfort zones into fear states, all the while shaming them for crying or protesting. A common effect of these violations of mutual regulation in play is that the infant's self-regulation is sacrificed. (p.9)

After a series of such impingements, the organism's motility is likely to be organized in some pattern of neurotic withdrawal from the environment and others, so as to preserve some sense of individual existence. Here the child does not have a "good enough mother" or an adequately responsive "facilitating environment" (Winnicott, 1965, pp.238-239). In coping with chronic environmental impingement and/or neglect, the activities of the child's developing body become invested in the creation of what Winnicott came to call the false self, and what Reich would have characterized as the beginnings of character armor, as the underpinning a neurotic character structures. In Winnicott's description we see a preservation of the "true" self in withdrawal and solitude with the protective, social shield of the adapted "false" self. While there is a suggestion of movement and muscularity underlying neurotic structure, Winnicott does not elaborate these somatic patterns in any systematic fashion, as Reich endeavored to do.

"In the third pattern," writes Winnicott, "which is extreme, this is exaggerated to such a degree that there is not even a resting place for individual experience, and the result is a failure in the primary narcissistic state to

evolve an individual" (p.212). Here Winnicott's description is quite chilling:

The 'individual' then develops as an extension of the shell rather than the core, as an extension of the impinging environment. What is left of a core is hidden away and is difficult to find even in the most far-reaching analysis. The individual then *exists by not being found*.  
(p.212)

Here we find Winnicott's clinical description uncannily mirroring that of Reich's account of muscular and character armor, though Winnicott never writes, to my knowledge, in characterological terms. The motility of the body becomes the force, the action of immobilizing the body's freedom for narcissistic exploration, turned instead to hiding and warding off the interpersonal world.

What is significant here, from a body-centered perspective, is Winnicott's comprehension of bodily action/movement as central in defense mechanisms. His brief article is punctuated by moments of brilliant recognitions in the midst of ideas-in-becoming, more unformed than informed, struggling to recognize and articulate something and figure out what to do with it as a psychoanalyst. I think he gained an appreciation of the place of the body and its actions through his work with children, which often involved physical play. This informed his understanding of adult psychopathology and I imagine fostered some of his more radical experiments with deeply disturbed patients of literal accompaniment, holding, physical contact, and physical proximities between patient and analyst. In contrast to Reich, who saw the sensual and erotic contact between infant and parents as essential to healthy body experience, we see again if Winnicott's discussion of motility his apprehension and misunderstanding of the erotic.

Over the years of reading and teaching Winnicott, I have found it rather sadly amusing how he has been transformed, iconized, as the paragon of The Maternal presence. The full scope of his thinking is in fact often paradoxical, welcoming of aggression and conflict, and quite dark and solitary. Such ideas as the holding environment have great seductive power, evoking the fulfillment of our longings for comfort and being known by others, for relentless, unsoiled empathy and attunement, captured in the image of the Cassat mother and infant painting on the cover of Stern's **Interpersonal World of the Infant**.

But what happens if we take up the sense of "holding" from a somatic/movement perspective? There is holding, as in an embrace within the arms of another (mother). There is also holding tight. Holding off. Holding out. Holding back. Holding on. Holding in. Holding up. Holding down. Each of these holdings contains a very different sense of the body—of the body in relation to itself, of the body in action (or inaction), of the body in relation to the physical environment, of the body in relation to others. Each reflects a differing and individual manifestation of patterns of motility. A sensori-motor based exploration of "holding" could take one in many different directions.

Bodily movement and action was so for long considered "acting out" in the psychoanalytic and psychodynamic literature, that an informed understanding and exploration of movement as part of therapeutic exploration and learning has been slow to come. Jim McLaughlin, as a classically trained analyst, was singular in his efforts to attend to and find meaning in the nonverbal actions of his patients (2010, 2005). Bold in his willingness to observe and wonder, he was more cautious in technique, never quite able to fully challenge the constraints of traditional analytic technique to move beyond verbal inquiry and description (Cornell, 2010). His clinical accounts of nonverbal enactments and of his wrestling with his own countertransferences remain exceptional pieces of writing in the analytic literature to this day. He did not shy away from his own bodily experience. McLaughlin was among the very few theorists to suggest that physical contact between analyst and analysand can upon occasion be therapeutic.

