

10.18

Hattie Myers
EDITORIAL: BRAVERY

Coline Covington
NO JOKING MATTER

Michael A. Diamond
TAKING THE U.S. PERSONALLY

Delia Battin
A TEAR IN THE FABRIC

Eugene Mahon
THE LONGEST DAY

C. Jama Adams
OUTSIDE OF HISTORY

Lama Z. Khouri
BURIED NECK DEEP

Rachel Neve-Midbar
MEMORIAL

Elizabeth Trawick
AFTER THE LYNCHING MUSEUM



Carolyn Ellman
WHAT HAPPENED TO THE DEMOCRATS?

Isaac Tylim
PSYCHOANALYSIS' FOURTH WALL

Aneta Stojnić
ESTRANGEMENT EFFECT
POLITICS AND THE PSYCHOANALYTIC THEATRE

Kaja Weeks
WORD SEEDS

Joseph A. Cancelmo
THE ELEPHANT (WALK) IN THE ROOM

Featured Artists:

Aneta Stojnić, Sarah Valeri, and Gail Bragg
THE TRAVELERS BLANKET

Shelley Himmelstein
SOCCERSCAPE

A sketchbook for Analytic Action

Contributors to ROOM 10.18

Editor in Chief

Hattie Myers

**Art Director
& Graphic Designer**

Mafe Izaguirre

Managing Editors

Leon Anisfeld
Gila Ashtor
Phyllis Beren
Elizabeth C. Evert
Janet Fisher
Richard Grose
Sonal Soni
Aneta Stojnić

Copy Editor

Gretchen Stelter

Consultants

Karen Bernitsen
Eugene Mahon

C. Jama Adams, PhD, is associate professor in the department of Africana studies at John Jay College of Criminal Justice (CUNY). His most recent book, *Africana Peoples in China: Psychoanalytic Perspectives on Migration Experiences, Identity, and Precarious Employment*, was published by Routledge in 2018.

Delia Battin, LCSW, is a training and supervising analyst at the Contemporary Freudian Society (CFS), a fellow of the International Psychoanalytic Association (FIPA), a member of IPTAR and of the Association for Psychoanalytic Medicine, and on the faculty of IPTAR and the CFS. She practices in New York City. She has previously published articles on screen memories, play, the golden section, grief, and clinical psychoanalysis.

Joseph A. Cancelmo, PsyD, FIPA, is former president, training and supervising analyst and faculty of the Institute for Psychoanalytic Training and Research (IPTAR), and a Fellow of the International Psychoanalytic Association (IPA). He currently serves as co-chair of the Gould Center for Psychoanalytic Organizational Study and Consultation. He is a co-author of *Child Care for Love or Money?*, co-editor of *Terrorism and the Psychoanalytic Space* and *Warmed by the Fires: The Selected Papers of Allan Frosch* (in press), and has published articles on application of Winnicott's and Bion's ideas to clinical process. He maintains a private practice in New York City with adolescents, adults, couples, and psychoanalytic consultation to executives and organizations.

Coline Covington, Ph.D., is a training analyst of the Society of Analytical Psychology and the British Psychotherapy Foundation and former chair of the British Psychoanalytic Council. She is a fellow of International Dialogue Initiative (IDI), a think tank created to apply psychoanalytic concepts to understanding political conflict. She has written extensively on psychoanalysis and society, most recently *Everyday Evils: A Psychoanalytic View of Evil and Morality* (Routledge, 2016). She is in private practice in London. Her new book, *For Goodness Sake: Bravery, Patriotism and Identity*, will be published by Phoenix Publishing House in 2020.

Michael Diamond, PhD, is professor emeritus of public affairs and organization studies, University of Missouri, Columbia. He is an organizational consultant and author of *Discovering Organizational Identity* (University of Missouri Press, 2017)

and is currently a faculty and steering committee member of The Gould Center for Psychoanalytic Organizational Study and Consultation at IPTAR.

Carolyn S. Ellman, Ph.D., is a fellow at IPTAR and co-editor of several books: *The Modern Freudians: Contemporary Psychoanalytic Technique* (Jason Aronson, 1998); *Omnipotent Fantasies and the Vulnerable Self: A New Freudian Synthesis* (Jason Aronson, 1997); *A New Freudian Synthesis: Clinical Process in the Next Generation* (Karnac, 2011). She has also written extensively on envy, particularly among women.

Lama Z. Khouri, LCSW, is executive director and founder of Circle OASIS, a not-for-profit serving Arab immigrant and refugee school-aged children and their families. She is a psychotherapist and clinical supervisor at the Arab American Family Support Center and has a private practice in New York City. Prior to psychoanalysis, Khouri maintained a fourteen-year career at the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations, where she was a political affairs officer. <http://www.lamakhouri.com/publications/>

Eugene Mahon, MD, is training and supervising psychoanalyst at Columbia Psychoanalytic Center for Training and Research. He has published three books—*A Psychoanalytic Odyssey*, *Rensal the Redbit*, and *Boneshop of the Heart*—and numerous articles on psychoanalysis. He practices in New York City.

Rachel Neve-Midbar, MFA, is the author (under the name Heimowitz) of the chapbook *What the Light Reveals* (Tebot Bach Press, 2014). Her work has appeared in *Crab Orchard Review*, *Spillway*, *Prairie Schooner*, and *Georgia Review*. She was recently a finalist for the COR Richard Peterson Prize, winner of the Passenger Prize, and she has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize. Rachel completed her MFA at Pacific University in 2015 and is currently a doctoral candidate at the University of Southern California.

Aneta Stojnić, PhD, is a candidate in IPTAR's Respecialization and CAP Programs and a theoretician, curator, artist, and professor of performance and media theory. She has published three books and numerous essays and academic papers. Her latest book is *Shifting Corporalities in Contemporary Performance: Danger, Im/mobility and Politics* (Palgrave Macmillan, December 2018).

Elizabeth Trawick, MD, is a psychoanalyst practicing in Birmingham, Alabama.

Isaac Tylim, PsyD, FIPA, is an IPTAR Fellow, IPA training and supervising analyst, member of the Argentina Psychoanalytic Association, and a clinical professor, training analyst and consultant at NYU's postdoctoral program in psychotherapy and psychoanalysis, where he co-founded the Trauma and Disaster Specialization Program. For the last five years, he has been involved in the theatrical dramatization of Freud and Ferenczi's thirty-year correspondence, which is being presented internationally. He is a co-editor of *Reconsidering the Moveable Frame in Psychoanalysis* (Routledge, 2018) and maintains a multilingual private practice in New York City.

Kaja Weeks is a poet and essayist who often writes of music and healing. In addition to being a graduate of New Directions: Writing with a Psychoanalytic Edge, Weeks maintains a career as a clinic-based developmental music educator, which integrates the work of Stanley Greenspan and Serena Wieder. When young children's ability to engage and grasp verbal language is compromised, she harnesses the power of vocalizations and relational rhythms to elicit communicative interaction.

Mafe Izaguirre is a New York-based Venezuelan visual artist, a graphic designer with twenty years of experience developing brand platforms, and an educator whose research focusses on the conceptual image of the mind in new media. For the last seven years she has led the strategic advisory firm, Simple7 Design Lab, managing marketing and outreach for brands. In 2016, Izaguirre moved to New York to pursue her research developing "machines that can feel" and to explore the creation of artifacts that mimic human senses and consciousness. She is currently an artist member of Fat Cat Fab Lab, the Long Island City Artist Association (LICAA), a tech mentor at Mouse Inc, and the Bronx based non-profit DreamYard Project. In 2017, in collaboration with members of the IPTAR community, Izaguirre created ROOM. Website: www.mafeizaguirre.com Email: mafelandia@gmail.com



“Acts of bravery stand out in our minds because they signify a common belief system that we, individually and collectively, matter.”

Coline Covington¹



BRAVERY

by Hattie Myers

“Bravery,” COLINE COVINGTON, a psychoanalyst living in London, told me last spring, “exists in the eyes of the beholder. No one who has done something that other people consider brave or even heroic feels that they themselves have been brave. To a person, they feel they had no choice. Not only that, each one of them felt badly they couldn’t do more. I am thinking of writing an essay for **ROOM** about it.”

But Covington didn’t write that essay. Instead she wrote “No Joking Matter.” “**ROOM** may not want to print it,” she said. “Things change so fast every day that Trump’s visit to London may be old news by October, but this is what I had to write.”

This morning, well after this issue was in production, I got a call from a psychoanalyst in New York: “You may not have room for this in **ROOM**, but I have an idea about the Kavanaugh hearings that I can’t stop thinking about and no one is talking about it.”

Within two hours, JOSEPH CANCELMO’s essay “The Elephant (Walk) in the Room” arrived. He was right. We stopped the virtual press in order to include the thing that no one was talking about in an already very full issue.

It is not the first time that psychoanalysts are seeing something and feel they have to say something. It’s not the first time that we have been stopped in our tracks to make room for a new way to think about something.

In 1941, Ernst Kris, newly arrived in the US under an “enemy alien visa,” gave a paper to the Boston Psychoanalytic called “On the Dangers of Propaganda.” Perhaps because Kris had come to psychoanalysis through the field of art history, he was particularly attuned to the power of image and media. “My reason for dealing with this subject is not the challenge which its highly flavored topicality may exercise,” he told the Bostonians. “It is rather a sense of duty... psychoanalytical experience and theory have largely contributed to a better understanding of some of the phenomena of human suggestibility.” Kris linked our susceptibility to suggestion to our infantile beginnings, our longing for love and protection. He ended his talk with a call to action, saying that with the advent of “mass communication” (by which, in 1941, he meant radio and film), governments must now attend to new pressures and new responsibilities in order to protect their countries from totalitarianism.²

ROOM 10.18 stands out in the minds of our whole editorial board as our bravest issue. The essayists, poets, and artists in **ROOM 10.18** are writing, drawing, and, in some cases, figuratively screaming about racism, sexism, the erosion of the working and middle class, the influence of propaganda and lies, the erosion of morality, and the possibility of a totalitarian state. Psychoanalytic interpretations like Kris’s and the contributions that **ROOM** authors are making expand our perspective. It is no coincidence that the points that are being brought to bear here are being made two weeks before what will, perhaps, come to be the most important US election of our lifetimes. These are not speculative essays.

They are authoritative, confident, and clarifying. We are free to accept them or reject them, but we cannot ignore them.

DELIA BATTIN, in her essay “A Tear in the Fabric” and **MICHAEL DIAMOND** in “Taking the U.S. Personally,” do something similar to what Kris did in 1941.

Battin explains the psychic consequences for children when the structure of a family is torn apart. Diamond explains, in psychodynamic terms, what happens in large groups when leadership fails to maintain the integrity of our public space. Like Kris, both Diamond and Battin use their psychoanalytic understanding of human nature to suggest actions they feel must be taken to protect the traumatized children on our borders and to protect our traumatized country as a whole.

ELIZABETH TRAWICK and **LAMA KHOURI** take what from the outside seems a very brave step indeed, and they share their own stories. “In spite of her shame,” Trawick tells us in “The Lynching Museum,” in spite of listeners “responding with disdainful faces and comments that seem to show they have not grasped the full significance of the event,” she tells of an unforgettable incident she carries from her childhood in the racist south. Lama Khouri confides to us the pain she feels knowing others suspect her as a terrorist and don’t see her as fully human. In “Buried Neck Deep,” Khouri shares a dream she dreamt fourteen years ago that remains seared in her mind, while the meaning she has drawn from her dream has changed over time and given her strength.

