

## Introducing Room 2.17 A sketchbook for Analytic Action

### ROOM WITH A VIEW

Hattie Myers

2.17.1

In the weeks after 9/11 the IPTAR Clinical Center received a grant to fly 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 “Terrorism 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 sanguine tone of some of the presenters. It was as if *Americans* (you can fill in the inflection) were just catching up to something that the non-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* an entire economy could crumble to nothing in a matter of days. *Of course* random acts of deadly violence were every day occurrences. *Of course*, in other words, the sacredness of the “analytic space” was permeable to a shared, uncertain, and often violent external reality. Emphasis there on the word shared. You *American* analysts, Lord John Alderdice told me that weekend over coffee, you thought you left the bad stuff in Europe when you left in 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

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





Photograph by Delia Baratin

consciousness and unconsciousness, is paradoxically a barrier that makes expanding consciousness possible. But I got his point.

The other thing Alderdice shared with me was his very dim view of ego psychology. For example, he said Americans can be way too interested in the constitutional and historical reasons that someone might see only pink when they look at, what anyone can plainly see, is a blue sky. Psychoanalysis is not about consensus. Psychoanalysis is simply an evolving method through which one person might better come to understand another person. The question is not, 'what prevents a person from seeing an obviously blue sky?' Rather, the question is 'what is the color of the sky this person sees?' The question is not: why pink? The question is: **how pink?**

I hesitate to write this. It's psychoanalysis 101. It's baby stuff. It is so much a part of how most of us work that it is embarrassing to think that there was a time when it wasn't

There are ways that this year has put me in mind of that year after September 11. In the wake of raised and then seriously dashed hopes and expectations, a new terror has surfaced. **This new terror attacks the glue of secondary process: the continuity of structures built over time, the meaningfulness of words and the kind of inner balance which is essential to fully comprehend what another person sees and feels.**

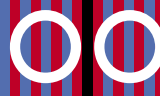
In his book *Thank You for Being Late*, Thomas Friedman describes how technology, globalization, and global warming are braided together and moving at exponential speed. There is no way for anyone to keep pace with the hurtling changes affecting our lives and our planet. The title of Friedman's prophetic book occurred



to him when he realized how much he appreciated the space of time he had to himself when someone showed up late for a meeting. Our individual challenge, Friedman wrote, is to find a way to "press a pause button and declare independence from the whirlwind." "Pausing and reflecting, rather than panicking and withdrawing is not a luxury or a distraction... it is a way of increasing the odds that you will better understand and engage productively with the world around you." This is not new news to psychoanalysts. Pressing a pause button in order to create a space from which we can view a whirlwind of forces occurring in real time is the foundation of our work. Room 2.17 is the inaugural issue of IPTAR's new newsletter. Like any analytic hour, we hope the creation of ROOM can help us pause in a space devoted to colorful analytic reflection. This is ROOM's view: Strengthening the continuity of our analytic community by sharing meaning where we find it *is* analytic action. —

**"This is ROOM's view: Strengthening the continuity of our analytic community by sharing meaning where we find it is analytic action."**

Friedman, Thomas L. *Thank You for Being Late: An Optimist's Guide to Thriving in the Age of Accelerations.* Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2016



2.17.2

### DRAFTING BRIDGES

Elizabeth Evert

With 25.4% of the United States population identifying as Evangelical Christian, and with 81% of Evangelicals voting for Trump, we cannot afford Freud’s attitude quoted here in the left side bar. Where religious people sense we feel them to be delusionally distorting the world and suppressing their intelligence, we are likely to go nowhere together. In looking at the question as to how we, as psychoanalysts, can live up to Obama’s challenge to discover the basic sense of solidarity that must underlie democracy, I am drawn to look both at the ways psychoanalysis can be guilty of dismissiveness of the religious endeavor, and to think about how we have more in common with those involved in spiritual yearning than we often acknowledge.

As George Makari describes in Soul Machine and Revolution in Mind, psychoanalysis is deeply rooted in the Enlightenment project of understanding the mind from a scientific perspective. Freud wanted individuals to win the capacity to think and take responsibility; he also guarded his movement from trends that could make it look backwards or cultish. As a field, we have moved on from much of what seems dated in the theory: Analysts rarely interpret penis envy as psychological bedrock or see homosexuality as pathological.



“Religion ... imposes ... on everyone its own path to the acquisition of happiness and protection from suffering. Its technique consists in depressing the value of life and distorting the picture of the real world in a delusional manner— which presupposes an intimidation of the intelligence.”