An appreciation of the meanings of movement and means of working intentionally with movement is beginning to emerge in the contemporary psychoanalytic literature. A recent book edited by Francis Anderson, **Bodies in Treatment: The Unspoken Dimension** (2008), is a collection of articles by psychoanalytically informed clinicians who have experienced or experimented with various forms of body-centered treatments. The most coherent presentations of work with bodily movement within a psychoanalytic frame is in the work of Frances La Barre (2001, 2005, 2008) and Katya Bloom (2006), both of whom have been trained in systems of movement analysis and therapies, influenced by the work of Kestenberg, Laban, and their followers.

Katya Bloom (2006) comes to psychoanalysis and the perspectives of Winnicott, Klein, and other British object relations theorists from an initial background in dance, choreography and movement therapy. Her understanding of movement is based in practices of movement and dance therapies. As a movement-centered therapist, her consulting room is quite different from the traditional setting; hers is a small, light studio with a wooden floor, empty but for folded blankets at one end of the room for her and her patients to sit on, such that "each patient makes use of the space and the blanket in his/her own way, and this can be seen to have implications for exploring patients' internal object worlds" (p.155-156).

The explorations are through physical movements in each session as well as verbal interaction. Bloom's primary task as therapist is to provide "embodied attentiveness" to both bodies in the room. Her attitude is typical of an analyst working well-attentive, receptive, curious, reflective—and these capacities are communicated through her own exploratory movements as well as words. Movement is an essential means of communication and understanding.

Bloom's case descriptions capture the experience, described in chapter 5 by Juhan, of the gradual surrender of familiar movement patterns to the exploration of novel patterns, often precipitating a period of "unintegration" (which is quite distinct from regression) that provides the ground for new movement and integration of a more fluid and varied sense of self.

La Barre has developed the concept of "kinetic temperament," bringing a body-centered understanding to the work of Stella Chess and Alexander Thomas on temperament (Chess & Thomas, 1996). According to La Barre:

*Kinetic variations of temperament are intrinsic foundational physical modes of operating beginning in utero and present at birth that initially shape a baby's actions and affect, and thus contribute heavily to patterns of behavior that are mutually created by baby and parents.*

The *kinetic temperament* can be summarized in three main parts: (a) the body attitude, which is formed over time by (b) favored intensity dynamics and (c) dimensional [relationship to three dimensional space] preferences. (2008, p. 415, italics in original)

There is a keen kinship between Winnicott's notion of motility and muscle pleasure and La Barre's sense of kinesthetic temperament. Both infant and parent *move*, and each has his or her preferred modes of movement, which may match, complement, contradict, or override the other. In love making, both partners move, in preferred modes, differing tempos and intensities. In psychotherapy and psychoanalysis, though actual movement is often inhibited (in fear of the dreaded "acting out") the differing kinetic temperaments register at a somatic and often unconscious (or at least unarticulated) level that shape in a fundamental, nonverbal way the nature of the therapeutic couple. One's temperament may be variable and fluid, it may be rigid and pressuring, it may be under-defined and tentative. I find La Barre's work exciting, offering a rare bridge between the realms of bodywork I have been describing and that of psychoanalysis.

La Barre offers an account of her own kinetic countertransference with a client who was a self-proclaimed "Ice Queen" (2008, p.424). In a psychoanalysis that evolved over several years, La Barre's client often expressed envy at the relaxedness and fluidity that she saw in La Barre's bodily presence but could not allow it in herself. La Barre characterized her client as "stuck in the vertical":

Judith's verticality was pronounced. She always began by speaking with this movement phrase: a small, sharp lift of her head, up and a little forward, with hand gestures up and in front of her that initiated her whole torso lift, and she continued to lengthen the torso before suddenly pressing her chin and upper torso down as she finished speaking. ...Her gestures, posture, rhythm, and intensity dynamics gave her movements a contained and stern quality with a quiet but intimidating portent of attack. (p.427)

Here is a description by an analyst whose has learned to look as well as listen. La Barre describes her practice as that "to observe the kinetic text and explore ways to bring my movement and the patient's to our shared attention so that we can think together about the meanings of our nonverbal interactivity" (p.426). Here I see both a significant appreciation of movement as meaningful and what seems like the inevitable analytic privileging of "thinking together" (in contrast to actually, intentionally moving

together) and of attributing verbal meaning to nonverbal actions.