In their essays, **CAROLYN ELLMAN** and **COLINE COVINGTON** want us to know that they are drawing strength from historians. Underlying their generous reporting of what they are learning, is a not-so-quiet desperation to spread the word and get the facts out. Ellman’s “What Happened to the Democrats” reminds us of Kris’s and Diamond’s warning, that we are all susceptible to hearing what we want to hear, and this fact puts our country in danger. In “No Joking Matter,” Covington reminds us of something else psychoanalysis has taught us: we are also susceptible to not remembering. We repress history at our own peril.

C. JAMA ADAMS’s essay “Outside of History” drives home the ways the practice of psychoanalysis must reclaim history anew. Adams insists that a psychoanalysis whose focus is exclusively on the psychic world must find new ways to engage with the hidden consequences of history beyond the transmission of trauma. The transmission of privilege and the transmission of culture and class, Adams argues, have deep sociological and intrapsychic implications that psychoanalysis has not historically acknowledged.

In his essay “Psychoanalysis’ Fourth Wall,” **ISAAC TYLIM** brings his historical and international perspective as he questions the illusion that psychoanalysis can be sequestered from the world in which it is practiced. **ANETA STOJNIC**, who, like Kris, entered psychoanalysis through her study of the arts, describes in “Estrangement Effect: Politics and the Psychoanalytic Theatre” certain similarities she sees between psychoanalytic practice and the way Brecht reconceived theatre: two arts created, not to mirror reality, but to shape it.

Changing our future by engaging with our past is a cornerstone of psychoanalytic action. If there is a single thread that runs through this issue it is this: our personal history, the history of whatever country or community we come from, and even the history of our psychoanalytic field have brought us to where we are today. The act of owning our histories solidifies and expands the connections we have to ourselves and to our community. As **ROOM 10.18** reminds us, taking hold of history is a political act. If these essays look brave, it is because it matters deeply. Two weeks before the election, it matters now. ■

^[1] From *No Choice but to Act: Psychoanalytic Thoughts on Bravery and Dissent*, a chapter in Covington’s, new book, *For Goodness Sake: Bravery, Patriotism and Identity*, to be published by Phoenix Publishing House, 2020.

^[2] Kris was a colleague of Freud’s who fled Vienna in 1938. Along with Hans Speier, Kris created and directed the *Research Project for Totalitarian Communication*, which was funded for three years by the Rockefeller Foundation. *The Project* worked closely with the US War Department while producing dozens of papers and seminars.



10.18.1

NO JOKING MATTER

by Coline Covington

The world listens as Donald Trump, President of the United States, on a state visit to the United Kingdom bemoans the fact that Prime Minister, Theresa May, had “wrecked Brexit” because she had not taken his advice. We then see Trump, standing at a podium at Chequers alongside May, declaring that “Boris Johnson would make a great Prime Minister.” May deftly brushed off Trump’s criticisms, saying, “Don’t worry, it’s only the press.”

Many of us are now used to Trump’s outrageous public statements which he just as readily denies as being “fake news”, but the more we laugh, the more we succumb to a helpless despondency that this is our new reality – a reality ruled by the id and freed from the paternal shackles of the super-ego. This is the justice of the disaffiliated and disempowered Trump electorate who are finally having their say against the elites who are deemed responsible for unfair regulation, job losses, and inequality.

As Trump presses ahead with economic tariffs and the disruption of political stability across Europe, the Middle East, and Asia, and as populist movements proliferate across the globe, are the dissenting voices losing traction? Are “we” (liberal elites) only talking to ourselves? Trump’s words and his actions, once shocking to many of us, are now laughed at and at least partly dismissed as the words of a monster. This is eerily reminiscent of the gradual numbing helplessness experienced by many Germans during the onset of the Third Reich.

In his famous memoir of Nazi Germany, *Defying Hitler*, Sebastian Haffner wrote,

“I felt, intensely, the choking, nauseous character of it all, but I was unable to grasp its constituent parts and place them in an overall order. Each attempt was frustrated and veiled by those endless, useless, vain discussions in which we attempted again and again to fit the events into an obsolete, unsuitable scheme of political ideas... Strangely enough, it was just this automatic continuation of ordinary life that hindered any lively, forceful reaction against the horror.”

(pp.113-4)

As the infringements of human rights are increasingly accepted – whether it is the separation of children from their migrant parents or the selected ban on Muslims travelling to the United States – and “normal” life continues for most of us, the “normalization” of these conditions increases. With widespread distrust of what is “real” news, we are also left unable to make judgements and unable to think. Normalization turns into mindlessness.

Haffner warns, **“There is a saying ascribed to Hitler: ‘I will press my opponents into service – in the Reichswehr.’”** (p.223)

We would be wise to heed this warning and to voice as much dissent as we can now before further damage is done to our democratic principles.

History has a tendency to repeat itself. And yet, Timothy Snyder, the Yale historian, also warns us that history is becoming irrelevant in our political view of the world. At our peril, we are being drawn into what Snyder refers to as the “politics of eternity”, an ahistorical totalitarian state of mind, reliant on a saviour/leader to provide security to the group. As therapists we know very well the dangerous consequences of ignoring – or denying – history. The return of the repressed is rearing its head for all of us to see. No joke. ■

–
Email: ccovington@freemind.co.uk

^[1] Haffner, S.(2002). *Defying Hitler: A Memoir*. London: Phoenix.

^[2] Snyder, T. (2018). *The Road to Unfreedom*. NYC: The Dugan Books.

TAKING THE U.S. PERSONALLY

by Michael A. Diamond

Politics is about power — who has it and who doesn't.

Politics is also about ethics, fairness, justice, and governing assumptions about the state of nature.

Politics, it turns out, is highly personal. Malignant narcissism, and the absence of a moral compass, in the chief executive guarantees corruption and abuse of power.

I am a professor emeritus with more than thirty-five years of writing, teaching, and research focused on the nexus of psychoanalysis, organizational politics, and culture. Beyond pathologizing the individuals we hold accountable (on the right and on the left) for the crisis we are navigating, I feel it is critical at this disturbing historical moment to highlight the degree to which public space, what Jürgen Habermas calls the “public sphere,” remains vital to upholding American democracy in the face of despotism. Consider the protests of the #MeToo movement, the #NeverAgain movement, and, of course, the #NotMyPresident demonstrators, to name a few. All of these collective political actions represent an awakened, if not alarmed, American citizenry reclaiming public space — physical locations such as public squares, streets, and parks and even virtual locations, such as the internet and **ROOM**. This “occupation” of public space is critical to the opposition and resistance to oligarchy

and authoritarianism. To put it succinctly, these dissenting actions of ordinary Americans are deeply personal and political, representing the intersection of private selves and public space, internal world and external reality. The act of reclaiming public space is rooted in personal agency and the integrity and morality of the private self. The latter referring to Kantian ethics and the imperative to treat others as ends in themselves, rather than as means to an end, or as instruments to be manipulated and deceived. In addition, the repossession of public space for liberals and progressives signifies an acknowledgment of personal and political tensions and divisions in a rapidly changing Western democracy. Ethnic, racial, cultural, and religious diversity depends upon democratic norms and values. These rules and customs are typically protected by agents of democratic institutions and represent beliefs and practices necessary to promoting the health and well-being of the body politic. Imagine a public space, a Winnicottian potential public space, where private selves are highly regarded and respected as relational, transformational, and curious sentient beings — a public space where the dynamics of self and other are experienced as intersubjective and where identity-group boundaries are sufficiently sturdy to withstand differences, debate, dialogue, interaction, meaningful communication, and consensual validation. This is the ideal — political and personal, public and private — of democratic institutions buoyed by democratic selves.

In conjunction with this potential public space, there exists in America an equally powerful paranoid and persecuted force within the public space — think Charlottesville and the neo-Nazi, alt-right, white power demonstrators and the never-ending Trump rallies — a fearful public space where private selves are trapped in shared feelings of paranoia and hate, personal and political abandonment, low self-regard, and rejection. These private selves are governed by splitting off good from bad feelings, Manichean black-and-white thinking, and regressive unconscious processes, in which half-heartedly contained paranoia eventually shifts into hatred and dehumanization of the other. This dynamic results in violent protests that are impulsive, reactionary, explosive, and deadly. Locating a convenient scapegoat, via projection and projective identification — whether ethnic group or political adversary — is commonplace. While private selves of potential public space move consciously toward the other, private selves of paranoid and persecuted public space move either unconsciously away from or tragically against the despised other (fight or flight). As Hannah Arendt warns, “Totalitarianism has no spatial topology: it is like an iron band compressing people increasingly together until they are formed into one” — a homogenous fascist state of anti-thinking and oppression.

What are the psychosocial roots of public space? There is certainly a juxtaposition between public and private space. The idea of public space, I suggest, ought to be reimagined and reframed as potential and facilitative on the one hand, paranoid and persecuted on the other — the latter is a reflection of America’s present state of political polarization and the absence of a center. Thus, it is not simply the physical presence of public space that is noteworthy; it is also the perceived and shared assumptions of private selves (participants, citizens) and private space in the psychological reality of groups. We might ask: Do group members see themselves as agents of political change and transformation? Or do they see and feel themselves as collectively persecuted by the dreaded other? Do citizens generally feel included and welcome at the boundary of public space? Or do they feel excluded and unwelcome, anxious and fearful of engaging the other?

When I speak of private space, I refer to the metaphoric processes of mind and body that ideally promote a safe haven, much like a cocoon, for the emerging and evolving private self. The common individual assertion “I need my space” symbolizes this notion of private space.

As Beren and Bach described in their essay, “Psychic Space” (ROOM 6.18), the private self requires respite from intrusion and an opportunity to “collect one-self.” The core self, one’s sense of identity, is comprised of values, perceptions, assumptions, meanings, and motives that hold steady over time. The private self is safeguarded by private space — an introjected and internalized world, ideally, of affirming relationships. However, it is the disturbance of this private space by way of inadequate nurturing or abuse that renders the self vulnerable, defensive, de-centered, dissociated, and anxious. Paradoxically, one does not retreat into private space alone; one does so with imaginary others. And when one enters the public space in protest, one does so along with the private self. Consequently, anxiety and psychological regression inevitably and unconsciously occur to some degree whenever we join a group or institution.

