

Introducing Room 5.17 A sketchbook for Analytic Action

5.17.1

MAKING ROOM

Hattie Myers

From 1934 -1945, the *Rundbriefe* was a top secret newsletter that circulated among a small group of socially and politically committed refugee psychoanalysts. Otto Fenichel, its founder and one of Freud's most eminent followers, urged this small group of analysts not to isolate themselves. He wrote in the *Rundbriefe*, "Where there is still truth, it will be preserved, even if it must fling far... the fate of psychoanalysis depends on the fate of the world."

The world survived but the fate of psychoanalysis took a turn Fenichel couldn't have predicted. The power of psychoanalysis to address man's conflicted, rapacious desires and the dehumanizing impact of civilization degraded over the decades. Many of the revolutionary aspects of psychoanalysis that were not aligned with the economic or political aims of new host cultures were repressed or marginalized.

For the past sixty years, the Institute for Psychoanalytic Training and Research (IPTAR) promoted a radical classical analytic position often at odds with the internal and external pressures facing psychoanalysis. When psychoanalysis in America was monopolized by the medical profession, IPTAR provided rigorous training to social workers and psychologists. As more mental health practitioners gained access to training, IPTAR opened its doors to individuals from non-mental health backgrounds

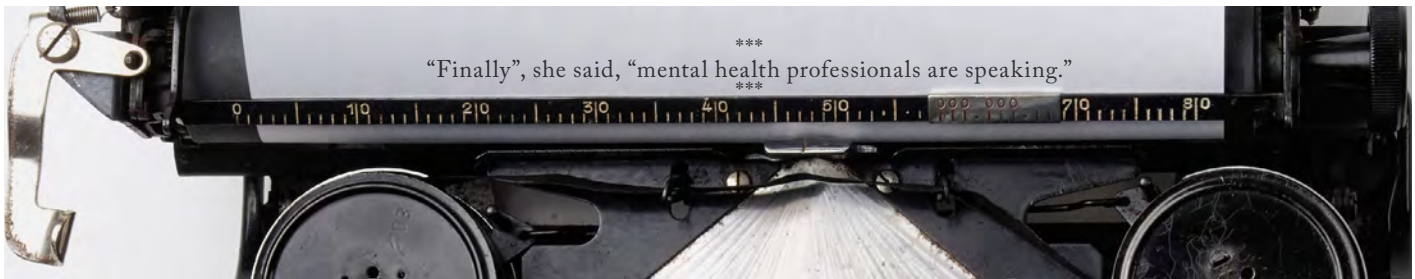


and to foreigners without access to analytic training in their native countries. When available community mental health services dwindled, IPTAR's clinical center provided thousands of New Yorkers access to low fee psychoanalytic treatment. The Clinical Center has also provided individual and group treatment in six schools over the past fifteen years and has partnered with other agencies to provide free treatment to refugees and asylum seekers.

But what does all this have to do with IPTAR's newsletter *ROOM*: a sketchbook for analytic action?

As it turns out, everything. At root, psychoanalysis holds that making room for the unconscious is critical to the understanding of ourselves and our society. It is one thing to facilitate treatments that make room for the silenced. It is another thing for analysts to plumb our own experiences. Like Fenichel's *Rundbriefe*, *ROOM* is devoted to maintaining a connection to each other and to our analytic roots in the midst of a frightening political reality. Unlike the *Rundbriefe*, *ROOM* is not sequestered within a closed analytic circle. Like psychoanalysis, *ROOM* is open to all.

The first issue of *ROOM* took us by surprise. Mental health professionals across the United States and from London to Jerusalem responded with enthusiasm. *ROOM* hit a chord with non-analysts as well. As one novelist told me, "None of us can stop watching the news. We all need help with this. Everyone wants to know what people in the mental health profession are thinking now."



In this issue of *ROOM* are Jared Russell's impassioned response to Elizabeth Cutter Evert's thought provoking essay (which appeared in *ROOM* 2.17) on the bridge between psychoanalytic and religious endeavors, C. Jama Adam's literary and musical reminder that we do not exist in isolation from each other, Richard Grose's creative take on our sudden addiction to television, and a philosophical essay by Carlos Padron which speaks of psychoanalysis as a radical practice of otherness which has the power address the blindness in our souls. *ROOM* 5.17 ends with an old toast by Sheldon Bach to a future we have come to inhabit.

Psychoanalytic therapists of all stripes are stepping up to contribute poetry, critical essays, ideological arguments, biographical reflections, - and when words just won't do, art, photography, and music. Beginning with this issue we have added a permanent section at the end of *ROOM* called DISPATCHES, which is devoted to announcements and different actions analysts are taking in their communities.

We don't know where this analytic newsletter will take us next, but we do know we can go further than homeland security asks us to go. If you see something, don't just say something—submit something to roominiptar@gmail.com Your contribution will help us all.

We expect our next issue will be coming out in September. Submissions for *ROOM* 9.17 are welcome through the end of August. —

5.17.2

ENSNARED

Ani Buk

We are now ensnared
in an anti-reality TV show
with no commercial breaks.
The scripts are written and edited
by a gang -
malignantly perverse child -people-
whose only talent is knowing
how to carve away
any hint of veracity and compassion
from the complexity of the human experience,
leaving just the sharp and brittle bones of hostility
scattered on the ground
for the emotionally malnourished
to claw at and collect.
Lamentable weapons of control
against the vulnerability of
the other
that they are not authorized to feel
in their very own selves.

ADDICTED TO WATCHING OUR PRESIDENT?

Richard B. Grose, LP

Since the election of T¹ as president many people who can see nothing positive in him whatsoever, either as human being or politician, are nevertheless transfixed by him on television and watch him with a fascination and an attention that they cannot account for and do not approve of. I want to put forward here a couple of ideas about that unaccountable fascination and attention.

