EMOTIONAL COMMUNICATION AND THERAPEUTIC CHANGE

Understanding Psychotherapy through Multiple Code Theory

Wilma Bucci and edited by William F. Cornell

"Wilma S. Bucci, Ph.D., who works on the border of cognitive science and psychoanalysis, incisively delineates her most recent systematic theory of human psychological organization. Rooted in current scientific research in cognitive science and affective and social neuroscience, Bucci masterfully applies her understandings of the formation and transformation of emotional schemas to the change processes that occur in psychoanalysis and psychotherapy. She treats us to a conceptual revision of such phenomena as unconscious processes and to verbal and non-verbal (sensorial) symbolic processes. I believe this book will become a landmark in contemporary applications of cognitive science to the theories and practice of psychoanalysis and psychotherapies. This is a must-read for all serious students of the human mind."

James L. Fosshage Ph.D.,
Clinical Professor, NYU Postdoctoral Program of
Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis,
co-founding Board Director and Faculty, National
Institute for the Psychotherapies,
Founding Faculty, Institute for the Psychoanalytic Study of Subjectivity

"This is a really important book. It answers the fundamental question of both psychoanalytic theory and practice: Where do our worded thoughts fit with the sprawling scenery of images, feeling, gesture, and emotions that furnish our living world? To answer, Bucci reminds us that emotion and cognition are not so distinct after all. Whether orienting us in continuous dimensions or by neat symbols, they work together to interpret our world, and Bucci's mission is to describe the nature of that partnership. It has been hard to get a scientific focus on non-symbolic awareness. Bucci's solution is to use recent neurophysiological findings to particularize the unworded material that feeds articulated reflection. That, in turn, suggests a new picture of psychopathology, and a clearer and extremely plausible theory of therapeutic action.

Not the least of Bucci's accomplishments is to offer a more than usually convincing demonstration that hard science can advance real-life psychoanalysis. Bucci's classification of expression into symbolic (language), sub-symbolic and emotion schemas has helped expand our empathic repertoire. This book will give the practitioner a new respect for the centrality of nuance, a new tolerance for dimensional thinking, and a bit of a vacation from categorical prisons."

Lawrence Friedman, M.D.,
Clinical Professor of Psychiatry, Weill-Cornell Medical College
Faculty, Psychoanalytic Association of New York
Affiliated with NYU School of Medicine

"Over 20 years ago, Wilma Bucci broke new ground with her ingenious development of multiple code theory. As a result she had been regarded as one of the most brilliant and creative minds in the psychoanalytic world. However, with this extraordinary new book she has truly outdone herself. Dr. Bucci has redefined the relationship between mind and body, and between emotion and cognition in a compelling integrative effort that will change forever the way we think about psychoanalytic and psychotherapeutic work. I highly recommend this new contribution to our field to all those in the mental health professions."

Glen O. Gabbard, M.D.,
Clinical Professor of Psychiatry, Baylor College of Medicine

"A lot has been said and written on how the two contexts of our field—clinical and experimental—can come together, but this book marvelously stands out among the many attempts at exploring the interface between these two contexts. Wilma Bucci goes directly into the heart of psychotherapy process, and she does so in a truly interdisciplinary way: she looks simultaneously from different perspectives such as psychoanalysis, cognitive psychology and affective and social neuroscience. This is just what is needed, and the theoretical parts come alive through many clinical vignettes. We also receive a clear picture of the new developments of Wilma Bucci's line of research following her 1997 book, *Psychoanalysis and Cognitive Science: A Multiple Code Theory*. This new book should be read by all those who are really interested in the revision of psychoanalytic metapsychology and in the scientific standing of psychoanalysis today."

Paolo Migone, M.D.
Editor, *Psicoterapia e Scienze Umane*
("Psychotherapy and the Human Sciences")
www.psicoterapiaescienzeumane.it

"I have always had the utmost respect for Wilma Bucci's thinking. I believe it is important—even classic. So, despite the fact that she and I don't always agree, I am delighted to see this body of work brought together in a single source. The field of psychoanalysis and, more broadly, cognitive and affective neuroscience, need this collection. Here you will find statements of dual/multiple code theory, for which Bucci is justly famous, as well as elaborations and clinical applications of those views, including vivid case material. Bucci's highly significant work on dissociation—classic in its own right—is here too. Psychoanalysts and their sympathizers should count their blessings that Bucci has been there to represent them in the wider world of cognitive psychology and neuroscience. This is a book with which every student of psychoanalysis and neuroscience should be familiar."