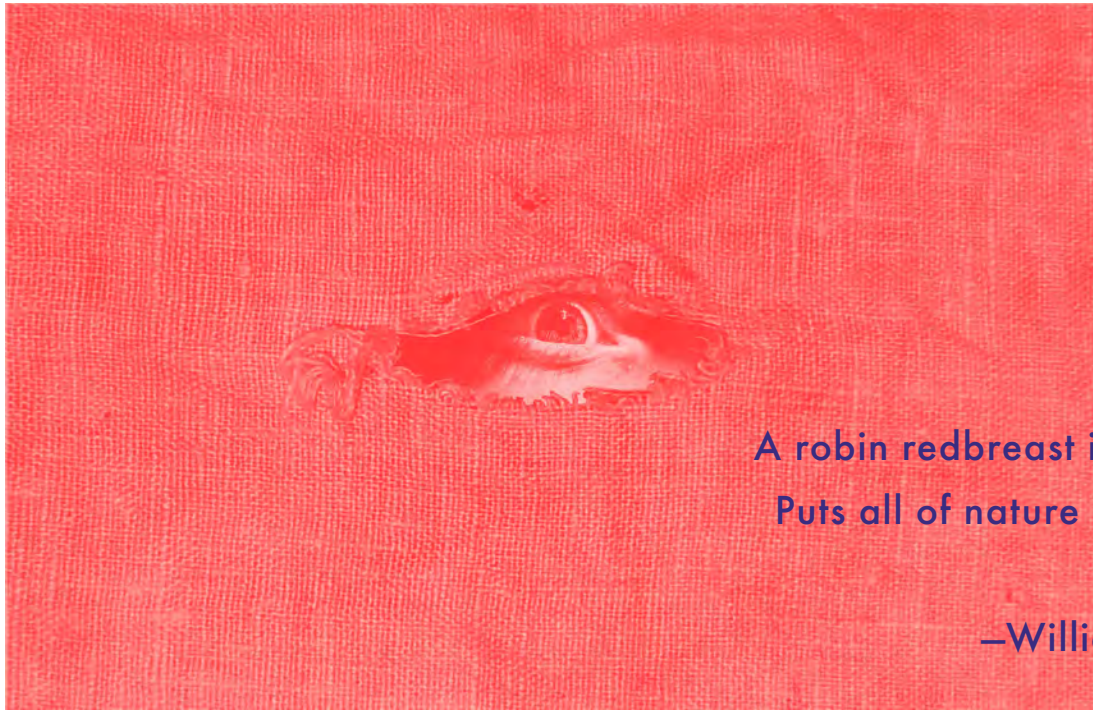
From this perspective, one might say that public space is, in effect, understood as a large group of individual selves bounded by a range of holding or private spaces that enable or disable, motivate or inhibit individuals to join public spaces with real and imagined others. It is the quality of the individual’s initial holding environment that predisposes one to agentic capacity moving toward or away from public space and the body politic. Democracy necessitates citizens with this agentic capacity and political leaders who appreciate and respect the values and norms inherent of the constitution and the requisite institutional checks and balances on power and personality.

If nothing else, it is my hope for this essay that we are reminded that the primary task of our political leaders is that of holding — as in Winnicott’s holding environment — the personal and political center of the body politic, leading at the boundary between people and their group identities (left and right), between institutions and nation-states, taking up the psychoanalytic position of the playful and imaginative third, linking subjects and objects, selves and others. This is the role of reparative political leadership found in such influential leaders as Mahatma Gandhi, Abraham Lincoln, Mustafa Atatürk, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Eleanor Roosevelt, Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King Jr., and Yitzhak Rabin, to name a few.

Knowledge of psychoanalysis and democratic theory gives us power and agency through which we can begin to think of policy solutions in the midst of the unthinkable and empowers us to elect those who might lead us there. ■

—

Email: Diamond@missouri.edu



A robin redbreast in a cage
Puts all of nature in a rage

—William Blake

10.18.3

A TEAR IN THE FABRIC

by Delia Battin

William Blake was outraged by the idea of a bird in a cage, it being a violation of the natural order.

One can only imagine what he would think about children in cages, an outrage which should put all human nature in a rage.

Americans and many in other countries were shocked when they learned that children were separated from their parents as the fugitive families attempted to gain entry into America. They sought to get away from the brutality of their own country only to be met with a more “civilized” kind of brutality, which is, of course, not civilized at all; in fact, it makes a mockery of America as a supposedly civilized nation.

Separation of children from their families comes in many forms. Illness of a parent can set it in motion, as can the hospitalization of a child.

Anyone who has experienced the horror of war knows that fathers go to war; children can be fatherless for significant periods of time. Death of a parent or parents can leave children bereft. Natural disasters such as earthquakes and tsunamis can play havoc with the stability and cohesion of family bonds.

But the kind of forced separations that have occurred at the border between Mexico and America that Trump’s sadistic zero tolerance has engineered is especially barbaric in a nation whose symbol is the Statue of Liberty, which welcomes “the tired, the poor, the huddled masses yearning to breathe free” into the arms of a tolerant, enlightened nation. Shame seems to have little clout

in the current political management of our great nation.

Psychoanalysts know that a child’s attempt to build a sense of constant love and safety is the outcome of many factors. A child learns to tolerate the normal frustrations of child development as long as the bond between mother and infant remains stable. If the child is angry and frustrated at times, she/he learns to appreciate that anger does not destroy love as long as the relationship maintains its stability. Brief separations and frustrations teach a child that love, frustration, and anger can be tolerated. Long-term separations are another matter. Brutal separations such as those that are occurring at our border introduce another most significant variable of course: trauma. Trauma occurs when the mother or both parents are ripped away from the fabric of constancy and trust; consequently, a child’s frustration and anger, usually addressed toward loving, understanding, and comforting parents, has no place to go and is turned inward by the child, with massive consequences for the sense of trust and love, reliability and constancy that development so needs to proceed on its adaptive, life-enhancing journey. Public outrage forced Trump to change this sadistic policy, but the problem of the children detained in tents, camps, and cages could not be redressed by executive order unless it also ordered the immediate reuniting of the 2,300 children with their families. A tragedy was set in motion, and heartless political policy seems unable to address the scope and dimension of its crime.

If the child cannot express the nature of her/his disappointment, the nature of her/his fury, each citizen of America must become a “facilitating

environment,” as D.W. Winnicott termed it, so that this trauma, this disgrace, can be redressed by all the institutions a great society—a great nation—should possess. Winnicott also stated that “there is no such thing as an infant,” since everywhere he turned, he saw that infants and mothers are dyads that gradually become separate individuals, but only after a sacred and sustained bond of love and constancy has been established. Trust is not a given, after all; it is a dynamic expression of love and hate that eventually establishes the internal, intrapsychic certainty that makes stable development proceed. Love and hate do not destroy each other. On the contrary, they nourish each other, and trust is the offspring of that dynamic process, which begins in the arms and at the breast of a loving, reliable mother. To rupture that bond thoughtlessly and brutally is a barbaric act that all citizens must decry, lest they forfeit the right to call themselves citizens of a great democracy. All citizens must fight for the preservation of these bonds, these principles that should be at the forefront of the body civic and the body politic. The pursuit of happiness is written into our constitution as an inalienable right. If we deny this right to helpless children at our borders, we all become aliens from civic decency and political integrity. Our shame will not be easily removed from the face of our besmirched nation.

I want to end with a clinical example. Annie, a four-year-old girl, was in analysis for incipient school phobia and nightmares that began after her father left; he was stationed overseas in wartime. In one of the initial sessions, Annie reported a dream about a strange house. “I was in a strange house with a strange door. I was alone. I was afraid. I woke up.” She then made a drawing of the strange house and its strange door and made a most enigmatic, cryptic statement: “A door is a tear in a house.” This most emotional concept of homes with tears in them was much engaged with, in play and language, as the analysis proceeded, so much so that Annie, discussing the imagery of houses with tears in them, said rather dismissively around the time her treatment was drawing to a close, “Oh I got over that.” This little girl was able to process and repair the “tear,” working it through in the treatment situation.

The tears in the fabric of the homes of the thousands of immigrant children can only be redressed by an enlightened society and government that reunites these children as soon as possible, so that they also can redress the tears and eventually say, “Oh we got over that.” Time is precious as a child’s mind is developing. There is a government-induced tear in the fabric of their development right now that must be repaired immediately. There is no time to lose. ■

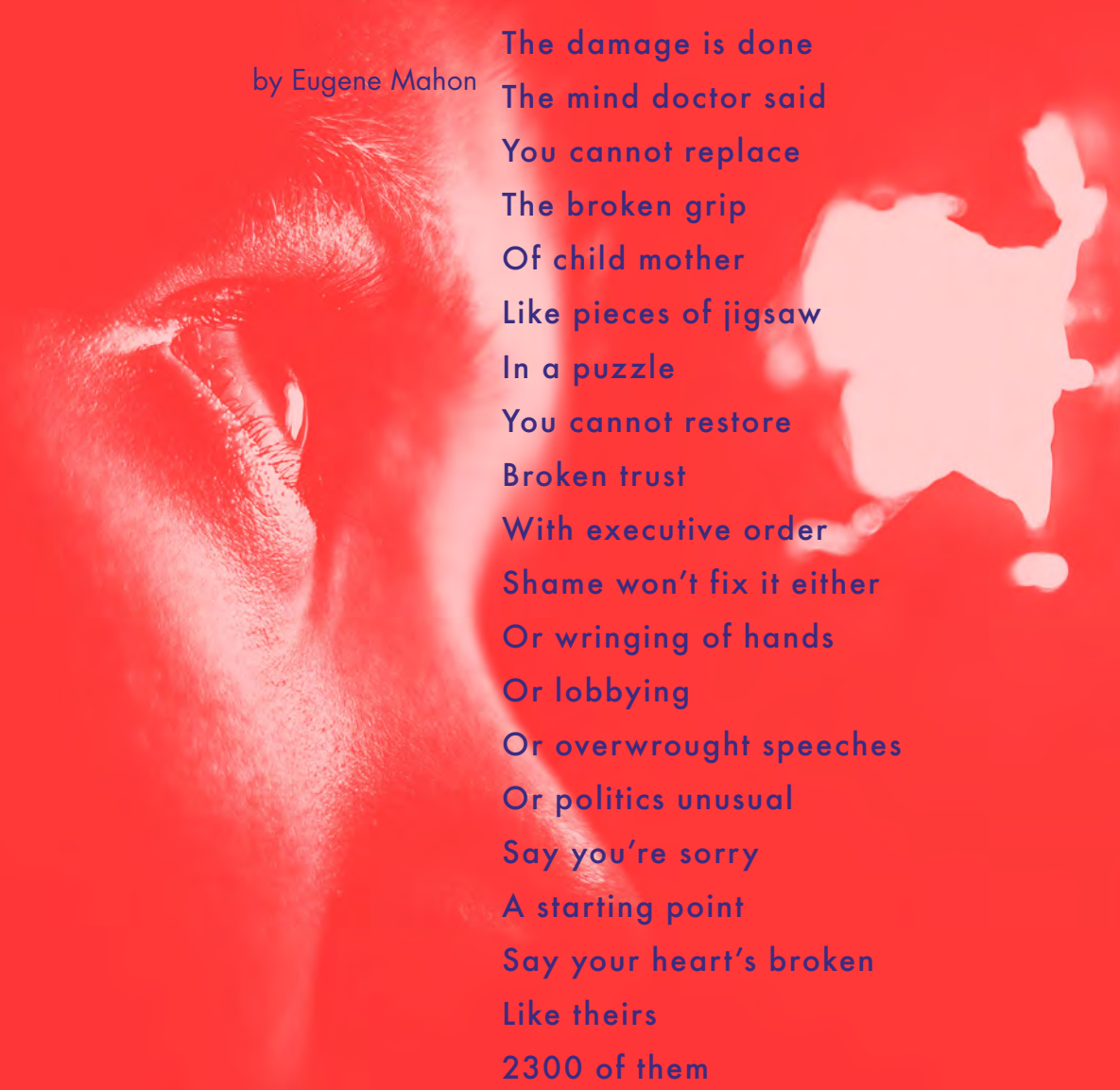


THE LONGEST DAY

"2300 CHILDREN AWAIT..."