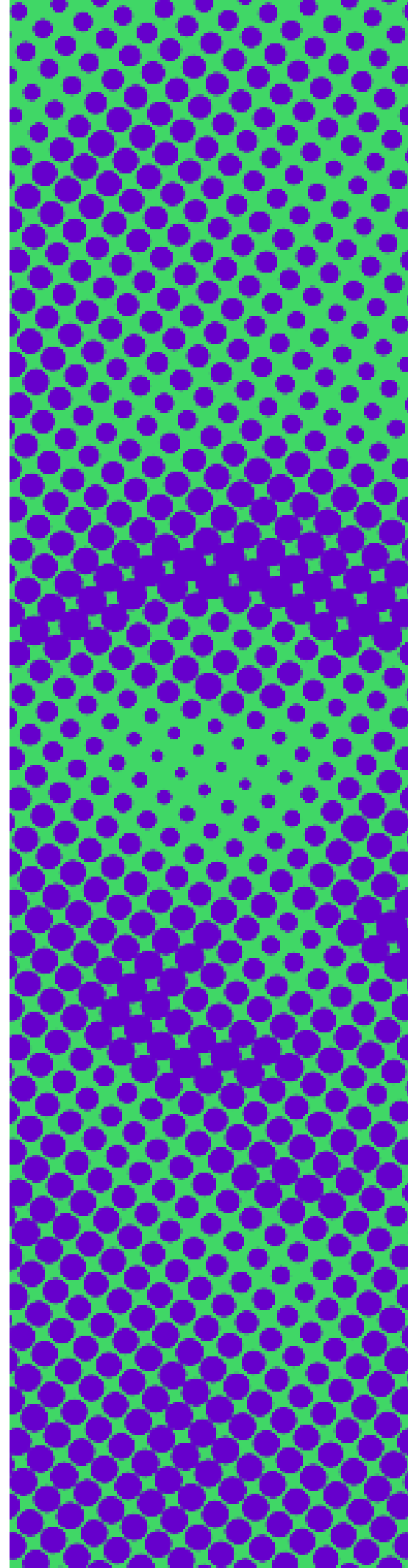
Train Wreck

The T presidency has been a spectacular train wreck by any normal standard. We have elected as president someone who knows nothing about any issue, domestic or foreign, except how it plays or could play on television. T's ignorance and contempt for knowledge remain breathtaking. And, as we hardly need to be reminded, when policies based on ignorance and contempt for knowledge are carried out in reality, the result is, at a minimum, disaster. Thus the train wreck that we see now portends more serious train wrecks coming.

The very awfulness of this may be one reason we can't stop watching. A gruesome spectacle, however repulsive, draws us in whether we like it or not. This is given clear expression in Plato's Republic in the following story:

Leontius, the son of Aglaion, was going up from the Piraeus under the outside of the North Wall when he noticed corpses lying by the [place of the] public executioner. He desired to look, but at the same time he was disgusted and made himself turn away, and for a while he struggled and covered his face. But finally, overpowered by the desire, he opened his eyes wide, ran toward the corpses, and said: 'Look, you damned wretches, take your fill of the fair sight.' (Book IV, 440 a)²

A similar impulse causes us to gawk at accidents and fires. In any case, as Leontius knew, being aware of this attraction to what is hideous and appalling, we usually are conflicted about giving in to that desire. This would be one element of our discomfort at watching T so much.



Narcissisms

That T is a narcissist is well-known. It has been extensively reported that T spends a lot of time watching himself on television. Therefore, in a real sense, when we watch him on TV he is watching along with us. Now, of course, all presidents in the television age have been aware of their self-presentation on television; the difference, alas, is that they also had an idea of something besides their image on television. Thus, in T we are seeing a purified extract of narcissism uncontaminated by any object inputs.

I would argue that such a pure narcissism speaks to our own narcissism in a way that can circumvent our conscious political selves. T became president, clearly, because his narcissism was embraced by millions of Americans whose lives were overfull of narcissistic wounds. For them his narcissism was a healing balm. They identified with it. And their identification with his narcissism remains one of the reasons for fearing the totalitarian tendencies in T and his followers. But perhaps the power of his narcissism also reaches even his bitterest enemies, who find themselves watching him in disgust not only with him but with themselves for watching him. Perhaps his narcissism is so powerful and so well-developed that it reaches to some degree everyone who bears narcissistic wounds, which is, of course, everybody.

If this is true, then T's very emptiness would be a source of a hidden attractiveness (not yet, thankfully, reflected in his poll numbers).

Civic Duty

Of course, our watching a president who has populated the government with train wreck artists is also driven by our outrage as citizens who would prefer responsible, rational government. Unfortunately, the conflicted viewers of T may find it hard to consider their viewing as exercising a civic duty. But it clearly is.

To help us see this point, let us consider a moment from the beginning of *The Iliad*. The very first event we are told about in the poem is that a priest of Apollo has come to Agamemnon and Menelaus, the leaders of the Greek, or Achean, army, to try to ransom his daughter back. She had been taken by the Achaeans in a raid and given to King Agamemnon. Her father has come to the Achean camp and "begged the whole Achaean army but most of all the two supreme commanders." (1, 17-18)³ He tells them that he prays that they will sack and plunder Troy and then go home safely, but please would they set his daughter free, and for that he offers gifts in ransom. He says: "Honor the God who strikes from worlds away – the son of Zeus, Apollo!" (1, 23-24)⁴

The next line is: "And all ranks of Achaeans cried out their assent: "Respect the priest, accept the shining ransom!" (1, 25-26)⁵

When I studied *The Iliad*, our professor pointed out that this sequence gives us the most elemental possible form of democracy.⁶ The Achean fighters stand around listening to the priest talk to the king, and they express their opinion by crying out. As it happens, the king ignores it. He angrily and contemptuously sends the priest away, and the ensuing plague (caused by an angry Apollo) sets in motion the action of the poem. In this world, without democratic accountability, the people were nevertheless right: the priest should have been respected and the ransom accepted. The poem is about what happens when a shortsighted king sees only his immediate interest and can't see and is not curious about the effect his actions have on others.

In the Homeric world, the opinion of the people watching the action had no effect. We, on the other hand, who have inherited a beautifully wrought though imperiled system of democratic restraints, have seen at least two examples in living memory where the opinion of the people watching the action determined the action.

The first was the Nixon resignation, when the opinion of the majority of Americans was: "Lawbreaking by a president is wrong; Nixon must go!" By August 1974 Nixon's approval rating was 24%, and 57% of Americans believed he should leave office.⁷ His abandonment by the public unmistakably guided the judgment of the Congress and ultimately of Nixon himself in deciding to resign rather than be impeached and tried in the Congress.