Donnel B. Stern, William Alanson White Institute, New York

Emotional Communication and Therapeutic Change

In this book, Wilma Bucci applies her skills as a cognitive psychologist and researcher to the fields of psychoanalysis and psychotherapy, opening up new avenues for understanding the underlying processes that facilitate therapeutic communication and change. Grounded in research geared to understanding and demonstrating the clinical process (rather than the "outcome") of analytic inquiry and therapeutic dialogue, Bucci's multiple code theory offers clinicians, researchers, trainers, and students new perspectives on the essential, often unlanguaged, foundations of the psychotherapeutic endeavor.

Wilma Bucci is Professor Emerita, Derner Institute of Adelphi University; Co-Director of Research at The New York Psychoanalytic Society and Institute; Honorary Member of the American Psychoanalytic Association, the New York Psychoanalytic Institute and Society, and the Institute for Psychoanalytic Training and Research; and Member of Faculty of the Research Training Programme of the International Psychoanalytical Association.

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Understanding Psychotherapy through Multiple Code Theory

Wilma Bucci
Edited by William F. Cornell

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A cognitive scientist meets the couch

William F. Cornell

> Normal emotional development depends on the integration of somatic, sensory, and motoric processes in the emotional schemas; emotional disorders are caused by failure of this integration … These sensory experiences occur in consonance with somatic and visceral experience of pleasure and pain, as well as organized motoric actions involving the mouth, hands, and whole body—kicking, crying, sucking, rooting, and shaping one's body to another's.
>
> (Bucci, 1997)

This epigraph is taken from the chapter that begins this collection of Wilma Bucci's writing, which I read when first published in 1997 in an issue of *Psychoanalytic Inquiry* devoted to exploring "Somatization: Bodily Experience and Mental States". I found this paper riveting and I noticed in the reference list that Wilma had a book in press. I bought *Psychoanalysis and Cognitive Science: A Multiple Code Theory* as soon as it came out, then contacted Wilma, beginning what has proven to be a decades-long collaboration. It has now been more than two decades since that first book, and we decided the time was right to assemble a new book that gathered together many of her papers written since then. The result, *Emotional Communication and Therapeutic Change: New visions of the "Talking Cure" Through the Lens of Multiple Code Theory,* is a collection of papers, revised lectures, and case discussions that show a relentless, incisive, perpetually questioning mind at work.

Bucci's multiple code theory has been a very timely arrival as efforts to comprehend the presence and meanings of bodily experience have been emerging in contemporary philosophy, psychotherapy, and psychoanalysis. Since Freud, the verbal and symbolic order has been the primary means and vocabulary of psychoanalytic treatment, but the reach and means of analytic inquiry are now increasingly exploring visual, sensate, motoric, and visceral modes of experience and expression within the bodies of patient and analyst alike.

Bucci titles her acknowledgments section "Building an Interactive Field," and she demonstrates throughout the chapters of this book her capacity to build, question, and rebuild her models through her ongoing engagements in a profoundly enriching interactive field of fellow cognitive and neuroscience

researchers, psychoanalysts, and practicing clinicians from a broad range of disciplines. This book brings the reader a research-based model of psychoanalytic processes that remains alive in its efforts to grasp and demonstrate the therapeutic forces in psychoanalytically based treatment models. In its pages, the cognitive scientist faces the couch and the couch faces cognitive psychology and affective neuroscience research. In her personal notes at the start of the book, Bucci describes her own experience of a somewhat successful psychoanalysis but then writes that, "I assumed at the time that the practitioners of the analytic treatment I was receiving had a clear scientific understanding of the mechanisms underlying this process." She explored the existing literature and Freud's meta-psychology but did not find what she was looking for. So she undertook a research program that has carried on (perhaps to her surprise) for decades. In a paper not included in this book, Bucci (2008, p. 53) offers a concise challenge to classical psychoanalytic theory that motivated and shaped her research:

> Whereas Freud's deep and generative insight concerning the multiplicity of the human psychical apparatus remains valid, the psychoanalytic premise of lower or more primitive systems—unconscious, nonverbal, irrational—being replaced by more advanced ones needs to be revised in the light of current scientific knowledge. We now recognize that diverse and complex systems exist, function, and develop side by side, within and outside of awareness, in mature, well-functioning adults throughout life … The goal of treatment is better formulated as the integration, or reintegration, of systems where this has been impaired, rather than as replacement of one system by another.