THE NEW YORK TIMES 6/21/18

by Eugene Mahon



The damage is done
The mind doctor said
You cannot replace
The broken grip
Of child mother
Like pieces of jigsaw
In a puzzle
You cannot restore
Broken trust
With executive order
Shame won't fix it either
Or wringing of hands
Or lobbying
Or overwrought speeches
Or politics unusual
Say you're sorry
A starting point
Say your heart's broken
Like theirs
2300 of them
And weep



Photography by Alisdare Hickson. Demonstrations in United Kingdom, 2018.

CHILDREN ON THE BORDER WANT TO TAKE ACTION?

TELL WASHINGTON YOUR COMMENTS MATTER

The Flores settlement mandates that children be detained no longer than twenty days. The administration is proposing to change this, and the Department of Homeland Security has proposed an indefinite detention period.

UNTIL NOVEMBER 6 all citizens can post responses on the official website. — here is how you do it:

Go to www.regulations.gov

Enter into the search box DHS Docket No. ICEB-2018-0002

That will take you to a comment form to fill out and submit.

The Flores settlement should remain unchanged, as it reflects ALL scientific, developmental, psychological, and medical knowledge about the well-being and healthy growth of children, both physically and emotionally. Our government should defend and promote the needs of all individuals, however small and powerless.

SPREAD THE WORD.

CHILD THERAPISTS NEEDED

Attorneys working with families separated under the "Zero Tolerance" immigration policy are seeking therapists in a variety of locations across the country to work on a pro bono basis with children who were forcibly separated from their parents.

THERAPISTS ARE NEEDED FOR ALL AGED CHILDREN

If you are able to provide services, particularly if you speak Spanish, please email Goldie Alfasi at: goldiealfasi6@gmail.com

Include your contact information, location, languages spoken and the services you can provide.

In the New York City area, you may also contact Liane Aronchick:

CLICK HERE



10.18.4

OUTSIDE OF HISTORY

by C. Jama Adams

Engaging with marginalized social histories and recognizing the psychic consequences these histories hold for the treatment dyad poses a challenge for psychoanalysis. Bottom line, the fact that social history is a source of distress outside of the control of the individual has always been a conceptually difficult yet clinically pressing issue for psychoanalysis.

A few years ago, I did a presentation to maintenance workers and managers on healthy ways of caring for the self in a time of institutional cutbacks. The group was comprised exclusively of persons of color, most of them females and many with expressive Spanish as their preferred mode of speaking. So while they had a good working knowledge of what I was saying, it was difficult for them to share their perspectives in English. I asked them to respond in Spanish and then had someone interpret. The interaction became more animated as the volume of comments increased dramatically. They spoke of healthy practices that were familiar but not necessarily still practiced. One woman, for example, spoke about the benefits of making tea using dried orange peel. This triggered much laughter as many remembered that, as children, they struggled to master the art of peeling the entire orange without the peel breaking or bruising the skin.

Our psychological selves reflect the influence of the experience and interpretation of these quotidian acts across time. While some acts, like traditions of self-care, are self-affirming and form a basis of our sense of agency, others are painful and unduly constrain us. For all of us, there is the temptation to avoid the painful aspects of our histories by acting as if we are outside of them, exempt from their structural and psychic consequences. Psychoanalysis both hinders and facilitates the acknowledgment and reinterpretation of history by what it privileges and by what it marginalizes.

By “history” I mean a focus on the ways in which we have been socialized to interpret events — each with its own bias — and how that process continues to influence our contemporary and future intra- and inter-psychic activities and actions. We are not necessarily psychic slaves to these longstanding interpretations, and with help, often at painful cost, we can reimagine the past as a future in ways that are ethical, healthy, and instructive. Alongside this possibility, however, is the all too human fantasy of being untouched by some painful aspects

of history. Individuals in pursuit of a mythic sense of self that is emotionally or politically unfettered often severely discount the past. This pursuit is often supported by groups and institutions to which they have strong emotional and often irrational attachments.

Some would argue that the idea of America is that of a psychosocial space where one can reinvent the self unencumbered by the past. We are, however, never outside of the impact of history. We are never able to completely escape history's gravitational pull, its effects on self-making. But history can be thoughtfully used to reanimate the self, and through judicious reinterpretation, an understanding of history can be used to limit its negative effects.

A positive interpretation of one's historical experience is vital for good-enough well-being. This provides the foundation for a sense that one is a part of something larger than one's self. It provides a continuity that predates one's existence and will continue after one's death. Such an ethically informed perception of history is the basis of a good-enough sense of agency and of self-esteem. One feels cared for and that there is the possibility of having some impact on the world. Such experiences do not have to provide unalloyed pleasure, and the interpretations need not devalue others or unduly marginalize. The inevitable compromises and attendant narcissistic injuries are the basis of resilience and hope.

There is a story told of Anna Akhmatova, the Russian poet, standing in front of a prison where loved ones, including her son, Lev Gumilev (who would later come to embody his own dispiriting historical denialism), were being held as political prisoners. One of the other mothers standing with her outside the walls turned to the poet, saying, "Can you describe this?" Akhmatova reassured her that she would. This event was not unique; it was not without a history; therefore, it could be understood, contextualized, and possibly addressed. Far too often, those who have been victimized are treated as if they lack any other subjectivities or as if they lack a history of substantive agency that can be mobilized in the service of memory, reflection and healing. Oftentimes, with the best of intentions, many feel — or are made to feel — immobilized, like a plaything of remote, capricious, and protean-like gods.

Appearing to be outside of history is also observable among groups who have experienced a loss of status, a diminished sense of privilege, and new limits on previously unbounded access

to resources. This experience of decline gives rise to an Orwellian psychosocial denialism within elements of certain racial/ethnic groups, gender and sexual constellations, and some religious organizations. Their unearned privilege, the traditions they celebrate, their exclusionary approaches regarding their community, and the respect they feel entitled to are being contested.

Denying their long history of plunder and exploitation devolves to a perversion of what we accept as victimhood and leads these groups to perceive themselves as victims of discrimination. Some groups and individuals link the new ethical constraints imposed on their status and access as the loss of their privilege of exceptionality. They feel that they have been relegated to the status of "mere equals" of the many whom they have denigrated across time — a bald-faced but unconscious renunciation of egalitarianism.

Unconscious generational transmissions of privilege — much like unconscious generational transmission of trauma — have intrapsychic and sociological implications on agency and on psychic and material reality. We see again and again among certain elements of white folks the assertion of an illusory but strongly held sense of privilege which conflicts with their economic interests. The rejection of Obamacare and the acceptance of Trump-initiated loss of benefits are just two illustrations.

To address this crisis, psychoanalysis needs to expand the range of what history encompasses. Such an approach would facilitate a more accurate reading of transference within a socially informed understanding of agency on the part of both therapist and analyst. Finally, more attention needs to be paid to the psychosocial processes informing the pursuit and fulfillment of identity claims. Increasingly, we find our often-contradictory identity claims leaving us in an intrapsychic space of in-between-ness. We hyphenate our cultural identities, and many of us are fluid in our gender and sexuality preferences. Stephen Mitchell has written insightfully about this fluidity of self, while Gary Walls has outlined culture's influence on aspects of the self that are unconsciously deployed in any given situation. Farhad Dalal, among other psychoanalytic thinkers, has bemoaned the reductive tendency to privilege psyche while marginalizing the macro-social contributions to psychic dysfunction. History shadows us. Engaging with the shadows of our history will help us deal with our uncertainty and our constrained agencies in ways that do not diminish ourselves or others. ■

Madina

Tigida
UT



Where we love is HOME
a place where your feet may
leave, but not your HEART

MADINA

This is my happy
Place



Home is the
starting place of
LOVE, HOPE and
DREAMS

THE TRAVELERS BLANKET

Aneta Stojnić, Sarah Valeri
and Gail Bragg

[Go to the Online Gallery](#)

In the summer of 2016, several IPTAR clinicians began to meet with administrators at the International Rescue Committee to discuss forging a partnership in which IPTAR therapists would provide pro bono services to IRC clients who are refugees resettling in NYC.

The first and ongoing activity of the partnership involves IPTAR interns and externs providing individual counseling to IRC clients, often with an interpreter. We were next asked to participate in IRC's Unaccompanied Minors program, to work with families reintegrating in the US after the children crossed the border from Central America.

In early 2017, following the executive orders banning immigrants from mostly Muslim countries as well as other anti-immigrant rhetoric, the IRC asked us to expand our services to provide emotional support to students in their Saturday Learning Series. On Saturdays during the school year, up to fifty young refugees (ages 4–20) receive one-to-one academic tutoring from volunteer tutors. Several IPTAR members, candidates, and interns have been running short-term groups with these young people.

The support group work has been mostly conducted through the use of art therapy methods. This both helped to bridge the language barriers that would sometimes occur as well as to facilitate a safe environment where complex and often difficult feelings could emerge and be processed through different creative forms of expression.

In the latest set of groups (April/May 2018), we worked on a group project of creating "Traveler's Blanket." We invited each of the participants to create a patch that would represent a place that is in some way important for them. It could be a place they are from, a place they traveled to or would like to visit, or even an imaginary place. In a second stage, we sewed the patches together on a large piece of fabric—the traveler's blanket. In this collective process, the group participants could share their individual experiences of significant real and psychic spaces, but also learn new skills from each other and help one another to make sense of their journeys and build up a feeling of continuity in their lives.

These young people are trying very hard to take responsibility for their futures while struggling to adjust to the new ways and conditions of life and to cope with the trauma of displacement and the uncertainties that refugee life itself carries. This is their way of maintaining a sense of home and security wherever they go, while also accepting friendship whenever they can.

In addition to the artwork itself, some of the group participants shared their thoughts and feelings emerging from this process:

"I want to keep going with my school. I am happy to meet a lot of people at the IRC. I like the moments I pass in SLS¹ with my friends and teachers."

Anonymous

"Express my feelings is important, I am scared sometimes, thinking about people being hurt."

Gora

"This home is not just a place, it's the feeling that I get when I belong. Sensing that my life has purpose, knowing that I am needed and Believing that I am loved."

Tigida F.

"You make your path. You decide your future. You choose your life."

"Todos pasamos por momentos difíciles. Todos, en algún punto de la vida nos sentimos tristes por alguna razón. Tú no eres la primera, ni la última persona en sentirte así. Solo debes encontrar el camino hacia la salida."

(Translated: "Everyone passes through difficult moments. We all have sadness in our life at some point for whatever reason. You are not the first, nor the last to feel it. But only you have to find the way out.")

"Life is struggle but you can make that struggle a great success. Sometimes you will never know the true value of a moment until it becomes a memory. Love and be loved."

Yanelsi F.