The second example was the Clinton impeachment, when the opinion of the majority of Americans was: "His failings are not impeachable; Clinton should stay!" Throughout the Lewinsky scandal, Clinton's poll numbers were around 60%, the highest of his presidency.⁸ If his poll numbers had been near Nixon's at their lowest, he would also have had to leave office. Both of these critical decisions in the last 50 years were ultimately decided by the people in a manner not dissimilar to the way the fighters sought to influence their leader in the poem.

Thus, watching the repulsive but fascinating spectacle of a sublimely ignorant president acting without knowledge nevertheless represents active civic participation.

The Achaean fighters gathered around the priest and king.

We gather around televisions and computers.

Ultimately, what happens with T will be determined by us, whether we know it or not. —

¹I will follow Michelle Obama and others in not referring to the President by name. Like Antaeus, who gained strength every time he touched the ground, T seems to gain every time his name is mentioned, the business use of his name being but one example of this.

²Allan Bloom, trs., *The Republic of Plato*, (New York: Basic Books, 1968), p. 119.

³Robert Fagles, trs., *The Iliad*, (London: Penguin Books, 1990), p. 78.

⁴Loc cit.

⁵Loc cit.

⁶My thanks go to Professor James Redfield, the University of Chicago, for help in locating in 2017 the passage that he interpreted in 1973.

⁷Andrew Kohut, "How the Watergate crisis eroded public support for Richard Nixon," Pew Research Center, 8/8/2014.

⁸Frank Newport, "Presidential Approval: Bill Clinton's High Ratings in the Midst of Crisis, 1998," Gallup, 6/4/1999.



5.17.4

INAUGURATION DAY 2017

Joan V. Liebermann, M.D.

My grandmother
uncertain
of her deported family's fate
wore black
for four years
when wearing black
was not chic.
My closet
a swath of black
stippled with olive green or navy blue
favors irregular hemlines
unusual details
architectural angles.
With each addition to
the monochrome palette
my son asks
another black dress?
Slimming
easy to mix and match I say
donning a formal black suit
for the funeral.

5.17.5

A L O N E AND TOGETHER

C. Jama Adams, PhD



It was yet another chilly day as I weaved and strode across the concourse at 34th Street-Penn Station. I was initially exasperated by the disorderly order-far too many roaming Romans- but then it occurred to me that the unpredictability of movement was humanizing. Given the increased regulation of public space, it was good to be able to drift, walk outside the line, and engage in watchful reverie. Slow down, I thought and drift.

As I approached the steps to the uptown 8th Avenue local platform, I heard a pan man on his tenor pan doing an electronic bass augmented rendition of Bob Marley's *Natural Mystic*, and came to a halt. I suddenly found myself confronted with an assault wrapped around an invitation. The assault came from an alliance between architecture and the scent of the passage where the pan man played. This particular passage way is a very efficient conduit for the effluent-tinged air emanating from the bowels of the subway and other odious precincts. Wherever you are on the 8th Avenue subway line in midtown, you are reminded that, probably right beneath your feet, there is a vast reservoir of shit, probably unprocessed, marinating, and a rankling reminder of our organic and expulsive nature. The air was also cold and accompanied by trash, making for a space that one traversed as quickly as possible.

And yet I had stopped. In addition to fetid air, the passage was a sublime incubator of sound, an acoustically friendly performance space. It was often used by talented musicians, usually older Black men, who were in that space but not of it. I often accepted the invitation to listen, as I enjoyed the artistry even as it seemed to desensitize me to the nostril wrinkling odors and the dusty chill.

The pan man was tall, tattooed, and wearing a tee shirt struggling to contain his muscles. His smile was generous and his sweat-flavored motion was one with the music. As an adolescent in Guyana I had often lingered, watching the rhythm of the players and listening to the music being coaxed from the steel drums. In those late sixties days, the genre was at the tail end of seeking European validation for the steel pan as an 'authentic' instrument capable of playing 'serious'-read classical-music. Given that shallow aspiration-which reflected the colonizing aspect of the social unconscious-the body movements of the players were stilted. This was a reflection of a conscious willfulness to discipline another aspect of the cultural unconscious, the Afrocentric urge to move with the melody.

And then the Black Power hurricane swept through the Caribbean, Toots and the Maytals, Nina Simone, Burning Spear, James Brown, and Bob Marley among others, sang a different tune, danced to different rhythms, celebrated remembering, and re-signifying. They reminded us, in Marley's timeless lyrics, "*If you know what life is worth, you will look for yours on earth. Now you see the light stand up for your rights*"

The body rhythms of the pan men and increasingly women shifted to the melding of body and instrument, each somehow playing off the other.

[Click here to play the music](#)

The pan man performed Bob Marley's, *Natural Mystic*.

[Click here to play the music](#)

Guidance: I humbly ask that you not listen to this tune on a cell phone, as you will not hear the bass. That would be akin to watching a color movie while wearing sunshades. An iPad is ok... I guess... if you have decent ear phones. Try to listen while standing and moving with the bass. Yes we know 'white' folks can't dance but what is asked of you is far more elemental. Should you trust yourself, your body will synchronize quite pleasingly with the Africa that resides in all of us. Yes, I know the science is suspect but you get the idea. Forget about mindfulness; just trust the Jung within you.

With this tune the bass is fundamental to the melancholic and yet insistent flavor of the lyrics. It is a tune that arrests, humbles, and if you emerge from the shadow of reflection, offers hope. As a soloist, attuned to the augmented bass, the pan man swayed, hunkered, and flowed.

I watched and was not alone. Down the incline was a white middle-aged man, unremarkable in dress, and public face. His bag was at his feet, and at first glance I wondered if he belonged to the legion of the near homeless. Not quite respectable, on the verge of bedraggled. His forehead was against the cold dirty tile; perfectly still, as if in prayer. I realized he was in communion with the throbbing and hypnotic bass. In this rendition there were no lyrics, so the mind being forever restless would drift and the associations would cascade.

Yet I felt a bit uneasy as the pan man seemed to be enjoying himself, not a state that is usually invoked by this particular tune. He was not being disrespectful, but I thought he was close to the border. Who was his audience? Where had his mind taken him? Was this one of those Trinidadians, who could turn a funeral into a party? How did a dirge, with its command to sway become infected with joyous soca moves? He was not outside of himself. He sought to entertain me but also to derive his own pleasures, somewhat at a remove from the social. We shared and yet we were also separate. We were together in our own separateness and he felt quite comfortable to take his pleasure in ways that both pleased and discomfited me.