Bucci's research steps out of the outcome-focused research models that have come to pervade and pervert the functions of scientific inquiry into the psychotherapeutic project and produce results that are eagerly promoted by insurance companies, arguing that, "Comparing the outcomes of competing theories is not useful if we do not identify the psychological mechanisms that bring about the observed results" (Bucci 2013, p. 16). Bucci has stepped out of the silos of preferred theories and efforts to prove that one is superior to another. She asks a fundamental question: How can we understand and demonstrate the means through which therapeutic change comes to be? Through the evolution of her multiple code theory and the elucidation of the referential process, Bucci has devoted herself to the study of therapeutic processes and the identification of factors in psychodynamic therapies that foster change. Consistent with a fundamental attitude in psychodynamic approaches to therapy, the therapeutic work studied by Bucci is not focused primarily on the alleviation or elimination of symptoms, but rather on grasping their meaning. As Bucci stresses in her closing comments in Chapter 4:

> A major distinction that I hope I have made clear through this chapter and that I want to emphasize particularly here is that *symptoms* may operate as *symbols*—have symbolic functions—in the sense that their expression may enable entry into a symbolic mode. In therapy, somatic symptoms may provide a pathway to symbolizing emotional experience that has been dissociated, particularly where other modes of expression, such as memories, fantasies, and dreams, may not be accessible.

Virtually every aspect of the multiple code theory calls the adequacy of manualized, cognitive-behavioral treatment into serious question for any therapeutic goal beyond symptom relief and insurance reimbursement. Bucci critiques the underlying assumptions of the theories underlying cognitive-behavioral models of treatment and issues a challenge to clinicians of both psychoanalytic and cognitive behavioral models to carry out research to identify and demonstrate potentially common factors that contribute to the efficacy of varying methodologies:

> The field of psychotherapy research has recently focused on outcome rather than process studies, with outcome mainly evaluated in terms of symptoms and behaviors. This emphasis has occurred for many reasons, including professional, ethical (and financial) considerations—as well as the fact that process research is difficult, time consuming and expensive.
>
> (Bucchi 2013, p. 22)

Following a graduate education in phenomenology, I trained simultaneously in psychodynamic psychotherapy (transactional analysis and subsequently contemporary psychoanalysis) and a neo-Reichian approach to body-centered psychotherapy. After more than twenty years of practice, I still had not found a coherent means of integrating these rather incompatible models, theoretically or clinically, to my satisfaction. Freud privileged mind over body, and language over action and affect, perspectives that have carried on for over a century in classical psychoanalysis. Reich sought to reverse the Freudian order, declaring that mental processes were often woven so deeply into the warp and woof of characterological and somatic defenses as to need to be circumvented through his body-based interventions. It was my Reichian training that brought the body directly into my therapeutic work. However, in stark contrast to Freud, Reich and his followers privileged affect and action over language and thought. Each had value, but the integration of these models proved elusive. I got my first glimmers of means of integration through the work of Winnicott and Bollas, but the waters remained murky.

Then along came "Symptoms and Symbols" and *Cognitive Science and Psychoanalysis*, which were a revelation to me—they provided a framework within which I could see the potential for thinking about and truly integrating

the divergent models that had informed (and sometimes frustrated) my work. Here was the demonstration of bodily experience—sensate and motoric—as a form of psychic organization, as a means of coming to know and be known by another. The subsymbolic domains are seen through the multiple code theory as essential forms of psychic organization, as means of *knowing* and *learning*, informing us about ourselves and others, consciously and unconsciously. There is vast potential for understanding and emotional contact when we open ourselves to *how* something is said to us, as well as *how* we respond in pace, tone, postural shifts, facial expression, and so on. The multiple code theory provides a structure within which language and cognition, so valued by Freud, and affect and the body, so valued by Reich, each have a place, a value, and necessary functions through the interrelationship of three fundamental forms of psychic organization: verbal symbolic, nonverbal symbolic, and subsymbolic. Bucci began to recognize that the key to therapeutic change was the gradual evocation of all three modes of experience within the therapeutic process and their gradual linkage (the referential process) within a psychodynamic relationship that is sufficiently emotional and personally engaged.

In his classic book, *Character Analysis*, Reich insists that "the beginnings of living functioning lie much *deeper* than and *beyond* language. *Over and above this, the living organism has its own modes of expressing movement which simply cannot be comprehended with words* (Reich, 1980, p. 359, italics in original). Reich, in many ways foreshadowing contemporary neuroscience and parent–infant research, grounded his therapeutic approach within the foundations of the emotional and physical qualities of the mother–infant relationship and the autonomic nervous system as they were known at that time.