—Sigmund Freud

However, even at a time and at an institute where we value looking at diversity, the secular/spiritual divide is not well explored. We can be leery of those who turn to religion as a way of coming to know what is deepest in themselves and in the world. The bias can be subtle: I can think of any number of case conferences where a patient’s parents were described as religious and the assumption was that they were rigid or authoritarian. Similarly, it is not uncommon to hear someone described as Muslim or Jewish—but not religious—and for it to seem that the implication is that they are, therefore, more likely to be part of the mainstream.

And yet, as we see in the second passage from Civilization and its Discontents, this discomfort with spiritual striving is not the whole story. Freud was worried about the danger of our sadism and our pull to nothingness overcoming our capacity for life and love. He cast the battle in mythical terms: Eros vs. Thanatos. In these passages, we find ourselves in a universe that seems closer to religious cosmologies.





“Democracy does not require uniformity. Our founders argued. They quarreled. Eventually they compromised. They expected us to do the same. But they knew that democracy does require a basic sense of solidarity — the idea that for all our outward differences, we’re all in this together; that we rise or fall as one.”

— Barack Obama



“Men have gained control over the forces of nature to such an extent that with their help they would have no difficulty in exterminating one another to the last man. They know this, and hence comes a large part of their current unrest, their unhappiness and their mood of anxiety. And now it is to be expected that the other of the two ‘Heavenly Powers’, eternal Eros, will make an effort to assert himself in the struggle with his equally immortal adversary. But who can foresee with what success and with what result?”

— Sigmund Freud

More importantly from my perspective, it is this deep commitment to the possibility of discovering the capacity for love that defines psychoanalysis. Allan Frosch spoke of the therapeutic relationship in psychoanalysis as a secular form of prayer. On a day to day basis, as patients and as therapists, we encounter the depths of our psyches where the need to attach and moments of concern lie hidden amongst our urges to dominate, emptiness and fear. For most of us, this purposeful intimacy keeps us in the field.

It seems to me that this dimension of psychoanalysis is related to what I find most central in many religions—including Christian Evangelicalism in this country. It seems worth making the bridge, not only for the demographic reason that there are many more Evangelicals in this country than there are psychoanalysts, but also because it seems in many ways they may be our natural allies. There is a long history in Christianity of recognizing the value of each soul; and a deep concern for caring for each other both economically and personally.

Over the last ten years, I have had the opportunity to get to know and respect a number of Evangelical Christians. I was shocked when I saw some of them turning to Trump, when it seemed he would win the Republican nomination. The people I am speaking of believe deeply in human rights. What I learned was that many of them see abortion as genocide. They have chosen this fight as a lifelong priority. While it is not a choice I would make, it is, at least, a motivation I come closer to understanding. —

<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/11/09/how-the-faithful-voted-a-preliminary-2016-analysis/>  
<http://www.pewforum.org/2015/05/12/americas-changing-religious-landscape/>  
 IPTAR Clinical Center: (212) 410-0821



2.17.3

THINKABLE  
/  
UNTHINKABLE

Gila Ashtor

When I got ready to see patients on the morning of November 9th, I wanted to wear a hoodie to work. My army green hoodie is something I reserve for errands and weekends, but that post-election morning the performance of mastery and professionalism seemed too much to do when what I felt most intensely was the shock of having been so thoroughly, totalizingly, fundamentally wrong. The shock felt general at first but when my first patient expressed fear and terror at not knowing what was going to happen next, I listened and realized that alongside shock I also felt responsible. Throughout the day I heard my patients expressing incredulity that something so “impossible” could actually take place and it occurred to me that while making Trump seem like an “impossible” choice may have been an effective campaign strategy, it also made the fact of his election ‘unthinkable.’ I listened to patients and realized how terrified they were and that it wasn’t only because of what they knew or thought they knew of the candidate they opposed, but also

“When my first patient expressed fear and terror at not knowing what was going to happen next, I listened and realized that alongside shock I also felt responsible.”

because they have been told by the media and academics and political pros that his election was so “impossible,” that it wouldn’t and couldn’t ever happen. I realized how much I found this rhetoric strangely consoling at the time: if electing Trump = the “apocalypse,” then what chances are there of the “apocalypse” happening? The problem with framing things this way is obvious by now; calling something “impossible” is not a fact, it is an aspiration. I felt betrayed by the media for sensationalizing a race that was, judging by all the post-election theorizing, “thinkable” after all. I felt complicit for using the media’s tropes of “impossibility” to comfort my own anxiety instead of intervening in the circuit of fear-reassurance and questioning what it meant that we could be so sure something was “unthinkable” – besides, didn’t being certain of this fact presume at least some level of thinkability? I felt responsible to my patients and aware, for the first time, that the stories we tell about what is possible or not is always a thoughtful, political act. —



