

## **Dancing from the heart – cultivating empathic connections for humanity**

**Aleka Loutsis**

In the publication *Indignez-vous* (2011), Hessel re-awakened the spirit of the French Resistance to a global society that had lost its heart. In her chapter, ‘Towards a deep democracy of the body’, and in relation to toxic and oppressive power structures, dance movement psychotherapist Linda Hartley suggests that it matters to keep one’s “heart open, and the flow of life and love through it strong and clear” (2004:168).

The extent to which ‘singing about the dark times’ should involve the feeling function and the heart is a central idea in this workshop. We give space and time to honour the power of the heart and to move from and within its intelligence. We will begin by paying attention to the heart’s resonance and rhythm and take time to listen and follow what emerges. Making space for moments of creation and resistance both individually and in relationship, we will experiment with ways to embody and express what matters to us, seeking clarity in how we stand our ground. Hessel warned of indifference and the importance of outrage and indignation in the face of oppression and authoritarianism. Exploring strength through community and synchrony of movement, we will collaborate collectively to connect with passion and action in response to this. How do we dance for the protection of human rights and peaceful protest?

Aristotle believed the heart was the seat of the soul. The notion that the heart could be central to psychological work has been noticeably absent from discourse. Could this now be the time for us to rekindle this idea from ancient times?

## Biography

**Aleka Loutsis** is a dramatherapist and dance movement psychotherapist. She teaches Movement on the MA Drama & Movement Therapy Course at RCSSD, University of London. Aleka works in adult mental health for the NHS and has a private practice in therapy and supervision. Aleka actively promotes an embodied approach to therapy drawing on her clinical and research experience and her specialist training in the treatment of complex trauma. She is registered with HCPC & UKCP

## Recent publications and conference presentations

Chapter contribution in following publications:

Hougham, R. and Jones, B. (Ed) (2021) *Dramatherapy: The Nature of Interruption*.  
Routledge.

Hougham, R. and Jones, B. (Ed) (2017) *Dramatherapy: Reflections and Praxis*. Palgrave.

Loutsis, A. (2019) Movement workshop & masterclass: **Gesture as a gateway to the imaginal realm**. EArTE conference.

Loutsis, A. (2017) Movement workshop & masterclass: **The gestural field as a gateway to transitions**. EArTE conference.

Loutsis, A. (2018) Movement workshops: **Images of Power and the Power of Images**.  
Champernowne Trust conferences.