La Barre relates how the intensification of the kinetic transference/countertransference struggle heightened her client's sense of loneliness, leading to a break through:

Having spent several sessions lamenting her pain at our physical distance, Judith arrived for her session, threw down her bag, sat on the floor at my feet, and put her head on my lap and sobbed. She wept about how awful she felt, how foolish and ashamed. I put my hands on her head and back and leaned over to hear her. When she recovered her composure and sat back on the couch, she did not resume her full rigid verticality, but softened and leaned sideways onto the back of the couch. ...She said with relief that it felt as if I had become for her the strength she needed on the outside that she had always felt compelled to keep within herself. (p. 430)

La Barre goes on to describe their reflections on the meaning of this interaction, with La Barre commenting on "a freer, softened range of muscle action" and Judith feeling no longer such a "prisoner in her 'up tight' state" (p.430).

La Barre adds, in the middle of the passage I quote above a footnote:

I include this example of "acting out" and touch in this case to address the common fear that working explicitly with movement and the body will cause many experiences like this that will uncontrollably come to take over, making reflection impossible. But my experience is that this kind of interactivity does not happen very often, and when it does, the actions become integrated into the verbal dialogue, augmenting what can be spoken and understood. (p. 430)

To my reading of the interaction described here, it was the action, the actual moving, of both patient and analyst that were the most crucial, not the verbal reflections afterward. I very much agree that these bodily interactions need to be discussed and reflected upon verbally, but I would argue there is essential, therapeutic learning through the actions themselves. The bodily interactions and *touch* between La Barre and her patient were pivotal and of lasting therapeutic value in and of

themselves. Whatever may have been elucidated and consolidated through discussion and reflection, Judith had already learned something in her body of lasting significance in relation to both herself and her analyst.

The fear to which La Barre refers in her footnote to her psychoanalytic community I see as a reflection of the fact that analysts are simply not trained in the meanings of movements, how to move, when to touch, etc. So long as the analytic communities define these interactions as "actings out" and remain untrained in an understanding of the body, it is probably best that analysts remain in their chairs and keep their patients on the couch.

The quality of movements to be explored in a session can be very subtle, and the field of "play" occurring within the familiar setting of two adults seated in their chairs. To illustrate, these are notes from a recent consultation with a body-centered psychotherapist seeking a new perspective on work with a client that was going well but had become a little too predictable. The consultation consisted of my direct observation of an actual session, with my observations to be shared directly to both therapist and client. In the notes that follow, I provide a summary of the verbal dialogue in italics. Descriptions of the nonverbal interactions are provided in bold type within parentheses. My thoughts to myself are included in brackets.

*Guy: "It's good to be here with you. I've been looking forward to seeing you."*

**(Deep, rapidly passing smile. Eyes lively, moving forward in his chair toward Paul, arms extending. Hands reach his knees, hesitate, stop in mid-air. Fingers curl inward. Arms drop to legs, pulls back into the chair, shoulders slump forward, chest collapsing. Face still)**

[seems to be pulling back from Paul, as though he's moved back into a cage. Hands first open, then seem anxious]

**(Paul holds Guy's gaze, remains silent. Paul's body is moving, mirroring Guy's movements, intensifying them slightly)** [looks like an intentional, nonverbal amplification of Guy's movements. Hoping to bring Guy's attention to his body activity?]

*Guy: Describes feeling shy, saying he is too often isolated in his life, that he isolates himself.*

Paul: "And how are you feeling now here with me?"

Guy: "Cagey."

(Michael's "trial" movements become more pronounced.) [I have the strong impulse to move behind guy, put my arms along side his and move his arms forward toward Paul. I feel intensely fatherly.]

Guy: "There are a couple of issues I'd like to address today. Maybe." (laughing, fleeting smile)

Paul: "Yes?" (Body moving forward in his chair)

Guy: "My relationships... It's like a put a capsule around myself. I want to get OUT more in the world... (Hands keeping opening, moving toward Paul, always stopping at his knees, fingers curling back in to themselves) [Not like forming a fist, but more like wanting to grasp but can't allow it. Caged.] "It's like when I go out, I feel open, good, and then all the old habits come back quickly. I feel ashamed of myself." [Shame. Is it too early in the session to focus on the shame? Too much exposure?] "I come back into my capsule, and I isolate. Shame. I want to be seen but then I go into hiding. I read the New York Times, see all the catastrophic threats, and retreat." (Hands moving back and forth, opening and closing) [Profound ambivalence. What's it about? Focus here. Hold the ambivalence. Speak to it. Go into the ambivalence, not the shame.]

Paul: (also moving back and forth, slightly more so than Guy) "Can I?" (extending his hands toward Guy. Guy does not take them, sitting still, face goes blank) [Leave me alone! Perhaps this is the message. Does Paul notice? Killing off.]