I had to accept that I am never truly sovereign or completely disengaged. The pan man's boundary flirtations challenged my own notions of 'authentic' reggae, linked to the heady ideological commitments of my youth. He was reminding me that we are not psychic islands; at best archipelagos, connected, with in-between spaces, and always in motion, however imperceptible. No matter how much I resisted I was subject to his interpretation; his exploitation of that fecund in-between space. A precarious space in which to create, connect and sometimes revel. Within that space one must be mindful of a form of tradition that insists on sameness, and also of a market that, faster than a click on amazon.com, commodifies difference. I am still uneasy about the pan man, given his aesthetic audacity, but that sits alongside a pleasure with what he shared.

At the end of the piece the white man bent, picked up his weary bag and gave the pan man a smile that verged on the beatific. I, still a tad ambivalent, gave a stiffy wave, and an offering. I smiled-to myself, - after all this is still New York- at the sound of the bass still playing in my mind, and went train waiting. —



5.17.6

UNDERSTANDING, DEMOCRACY

Jared Russell

"Democracy has always
been suicidal,
and if there is a to-come
for it, it is only
on the condition
of thinking life otherwise,
life and the force of life."

– Jacques Derrida

In the inaugural issue of [ROOM](#), my dear friend and colleague Elizabeth Evert published a piece that I found somewhat disturbing. Elizabeth brought thoughtful, critical attention to the historically negative and dismissive attitude psychoanalysis has held towards religion. Her plea for a more radical commitment to understanding and inclusion was heartfelt, and she is to be applauded for having raised these concerns at a time when challenges to such a view are to be expected. My response here does not concern Elizabeth directly but rather the direction that our current critical conversation appears to be taking as indicated by the appearance of her piece. The question I find myself preoccupied with is whether psychoanalysis is truly reducible to the project for a universal democratic understanding. Perhaps we are at a historical moment when an idealized version of the power of understanding needs to be criticized quite intensively, and perhaps psychoanalysis is in a position to perform that critique rather than submit to it.

Elizabeth's essay was organized around two quotes from Freud's *Civilization and Its Discontents*. The first articulates Freud's standard Enlightenment condemnation of religious belief as a form of superstitious delusion, while the second demonstrates that even in critiquing a religious perspective Freud could not at times avoid appropriating its vocabulary. The suggestion was that Freud's views, deriving as they did from the European climate of the 1920's and 30's, do not necessarily reflect what analysts might have to say about the location and power of the American religious project at the beginning of the 21st century. There is a good deal of truth in this, and perhaps an account of the peculiar rise and falloff of psychoanalysis in the context of 20th century American consumer culture might be situated against the background of a relatively young cultural tradition deeply informed by the transcendentalism of Emerson and Thoreau.

However, halfway through the essay a parallel is drawn between psychoanalysis and Christianity as coincident efforts at "recognizing the value of each soul." This struck me as a rather Christian understanding of psychoanalysis itself, one that demonstrates not a point of convergence between analysis and religion but a reading of clinical practice already determined by religious morality from the outset. There followed a further parallel drawn between psychoanalysis and Evangelical Christianity, leading to the author's admission of her surprise that Evangelicals would largely support Trump's presidential candidacy, and finally an appreciation of how "believ[ing]

deeply in human rights" could authorize a "lifelong priority" to thinking "abortion as genocide." I would argue that those who consider Planned Parenthood an agent of "genocide" should appear as offensive as those who would deny that the Holocaust actually happened, despite whatever endearing humanist qualities they might otherwise possess. If we are uncomfortable calling these "delusions," perhaps we might employ the more palatable contemporary euphemism "alternative facts." I am not sure we



Photography by Jerry Kiesewetter. Washington, United States.

secure a victory for democracy in doing so. I am also not sure why we are so quick to demonize Muslim fundamentalism as “radical Islam,” while we are just as quick to naturalize Christian fundamentalism as “Evangelical Christianity,” or Jewish fundamentalism as “orthodox Judaism.” (Actually, I have a fairly good idea as to why we do this, but that is beside the point.)



Photography by Rebecca Monahan. Trump Tower, New York, US.

"While it in no way lends itself to legitimizing the suicidal nightmare of Trumpism, democracy at its pre-Christian origins was not the democracy of the neoliberal order expressed today by the marketplace of global consumerism."

If we see in these points an expression of Freud's rationalist arrogance, it is worth noting that these were sentiments offered by Aristotle in his *Nicomachean Ethics*. No doubt they are not Christian sentiments, but they are not specific to Freud, and they belong to the foundational attitude of democracy. Love, thought, and the pursuit of justice are gestures of discrimination—they concern what is singular, not what is universal. For Aristotle, indeed for the Athenians from whom our understanding of the democratic project originally derives, this is an attitude upon which democracy must be based. While it in no way lends itself to legitimizing the suicidal nightmare of Trumpism, democracy at its pre-Christian origins was not the democracy of the neoliberal order expressed today by the marketplace of global consumerism.

The second quote from *Civilization and Its Discontents* that occurred to me—this one much darker, and relegated to a footnote in the text—reads:

Another difficulty arises from the circumstance that there is so often associated with the erotic relationship, over and above its own sadistic components, a quota of plain inclination to aggression. The love-object will not always view these complications with the degree of understanding and tolerance shown by the peasant woman who complained that her husband did not love her any more, since he had not beaten her for a week.