10.18.5

BURIED NECK DEEP

by Lama Z. Khouri

Lately, a dream I had twelve years ago has been coming back to me. I dreamt that my four-year-old son (he's sixteen now) was buried neck deep in the middle of a neighborhood and surrounded by modest houses. Passersby would kick his face, but he remained silent, as if the kicks were part of life and not to be contested — as if, to survive, he needed to keep his mouth shut.

This dream has had many meanings for me. Twelve years ago, I thought my four-year-old son in the dream was me: buried in a failed marriage with nowhere to go. Of late, my son in the dream has become the Palestinian people: “You either capitulate or we will continue to beat you to the ground.” Their struggle for freedom is terrorism, children throwing rocks are arrested or killed, many young adults have no hope — if they can't escape, they wish they could die. Parents in Gaza must do whatever they can to help their children escape the largest open-air prison on earth knowing that they may never see them again.

I spent a good portion of my adult life in the U.N. Department of Peacekeeping Operations. Over the years, I came to believe that resistance can take many forms. As a mental health professional, my role is to protect and heal, while politicians and diplomats work toward peace (one hopes). To protect and heal, I have a role to play inside and outside the consulting room. It is not enough for me to hold and contain the client's pain. I need to do what I can to change their sociopolitical environment. But, sometimes, I ask myself: What do you do when there is no peace to keep and politicians are certainly not working to reach it? What



These days, this village is in the news all the time. After a long fight, the villagers lost their battle. The Israelis have cordoned the village, cut off all food supplies and medicine, and plan to demolish and evict the citizens. Israel wants to build a settlement there.

do you do if you're all alone? The Palestinians have been abandoned by Arab nations, none of their Arab neighbors want anything to do with them, the Palestinian authority leaves much to be desired, and the world community seems impotent. In Israel proper, a Jewish state, they are not like other citizens. In occupied Palestine, they live from minute to minute. They don't have access to the same sources of water as the Jewish settlers, if they have water at all, they can't drive on the same roads, and the Israeli Defense Force terrorizes them day and night. How are they to survive and make it through? I thought that perhaps the only thing I, and people like me, could do is to be a bridge that would bring Palestinians relief and support. Perhaps other Israelis and I could join hands and help both our people.

The other day, my friend Jamal Jahaleen, a Palestinian Bedouin writer and poet, shared a photo with me. It was of his family in a tent, and next to them in the same tent were Jewish children. Jamal wrote: "They know they are safe with us, but adults in their lives will teach them to hate." I so want to hold the image of the boys in the tent in mind. I want to believe in seeing the light, no matter how dim it might be. If anyone has empathy for the Palestinians and is able to consider their plight, then we have something with which to work — in such moments, I embrace my peacemaking self and charge ahead with hope and optimism. However, there are moments when I realize that such hopes are, at best, simplistic and naïve. I hear things said that leave me wondering if this peacemaking self is nothing but an Uncle Tom, giving colonial and oppressive powers what they want at the expense of my own people.

While many in my social and professional milieu are well informed about the situation in Palestine, many others are not. Consequently, I see people dear and close to me taking actions that could only worsen my people's predicament, by putting money in the hands of their oppressors. Increasingly, I hear statements and see actions taken that leave me feeling as if they are saying, You think we respect you and see you as an equal, but you will always be a suspected terrorist and never fully human.

In such moments, I become my son in the dream, buried in a ditch of disillusionment and disappointments, unable to move, and kicked in the face by friend and foe.

I want to end with this: We the Palestinians are formidable people. We survived seventy years of an unending catastrophe. Outside Palestine, we helped build nations, developed economies, and changed worlds. To paraphrase Noura Erekat, the Palestinian-American human rights lawyer, in Palestine itself, we continue to live and fight for freedom, although confronted daily by the most powerful army and the only nuclear power in the region that is supported by the only superpower on the planet. Things are changing. Increasingly, more individuals are recognizing the Palestinians' mistreatment and abuse and are speaking out. I believe a critical mass of supporters of Palestine is beginning to coalesce and will eventually reach a tipping point. The trajectory of the Palestinians' path will change.

So, perhaps my son in the dream symbolizes the Palestinians' sumud (their steadfast perseverance). He is planted in the motherland, loyal and resolute, carrying on his people's journey of resilience and heroism. ■

-

Email: lamakhouri9@gmail.com



SOCCKERSCAPES

Shelley Himmelstein

[Go to the Online Gallery](#)

I paint to create a space "to be," a space to reflect and connect me back to the physical world. My images spring when I pause to be "in the moment" and absorb where I am and what's happening. When making cursory sketches or snapshots, I'm drawn especially to characteristics that transcend time and exist outside of narrative and that mix the everyday and the transcendent, the scripted and the spontaneous. The impressions are often from my travels, televised sporting events, and music or jazz performances. These set the stage, so to speak, where I distill out most referential detail and through abstraction explore the relationship of space and light in search of a simple yet pervasive expression of the experience.

SoccerScapes: FIFA World Cup Series

My series on FIFA World Cup developed as the memories from living and studying in Italy. Beyond being exposed to its great art traditions and history, I witnessed the enthusiasm building up through the matches in 1978 to Argentina's victory, and then again in 1982 to Italy's spectacular triumph over Germany. In these years a creative seed was planted that surfaced during the 1990s in New York.

With each new series, I shift my approach to open up new possibilities. I chose watercolor for its fluid and immediate nature,

very much like the energy of the matches themselves. The event that these works spring from is full of action, an amalgam of pageantry and people, rather than a fixed moment and place. Also, unlike most of my landscapes and urbanscapes that are revisited and developed over months, these compositions are created with a self-imposed constraint that they be completed within the duration of the match.

In 1994, when USA hosted the World Cup, broadcasts of the matches were ubiquitous in delis, bodegas, and all type of workplaces, homes, and bars. The visual beauty and choreography of the matches captivated me as I was swept up in the excitement of the multinational population of New York, and I began to fill a sketchbook. I superimposed and collaged images of the fields, flags, and uniforms in ways that expanded my approach to landscape. In the following months, I revisited the images and motifs of select compositions on canvas in oil paint and eventually came to refer to these as "soccerScapes."

Each subsequent FIFA World Cup drew me in again, and in 2006, I fully committed to capturing the individual energy, field angles, and pageantry of participant countries' colors in each and every match. Working in the abstract tradition and using Prismacolor sticks and pencils, I created a series of large-scale works on paper. ■

MEMORIAL

Rachel Neve-Midbar

I watch you call the names of your dead,
each forms deep in your throat, falls from your mouth
like chess pieces or toy soldiers, even the children
posed with field phones and guns—everyone ready for battle.

The names tumble to the lectern, perch there
despite the hard currents of your sorrow,
your tears, my tears, splintered

and spilling from tabletop to floor. Yes
name your dead, each who fell in grace or not,
in innocence or not. And I will name mine.

When I name names, am I counting doves or darkness?

Our lists swell, the dead crowding in, anger
plain on their faces, even as we clean their bodies, prepare
the earth, all of us greedy for more anger,
to claw at borders, dispatch these names into the void,
blame clutched in their talons, the language of this conflict
so easy in our mouths, so easy—

What lies on the other side
of the mirror if we choose to walk through
to a place where the sounds of the wounded
are lost in the whispered sand

and we can only hear water, a river,
or perhaps just the clank of dishes in the sink,
the soft sound of water washing away
the last of a good meal shared together?

Lay with me back to back. Don't you see
we are two sides of the same hair?

Please, we can do this together.
You hold the amulet while I
carry you across the divide.

BLACK PSYCHOANALYSTS Speak III

BEYOND BORDERS AND BOUNDARIES

For all of its potential to do good, psychoanalysis has tended to focus on problems that can be narrowly viewed as stemming from intrapsychic and familial problems, and it has failed to include social and historical forces and inequities into its theory and practice. As such, it is much maligned, and often thought to be irrelevant, among nonwhite populations. If psychoanalysis is to remain relevant, it must reevaluate its avoidance of race, class, culture, and difference. The purpose of Black Psychoanalysts Speak (BPS) is to bring these variables into systematic consideration.

This clinical conference is designed for therapists who work consciously or, as importantly, unconsciously with race in the therapeutic dyad. Issues of race occur most obviously when therapist and patient are of different races and more subtly, but no less significantly, when therapist and patient are of the same race. This conference is designed to crystallize these issues so their implications might be consciously considered.

Demonstrations using case conference methodologies, discussion, and self-reflection will be the core of this conference experience. Coupled with a didactic presentation, these approaches will be used to highlight, stimulate, and explore personal and interpersonal dynamics as they exist in the treatment room. Conference participants will have the opportunity in small groups and in larger settings to share insights, raise questions, and offer experiences relevant to racial enactment in their own work with patients.

NOVEMBER 17TH, 2018

9:00 am to 5:00 pm**

The New School for Social Research
66 West 12th Street, NY, NY 10011

Dionne Powell, M.D.

"Breaking walls and building bridges:
Bringing race into the therapeutic conversation"

Case Presenters:

Cleonie White, Ph.D.;
Michael Moskowitz, Ph.D.

Consultants:

Kathleen Pogue White, Ph.D.,
Kirkland Vaughans, Ph.D.

To register for this conference
[CLICK HERE](#)



“Nigger take this! Take it, I tell ya!” Howard yells at the black carhop. It is 1951 in Macon, Georgia. I am eight years old. My brother, Toby, is six. We are in the back seat of a 1948 Ford. I am cringing. I do not know what Toby is doing—probably laughing and picking his butt.

“Naw, sah. Naw, sah.” The black carhop shakes his head, backing away from the brown paper bag my stepfather, seated in the driver’s seat, holds closed in his fist. From the bag comes noises that sound like a hurt and angry animal.

“Nigger, ya want me to whip ya? I tell ya, take this here bag,” Howard yells when no sounds come from the bag. As the man steps to take the bag, screeches and growls erupt from it again. The carhop, eyes wide with terror, jerks away until again my stepfather yells, “Nigger, ya know what is good for ya, ya take this.”

The thin, dark man stands four feet from the car, frozen still, his eyes flashing their whites. He says, “Yas, sah. Yas, sah.” He does not move for what seems like an hour, until Howard throws the bag at him and it erupts in louder noises. The carhop runs.

Laughing raucously, Howard snickers. “Stupid niggers,” he says to his friend, Buck, in the passenger seat.

Buck stops his ventriloquism to join the laughter and yell, “Hey, nigger, ya butta do whayer told, or we get you. Get here an’ take our order. Don’t you drop nuthin neither. These childrun need some french-fried potatoes and a Coca-Cola. Them potatoes better be hot and them Coca-Colas good and cold.”

Still almost choking with laughter, Howard reinforces Buck’s order, “And ya be quick about it.”

10.18.6

AFTER THE LYNCHING MUSEUM

by Elizabeth Trawick

The thin carhop turns, runs. When he returns with fries and cokes for Toby and me, his shaking hands can barely hold the tray, causing another explosion from Howard. “Nigger, ya good for nuthin’. Cain’t ya even carry no food? Why ya even alive?” Laughing, Howard and Buck pass another brown paper bag between them, taking swigs of whiskey from the bottle hidden inside.

For as long as I can remember, this scene has played in the back of my mind. In conversations with liberals confessing our racist backgrounds, I related with shame that I came from this family and with pride that I have come to be able to tell of it. Listeners respond with disdainful faces and comments that seem to show they have not grasped the full significance of the event.