Photograph by Delia Battin



## A VIEW OF THE ELECTION FROM THE OUTPOSTS OF OLD AGE

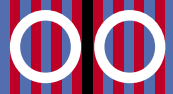
Janet Fisher

2.17.4

An eighty-four year old woman who has been in therapy for years for chronic anxiety has a satisfying and still thriving career, a solid marriage, and a large, sprawling and emotionally involved family resulting from a second marriage to a widower which blended her three biological children with his three motherless children. There are eleven grandchildren and six great-grandchildren and she is, still, hands down, the person at whose house everyone wants to celebrate a birthday, wedding, movie premiere, art opening, or trunk show. She is affluent, generous, and actively participates in many cultural events ---theater, cinema, the fine arts, ballet, museum exhibits ---and contributes philanthropically to social causes and creative endeavors.

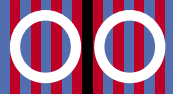
As long as I have known her, and despite her being involved in many vital activities and projects, she has always devoted a portion of every session to reviewing the current status of the children, grandchildren, and now great-grandchildren. Who is having a work-related success? Who is struggling financially? How can she help resolve tensions in her granddaughter's marital crisis? Will she host the fund-raiser for a school for special needs kids? Does she know of someone in publishing who would be willing to look at her son's screenplay? Is she willing to organize her childhood friend's upcoming memorial service? This 'accounting' of her flock is a basic form of orienting herself, in her family and in the world, like a checklist of her own well-being. Motherhood is at the core of her self, from which many aspects of identity and integrity radiate. Since turning eighty, she has become acutely aware of the crunch of time and with it, a wish to feel that things are in order and her descendants will be taken care of. Two years ago her husband had a serious stroke, and although he retrieved a significant degree of





mobility, clear speech, memory, and overall physical health, at almost 92 “he has become an old man”. Her own health is excellent--she walks twenty blocks to and from sessions in record time, eats with pleasure while maintaining an admirably trim figure, and travels with enthusiasm to visit her scattered offspring, attend cultural events in Europe, or see a new exhibit of primitive sculptures and artifacts in the Far East. Her friends, some going back as far as third grade, are beginning to fail. One died this month, several others entered nursing facilities in the past year because of cognitive deterioration, and another one or two has had to give up independent living to move in with children. Although her functioning continues to be good, overall, her hearing is impaired, macular degeneration is taking away the pleasures of reading, and most troublingly, she now experiences not just anxiety but depression. Her husband is even more isolated by progressive deafness and the loss of almost all his friends to illness and old age. She worries about her declining memory and whether she can continue to work in spite of it. She mourns, as her husband ages and becomes more frail, the loss of personal time and space, as she tries to meet his increasing, if denied, dependency on her.

Since Donald Trump improbably won the election, her sense of hopelessness, fear, and shock have intensified. She has always voted for liberal causes and leaders, contributed to political campaigns, and participated in events that represent her priorities and hopes. The day after Trump’s victory, she arrived at her session and burst into tears, expressing a profound sense of helplessness and concern for the well-being of those she will leave behind. Her children embody her hopes for the future and represent the values she has relentlessly strived to inculcate in them, especially care for the welfare of others, charitable giving, loyalty to each other, and participation in the world of ideas and actions. She now worries that two of her children, a writer and painter respectively, will struggle to make ends meet. Will the money she and her husband leave behind be enough to protect them? Who will help with private education funds for all the great grandchildren who

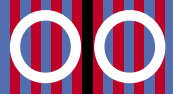


will undoubtedly inherit the family's dyslexia and other learning problems? As her future gets closer and narrower, her generative impulses are directed into those who will inherit her world. She is dismayed at the limits of her ability to protect and provide for them. As a person who has generally been able to turn desires into actualities, it is surprising and disequilibrating to feel her powerlessness. Aging brings many of these issues to the fore, and now they are heightened by an external reality in which humanitarian causes and individual socially conscientious impulses may be rendered impotent. Whereas earlier considerations of her children's inheritances afforded a sense of peace and relief, she now fears their possible disenfranchisement. She also despairs about how less privileged and protected people will fare with increasing threats to reproductive rights, employment, equality for all social, racial and ethnic minorities, the environment, etc. Conservative regimes do not tend to foster the arts or encourage creativity. Narcissistic leaders do not tend to engage their constituents with the promise of