Winnicott, in his emphasis on the developmental indwelling of the psyche in the soma through the mother–infant relationship, also saw somatic experience as being at the heart of health and vitality:

> Here is a body, and the psyche and the soma are not distinguished except according to the direction from which one is looking. One can look at the developing body or at the developing psyche. I suppose the word psyche here means the *imaginative elaboration of somatic parts, feelings, and functions,* that is, of physical aliveness … Gradually the psyche and the soma aspects of the growing person become involved in a process of mutual interrelation … At a later stage the live body, with its limits, and with an inside and an outside, is *felt by the individual* to form the core for the imaginative self.
>
> (Winnicott, 1958, p. 244, italics in original)

For Winnicott, the infant discovers and elaborates the self through movement (for which he created the notions of muscle pleasure and motility) through their immersion in the subsymbolic realm:

> So in every infant there is this tendency to move and to get some kind of muscle pleasure in movement, and to gain from the experience of moving and meeting something …What will quite soon become aggressive behavior is therefore at the start a simple impulse that leads to a movement and to the beginnings of exploration.
>
> (Winnicott, 1984, pp. 93–94)

> The summation of motility experiences contributes to the individual's ability to start to exist, and out of this primary identification [with the body] to repudiate the shell and to become the core. The good enough environment makes this possible.
>
> (Winnicott, 1958, pp. 213–214)

In more poetic language, Bollas extends Winnicott's grasp of the subsymbolic:

> If the developing child feels increasingly free to release the body to its being, to embody their subjectivity, they will develop a very peculiar expression which we know as "sensuality." This capacity to use the senses is an acknowledgment of the body's freedom of movement and the sensual self has matriculated desire into gestural being. But sensuality is not achieved by the self alone.
>
> (Bollas, 1999, pp. 152–153)

> Sensualisation is a form of embodied perception and reverie-like physical expression, the subject moving in the physical world of body-to-body communication.
>
> (Bollas, 1999, p. 155)

Bollas infuses Winnicott's properly British "good enough" with a vivid sense of the eroticism and vitality of the forces of our early development.

Winnicott famously framed psychotherapy as a form of "play":

> *Psychotherapy takes place in the overlap of two areas of playing, that of the patient and that of the therapist. Psychotherapy has to do with two people playing together. The corollary of this is that where playing is not possible then the work done by the therapist is directed towards bringing the patient from a state of not being able to play into a state of being able to play.*
>
> (Winnicott, 1971, p. 38, italics in original)

> The thing about playing is always the precariousness of the interplay of personal psychic reality and the experience of the control of objects. This is the precariousness of magic itself, magic that arises in intimacy, in a relationship that is being found to be reliable.
>
> (Winnicott, 1971, p. 47)

Contained within Winnicott's conceptualization of play is the active (motoric *and* verbal) exploration of the self in the world through movement (motility), imagery, fantasy, and nonverbal as well as verbal exploration and communication. This conceptualization of play captures what I have come to see as the heart of the referential process.

These sensory and motoric processes are not limited to infancy or primitive states of being. As Bucci demonstrates, we do not grow out of them as we mature; these are the vitalizing forces of life. The subsymbolic domain is the foundation of intimacy, play, eroticism, aggression, sexuality, and nurturance throughout life. Within the context of a reasonably responsible environment, this vital domain of experience forms the basis of a resonant and resilient sense of self. When the interpersonal/developmental environment is one of neglect or impingement/trauma, the capacity to integrate experience is diminished and the self learns to survive through varying degrees of dissociation (Chapters 9 and 10). Often split off from the experience of one's self, these are the formative forces that can emerge to inform and motivate dynamically informed psychotherapies (Chapter 11). Bucci's stress on the centrality of subsymbolic experience and its gradual integration into symbolic modes, both verbal and nonverbal, challenge many assumptions of both classical psychoanalytic and cognitive-behavioral theories that endeavor to explain the treatment processes and outcomes. In my own book, *Somatic Experience in Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy* (Cornell, 2015, p. 44), I note that:

> *Shaping one's body to another's* represents quite a challenge to the classical analytic process. Somatic processes place unique demands upon psychoanalytic theory, the psychoanalyst, and the therapeutic relationship. In these sensori-motoric realms, the therapeutic process becomes a kind of psychosomatic partnership that can often be wordless, entering realms of experience that may not easily come into the comfort and familiarity of language. We experience the successful or unsuccessful shaping of our bodies in all of our vital, intimate relationships of any age and developmental stage. There is a fundamental knowing of self and other which forms first through the experience of one's body with another's. In life, and in psychoanalysis, healthy development involves the integration of motoric and sensate processes within the context of a primary relationship, establishing subsymbolic, somatic schemas of the self in relation to one's own body, to cognitive and symbolic processes, and to the desire for and experience of the other.

It is, of course, the good enough environment, a *vitalizing base* (Cornell, 2001, 2015)—be it parental or psychotherapeutic—that facilitates the maturation of the developmental/referential process of developing one's capacity to utilize and move among the different modes of experience within one's self and in relation to others. When Winnicott speaks of the mother–infant

dyad, he is also addressing the therapist–patient dyad. Winnicott's transformation of the Freudian and Reichian premises is in his recognition of the necessity of an other's repeated attention to and languaging of somatic experience that situates the mind in the body, the psyche-soma as the foundation for a robust sense of self in the world. Language can be in the service of the body rather than in place of or in competition with it, facilitating an ease of flowing self-contact between the unlanguaged subsymbolic orders with those of the verbal, symbolic realms that have been so long the primary domain of the analytic endeavor.