Until two days ago, I didn’t grasp the full significance either. Not until I walked among cement, coffin-like, rust colored rectangles at the National Memorial for Peace and Justice, aka the Lynching Memorial, in Montgomery, Alabama. All of my young life in Macon, Georgia, I had heard adults laugh about the “spookiness” of “niggers” who were just scared of everything. It seemed to be a genetic impairment with no possible explanation, nothing the whites could have done to scare them. It was further evidence that niggers were just stupid. Of course, as a southern child, I knew nothing of slavery.

Walking through the first covered pavilion of coffinesque slabs hanging from the ceiling at the memorial, I began to hear my stepfather’s voice: Nigger, take this. And to see

my stepfather's hand extending
from the car window holding the squawking brown
paper bag. I saw the thin black man's wide, frightened
eyes as he jumped back. All the rest of the scene
came alive in my mind. I was in it all again.

At each coffin, I heard Howard's and Buck's
derisive, half-drunk laughter.

Howard had invited Toby and me out for a Coca-Cola
and french fries and to play a game with him and Buck.
We were generally intrigued with Buck's ability
as a ventriloquist. I suppose we hoped he would make
our ears bark, or a woman on the street meow,
or that we'd be included in some other secret, grown-up
game. We were supposed to like their game.
I sat silent until Howard turned and yelled, "What's
the matter with you knuckleheads? Ain't ya having
fun? I'll give you one upside the head to cry about."

Toby laughed maniacally. I stared.
Howard did not hit me if I sat still.

I did not know why Howard and Buck were scaring
the carhop. I knew it was mean. I did not like mean
games. Likely I felt but did not know the level
of hatred and violence enacted in the game.

Members of the Equal Justice Initiative investigated
lynchings across the south and were able to identify
more than 4,400 victims between 1877 and 1950,
with the dates and counties of the lynchings. Each
of the eight hundred columns at the memorial represents
a county where a lynching took place. The names
of the county and state and the lynching victims
themselves are engraved on one of eight hundred columns.

Macon, Georgia, is in Bibb County. The column
for that county lies in a long row of Georgia slabs flat
on the ground like a coffin. Looking at the four names
on the Bibb County column, I saw the carhops terrified eyes
as I heard my stepfather yelling, "What ya even alive for?"

What kind of man was my stepfather that he would
think it funny to "scare a nigger half to death,"
as he and Buck said? What kind of people did more
than scare other people half to death but went all
the way to killing them? Did he? How is this anchored
still in souls of those who enacted this violence?

Though afraid of heights, I learned to climb pecan trees,
to be lost when Howard called Toby
and me to go for Coca-Cola on Saturday afternoons.
Toby, always hungry, loved the fries and cokes.
His son, now a Trump lover, posts sorrowless hatred
on Facebook. My son walked with me through
the National Memorial for Peace
and Justice, sharing sorrow.

It is not that Toby was a bad person. He was simply
born two years after me, a year and a half after our father
returned from D-Day with a disastrous post-traumatic
stress disorder. Toby knew no father's love
and care and none of our mother's happiness
when she was grounded in a caring relationship,
as I briefly had been.

How can the damage ever be repaired? ■

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE DEMOCRATS?

by Carolyn Ellman

What happened to the party of the working class? When did the Democratic party become a party that neglects the poor? When did politicians stop fighting for economic equality and abandon the economically disadvantaged? When did fundraising take precedence over all other political activity?

In reading books such as *Listen, Liberal* by Thomas Frank, *White Trash* by Nancy Isenberg, and *Dream Hoarders* by Richard V. Reeves (in order to make sense of why Hillary and the Democratic Party lost the election), I was faced with the uncomfortable reality that we all have become part of a system that overwhelmingly favors certain classes of people over others. I have tried to impress on my fellow Democrats that Hillary lost not only because of Russian interference and the blunder of James Comey and the poor way that the campaign was run, but also because the Democratic party has really lost its way.

Listen, Liberal by Frank was a wake-up call because, in it, he details how, over the last forty years, the Democratic Party — starting with the Carter administration's open hostility to unions — has turned their backs on unions and the middle and working classes and the poor to curry favor with wealthy (and purportedly “liberal”) billionaire CEOs largely from technology

and financial companies. We — what Frank describes as “the professional class” sitting below the corporate executive class — have supported this new political alignment through our votes and campaign contributions, and not voicing vociferously enough our opposition.

What was so important and so eye-opening was how Frank spells out the way that the Democrats have given up so many parts of the working class's American dream for the past several decades, starting with Carter and continuing through subsequent Democratic administrations.

Frank chronicles how, time and again, the Clinton and Obama administrations, using language to promote the “inevitability” of “entrepreneurial technological innovation and progress,” ultimately aided the financial and technological industries in ushering in significant changes and disruptions to our economy and society — mostly to the benefit of a few insider individuals, creating massive wealth inequality.

In hammering home the positive influences of technological and economic change, these administrations touted controversial economic and labor agreements, such as NAFTA, TPP, and congressional legislation, such as the '90s welfare reform and repeal of Glass-Steagal, which overwhelmingly favored corporate profits and justification for enormous

increases in executive pay.

All of this was deemed “inevitable progress” by our cheering democratic leaders, as workers suffered in terms of job stability and pay, and the poor, the retirees, and the working class were pushed out. Many local, state, and national Democrats have spoken as if they're on the side of the poor and middle class, but in reality, lobbyists write most of the legislation cranked out by both parties. Today, economically speaking, there exists little difference between the parties, the major difference being that the Democrats espouse a more libertarian view of social behavior and individual rights, and the Republicans espouse a more totalitarian and repressive social regime. This explains why wealth accumulation and the wealth gap over the past forty years has been a straight, unadulterated line upward across all administrations and congresses, with 1987, 2001, and 2008 representing momentary moments of downward wealth accumulation for the ruling class and the loss of stable jobs for many Americans.

When the Democratic Party reaches out to us for money, they tell us they're on the side of social justice, and in many significant ways they are, but where does the money actually go? We need only to look at our own city and the recent multibillion dollar scandals around the New York Housing Authority's



handling of toxic NYC housing projects to understand how the poor are neglected. It is very important to me to give credit to the Democratic Party for all its work on climate change (which clearly benefits us and the whole world), the fight for women's rights, the protection of the courts, and more. But when it comes to certain very important social programs, such as Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid, it hasn't been the voice of the Democrats in power that speaks the loudest for these "entitlements." It's actually come more from the progressive end of the party.

Many of the Democrats do usually say all the right things to liberal ears, although Biden and Obama both came out against gay marriage during their first campaign. But they are telling us things some of us want to hear, and then behind the scenes, they may be doing something else. So Obama became the "deporter in chief," deporting millions of people and building the complexes now used to house the separated children, and Bill Clinton became the "imprisoner in chief," signing into law the three strikes and you're out crime bills, which sent into overdrive the building of prisons and the imprisonment of millions of black males; roughly a third of all black males are locked up for one thing or another

at some point in their lives. Again, these were silent, stealthy moves, so we wouldn't see the enormity of what was happening to the underclass, and to people of color more generally. Obama, to his credit, sought to decriminalize some minor offenses but didn't really fight to make life better for the poor (except for protecting Medicaid through Obamacare).

The reason for this statement is not to make us feel bad and mope around that we are at fault. It is meant to take a hard look at who we have been supporting, their policies, and whether they are more interested in perpetuating a capitalism that can roll back and bury the New Deal policies that have held this country together since the early 1930s. I am also writing this because, before I read Thomas Frank, there were so many things that "my leaders" had voted for that I knew very little about. I was too blinded by the social programs that seemed to indicate a more enlightened populace to pay attention to all the white men that were committing suicide because their lives were so destroyed economically (as reported over and over in the New York Times)! I started paying attention after Hillary lost, hence all the books I have read since then.

This massive wealth concentration into the pockets of a handful of people

isn't necessarily inevitable, but it will become inevitable if we don't start loudly speaking up as we face a future society of intermittently paid-for-hire contractors, as opposed to employees, with executives remaining the sole fully employed with benefits and perks — and our leaders are not the ones to support us in this crucial moment in world history. We need new leaders, not necessarily career politicians but everyday people like you and me and our children, who are not yet caught up in a system of corruption and corporate power.

So support local candidates. Support left-leaning politicians who support progress for all people and not the status quo. Because we care so much about identity politics (like women's rights, Black Lives Matter, gay rights), we have to make sure we're not blinded by people fighting for abortion rights (or some other issue we care deeply about) but who don't do what they can to lessen inequality in this country. The party of Franklin D. Roosevelt and the work Lyndon B. Johnson did to create a "great society" seem more like the party that we read about in our history books — because in those books America was the land of opportunity for all.

That was a party to be proud of.
That is the party to bring back. ■

—
Email: cellman174@aol.com





Photography by Isai Ramos.
Ten fragments of the original Berlin Wall located on the 5900 Wilshire Boulevard,
Los Angeles, California.

10.18.8

PSYCHOANALYSIS' FOURTH WALL

by Isaac Tylim

The “fourth wall” is a technical device used by actors. It works in the following way: Actors choose a spot in the back of the theater, internalize it, and move on with the action, bypassing the potential interference of the audience’s gaze. The fourth wall aims to strengthen the illusion that what takes place onstage is private, shielded from the impinging randomness of the external world. Reality is put on hold in order to create and sustain theatrical intimacy. The only reality that counts is the reality of the script.

The power of the script may elicit strong effects in the performers or spectators. In ancient Greece, it is said that the power of Sophocles’ tragedies could induce premature labor in pregnant women. An intermission or break in the action may be sufficient to restore a balance between fantasy and reality. The playwright Bertold Brecht recommended a device to bring down the fourth wall that he called “the estrangement effect.” In the middle of an emotionally charged scene, he directed his actors to alert the audience against confusing the world onstage with the world off stage. He directed actors to interrupt the production, face the audience, and simply state: “This is fiction. Don’t take it for reality.”

Analogous to a theater production, the psychoanalytic frame also relies on a fourth wall. Psychoanalysis is conducted within walls that foster regression and minimize the interference of the outside world. The fourth wall in psychoanalysis is the one that closes the space to make it private and prevent it from being contaminated by an excess of reality. It is the fourth wall that keeps the ordinary world out. Analysts at the end of the session, like theatergoers during an intermission, may experience themselves moved back to the mundane. The analytic frame delineates a space where the psyche and external world come into contact, a place where the psychoanalytic project might be safe on one hand and at risk of being disrupted on the other. The frame is like a wall that carries disavowed aspects of analyst or analysand.

In psychoanalysis, analysts and analysands co-create and produce “theatre” scripts represented in the analytic arena. The analytic dyad evolves in scenarios where theater of the mind and/or theater of the body (neurotic, psychotic, psychosomatic) may be performed (McDougall, 1989). Not unlike actors in training who are expected to sustain and manage the fourth wall, analysts build fourth wall

versions to prevent the analytic space from being disrupted by the external world. The aim is to foster regression and the development of transference. An imaginary fourth wall keeps the analytic dyad secluded (if not protected) from the weight of external reality and its disruptive potential.