Here Freud distinguishes himself from the tendency towards fetishizing understanding and tolerance that psychoanalysis today seems to be embarking on, and that is not in keeping with the original orientation of our discipline. At what point do understanding and tolerance begin to facilitate masochistic self-sacrifice? At what point do they transition loudly into active struggle, and at what point do they transition quietly into passive compliance? Understanding should not be confused with tolerance, nor should tolerance be confused with acceptance. Fundamentalism is not the perversion of established religions;

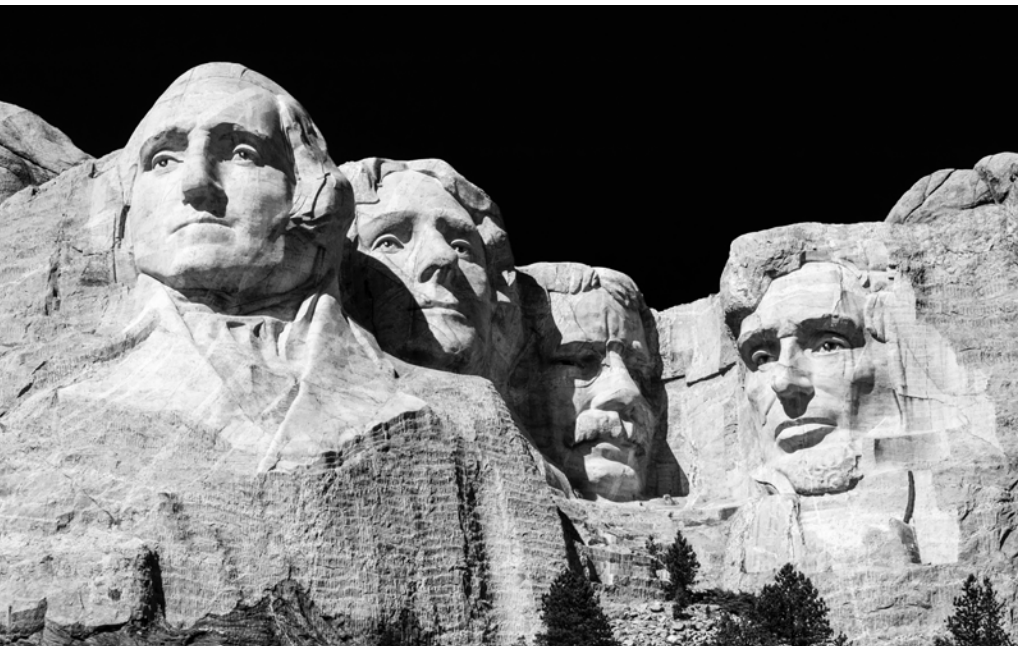
The most cursory reading of *Civilization and Its Discontents* is enough to indicate that, for Freud, psychoanalysis is not a liberal discourse. Perhaps we might find in this a reason to revisit Freud's perspective on contemporary politics, rather than yet another excuse for declaring Freud “dead.” In conjunction with the two quotes Elizabeth cited from Freud's text, I found myself thinking of two others. In Chapter Four, Freud offers two objections to the notion of a universal love:

A love that does not discriminate seems to me to forfeit a part of its own value, by doing an injustice to its object; and secondly, not all men are worthy of love.

it is that through which religions become powerful in the first place by silently cultivating such perversions within themselves. It is by grasping this that psychoanalysis defies its critics and becomes something other than a religion, something closer to a science.

And here, though I can't help but feel self-conscious in the privilege underwriting my appeal, I'm reminded of a speech by Dr. King. Not the famous "I Have a Dream" speech—which market democracy has been eager to embrace, because it does not challenge the hegemony of the marketplace or the fundamentalist morality that drives market relations today—but the (symptomatically) less famous yet to me more inspiring statement on "Maladjustment" from 1963:

Modern psychology has a word: "maladjusted." Certainly, we all want to avoid the maladjusted life. In order to have real adjustment within our personalities, we all want the well-adjusted life in order to avoid neurosis, schizophrenic personalities. But I say to you, my friends... there are certain things in our nation and in the world to which I am proud to be maladjusted, and to which I hope all men of good-will will be maladjusted until the good societies realize. I say very honestly that I never intend to become adjusted to segregation and discrimination. *I never intend to become adjusted to religious bigotry.* I never intend to adjust myself to economic conditions that will take necessities from the many to give luxuries to the few. I never intend to adjust myself to the madness of militarism, to the self-defeating effects of physical violence. (emphasis added)



Photography by Brandon Mowinkel.

Notice that King does not say simply "bigotry," but specifically "religious bigotry." Also notice that he condemns specifically "physical violence"—which he will identify with the escalating nuclear arms race—while he otherwise advocates passionately for a certain critical violence, affirming that it is just to identify and to fight enemies of justice, because justice is not universal, it is local, and different, and fragile as a result. He goes on to propose the establishment of "a new organization in our world: the International Association for the Advancement of Creative Maladjustment—men and women who will be as maladjusted as the prophet Amos."

Like Freud, King appeals to the terms of religion as a way of countering its intrinsically perverse tendencies, while grasping, perhaps again like Freud, that this is not a negative gesture of self-contradiction but a positive gesture of radical affirmation, even though it generates exclusion. I believe that what King understood here was that understanding must understand its own limits, and that it is at these limits and in the agonistic struggles they produce that we enter into the space of a genuinely democratic politics. Perhaps psychoanalysis today might redirect its tendency to idealize understanding towards an appreciation of the complex defiance of creative maladjustment. Perhaps there are perspectives that we should not tolerate, and not because of any failure in our capacity to understand, but because they are all too immediately understandable and recognizable in their destructiveness. —



5.17.7

DEATH

Arlene Kramer Richards

Low fluttering arc
of twittering song birds. Hawk
glides above: darts; done.



The American Dream, Violette Bule.

Can you see me
Hey hey
I don't believe you can see me
Wo yeah
Can you hear me baby
I don't believe you can
You can't see me