In the formative years of her research, Bucci—of necessity, I think—placed a great deal of emphasis on the distinctions between the verbal symbolic, nonverbal symbolic, and subsymbolic domains of experience, working persistently to gain recognition of the legitimacy of the subsymbolic as an essential means of knowing oneself in the world. As Bucci and her colleagues have developed methods of studying transcripts of actual therapy sessions (Chapter 5), she has begun to articulate the referential process of the arousal of emotional schema, the connection to the symbolic mode, and the capacity for reflecting/reorganizing (Chapters 8 and 11). Here language comes to the forefront, not as a form of cognition superior to the nonverbal and sensate/motoric but rather as connected to it, expressive of it:

> In our characterization of verbal emotional communication, we expand the ends of this [speech] chain to incorporate the activation of emotional experience underlying the construction of a linguistic message (spoken or written) and its connection with subsymbolic experience in a listener or reader. We are concerned with the inverse process, the power of language to connect back to imagery and subsymbolic representational modalities in the speaker (or thinker), and to lead, potentially, to reorganization of emotional life.

Here the linking and integrative functions of language within the referential process become crucial. The therapist's words can become the means by which the therapist and patient focus and deepen somatic, subsymbolic experience. Quinidodoz (2003, p. 35), for example, describes her use of "incarnate language," which she defines as a "*language that touches* as one that does not confine itself to imparting thoughts verbally, but also conveys feelings and the sensations that accompany those feelings" (emphasis in original). Descriptive language on the part of the analyst—words often informed and inflected by the therapist's own somatic experience—is crucial here; such language is experience-near, conveying a felt sense of one's interior and somatic states. Incarnate language is a way to speak *to* the patient's body rather than speaking *about* it, an avenue for the "sensualisation" of the emergent process.

Contemporary psychoanalysis has come to see and to articulate the centrality of the therapeutic relationship in the vitality and efficacy of the

treatment—this is also the case in transactional analysis, gestalt therapy, and some approaches to CBT. The richness and realness of the therapeutic relationship is communicated and experienced through the realms of the nonverbal symbolic and the subsymbolic. Significant growth and change can emerge through those domains of learning, with little to no verbal representation, yet language—especially incarnated language—can further deepen and "cement" the nonverbal aspects of therapeutic process. The referential process demonstrates that, over time, the access to and integration of all three modes of experience creates the ground for lasting psychological change.

As we reached the final stages of preparing the manuscript to send to Routledge, I began to write this preface. It was the time of the Covid-19 lockdown, and suddenly psychoanalysts and psychotherapists worldwide were working remotely, via various forms of online platforms. Suddenly the felt presence of being on the couch or sitting together face-to-face in our consulting rooms, talking and listening, was gone. Now, a voice on the phone or faces on computer screens were all there was. The list-serves of every major psychotherapy association were filled with discussions of the impact of these changes. Over and over again, psychoanalysts and psychotherapists wrote of their fatigue at day's end. My consultation groups, rather than being the intimate exchanges of colleagues who had worked together for years, sitting together in close proximity, were also on line—and everyone reported their fatigue. Speaking as a somatically oriented psychotherapist, I offered a posting to the open forum of the International Association for Relational Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy. It seems like an appropriate way to bring my reflections on the multiple code theory and its rich implications to a conclusion:

> As I read the posts on this forum, talk and write with colleagues around the world, work with my consultation groups, and meet with my clients—all now through virtual means—the questions and realities of embodiment do indeed come to the forefront. I think the term "working remotely" is far more accurate in capturing experiential reality than "working virtually".
>
> We are, in fact, working remotely. We are not in the same room; we are not in one another's physical presence; and we are deprived of the wealth of sensate, emotional, and nonverbal communications that silently inform, enrich, and enliven our sessions (with a huge nod to Wilma Bucci's accounting of the place of subsymbolic experience in the psychotherapeutic process). I hear (and myself experience) over and over again the fatigue, exhaustion people experience working the "virtual" realms all day long. It has given me new insights into the anxieties and disconnections my younger clients experience when they spend so much time with the misnamed "social" media. The screens create an illusion of contact. The screens dominate our immediate experience with

two-dimensional, visual and vocal data. Our receptive tools and capacities are seriously diminished, and I think we are constantly consciously, and unconsciously, trying to fill in the experiential gaps in our contact.