Whatever assurance this fourth wall may provide to the analytic dyad, life’s unexpected intrusions — whether political, social, or catastrophic upheavals — invariably enter the analytic stage, challenging the stability of the fourth wall, and often tearing it down. When suddenly the external world leaks into the sacrosanct domain of a session, it is bound to produce what the literary theorist Ronald Barthes has called “the reality effect.” It is equivalent to a disruption in the middle of a theater performance — a cell phone ringing or a theater patron suffering a heart attack during the second act.

The fourth wall came down in many analyses during the aftermath of our last election.

No analyst can anticipate and prevent the analytic setting from the reality effect. When actors trained under the Stanislavsky method find themselves in the midst of a sudden eruption during a performance, they incorporate that reality into the plot so, as the saying goes, the show may go on. What about analysts? How can they hold on to the transference-countertransference paradigm and the vicissitudes of the inner world when external reality becomes toxic to the process? How does one proceed when the fourth wall is coming down? Under the best circumstances, analysts are expected to mobilize their own creativity at a moment’s notice, hoping that, in confronting the unexpected, spontaneous interventions may do the job often reserved for complex interpretations. At the same time, when an analytic fourth wall unexpectedly comes down, the urge to replace it may seduce the analytic dyad into working within a bubble of denial and negation.

But might there be instances in psychoanalytic treatment when the removal of the fourth wall may be necessary?

At the 2017 International Psychoanalytic Association Congress held in Buenos Aires, a poignant comment made by an esteemed colleague stirred in me a need to explore the aftermath of the coming down of

the fourth wall in analytic treatment. It became apparent that analysts from diverse countries and orientations were hesitant to share the responses they had when facing intrusions of the unexpected. The reticence came from the feelings of shame resulting from violating the classical frame, from a sense that they were betraying the canons of their training and their supervisors' wisdom. Questions were raised as to whether there are times when analysts must forgo interpretations that attempt to link the present to the past and delve into the present distress emanating from real or fake news.

Rather than devalue these topics that defy traditional ways of thinking about the analytic frame, perhaps analysts can facilitate an opening to think together about the unexpected, bringing down the wall. Might not analysts and analysands together reflect upon ongoing, devastating news of school massacres, children separated from their parents, and the unrelenting push to build real walls?

Following the last election, several analysands could only speak about the results. For their analysts to interpret their fear of aggression, father conflict, or narcissism would have been the equivalent of sealing the space with a fourth wall. The sense of despair or hopelessness many analysands felt were not just scenes from a private theater but a shared reality that enveloped the analytic dyad.

A telling anecdote that involves Freud, provided by Gampel, an Israeli analyst, may serve as illustration. During the years leading to World War II, news censorship was prevalent in Vienna. Residents had no access to real news (fake news is not an original American invention). Freud, like most Viennese citizens, was starving for neutral or more objective accounts of what was going on in the political scene. He had the good fortune of treating wealthy individuals, many of them staff of foreign embassies. One analysand used to bring him newspapers from England and other countries. The story goes that on one occasion, after his patient handed him a newspaper, Freud scanned the front page, reading aloud the devastating heading. With tears pouring out of his eyes, he said, "What will happen to our children?" The patient, moved by Freud's unusual emotional reaction, asked the master whether he would like to talk about the situation. Allegedly, Freud replied, "Let's go back to our work." In my lingo, he restored the fourth wall.

Freud, caught by the sudden, fresh news of the day, under the impact of the estrangement effect, allowed the fourth wall to collapse for an instant only to restore it soon after. He responded to his patient as a real "other" but wouldn't engage with this "other," retreating instead to his technique — the analytic fourth wall. One may speculate that he most likely went back to free-floating attention, perhaps identifying with his patient's neurotic distress.

I wonder if this kind of refuge in technique precluded the possibility of relating at a level that may have altered the binary nature of power dynamics. Talking about the social-political and historical events that affect both analyst and analysand may have allowed a shift from a relation based on power to one based on mutuality. Revisiting the theater metaphor, Freud was obviously unwilling to follow the Stanislavsky method, which would have allowed him to either improvise or engage creatively with his analysand at a moment's notice.

It is interesting to note, in Freud's writing, a paradox between the narrative of his theoretical and technical contributions, and the way he actually practiced psychoanalysis. Peter Gay points out that "in his papers on technique Freud allowed himself not a hint of escapades" (1988, p. 303). Gay alludes to the idea that, in his consulting room, the working Freud permitted himself many "escapades" from the recommendations he prescribed in his technique papers. (Freud may have been a closeted fourth wall breaker!)

Analysts and analysands partake of multiple worlds that tend to overlap. Thus, it is relevant to consider clinical practice in relation to analysts' and patients' everyday lives — social and political violence, prejudice, and the opinions that develop in the process of inhabiting social places. Overall, American psychoanalysts had — up to 9/11 — neglected to address the presence of sociopolitical realities in the analytic situation. One may regard this past neglect as the confluence of multiple factors: the operation of culturally reinforced sanitized versions of the American dream, denial and negation, and the priority given to the internal world. However, to escape the effect of reality seems impossible in today's world.

At some point, the fourth wall comes down. ■



10.18.9

ESTRANGEMENT EFFECT POLITICS AND THE PSYCHOANALYTIC THEATRE

by Aneta Stojnić

Art is not a mirror
to reflect reality,
but a hammer with
which to shape it.
—Bertolt Brecht

As a young candidate transferring from the field of performing arts and theory into psychoanalysis, I am struck by their provocative resonances. In addition to theoretical connections I have noticed between psychoanalysis and performing arts/performance studies, resonances emerge from actual practice on the one hand and, on the other, thoughts concerning the analytic community's place and role in contemporary society. In this short text, I will focus on the first, keeping in mind the latter, which deserves an elaboration of its own.

In thinking about the role of the analyst and the analysand, as well as the analytic space itself, one word keeps popping up in my mind: *Verfremdungseffekt* (vɜ:ʔæmdʊŋsəˌfɛkt), aka *V-effekt* (fʌʊəˌfɛkt) — a performance technique developed by Bertolt Brecht for actors of his “epic theatre.”

Verfremdungseffekt is one of those German words difficult to grasp in translation, and theatre people often use the original as a technical term. The common English translations are “distancing effect,” “alienation effect,” and, in my opinion, the most accurate and faithful to Brecht's actual intention, the “estrangement effect.” The technique's goal is to make the familiar strange, in order to provoke a new insight that triggers a social-critical audience response.

But first things first: German leftist playwright, director, poet, and theorist Bertolt Brecht was arguably one of the most significant figures in the history of twentieth-century art. Not only did he revolutionize the field of theatre and performing arts, but his theatrical innovations from the 1920s and '30s have also paved a new way to politically and socially engaged art and remain influential to this day.

The mainstream, commercial theatre of Brecht's time was everything but political. The dominant style was realism and naturalism, with actors using the Stanislavsky method (that would later become known as "method acting"). The skill of an actor was seen in his/her ability to portray a character as believably, realistically, and naturally as possible (quite similar to contemporary Hollywood films). The actors would completely identify with their characters, which would then lead to the audience identifying with the characters and situations presented onstage. Actors would "feel" what their characters "felt," and their audience would "feel" along with them. Audiences would come to theatre to see themselves, their own lives, desires, and problems, mirrored onstage. They would go to the theatre to perform their class identity, to passively consume the content, to confirm what they already thought and knew. Ultimately, they would leave the play content and unchanged.

Fiercely political, Brecht resented this kind of "bourgeois" dramatic theatre based on the emotional manipulation of the audience that was completely disconnected from the social and political reality of Weimer Germany. He opposed this theatre with the new concept of "epic theatre." Epic theatre broke the illusion of the fourth wall — the pretense that characters are "real" and the stage is separated from the spectators. Instead, actors in epic theatre directly address and activate the audience. Brecht's audience could no longer be passive; as he put it, they could not "hang up their brains with their hats in the cloakroom." The social convention — the frame — was exposed: we are in theatre, this is a stage, and the people on it are actors whose job is not to indulge you and make you forget they are actors. On the contrary, actors are supposed to remain distant with their characters and provide commentary on them as well as on staged situations, in order to help the audience understand something new about themselves and their social and political reality. Ideally, the spectator would leave the theatre transformed. As Brecht explained in his essay "Theatre for Pleasure or Theatre for Instruction?":

The dramatic theatre's spectator says:


Yes, I have felt like that too — Just like me — It's only natural
 — It'll never change — The sufferings of this man appall me,
 because they are inescapable — That's great art;
 it all seems the most obvious thing in the world
 — I weep when they weep, I laugh when they laugh.

The epic theatre's spectator says:

I'd never have thought it — That's not the way
 — That's extraordinary, hardly believable
 — It's got to stop — The sufferings of this man appall me,
 because they are unnecessary
 — That's great art; nothing obvious in it —
 I laugh when they weep, I weep when they laugh.

Brecht developed the estrangement effect as a performance method designed to produce this reaction in the audience. Although acting believably and skillfully, the Brechtian performer does not lose herself in "becoming the character." While playing a role, I remain myself in that role, and it is crucial that I make the audience aware of it. The Brechtian performer is simultaneously in the character as well as observing the character, the situation onstage, and the audience. In analytic terms: the observing ego is always active.

Brecht developed many estrangement techniques. For example, actors would interrupt the ongoing scene and address the spectators directly in a song that would interpret the events in an unexpected way, making them think beyond what seemed obvious. Often each actor would play multiple characters, changing in front of the audience, stepping out of one role and into the other. Simple, unrealistic scenography left the stage machinery in plain view. On a dramaturgical level, Brecht used historicization to draw connections between historical and current events. For example, staging Richard III today, a story about a cruel medieval king is only relevant if it can tell us something explicit about the abuse of power in our contemporary political reality. Through the estrangement effect, Brechtian actors enable spectators to see their world differently and confront things they have been avoiding in their everyday lives. For Brecht, this was a political move par excellence.



As I've started analytic training, associations to my experience with Brechtian performance tradition keep coming back, both when I'm in the room with patients and when I'm in the room with my own analyst. Much like a Brechtian actor, a psychoanalyst gets cast into different roles within the transference. While becoming that character, she also maintains distance from it and remains the analyst. She makes an effort to understand what is happening in the room between the patient and the analyst/character, and waits for the right moment to offer an interpretation or otherwise bring the patient to an insight. It feels much like the *Verfremdungseffekt* effect. Of course, the analytic situation is much more intimate. There is no stage and audience, and rather than political reality, we are dealing with psychic reality. Nevertheless, the analysand too understands that the frame is a social convention. In a more Stanislavskyan approach, which is an approach Isaac Tylim describes in his essay "[Psychoanalysis' Fourth Wall](#)" in this issue of **ROOM**, the frame may appear to function as a fourth wall that provides a total illusion of "realness." However, I have come to believe that the analytic room functions more as a real Brechtian performance space where both parties, while immersed in the situation, are also aware of its artificiality, and this understanding is precisely what holds the frame together. Estrangement effect opens the creative space for insight, interpretation, and negotiation between psychic reality and so-called external reality.