what the leader can give so much as what the powerless individual has to gain by affiliating with the leader's power and self-interest. At this time in her treatment, the patient faces the possibility of a much-changed and constricted world as she struggles to hold on to her characterological optimism and altruistic spirit. Aging and "running out of time", in and of themselves, are challenges to the individual's sense of purpose and standing in the world. In this final developmental phase, Erikson emphasized generativity, the satisfaction that accompanies the thought of passing on to those who follow one's investment in life and both personal and extra-personal growth. As our own future shrinks, there is pleasure in imagining the lives that will continue after we are gone. There is contentment in feeling we leave our children a sense of belonging to an expanding web of relationships and connections, a sense of personal agency, and a desire to participate, in turn, in the world they will leave behind to their survivors. In the absence of these hopes and commitments, we are left feeling isolated, defeated, and despairing about the future our loved ones will inherit, and the present we must ourselves occupy with a sense of meaning and pur-





pose. On Inauguration Day, in the company of several intelligent and reasonably worldly women, I expressed my own worry about what will happen to our country under the leadership of Trump. Two women, in almost the same words, snapped back, "Get over it! He's our president and we'll accommodate!" I believe the challenge is to do more than 'get over it', but to 'get into it', actively engage in what this new era of constriction and intolerance will entail. In analysis, we rely on the safety of a secure frame, with its promise of predictability, reliability, and containment, to explore those parts of ourselves and our world that frighten us, beckon us, and cause us conflict, with the longer-term goal of mobilizing strengths in the service of a higher level of adaptation and freedom to inhabit ourselves more fully and creatively. Under similar conditions of containment, reliability, and concern, cultures can also thrive.



"In the absence of these hopes and commitments, we are left feeling isolated, defeated, and despairing about the future our loved ones will inherit, and the present we must ourselves occupy with a sense of meaning and purpose."

For our oldest citizens, the sense of outrage can be very acute as feelings of powerlessness due to external reality converge with diminishing physical, mental, and emotional reserves and the tightening grip of finite time. As clinicians we must be sensitive to the anger older patients may experience and encouraging of their search for meaningful outlets for it. Similarly, we must help them to balance those trends that move toward loosening the hold of reality as they face the incontrovertibility of their own death with opposing urges to continue to participate and make a difference. —



## SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE NEW 'NEW NORMAL'

Joseph Cancelmo

Sitting down to write these words on Inauguration Day felt like the exact right thing to be doing. For this is another inaugural -- of ROOM. Perhaps we can even consider it the IPTAR *Alt-Inaugural*. Of course, ROOM is meant to be the antithesis of the Alt political movement: the mission here is to carve out a collaborative thinking space in the face of what feels to many of us the emergence of the unthinkable, the unimaginable.

But even for those citizens who voted for he who, for the moment, *shall not be named* (with apologies to Voldemort), this is also the arrival of the unimaginable. For nearly half of the population, however stratified, the election of their man who spoke to the most base of impulses and paranoid anxieties with his promise of protection, served up with a side order of their stolen piece of the American pie, this is a day of unimaginable jubilation.

All manner of ignorant, deluded and nefarious intentions have been ascribed to the casting of such a vote. But as analysts, perhaps we can think of it as concreteness; an offloading of one's ego ideal in order to merge with an idealized, powerful figure, or maybe a profound failure of empathy, perhaps a retreat from the depressive position to the paranoid-schizoid, or of basic assumption thinking rooted in the earliest of anxieties. It does help to try to make some psychoanalytic sense of all this; but observing our reactions

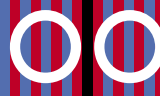


to the others' position has to be part of the puzzle. I find myself working hard to stay on that tract, to keep to this analytic highroad. To paraphrase Michele Obama, perhaps 'When they go shallow, we must go deep' -- in the Psychoanalytic sense. But here too, we need to go not only deeper but broader than our dyadic analytic constructs -- to the dynamics of field and systems theory, to the larger world and its impact on us, and our impact on it.

From this perspective, today feels like another pivotal day in the trajectory of our country: September 11, 2001. But there are crucial differences at play here.

With 9-11, we were united within our country against some external force that was a threat to our democracy, to our very way of life. Americans of every stripe and circumstance felt the containment of a societal structure and function -- a collective we that could be relied upon, that had our back. We were not left alone to cope with our New Normal.