I often hear weary versions of, "It's better than nothing." But from a somatic perspective, it is the areas of "nothing" that need to be acknowledged. I have found it essential as these days of remote sessions go on and on to not pretend that this is good enough, better than nothing. I am finding it essential to acknowledge and inquire about the experiences of absence, what is missing. This is an acknowledgement of elements of our lived realities as we cannot be in close or physical contact with those with whom we are working, with those we love who are now held at a distance. The experience of loss, anxiety, and grief in our sessions is a core aspect of working somatically.

(April 8, 2020)

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Acknowledgments
Building an interactive field

I have been doing this work for a long time and have had the great good fortune of building close relationships with many people—clinicians and researchers—whose collaboration and inspiration have been indispensable in this work. This volume happened because my friend and colleague William Cornell suggested that it was time for me to do a book that brought together several papers, and because he offered to be the editor. I am extremely grateful that he was willing to do this, not only because it is important to me to have produced this book, but also because he is such an original thinker and eloquent writer that it seemed above and beyond expectations for him to be willing to take on the role of editor of this volume. Bill's work intersects closely with mine in recognizing that subsymbolic bodily and sensory experience needs to be alive and present in the session and in the therapeutic relationship in order to bring about change; he is a master at knowing how to bring about such activation in the consulting room. His characterization of the therapeutic process from the perspective of somatic psychotherapy, and his vivid clinical descriptions have provided validation for the ideas of multiple code theory and also opened new questions and ideas.

The evolution of multiple code theory has been interactive with the development of methods of measurement from its beginning, but the project of measurement took a giant leap when Bernard Maskit entered this work about fifteen years ago. Bernie is a research mathematician who by now probably knows more about psychoanalysis and psychotherapy than any mathematician ever has. Using some mathematical ideas, and also acquiring an enormous amount of mysterious computer skills, he has developed the innovative program that is the basis for our explorations into the psychotherapy process. Bernie is the partner of my life as well as my work; following the theme of this volume, his contributions transcend boundaries. He has brought his awesome ability to think outside the box to our conversations about work and everything else for the past 40 years and more.

There are many colleagues with whom I have collaborated and discussed ideas over the years. Here I will just mention three people who were instrumental in developing the theory and research approach. Norbert Freedman

was a mentor who became a colleague; his work in developing the interface of theory and research in the clinical context was highly innovative and continues to be influential. Erhard Mergenthaler introduced innovations in the computer assessment of language style that are central to our research. Richard C. Friedman's broad and courageous vision of psychoanalysis as a living theory that requires reexamination and revision provided inspiration, and his personal encouragement provided support. I have also had the privilege of supervising the research of many students who did their dissertations with me at the Derner Institute of Adelphi University and elsewhere; I remember each of them as a special collaborative relationship. Some of their work is represented in this book; some is represented in other publications that are referred to here and elsewhere. I wish I could thank each of my colleagues and students, past and present, individually here.

I also want to mention several people with whom I actively collaborate today. We work closely with Leon Hoffman, of the New York Psychoanalytic Society and Institute (NYPSI), whose insights and creative energy are indispensable to our thinking, our projects and our program of research, on many levels. Also, through Leon's efforts, NYPSI provides us with a base for our work. With the resources of the Pacella Research Center, we have been able to support several graduate students and postdoctoral fellows to participate in the projects and we are beginning to establish a research presence in the education of candidates. Here we are realizing at least a start at repairing the split between the institutes and the universities that has hampered the development of the psychoanalytic field from its early days.

Sean Murphy has been a central, indispensable member of our group; he did his dissertation with me at Adelphi, graduating in 2012, and has been involved in our research program ever since, continuously generating new ideas at the interface of theory and practice, developing new projects, and spreading the word. His grasp of technology is awesome and constantly expanding; he and Bernie bring their different and complementary talents and skills to our collaborative research. Sean is also strongly, viscerally aware of the need for revision of theory and practice to meet current critical mental health needs. In addition to working directly with us at NYPSI, and teaching research design at the university level, he now has the position of data scientist at a nonprofit service and advocacy organization. In this role, he is exploring the application of features of the referential process to develop a protocol for responding to calls on suicide hotlines. Sean's work gives me the opportunity to add a note of looking forward to the future of our theory and measures, opening a broader direction of their application to urgent mental health needs.

The Clinician-Researcher seminar that we have established at NYPSI has provided a new approach to repairing the split in the field. I thank Drs. Wendy Olesker, Charles Jaffe and Christopher Christian for their invaluable contributions in sharing their own treatments and their own perspectives. Our Italian colleagues are adding a cross-cultural perspective and their own

imaginative and creative ideas to this work; here I'll mention particularly Rachele Mariani, Attá Negri, Luigi Solano, and Marina Amore.

We are fortunate to include graduate and post-doctoral students as members of our current research group at the NYPSI, including Karen Tocatly, who has been central in our current project of developing a measure of the arousal function of the referential process, and You Zhou and Xinyao Zhang, who have worked closely with us on several theoretical and technical projects.