From the beginning of the twentieth century, artists/the art world increasingly became aware of a necessity to become political. The arts were struggling with the questions: How do we stay relevant in the midst of the turmoil of contemporary reality? How do we respond to new technologies, urgent issues, challenges, and rapid changes of our times? How do we critically engage with social context and transgress the limitations and exclusivity of the "white cube" or "art for the sake of art" in order to make positive impact in concrete sociopolitical reality? Since then, politically engaged art has arguably become one of the dominant and most influential streams in contemporary art. It was a way to revive the whole field. Brecht was one of the pioneers of the movement.

As I enter the world of psychoanalysis, through conversations with much more experienced colleagues gathered around **ROOM** and elsewhere, I have come to realize that, at this moment, the psychoanalytic community is asking very similar questions. While I don't argue for some kind of Brechtian analysis, I do feel that Brecht and other artists can be helpful, not only for our analytic experience, but also for thinking about the productive and creative ways for the analytic community to relate to and engage with our current political reality. ■

THE ELEPHANT (WALK) IN THE ROOM

by Joseph A. Cancelmo

There has been a curious omission in the public debate following Dr. Christine Blasey Ford's testimony to the Senate Judiciary Committee on allegations of sexual assault by the Supreme Court nominee Judge Brett Kavanaugh—curious yet somehow present in its absence. Not surprising, from a psychoanalytic standpoint. And not so absent among men in the consulting room in the days since the hearings.

Rightly, the outcry over these allegations has focused on the #MeToo movement. The unearthing of systemic, heteronormative, white male dominance and abuse of woman and minorities and the institutional, societal structures that keep such dominance in place were on full display in the narrowly circumscribed hearings. The judge's outrage, echoed by nearly the entire committee's aging male membership, painted him the victim. Both of the Donalds, President and Junior, subsequently noted the importance of this "cultural moment," taking broad swipes at dangerous women who wield such unilateral power against men. In this "confusion of tongues," the perpetrator becomes the victim. This is a machine-gun-like projection of blame in which political pivot meets psychological defense.

Perhaps these hearings have unwittingly "outed" a more threatening societal discussion: how men galvanize their male identities and ward off unacceptable impulses en route to that identity. It is the impulse that dare not speak its name—men's homoerotic attachments that are, for all men, the bedrock of healthy masculine development, whatever one's eventual sexual orientation.

Freud spoke of the essential bisexuality of human beings, a fluidity and complexity of erotic desire. While he got many things wrong about women's development, he was much less off the mark about men and men's preoccupation with their sexual equipment and potency. This need for men to define their masculinity in the crucible of competition and comradery with men, from high school to college, in organized sports and fraternities, has offered both the best and the worst opportunities for the development of masculine identity. It is instructive to consider the ways in which such necessary and facilitative bonding and identification can go terribly awry for a man, indeed, for a society that institutionalizes male dominance over women.

In her meticulously researched and incisive book *Not Gay*, professor of women's studies Dr. Jane Ward chronicles the ways in which young men may use such eroticized contact to galvanize male identity and express desire with impunity. Fraternities of young men, whether formal organizations or more informal groupings, often express such desire through aggressive humiliation and control tactics. It is the definition of the heteronormative via the homoerotic, masquerading as group bonding. She writes about one such activity,

the “Elephant Walk” as a communal act that links young male pledges to each other. In the version she describes, men suck one of their own thumbs and insert the other into the anus of the pledge directly in front ([click here to read the urban dictionary definition](#))
What is split off in the process of such bonding is the degree to which masculine identification is forged through group physicality with men that is, in turn, expressed through aggression toward women.

This idea begs several questions. What are young men doing when they “team up” to assault a women? What are young men doing when they get a young woman drunk to the point of non-consent and then line up together to have their way together, with her? This is male bonding gone wild. It is a desire for comradery and shared masculine experience at once perverse and destructive.

As horrific as these acts are unto themselves, the underbelly of these experiences is also an assault on men by men. Younger pledges are subjects and servants to their big brothers, who, in turn, were once subjected to such acts to show their loyalty, to pledge their allegiance. Men’s locker room antics, such as the thrusting of genitals toward other men, a display of dominance and submission, also take their power from their nonconsensual nature. These are everyday occurrences in high schools and on college campuses. And of course, the social lubricant and defense that takes these acts up a notch and over to dangerous places is alcohol. These acts almost always go unspoken, unacknowledged. And like all traumatic and conflictual experiences, what goes around comes around. What is left is the liquid defense: “I like beer. I drink beer. Do you like beer?”

This developmental need to bond has suffered from the binary structure of maleness and femaleness. We now know such dichotomies to be psychologically inaccurate to the experience of most if not all men and women. Fortunately, Millennial and iGeneration men suffer much less from this estrangement and are more comfortable with shades of gray in sexual identities and orientations. A “bro hug” is the common greeting these days, and handshakes are more passé. Not so much for the Baby Boomers and Generation X—the cohort of male senators on the committee and Judge Kavanaugh.

To have engaged with Dr. Ford’s testimony by bringing in the men who were witness to the events she alleges would threaten more than a Supreme Court nomination. It would open up a painful dialogue and more conscious reckoning with conflictual aspects of men’s development, on personal and societal levels. It also would present another opportunity for further transformations in our patriarchal society that threatens institutions and male identity. And while it is unthinkable to dismiss such behaviors as a rite of passage or have empathy for men who perpetrate such acts on women, acknowledging such acts by men against men is a potential avenue into this dialogue.

Perhaps a crack in this systemic edifice was seen in the reaction of many men to Kavanaugh’s tear, couched as his right to express his “victimhood” in this less than typically masculine way. If we consider reframing these tears as tears for a collective, beleaguered male self—including the vast majority of men who would never lay hands on a woman without her consent—perhaps we can begin to address and more fully engage the elephant in the room that has entered our societal consciousness. ■

OUTSIDERNESS

CONFERENCE
IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

New Directions: Writing with a Psychoanalytic Edge brings together clinicians, academicians, and writers in an environment designed to foster intellectual growth and enhance participants' ability to write about personal and professional topics.

FEBRUARY 1-3, 2019

Keynote speakers include:

Ethelbert Miller, poet, memoirist, and founder and director of the Ascension Poetry Reading Series, and director of Howard University's African-American Resource Center. He is co-editor of Poet Lore magazine, former chair of the Humanities Council of Washington, D.C., and has served on the boards of the AWP, PEN American Center, PEN/Faulkner Foundation, and the Washington Area Lawyer for the Arts (WALA).

Gurmeet S. Kanwal, M.D. is clinical associate professor of psychiatry at Weill Medical College of Cornell University, supervising psychoanalyst and teaching faculty at the William Alanson White Institute, and formerly president of the William Alanson White Psychoanalytic Society. He is a member of the Editorial Board of the International Journal of Psychoanalysis and Journal of Psychoanalytic Discourse.

Aria Beth Sloss is the recipient of fellowships from the Iowa Arts Foundation, the Yaddo Corporation, and the Vermont Studio Center, and her writing has appeared in Glimmer Train, the Harvard Review, and online at the Paris Review and Five Chapters. She is the author of Autobiography of Us.

Boris Thomas, J.D., Ph.D., whose clinical and scholarly interests focus on race, culture, intersectionality, and the individual's unconscious integration and reenactment of legal and political systems, was a fellow in the International Psychoanalytical Association Research Training Program at University College London. A former litigation attorney, Thomas specialized in labor and employment law.



Feeling different, marginalized, or excluded is common and painful. Confronted with the discordance between one's sense of oneself and one's perception of the way the world sees us — not white, not heterosexual, not young, not "normal" — we may feel doubly damaged — socially alien and alien to ourselves. A sense of "outsiderness" can overwhelm and define our experience and become an identity. But "outsiderness" need not be a fixed or static position paralyzing the self. It can be a shifting position in which one may be an insider one moment and an outsider the next. This shifting point of view, enabling one to see the world from more than one perspective, is, of course, the stance of some of the most thoughtful individuals — artists, intellectuals, and, often, at our best, psychotherapists. Thus, as thinking and feeling individuals, we may fiercely embrace the outsider position, taking pride in the status of "other" that allows us witness and speak of things others may not see.

For more details contact:

Kerry Malawista, Ph.D.
KMAlawista@gmail.com

WORD SEEDS

Kaja Weeks

Words have been igniting
from combustible seeds.

The man's rapid-fire discharges
from a stunned, old, white house.

When resistance flames back,
he bitter-tweets *Retaliate*—

brags, *Bigly* for self,
blasts others as *Losers*.

Pleas blister the air: *Help us*.
His crass scream pelts *Your Fault!*

His words latch to *Bump-Stocks*,
boast of personal *nuclear* prowess.

Overnight, Alchemist of Annihilation
bares his teeth, hisses high whistles
into the stratosphere so they pierce
new hours and set them trembling.

Minds create sonic barriers to stop
explosions from perforating eardrums,
their missile pods from propelling
into our eyes, through brains,
sizzling down throats,
engulfing our beating hearts.

In that moment of caesura,
pre-word sounds—infant wails—

wrench the border between
silence and cacophony,

parch southern winds—
demand to be heard, to be borne.

We shall not sow these caustic seeds
he renders onto beloved soil.



You Know It's Bad
When The
Introverts
Are Marching

ROOM 2.19

[CLICK HERE TO JOIN OUR MAILING LIST](#)

OR DOWNLOAD PAST ISSUES IN THIS LINK: ANALYTIC-ROOM.COM/ISSUES/

We are pleased to invite you to the fourth

ROOM ROUNDTABLE

We will hear from **ROOM 10.18**
authors who interpret both
very recent events and the larger
picture of our fractured world.

NOVEMBER 4th, 2018
IPTAR - 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM

The next Room Roundtable will be held at:
THE INSTITUTE FOR PSYCHOANALYTIC
TRAINING AND RESEARCH (IPTAR)

Conference Room

1651 3rd Avenue suite 205
New York City, NY 10128

Facilitated by Richard Grose and Janet Fisher



CONTRIBUTE TO ROOM

ROOM: A Sketchbook for Analytic Action

was created in 2017 in response to a bewildering and frightening political reality.

This virtual analytic space is dedicated to providing on-going room for authentic and diverse thought. We welcome clinical, theoretical, political and philosophical essays, as well as poetry, stories, artwork, photography, and announcements. Add your voice to **ROOM**.

2.19 Open Call Submission Deadline: JAN 4th, 2019

Mail Essays* | Poems | Art | Photographs
directly to: ROOMinIPTAR@gmail.com

*Length: Max 2000 words

ROOM IS FREE

ROOM is made possible through hours of volunteer time and your tax deductible donations. Please consider helping **ROOM** by:

DONATING HERE

Possible with PayPal

or send a check made out to:
IPTAR (in care of Room)

at IPTAR 1651 3rd Ave — Suite 205
New York, NY 10128

ROOM ISSUE 10.18 NEW YORK, USA

©2018

ROOM : A SKETCHBOOK FOR ANALYTIC ACTION
analytic-room.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.

NEW YORK, USA

Institute for Psychoanalytic Training and Research, Inc.
A NYS Nonprofit Corporation


1651 3rd Ave — Suite 205
New York, NY 10128

Phone: +1 (212) 427-7070

<http://iptar.org/>

Treatment available in:

Bahasa Indonesia
Danish
French
German
Greek
Hebrew
Mandarin
Italian
Korean
Polish
Russian
Serbian
Spanish
Swedish
Turkish
Vietnamese
Yiddish



**I
Voted**