Guy: "I want to spring into action." (Voice intense, body shifting forward) "To live in the world. To live in the woods! To sleep in the woods, hearing a bear, knife at my side. Eager for a fight. I get ready, energized, and then I don't take action. I am disappointed in myself." (Face goes flat) [Despair? Deeper than disappointment. Collapse. Stay with it! Drop into it, this disappointment with himself, a kind of abandonment of himself. Why?]

Paul: "So much easier to just numb out?" [Not numbing out-killing off!]

*Guy: "I want to dissociate from my nervousness, this anxiety. ...My mother, she's always anxious. I spend a lot of time with her because she needs help."* [My fatherly urges grow. Where is his FATHER? Where is the paternal presence in this work? PATERNAL]

*Paul: "I know something about that kind of mother, that little kid..."* [Paul offers a kind of identification here. Why? Intentional? What is he hoping for here? Paul knows history here that I don't?]

**(Guy looks anxious. Face mask-like, deadening.)** [Killing off] **(Silence)**

*Paul: "What interests you here so far?"*

**(SILENCE)** [Guy is retreating. The capsule/cage. Enactment]

*Paul: "Can I tell you what interest me so far?"* **(Gesturing forward toward Guy, gesturing to Guy to move toward him)** [Paul keeps trying to pull Guy forward. I would speak to Guy's withdrawal, the repeated deadening of the space between them. It doesn't look intentional or even conscious. I would be paternal, move toward him rather than inviting him to move toward me. I would speak, describe. Stop asking questions and permission. Is Paul being too "maternal"? Guy will defeat him.]

*Paul: "Whatever you might like to go with with your hands..."* **(Guy's face goes dead, a heaviness coming over it)**

*Paul: "Me, too."* **(Gesturing with his own hands, as though inviting/demonstrating/encouraging)**

**(Guy's face drops.)** [He looks like he's aging. Spooky. Aging, weary. This is not an invitation, but a pressure. Guy looks nailed to his chair. I think there's relief when he cuts contact. And sometimes there's a little, fleeting smile. A smile of victory? A tiny triumph. Cutting off, killing. The knife and the bear. INHIBITION. WHERE IS THE FATHER? What is the threat. Repeated depersonalization.]

*Paul: "I was imagining some way we might connect."* [I wouldn't connect. I would focus on the disconnect, Guy's depersonalization of their interactions. Follow his retreat. Here is his sense of agency. What does this mean?] *"How might we connect physically? I was thinking about our feet, your putting your feet on top of mine..."*

Guy: [appears to agree, fleeting smile, placing his feet on top of Paul's] "I just did that in a Breema [?] session last week." (**face goes flat**) [OUCH. Depersonalization.]

Paul: "I can take more of your feet. More pressure."

Guy: "It's a little like spooning." (**warmth comes over Guy's face, a softening, a smile of genuine affection**) [I think it's genuine. Now an area of intimacy, erotic. Can see real affection between them] "I feel a little more connected now...and a little more exposed." [explore this sense of exposure!] "My heels come up. I feel real critical of others when I see them sitting with their heels up off the floor, like they're not really there..."

Paul: "I want to be the ground underneath your feet. Put more pressure on my feet. I can take more. I want to be the ground underneath your feet."

Guy: "Not quite spooning any more." (**face goes flat, sits back in chair, feet still touching Paul's. chest sinks**) [I might say, "Don't like to stay too long."]

Paul: "You are brilliant at this!" [Is he referring to Guy's repeated cutting of contact? I'm feeling suddenly very sad, close to tears, fiercely protective of Guy. What am I wanting to protect him from? The mother? "The wind beneath your wings?" Yuck. Where is the father?]

Guy: "Gone. ...You're gonna have to raise the bar now."

Paul: "OH! You shouldn't have said something like that to someone like me!" [YAY! Finally some real aggression.] (**Guy stand up on top of Paul's feet.**)

Guy: "I want to crush you." (**Face alive, eyes intense, then pulling back**)

Paul: "CRUSH me?!"

Guy: "Well, not exactly crushing..."

Paul: "So crushing isn't quite the right word. What's the right word?" [It is EXACTLY the right word. Go with it. Don't let hi take it back. Hold the aggression. The paternal has arrived.]