– Jimi Hendrix¹

'CAN YOU SEE ME?'
PSYCHOANALYSIS
AND SOUL-BLINDNESS

Carlos Padrón

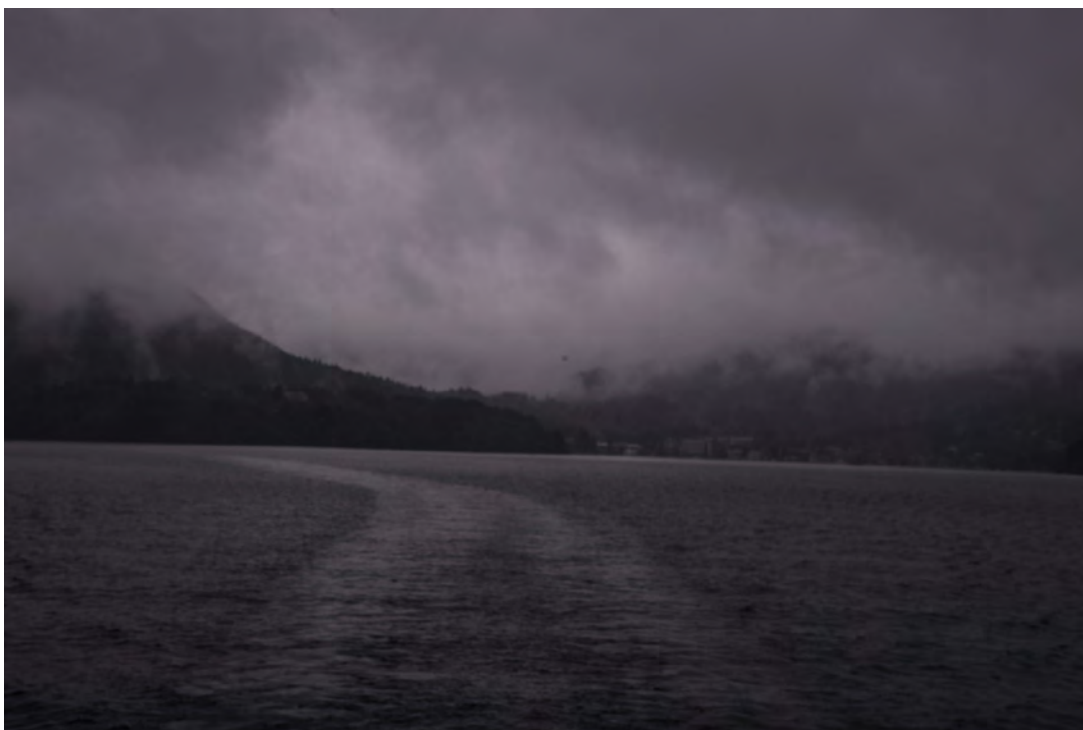
5.178 In the epigraph above, Jimi Hendrix's poetic alter-ego expresses skepticism in regard to being seen and heard. Does he pose a question: "*Can you see me?*"; a demand: "*Can you see me!*"; or perhaps a plea: "*Can you see me...please?*"?

It occurs to me that these three interpretations of "can you see me" share the following common feature: the idea of a field



5.17.9

Susan Katz



Japan, Susan Katz.

Bare trees line mountains
Under layers of blue clouds
The earth is quiet



Japan, Susan Katz.

One gong at a shrine
Echoing the past today
Calming the future



Japan, Susan Katz.

Timeless moments stay
Memories swiftly reshape
An experience

5.17.10

A TOAST

These remarks were given
by Dr. Sheldon Bach
at a publisher's celebration
for his new book, *Chimeras
and Other Writings*
on November 20, 2017,
twelve days after
the election of Donald Trump.

This book was written over a period of many years. I think the earliest paper dates from 1972, and in that almost half a century so many things have changed in our world that we indeed seem to be living in another time and place. Just a few days ago I watched an old Hollywood film from 1957, *An Affair to Remember*, with Cary Grant and Deborah Kerr who meet on an ocean liner and fall in love although they are each engaged to someone else. They promise to meet in six months at the top of the Empire State building, but as she hurries to the rendezvous she is struck by a car and crippled, but she will never let him know why it is that she hadn't shown up for their meeting. This tale of love, trust, fidelity and an eventual happy ending is accompanied by a chorus of smiling children conducted by the heroine in a wheel chair, who is being cared for by a trusted Catholic priest and a loving doctor who is constantly taking her pulse and refuses to be paid, and the lyrically swelling sound track at the happy end brought tears to my eyes.

How different from this contemporary vision by our late lamented Leonard Cohen:

Everybody knows that the dice are loaded
Everybody rolls with their fingers crossed
Everybody knows that the war is over
Everybody knows the good guys lost
Everybody knows the fight was fixed
The poor stay poor, the rich get rich
That's how it goes
Everybody knows
Everybody knows that the boat is leaking
Everybody knows that the captain lied
Everybody got this broken feeling
Like their father or their dog just died
That's how it goes
Everybody knows

So everybody knows that the White House will soon be inhabited by scoundrels, that if you repeat a lie often enough people will begin to believe you and that you can fool a lot of the people a great deal of the time. Not that this hasn't always existed, but the temper of the times has again become more frightening, and evil seems to feel less need to disguise itself in sheep's clothing.

So what do we have to celebrate?

We can celebrate good people, of whom there are still plenty, including many who voted Republican. We can celebrate good food, good wine to drink, and good company. And, appropriately, at a publisher's party, we can celebrate human creativity whether in the arts or in science, business, government, entrepreneurship or simply in some acts of loving kindness between people or even between one mother and one child.

What we have witnessed in the last few weeks is the wholesale destruction of meaning through lies, evasions and barbaric behavior. But most of us here in this room are lucky enough to be doing work whose very essence is the creation of meaning, and if we do that devotedly and speak up for the truth, each in our own way, then we are helping to redress the balance between life and death, which is always so precarious. I believe that if each one of us, every day, continues to replenish our store of meaning to replace the meaning that is being destroyed, then the world will be saved.

So I propose a toast to life, here and now. —



Rona Silverton, Spring Daffodils, Watercolor.



S E H C A T P A S I D I S

IPTAR'S PARTNERSHIPS:

PILOT PROGRAM WITH REFUGEES NEW YORK

A growing group of IPTAR members and psychology interns and externs have been involved in a pilot program with the International Rescue Committee (IRC) to provide psychological counseling to refugees being resettled in New York through the IRC.

If you are interested in knowing more about our work in the community

PLEASE CONTACT
Gail Bragg
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We initially worked with individual adults, and continue to do so, often in partnership with translators for non-English speaking clients.

A few months into this pilot project, IRC requested that we participate in their Unaccompanied Minors program, children who have crossed the U.S. border without an adult. An IPTAR member has been providing weekly pro bono counseling to several of these traumatized children and their new families in NYC, in their native Spanish language. IRC would very much like to expand counseling services for this population.

We have also been asked to support students in the 'Saturday Learning Series,' IRC's Education Department's academic support program. Every Saturday during the school year, up to 50 young refugees (ages 4 – 20) receive one-to-one academic tutoring by a volunteer tutor. The program directors, concerned that their students had been made anxious by recent executive orders banning refugees from some Muslim countries, as well as other anti-immigrant rhetoric, asked us to provide counseling and emotional support. Several IPTAR members and candidates have been running short term groups and workshops with these young people. At the conclusion, it is possible that some students will be interested in individual counseling or continuing in a group.