Mentioning You and Xin allows me to close these acknowledgments with what feels like a necessary reference to the existential crisis in the world, the widening plague that provides the context in which we now live, love, and work. A colleague on a listserv noted that there was one word in Chinese for both crisis and opportunity; I asked You and Xin whether they could fill in the current usage of this word. Xin says: "the word that pops up in my mind is "危机" (*wei ji*, pronounced "wei gee"), which usually means crisis in everyday usage. But … if you split the word apart, 危 means danger/crisis and 机 means opportunity … In this sense, perhaps a better matched English word is "critical time," which equally implies urgency (i.e. a tiny difference might end up with a big butterfly effect that is qualitatively different) with a more neutral connotation. A similar word is "*Kairos* moment," with a connotation of criticality but more positive." You Zhou says that the most frequently used meaning of this word in China is

> a moment that has danger and opportunity; it is a moment to test decision-making and problem-solving abilities. It is a turning point in life, group, and social development. Life and death are at stake, and benefits are transferred, it's like a fork in the road. So yes, I think this is a good word to hold to help getting through this period of turbulence … I think there remains latent opportunities in this situation, depending on how we view, approach, and deal with it.

For me, this concept of *wei ji* provides a way to end these acknowledgments with love and gratitude for my family, friends, colleagues and students, who continue in these critical times to provide new turning points, new opportunities, new tests, and new meanings to expand our explorations.

Earlier versions of the following chapters appeared elsewhere and are adapted here by permission:

Chapter 1: Symptoms and symbols: A multiple code theory of somatization (1997) *Psychoanalytic Inquiry, 17,* 151–172.

Chapter 2: The need for a "psychoanalytic psychology" in the cognitive science field (2000) *Psychoanalytic Psychology, 17,* 203–224.

Chapter 3: The referential process, consciousness, and the sense of self (2002) *Psychoanalytic Inquiry, 22,* 766–793.

Chapter 6: earlier version titled The role of subjectivity and intersubjectivity in the reconstruction of dissociated schemas: Converging perspectives from psychoanalysis, cognitive science and affective neuroscience (2011) *Psychoanalytic Psychology, 28,* 247–266.

Chapter 7: The primary process as a transitional concept: New perspectives from cognitive psychology and affective neuroscience (2018) *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*, *38*, 198–209.

Chapter 8: The interplay of subsymbolic and symbolic processes in psychoanalytic treatment: It takes two to tango, but who knows the steps, who's the leader? *The Choreography of the Psychoanalytic Interchange* (2011) *Psychoanalytic Dialogues, 21,* 45–54.

Chapter 9: Dissociation from the perspective of multiple code theory—Part I: Psychological roots and implications for psychoanalytic treatment (2007) *Contemporary Psychoanalysis, 43,* 165–184.

Chapter 10: Dissociation from the perspective of multiple code theory—Part II: The spectrum of dissociative processes in the psychoanalytic relationship (2007) *Contemporary Psychoanalysis, 43,* 305–326.

A personal note on theory and practice

I started thinking intensively about the need for a scientific study of psychoanalytic ideas at a time when I had recently finished my graduate work in cognitive psychology and psycholinguistics and had my first position at the Clinical Behavior Research Unit at Downstate Medical Center. I was considering a mixed career of clinical work, including psychoanalytic training, along with research; I had been in the clinical program at the University of Michigan a few years earlier. At Downstate, I had a few therapy patients, supervised in a thoughtful and supportive way by the psychoanalytically oriented faculty there. They were the kind of very complicated, very difficult patients—presumably not seen as suitable for analytic treatment—who were assigned to inexperienced therapists in those years.

At the same time, I was a patient in psychoanalysis—lying on the couch, in a fairly classical analysis, trying to following the basic rule: to say whatever comes to mind no matter how trivial or irrelevant it seemed, violating normal conversational constraints, possibly insulting the person I was talking to, causing pain and even shame for myself. I was asking myself how this process was going to help me resolve the emotional and somatic difficulties that had brought me to treatment. I assumed at the time that the practitioners of the analytic treatment I was receiving had a clear scientific understanding of the mechanisms underlying this process. But when I looked into the psychoanalytic theory, there was nothing that answered my questions in the terms I was looking for. The concepts were grounded in a theory of a century or so earlier, the psychoanalytic metapsychology, sometimes as psychological and sometimes as neurological concepts; and the process was far from being well defined or amenable to systematic research.