Luckily for us, this structure provided what 'terror management' experts say is the antidote to such implosions from without-- impingements to our intrapsychic life that can affect our internalized holding/soothing structure. But in this current situation, we may feel as if we are very much left to our own devices, have been left abandoned by rational discourse -- the very safeguards that our social



structures provide. The link to our internalized family, the 'bred in the bone' experience of society as first articulated in our childhood homes, can feel threatened as a result. When family members or longstanding friendships literally hold diametrically opposed views of this election outcome, the disorientation feels like a permanent state. But the operative word here is *feel*.

And like the stages of grief and mourning, at some point, we begin to live life in our **New Normal.**

It seems that this is where we are at this moment -- waking up from a nightmare to the notion that we are not alone. This is societal structure in itself. If you feel like one of the walking wounded, you are in a group. If you can identify your feelings and begin to think together about how to regain some of what feels lost – the sense of order, rationality, morality, decency, egalitarianism, and equality – than it has been identified. It is not truly lost. If media predictions about the size and scope of tomorrow's protest marches are even remotely true, we will get a big assist with this next step.

So in thinking about the importance of this endeavor at this pivotal moment, conceived by Hattie Myers, I recalled our earlier collaboration at a critical point in time. Along with her then Co-Director of the IPTAR Clinical Center, Joan Hoffenberg, and with our colleague Issac Tylim, we mounted



a conference in early 2002 we called *Terrorism and the Psychoanalytic Space: International Perspectives from Ground Zero*. (Proceedings published by Pace Univ. Press with cover Art by renowned Artist Nicole Eisenman; also available on Amazon Books).

The reason for going outside of our circle of trauma here in NYC back then was to get help with thinking about our unthinkable. We all felt too close to the experience to process it. When it comes to terror management, you need a shoulder attached to a living structure you can rely on, a thinking partner at both the micro and the macro level.

So it seems we are back here again. And in some uncanny way, our International friends, those who watched Brexit unfold, or watched Berlusconi's antics, or Erdogan's tentacles, to name just a few examples, have a lot we can learn from. And as analysts we can also lean on, learn from each other, in our own institution, and in our profession. This newsletter can help us think the unthinkable.

*Thanks to all who have made it happen.*





## THE THEFT OUTRIGHT\*

Click to play the arr. Otto-Werner Mueller: [Star-Spangled Banner](#)

How to take back a stolen country, yes,  
That's the oath of every citizen, the vow.  
When truth is slain can men and women still bless  
The dawn, the sweep of light across the brow  
Of hope, that old faith in the land that was ours  
Before the theft outright, that alternate truth,  
Reality, combed over, spawns when courage covers  
And nature itself loses its claw and tooth?  
Yes we can still bear us like the rivers,  
Yes we can still cherish the mountain springs,  
The deserts, the forests, the prairies, those wild givers  
Of earth's resilience, that throat of the land that sings.  
The gift outright is ours forever. No thief  
Can steal a birthright: such tenure will be brief.

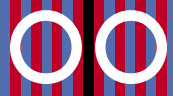
Eugene Mahon



\* The title is a bitterly ironic allusion to Robert Frost's great poem *The Gift Outright*, which the aged poet read at the Inauguration of John F. Kennedy in 1960.

Eugene Mahon was born in Ireland and emigrated to the US in 1964.  
Otto-Werner Mueller was born in Germany and emigrated, by way of Canada, to the US in 1967.  
Photography by Annie Spratt.





## WHERE DO THEY KEEP THE WHITE PEOPLE?

Jane Lazarre

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I try to rise up each time the pits of Trump fears and anger draw me down. Many people speak of the tangle of old fears and new, past traumatic times bleeding into these times now, like a ruined watercolor painting -- liquid stress muddying what needs above all at this time to be crystal clear. Friends talk of their inability to read the newspaper, watch television news or go to social media. "I listen to music, read a book, take a walk," each one says. I do the same, but then we reverse ourselves: we must stay informed. How else to prepare for the inevitable struggles ahead?