The IRC is an international humanitarian agency. In NYC they help resettle newly arrived refugees, and provide services to promote self-reliance and integration. If you've been feeling that you would like to use the skills and experience that you have to "do something" to support this vulnerable and increasingly insecure community, working in these initiatives could be a wonderful opportunity.



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IPTAR'S PARTNERSHIPS:

SANCTUARY FOR FAMILIES NEW YORK

Service provider and advocacy organization for victims of domestic abuse, trafficking, and related forms of gender violence.

PLEASE CONTACT
Judy Hanlon
judith.hanlon@gmail.com

If you are interested in learning more about our work with Sanctuary for Families and if you would like to participate as a pro-bono therapist to these patients.

Sanctuary provides crisis intervention, shelter, counseling, legal representation, and economic and job counseling to adults and to children exposed to gender violence. Some clients find temporary housing in Sanctuary's shelters while others receive services while living outside. Many of the clients are immigrants.

We have placed one extern at one of Sanctuary's five shelters, and we plan to have another extern working there next year. In addition, we are also receiving referrals from them to the ICC for pro bono therapy. They are able to provide short-term mental health treatment to their clients, but they are unable to provide longer term therapy, and this is one place where our therapists can be of help. Finally Sanctuary's Anti-Trafficking Initiative has referred patients to us. Korean-speaking candidates at IPTAR have been particularly important in this, in that Sanctuary has been helping a substantial number of Korean trafficked women.

On March 16, 2017 the Citizen Forum created an opportunity for participants to both discuss and experience phenomena generated by the current political climate. The Forum, structured to integrate both small and large group discussion, positioned itself as inhabiting a space in the interface between the political and the psychoanalytic. We hoped that as the discussion proceeded, group members would have an opportunity to experience and verbalize themes that had been previously unconscious and that these experiences would introduce themselves into the group either through some form of micro-enactment or as felt experience. The thought was that by virtue of engaging in this experience, internal confusion might be made available for conscious thought with the possibility that participants would leave the meeting with a greater sense of clarity and coherence.

In the introductory segment each of the 19 participants, representing a wide range of ages and diverse cultural and professional backgrounds, including members of The LJ Gould Center Steering Committee, spoke briefly about their thoughts and feelings related to the current political situation. This was followed by small group discussions that identified themes to be explored in greater depth in the final segment.

One theme that emerged was the idea of who is "big" and who is "small" in the current climate. Many members of the Forum became aware, as the discussion developed, that they identified themselves with the progressive/liberal elite; what became more conscious for many was their identification with the ruling class. What was difficult to process was the extent to which it feels like the customary power structure seems up-ended, leaving many of us suddenly feeling powerless and persecuted. Forms of identity supporting structures (such as NPR, NEA, NIH, EPA) are being attacked and dismantled. We can now identify with the disempowered "other"--we are the disempowered other in Trump's new world. And as such, do we still have a capacity for empathy with the other, or are we too busy protecting ourselves and fighting for survival. Is empathy a privilege of the powerful?

This led to a member's reverie about an American landscape icon, familiar to us all, and a hopeful belief in the power of American democracy to endure. In an interesting movement, another member associated to the musical Annie, and in particular, the song "Tomorrow" where optimism and faith in the future were belied by the presence of the greedy, exploitative and abusive Daddy "WarBucks".

As the discussion continued to deepen, a member of the group who comes from another country quoted sentiments from back home that "The US has historically talked like Hillary, but behaved like Trump". Now there is more honesty--the US is talking like Trump and behaving like Trump. The true nature of the US is emerging, there is less hypocrisy. Now the true level of rapacious and voracious greed are obvious, without disguise. Suddenly, a faction of the group was now identified with the aggressor. Members voiced a sense of shame, and expressed the narcissistic injury of facing ourselves as a people being led by a leader like Trump.

What was fascinating to experience was the transformation in the group as it moved through the experience of feeling that we now are a disempowered "othered" group, who cannot protect itself from persecution, or indeed, annihilation, and later coming to an identification with the need to disrupt and change old structures. There was a sense in ending that we too need to tear down the old oppressive structures. —

IPTAR THE LJ GOULD CENTER FOR SYSTEMS-PSYCHO- ANALYTIC STUDIES

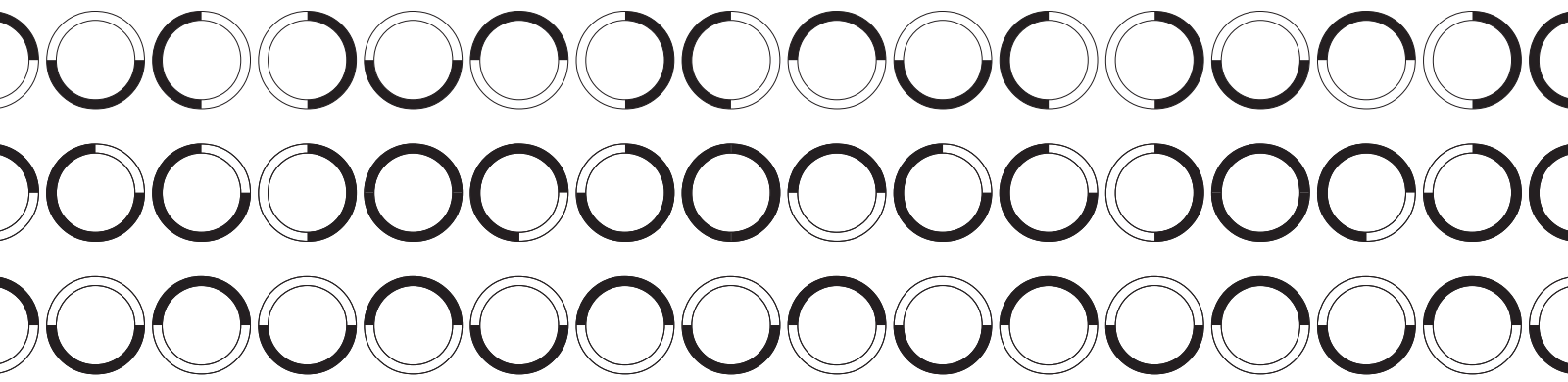
Citizen Forum Riding the Waves of a Changing World

