

DOUBLE VISION

Ellen Luborsky Ph.D.

I am looking out the window at a gray world. The sky has lost its color. It stretches above the dark cliffs as empty space. Gray is the color of the river too, though ripples add a nuance of movement and their shine brings a glimmer of light.

Another day in the pandemic. Another day where I look for light from two sources – the one out my window and the one I am writing on right now – the computer screen. That screen has become a universal portal during this year where being close to other people is dangerous, and gatherings are taboo. That flat screen, which changes live humans into moving images, has become the place where I now work. A year ago I would have said *no thank you* to only seeing patients on a screen or hearing their voices by phone. But with no choice, here I am, looking for light in a place that strains my eyes.

When we first migrated online it felt strange and lacking. Sessions, especially those with children, felt two dimensional. Gone was spontaneity, gone was the feeling of entering a kind of sacred space, one dedicated solely to them.

That was not good. I had to find my way. So after some months of trial and error, I discovered my own answer - dial in with my human self. I tripled up the emotional energy I bring to attunement. I doubled up my visible energy, taking with my hands and looking animated.

My patients and feel live again and quite connected, even those I never met in person. Who knew? I would like to hear from each of you about how you navigate that paradox – finding a live encounter in a flat screen.

Ellen B Luborsky, Ph.D. is a clinical psychologist with decades of experience helping children and adults with the range of problems that come with being human. She is trained in psychoanalysis, play therapy, hypnotherapy, and parent-infant psychotherapy. She has been consultant in preschool settings for decades. Her short but true stories about young children were awarded top prizes by the New York Psychological Association in 2010. She hopes to bring out a book of those stories later this year. She coauthored *Research & Psychotherapy: The Vital Link* with her father, Lester Luborsky, in 2007. drellenluborsky.com

What is your ukulele?
Five consecutive tweets from the morning of January 10, 2021
create a loom for reverie.

Katherine Akhtar Straznickas

If free association is a primary vehicle for psychoanalytic work between two people, what happens when the structure of the dyad is replaced by an endless stream of tweets? Everyone is talking at once. Time distorts. The give and take of mutual exchange is reduced to retweets and replies, communications which are themselves broadcast into an uncertain audience. In this paper I will describe my associations to a sequence of five consecutive tweets that appeared in my Twitter feed on the morning of Sunday, January 10th 2021. I find that these fragmented and seemingly unrelated short blasts of information illuminate an anxious moment in our social history and describe a variety of possible futures, a range of ways to respond to the conflicts of our time. I invite you to pay attention to your own reflections as you hear my paper and I look forward to talking with you about what it is we may be discovering.

Katherine Akhtar Straznickas is a psychologist living and working in San Francisco. She is an Associate Clinical Professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at the University of California San Francisco, a member of the Board of Directors of the International Forum for Psychoanalytic Education, and the Associate Copy and Voice Conservation Editor of IFPE's online journal *Other/Wise*. Her twitter handle is @kathOdaiko.

**THE EXHAUSTION OF THE FRAGMENT:
Collage and the pandemic.**

Paul Zelevansky

In late March 2020, I left New York City to spend two months in the Chesapeake Bay area with family. What felt like a desperate escape as the dangers of the corona virus climbed dramatically had been planned, and we left after two weeks of sheltering in place. As we quickly packed, I decided that I would not continue my usual video work, but instead try to make simple collages, a kind of hand work I had not done in several decades. The pandemic was unprecedented and unpredictable, and I felt the strong impulse to pull away from the familiar.

At the beginning, the suturing of fragments with Elmer's glue functioned as a kind of self-art therapy. Each day, I would collect new elements trying to avoid explicit themes or narratives, instead attaching the parts--side-by-side, dispersed or in counter-point--as if combining notes to produce music. Music that might soothe, if not transform, my anxiety and fear.

Central to this was the impact of touch: the stiffness, weight, and stability of flat cardboard and corrugated cartons; the marking of edges or shapes with a ballpoint pen; the resistance of scissors cutting into the varieties of materials; the gluing down of parts positioned and held in place. The eyes and intellect made the selections and defined the relationships, but the fingers and hands did most of the work.

When fragments of words and images are aligned in the collages, the constellation of references gives each part a new life and meaning beyond its origins. All become actors, props, scenery, stage directions in a psychic and kinetic play without a pre-assigned script.

This proposed talk speaks to the healing power of the exhausted fragment rescued through acts of imagination and will.

Paul Zelevansky is an artist and writer living in New York City. His work includes animation, video, artists books, theoretical writing, performance, graphic design and teaching. He has published several visual novels (artists books) including *THE BOOK OF TAKES*, *THE CASE FOR THE BURIAL OF ANCESTORS* trilogy, *THE SHADOW ARCHITECTURE AT THE CROSSROADS ANNUAL*, and *MONKEY & MAN*. His website, www.greatblankness.com, advances a form of visual metaphysics, as largely found fragments of words, images, video, and sound interact and combine to form new narratives. His visual primer *24 IDEAS ABOUT PICTURES*, develops a phenomenological approach to visual thinking that integrates theory and practice. Finally the video project, *MISTER ROGERS FOR ADULTS*--based on the work of Fred Rogers--explores the power of ethical thinking in a media context. All of this work is ultimately in the service of epistemological and philosophical ends: How do we know what we know, and why do we believe what we believe?

Where the Wild Things Are in Psychoanalysis

Ginny Rachmani

There are two types of people says Dwight Garner in *The New York Times* (January 2021), those 'who can live without wild things and the ones who cannot'--like me. I've been thinking about certain patients' seemingly desperate need to live among wild animals in their homes and surroundings as opposed to those who are repelled by the idea of keeping a bearded dragon in an apartment or a skunk in the backyard. What this says about our patients and ourselves, as well as the societies within which we live, needs some examination.

Domesticated animals belong to three main groups: those designated for companionship like cats and parakeets, those raised in farms for food like sheep or chickens, and those harnessed for work like horses and camels.

Two years ago I read a paper at IFPE about dogs in clinical practice to the only mild chagrin of cat lovers. This paper delves into wild animals and what unites or divides us and how that in turn affects our work and our planet; it hopes to begin a psychoanalytic conversation.

Wild animal species are those that live in areas where they were not introduced by humans. This can become confusing when speaking of overlapping situations like the adorably ruinous raccoons who dine among our garbage cans; or of fur taken for clothing coming from a farmed animal like a mink—yes, minks can be farmed but are not domesticated in the process; or of an Icelander's historic and still legal appreciation for traditional whale steaks. But although wild animals are seldom part of our work in urban/suburban areas, our patients' passions for the wild species can be fully on display.

Case examples will be given to explicate these topics.

Ginny Rachmani: With graduate school training in both social work and psychology from New York University, I am a supervising analyst and faculty member at the National Institute for the Psychotherapies and the American Institute of Psychoanalysis and maintain a full-time private practice in Manhattan. I have delivered and published papers in both the United States and internationally and serve on the Board of the *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*. My specializations include long-term trauma generally and trauma emanating from chronic illness with its on-going implications among the walking well.