I remember the models and lessons of past resistance, the times and ways people fought back, within ourselves and in the streets. In every memoir by an African American writer, I have told generations of students, there is a moment -- early, maybe when the writer is five or six years old -- of racial consciousness: what skin color means besides being a shade of tan or brown. I am Black -- and from that moment on, the necessity is entrenched: to fight against assaults on dignity, on freedom: I am happy to fight all outside murderers as I see I must, wrote Alice Walker, a battle to ward off invasion of the inside. "We have lived through worse," my African American husband of nearly 50 years has said repeatedly since the election results left many of us first in a state of shock, then of horror. Recalling years of growing up in total segregation in the Jim Crow South, he says, "It was hard, it was very oppressive, but we got through. And we will get through this." Dubiously? Courageously -- speaking of the threats to democracy we now must face, the spectrum of vicious hatreds at the center of a vicious campaign, reiterated in the inaugural address.

Ain't gonna let nobody turn me around.

The civil rights movement, in both philosophy and strategies, gave birth to all our movements for liberation, here and across the globe, and Obama captured that spirit in the chant of his first campaign: *Si Se Puede*, yes we can. The determination to struggle through great difficulty and opposition -- and the struggle is always both outside us and within ourselves -- the faith that we must continue and can somehow survive -- a faith embedded deep in African American history, from slavery, to Jim Crow, to the massive incarcerations of Black people in our prisons today.

Now is the time for all Americans, "born in the USA," children and grandchildren of immigrants, to take as our model the great American patriots who fought in the streets and within their own souls -- like a tree that's standing by the water -- for justice, for the freedoms written into our constitution over two centuries, for many Americans still unfulfilled.

The son of a family member -- an 18-year-old young Black man whom I have known and loved since his birth -- had gotten himself into trouble through addiction followed by several arrests. There was no violence in any of the crimes, but they were felonies of different degrees, and he spent more than six months in prison, first at the Manhattan Detention Center, then at the infamous Rikers Island



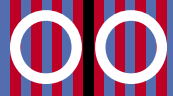
prison complex in New York City, waiting for trial. At his last appearance before the judge who had previously sentenced him to await trial without parole, the judge changed her mind for reasons we can only guess, deciding he deserved one more chance for rehabilitation. Perhaps she knew what he would encounter as a young Black man, fairly innocent despite his recent history, in an upstate prison. Perhaps she was swayed by reports of good behavior for the months he spent at Rikers. Perhaps she took a liking to him after his several appearances in her courtroom. No doubt the constant presence of his family -- "upstanding citizens" attesting to our support by our presence -- no doubt the luck of finding an excellent lawyer from an organization offering legal services for free -- all of this helped him in a way denied to many equally deserving young men, some of them really still boys who have made mistakes, taken wrong turns, who are in need of supports of all kinds to provide another chance at life. In any case, to our great relief, she remanded him on a plea of guilty to a rehab center in upstate New York, where he receives various therapeutic supports.

We visited him recently. Almost every single "resident" -- many of them court remanded -- were Black and Brown. This "community of color" surrounded by a larger, freer, more affluent white community, is not very different from most of our neighborhoods, schools, cultural centers, community and artistic events -- our American lives.

By the time of his move to the rehabilitation center, we had attended his court appearances in downtown Manhattan several times, trying to impress the judge in whatever way we could: This boy is not alone, this boy has a family, this boy is loved. Once, as I sat there clenching my hands, making silent pleas, I heard another visitor -- a member of an all white group visiting this courtroom as part of a New York City tour -- whisper to her neighbor: "Where do they keep the white people?" Because, of course, all the prisoners, brought in to face the judge, were Black or Brown, as were most of the waiting families. The only white people, apart from myself, some of the lawyers, most of the guards and police, the judge herself. When the young man's mother went to visit him at Rikers Island, she took along a friend for support, a woman from South Africa. "I thought you did not have apartheid in America," the friend said. "Where do they keep the white people?"

All this was more than a year before the election of Trump to the presidency following a campaign steeped in the cynical language of white supremacy, explicit threats and insults and implicit implications that have been driving elections and policies in the US for centuries, now loud and open again. Though never so far in our history vanquished, never gone, this is the first time in many years commentators are naming the rhetoric fascist, the speakers and their threat to our nation, fascist -- a process and outcome we have seen before, in Europe in the 1930s and '40s, in the McCarthy period of the 1950s in the United States, now in 2017. Many issues -- environmental, economic, global -- comprise this dangerous worldview -- but, as in fascist takeovers before, hatred of "the other" drives the verbal and often physical violence, making possible the murderous policies Trump now promises to invoke.