A Facilitated Group Event

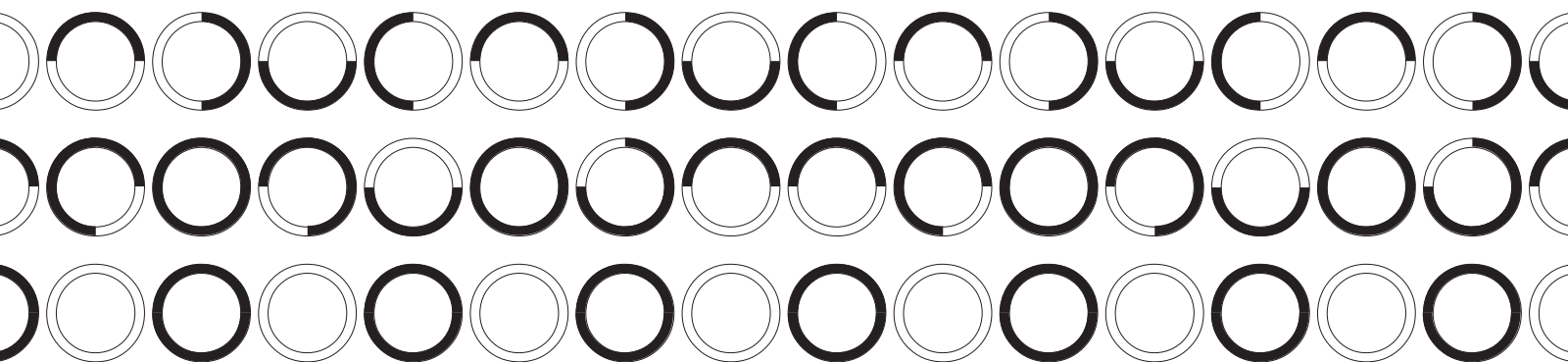
MARCH 16, 2017
IPTAR Conference Room

The Citizen Forum was an opportunity for group discussion and reflection on our roles as citizens of our interconnected, globalized world. While taking as our focal point the recent election and the reverberations and upheaval within us and our social institutions, it was our hope to explore the dynamics of these reverberations and consider more broadly how they might reflect experiences as citizens of the world. The format of large group and small group discussions and identification of underlying themes and less conscious threads is akin to the format used and known internationally in "Listening Posts."

Andrea Greenman, PhD
Susan Berger, PsyD
Dahlia Radley-Kingsley, MBA, MA
Joseph Cancelmo, PsyD
-- Facilitators



[CLICK HERE TO SUBSCRIBE ROOM 9.17](#)



room 5.17

Introducing Room 5.17 A sketchbook for Analytic Action

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From 1934-1946, the *Zandvoort* was a top secret newsletter that circulated among a small group of socially and politically committed refugee psychoanalysts. Otto Fenichel, its founder and one of Freud's most eminent followers, urged this small group of analysts not to isolate themselves. He wrote in the *Zandvoort*, "Where there is will to do, we will be prepared, even if it costs things... the fate of psychoanalysis depends on the fate of the world."

MAKING ROOM
Hollis Myers

The world awaited but the fate of psychoanalysis took a turn Fenichel couldn't have predicted. The power of psychoanalysis to address mass-audience, repression-driven and the dehumanizing impact of civilization degraded over the decades. Many of the revolutionary signs of psychoanalysis that were not aligned with the economic or political climate of war lost culture were repressed or marginalized.

For the past sixty years, the Institute for Psychoanalytic Training and Research (IPTR) presented a radical clinical analytic position often at odds with the internal and external pressures facing psychoanalysis. When psychoanalysis in America was discontinued by the medical profession, IPTR provided rigorous training to social workers and psychologists. As more mental health practitioners gained access to training, IPTR opened its doors to individuals from non-mental health backgrounds.

room 2.17

Introducing Room 2.17 A sketchbook for Analytic Action

2175

In the weeks after 9/11 the IPTR Clinical Center received a great influx in mental health professionals from Ireland, the Middle East, and South America to talk about the experience of doing psychoanalysis in the midst of existential terror. Hundreds of therapists practicing in New York came to "Terminus and the Psychoanalytic Space" a conference that was held in shadow of the twin towers.

Two things have stayed in my mind about that conference. One was the unique tone of some of the presenters. It was as if *Dr. Strangelove* (you can fill in the inflection) were just catching up to something that the new American psychoanalysts who came to speak to us had lived with all their lives. Of course gas masks and bomb shelters were part of everyday treatment. Of course in a matter of days, *Ground Zero* acts of deadly violence were every day occurrences. Of course, in other words, the sacrifices of the analytic space "as permeable to a shared, uncertain, and often violent external reality. Emphasize there on the road shared. You describe analysis, Lord John. Aikido-like told me that medical over coffee, you thought you left the bad stuff in Europe when you left the 1940s. You actually thought you could create an analytic space behind four walls that would be a safe world apart.

But wasn't that, in some measure, the point? Development, transformation, and real change can't happen outside of a safe, predictable boundary between outside and inside. Even the wall, permeable as it must be between

ROOM WITH A VIEW
Hollis Myers

"You actually thought you could create an analytic space behind four walls that would be a safe world apart."

[CLICK TO LINK ROOM 2.17](#)

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SUBMIT
TO ROOM

ROOM was founded by IPTAR in response to a new bewildering and frightening political reality.

This virtual analytic space is dedicated to provide on-going room for authentic and diverse thought. ROOM welcomes all clinical, theoretical, political and philosophical essays, poetry, stories, artwork, photography and announcements.

Add your voice to ROOM - IPTAR's new sketchbook for analytic action.

**9.17 Open Call Submission
 Deadline: Aug 30th 2017**

Mail your contribution directly to:
ROOMinIPTAR@gmail.com

IPTAR
CLINICAL CENTER

provides affordable, high-quality psychoanalysis and psychotherapy for adults, adolescents, and children.

In collaboration with community partners, the ICC also runs on-site therapy programs at three schools and offers pro-bono services to refugees and asylum seekers.

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