Guy: *This takes me way back. An ancient echo. I can remember stepping on my Dad's feet and walking around with him, me on top of his feet. More like an ancient echo, not sure it's a real memory, maybe more of a wish.* (**sadness and pleasure in Guy's face.**)

Paul: (**looking sad**) *"OH, I feel that in my chest."* (**Brings his hand to his chest, eyes open, very direct eye contact with Guy. Guy sits down, pulls back into his chair.**)

Guy: *"I felt my energy shift. A little less excited... a little less big."* (**looks a bit disoriented, sad, hesitant**)

Paul: *"What are you going to take with you from what we've done?"* [I would make a statement here of what I'm seeing, not ask a question.]

Guy: *"Going inside more."* (**silent pause**) *"Where is my grief? My Dad's death..."* [I want to hear more. When did he die? How did he die? How old was Guy? Maybe Paul already knows.] *"Where is my grief? It doesn't come up. I can't find it. I can feel it here just a little bit."* (**hand to chest**)

Paul: *"It's like, 'I just got too scared to pause and feel my grief.'"*

Guy: *"It's ancient history."* [distancing. The history is alive in this room is this moment. It's been here all through this work. The presence of the father, the dead father. Who will be my live father to protect me from my alive, anxious mother?]

Paul: (**looking very sad and tender**) *"The biggest loss of my life was my father's death."* (**quiet pause, each in contact with the other, quiet sadness, a kind of acknowledgment of something understood**) *"I hope you will remember my feet underneath yours."*

Guy: *"I will. Thanks."*

The three of us sat quietly for a while. I asked if either had any particular questions they wanted me to address. Guy said no, but he could feel my attention to what was happening. Paul asked that I comment on different choice points in the process, what I saw, what I might have done differently.

My initial reflections to Paul and Guy were to comment on what I saw as Paul's repeated offerings of and seeking greater contact with/from Guy—efforts that Guy with equal consistency turned away. I interpreted Paul's mode of relating as that of offering a maternal presence, while what was evoked in me was much more of a paternal pattern. I was struck by Guy's repeated extending of his hands, stopping at his knees, fingers curling inward as though a grasping movement was cut off. I wondered if Paul was aware of Guy's repeated "deadenings" of the contact between them and if so how he was processing it. I described my repeated thoughts and wonderings about the absence of Guy's father and my being moved by the father's sudden appearance in the ancient echo. I appreciated the quiet reception Paul offered at that point and the space for Guy to stay at the sad edge of memory, wish & loss of his father.

Paul replied that he was well aware of Guy's shifts away from contact. His comment, "You're brilliant at that!" was intended as an acknowledgment, and a bit of a provocation, of Guy's cutting of contact. Paul was monitoring the patterns of Guy's movements, side to side and forward to back, movements in a horizontal plane. Paul was intentionally mirroring and intensifying the horizontal movements with his own body to see if that facilitated contact between them. When Paul realized that it did not, he shifted his attention to the vertical, imagining some way to move Guy into a vertical position, probably standing up and getting him more grounded through his legs and feet. Paul was not framing his interventions as maternal as I was imagining in my associations to his interventions. His hope was to interrupt Guy's breaking of contact by shifting in the horizontal plane by bringing him into the vertical, offering his own feet as a kind of "shared ground" in which Guy could stand and fell grounded with and through another, no longer all by himself. He was not intent on interpreting the "meanings" of Guy's movements, but rather trying to engage Guy through working with his patterns of movement.

In my discussion with Paul and Guy, I said that my own inclination would have been to follow Guy's repeated withdrawals from contact in a kind of "killing off" that I thought gave Guy a sense of "little triumphs". Guy acknowledged that this was true and that it was satisfying that it was seen. I thought that there was a sense of agency for Guy in his various forms of refusal and withdrawal, so I would have followed those patterns rather than try to correct them. I probably would not have

intervened with direct physical touch but would have worked with the movements occurring at the various points of withdrawal, then verbalizing the associations that came up as we worked with the movements. I was also aware of the shame Guy expressed toward his way of being, which evoked a sense of caution in me—worried that my being too active or directive might be experienced as his failing and being shamed. I commented on the difference in our styles in which I saw my preferences as emphasizing self awareness and agency, while Paul tended to emphasize interpersonal contact. Certainly as the work between Paul and Guy continues to unfold, there will be time and room for all of these possibilities to emerge and be explored. I was not, and am not, sure if these differences were reflections of our own character styles, theoretical bents, induced unconscious enactments, countertransferences, or some combination of all these variables.

Somatic exploration and experimentation can help to restore the fundamental bodily foundations of selfhood, agency, and the capacity for engagement and intimacy with others.

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