Years ago, in a predominantly white class on African American literary traditions, I taught the lyrics of the Black National Anthem "Lift Every Voice and Sing" -- a song well-known by every African American person I have ever met, yet unfamiliar to many whites. The most recent time I heard the song was last year on Martin Luther King Day at the New York City Fire Department. Along with a few other long serving African Americans, my husband, a deputy commissioner there, was being honored for his service. He had worked with a team over several years, eventually backed up by a court order, to diversify that once almost all white institution in the midst of New York City. All the firefighters and administrators of color stood and sang, and some of the white people sang too -- or they remained standing, silent but respectful, feeling honored, I hoped, as I did, to be singing or listening to those words.



Lift every voice and sing, til earth and heaven ring,  
ring with the harmonies of liberty.  
let our rejoicing rise, high as the glistening skies,  
Let it resound, loud as the rolling sea...  
... Stony the road we trod  
Bitter the chastening rod  
felt in the day that hope unborn had died.  
Yet with a steady beat, have not our weary feet  
come to the place on which our fathers sighed?

I learned the song from a white teacher in my sixth-grade class in a public school in the heart of Greenwich Village, most of us Jews, Italians, Irish kids from the east side, one lone Black boy -- George was his name -- standing out in the midst of our whiteness. It was the 1950s, and scattered among the school population was a small group of "red diaper babies" -- children of communist parents, including myself. We had been taught to fear the men from the FBI who often followed us to school, questioned us about our fathers, or rang our bells in the evening. We were instructed to say our fathers were not home, and we did not know where they were, even if they were sitting behind a closed door in another room. Yes, we were taught to lie, that sometimes lies were necessary. The risks, after all, were great -- our parents could be arrested, imprisoned, for those of us like myself whose father was an immigrant, the threat of deportation was always feared. Many of them had been (or would soon be) called to testify before the House Committee on Un-American Activities, accused of treason, pushed to name the names of comrades and friends, deprived of work by a national blacklist, even sent to jail. We, the small group of us, stood on the avenue at lunch time and argued with the other children about McCarthy, about our ideals -- a system of values, the adults called it -- embedded in their political philosophy, although kept apart from its ultimately devastating illusions and extremes: Negroes should have the same rights as white people. Workers should benefit from their labor. Street cleaners are as dignified as doctors. And the ordinary American kids screamed at us to go back to Russia.

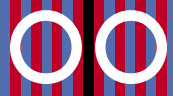
The teacher who taught us the "Negro National Anthem" was a "sympathizer," a "fellow traveler," as we called those who shared our beliefs but were not members of the Communist Party. She was also the music teacher, and she played the piano at every assembly where, often, after singing that other anthem, we all raised our voices and sang "Lift Every Voice."

Those days ring loud in my head today: the fears of our parents' deportation, close friends and relatives arrested -- locked up -- for challenging political orthodoxies. "Lock her up!" some of the Trump supporters and spokespeople shouted from halls, stadiums and podiums, repeated at the inauguration when Hillary Clinton walked in -- terrorizing, frightening memories that bleed into a frightening time.

"These are the times that try men's souls," we were instructed in the words of Tom Paine, and now again, as many have written and will continue to write, the Resistance has begun, preserving faith and hope, reminding me of the cry of the Spanish people who resisted Franco's fascism in 1936: No Pasarán!

A very recent memory intrudes. An early December afternoon, I am walking down Amsterdam Avenue, about 65th Street, a Manhattan neighborhood famous for its liberalism and progressive politics, even if also for its increasing wealth and deep pockets of poverty. It is famously diverse, yet many of its blocks and apartment





buildings are as segregated as those in most of the cities and towns of this nation. I am shopping for gifts on the crowded block, walking near the lines of Christmas trees, the aroma of pine calling up memories of holiday reunions past. At the corner, a taxi stops to allow pedestrians to cross. A tall, athletic looking white man crosses in front of me, and when we are on the sidewalk, he shouts to his little girl of about six or seven years old -- she is walking next to him but he is shouting, wanting us all to hear: "You have to watch out for those fucking idiots driving taxis now -- they're all foreigners -- bad people -- they don't belong here. They'll kill you if they can." I glance at the driver, wondering if he's heard. Like many taxi drivers in the city now, his skin is brown, many of them immigrants or naturalized citizens, or Black and Brown Americans.

Trump invades Amsterdam Avenue. And so I remember that even in New York City, many voters -- if they are not bigots or racists themselves -- were willing to vote for a man who used bigotry of all kinds to rally his supporters, and who has now appointed many such men to his proposed cabinet.

We have come, over a way that with tears has been watered.  
We have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered.

Voices lifted in song and at lunch counters, bodies on the streets, crossing bridges, artists making art -- the struggle of African Americans for social justice, dignity and freedom is a legacy we -- Muslims, women and men of all colors and creeds, people of all sexual preferences and identities -- must all learn to share. From abolitionists and partisans of slave revolts to Freedom Riders; from Southern sit-ins and marches in Washington, DC, demanding liberty and justice for all; to Black Lives Matter demonstrations against the murder of young Black men and children -- from this history, we find a model to resist. People of all backgrounds are marching, comrades with dark skins, light skins, holding banners reading: *Aqui Estamos Y No Nos Vamos*; *The Proud Daughter of an Immigrant*; *He is not my president*. Our common inheritance.

And I admit I am often frightened. Long ago childhood fears fill my dreams again, overlap anxieties for my grown up Black sons, driving, walking streets at night, strong men, yes. Brave men, but vulnerable, if not always in their bodies, in their spirits, their sense of safety replaced by a sense of threat.

I did not respond to the man in the street who shouted the obscenities at his daughter, but I vow next time, or in another way, to find my voice.

Lift every voice and sing...

Each time I get to the last lines, I cry; the promise, the claim:

May we forever stand / True to our god, true to our native land.

I read the word "god" to mean values. Where do they keep all the white people?  
Time for that question to be answered. Right here with you. On the front lines. —



We live in a turbulent world. The public sphere has been raucous and deeply divided during the 2016 Election season. Each side found the other side's candidate unacceptable, and inevitably a choice in one direction would leave the other side disheartened and disenfranchised.

Was the election about race? Economic disparity? The role of women? Turning inwards or reaching outwards? And what about gun control and climate change? All of these are readily identified red-letter issues, but are there deeper currents influencing decision-making in the public domain? Was the election about the democratic process itself? And indeed, how secure is our Democracy? How do we understand the tsunami of change that has swept aside the familiar social conventions that normally govern transitions?

Join with us as we enter 2017 for a group discussion about these and other issues as we identify common themes, and then move to a deeper level of work to discover shared unconscious beliefs and currents influencing society and the body politic.

**Seating for this group will be limited to the first 20 rsvps, so register early to secure a place. -**

## IPTAR: THE LJGOULD CENTER FOR SYSTEMS-PSYCHO- ANALYTIC STUDIES

### Citizen Forum Riding the Waves of a Changing World

A Facilitated Group Event

MARCH 16, 2017  
7:30-9:30PM at IPTAR

Date and Time:  
Thursday, March 16, 2017  
7:30 pm to 9:30 pm

Location:  
IPTAR Conference Room  
1651 3rd Avenue, Suite 101  
NYC

Convenor:  
Andrea Greenman, PhD

Facilitators:  
Members of The LJGould Center  
Steering Committee\*

Registration:  
<http://iptar.org/event/citizen-forum/>  
Questions?  
[joecancelmo@gmail.com](mailto:joecancelmo@gmail.com)

Charge: \$25.00

Students  
and Psychoanalytic  
Candidates: \$15.00

Components of the L.J.Gould Center: \* Chair of the Center: Joseph A. Cancelmo, Psy.D., FIPA; Chair, Monthly Case Conference: Dahlia Radley-Kingsley, MBA, MA; Steering Committee and Faculty: Susan Berger, Psy.D., Joseph Cancelmo, Psy.D., Andrea Greenman, Ph.D. Dahlia Radley-Kingsley, MBA, MA, Michael Moskowitz, Ph.D., and Ferne Traeger, LCSW, MBA





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### About the designer

**Mafe Izaguirre** is a Venezuelan visual artist interested in poetic computation and robotics. Her professional studies include visual language fundamentals, semiotics, art, photography, digital media, and media ecosystems. After dedicating 12 years of her life to teaching design and visual communication in PROdiseño School of Visual Communication in Caracas, Mafe has joined us in New York (thanks to an artists' visa) where she is creating an emotional robot based on concepts of mind in Nietzsche and Wittgenstein. Her past research includes a limited print edition of visual schemas of 'mind concepts' from Kant, Hegel, Benjamin, Adorno, Levinas, Merleau-Ponty, Elaine Scarry and Sianne Ngai. The contributors to ROOM have been honored to work with her and IPTAR is grateful for her generous contribution to our analytic community.

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Photograph by Anthony Delanoix

## 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.

Mail your contribution directly to:  
[ROOMinIPTAR@gmail.com](mailto:ROOMinIPTAR@gmail.com)

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