Yet the process worked for me. I could actually feel the moments in the treatment when something was changing; I gradually felt different within myself, others saw me as different, I acted differently to some extent, people responded differently to me. The modes of experiencing, thinking and relating that opened up for me in psychoanalytic treatment have continued throughout my life since then, as both life-saving on the one hand and endlessly fascinating on the other. As a researcher, I saw the development and continuing

examination of a coherent theory with well-defined concepts linked to observable events as a central responsibility of the field. I became fully involved in teaching and research, and did not continue the clinical work—perhaps in another life. I was fortunate to be entering this field of research at the time of the "cognitive revolution" and the emergence of a new approach to the study of language initiated by Chomsky's work. There were many ideas emerging from these new approaches that were applicable to the psychoanalytic process—and, conversely, that might also benefit from the discoveries and insights of psychoanalytic theory and practice. It is the essence of these ideas that they are continuously changing, and that is what I have tried to represent in this volume. It is also the essence of these ideas that they evoke passionate disagreement, and I hope that will be reflected in this volume as well.

Prologue
The need for evolution of the psychoanalytic model

I began writing the introduction to this book in the summer of 2019, in the context of almost three years of assaults on decency and humanity and on our system of government, distinct from anything I had known before. Like many others, I woke up each morning wondering what new horror would be unveiled today. There were so many unthinkable events and they happened so fast that whatever I read about one day was likely to be outdone by the next day's reports. And then came the late winter and spring of 2020, with its plagues, floods, fires, protests, and continually deepening fears for our way of life. This book is about a theory of emotional organization that addresses the questions of how interacting and talking with another person can help to heal the wide variety of emotional disorders that emerge in contexts such as these, as in the other challenges of life, and what kind of interacting works best for whom, when, and how. Related and new questions concerning the processes of psychotherapy also need to be addressed when the threats to humanity come ex machina, as has happened in the pandemic of the late winter and spring of 2020.

In August, 2019, I read how the Trump administration was moving to block immigrants who may need government aid:

> U.S. President Donald Trump's administration unveiled a sweeping rule on Monday that some experts say could cut legal immigration in half by denying visas and permanent residency to hundreds of thousands of people for being too poor. The long-anticipated rule, pushed by Trump's leading aide on immigration Stephen Miller, takes effect Oct. 15 and would reject applicants for temporary or permanent visas for failing to meet income standards or for receiving public assistance such as welfare, food stamps, public housing or Medicaid.
>
> (Trotter & Rosenberg, 2012)

According to the current acting director of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), Ken Cuccinelli, in a Fox News interview, the principle driving this new rule "is an old American value and that's self-sufficiency."

Cuccinelli actually said, when asked about the poem by Emma Lazarus inscribed on the Statue of Liberty, that a version of the poem can still apply: 'give me your tired, your poor—who can stand on their own two feet and who will not become a public charge.'

Also in August 2019, a few days after two horrendous massacres in El Paso and Dayton, the FBI along with local police departments arrested three young men in their early twenties for allegedly making mass shooting threats. Referring to one of these men, the Florida sheriff who made the arrest said, "When you look at this kid's background, he is the profile of a shooter. He lost his job, he lost his girlfriend, he's depressed, he's got the ammunition and he wants to become known for being the most prolific killer in American history."

This was also the summer in which Jeffrey Epstein, the multi-millionaire who was charged with operating a sex trafficking ring with teenagers, who had socialized with Donald Trump, Bill Clinton, and Prince Andrew, and who owned mansions and islands around the world, hung himself in a vermin-infested cell in a Manhattan prison.

During this same summer, a new and brilliantly designed city playground opened on our block. The area is designed with flexible equipment and zones that allow people to create their own games. The playground teems with children with their assorted caretakers—nannies, mommies, daddies and others. We pass there on most days; in the several minutes we stand there, we observe uncountable dramas that refute Tolstoy's assertion that all happy families are alike—or Aristotle's earlier version that men are good in one way but bad in many. One day, a little child—barely walking—noticed a still smaller barefooted baby in a stroller, became fascinated with the baby's feet and began to play with them. The baby was at first a bit taken aback, then began to participate actively in the play with these interesting objects. The caretakers exchanged smiles, one checking that this was alright with the other responsible for the little toes. Around the same time, another child started crying and three speed racers of about two to three years old on little vehicles and wearing helmets stopped briefly to look on with expressions of concern. These and many other different dramas occur so constantly that it is difficult to stop watching. The playground closed for several months in the spring of 2020 as the city worked to contain the virus, but it is open again now, with the masks and hand sanitizer that characterizes New York City's social experience today.

It seems to me that the various fields of psychology and psychotherapy have important roles to play in addressing the patterns of shame and grandiosity and hatred and fear of the other that underly the horrors we are seeing and experiencing, while also recognizing the varied possibilities of human behavior. How could a little child who was delighted with a baby's toes or a two-year-old who was concerned about another child's crying become someone who needs to rape and kill?

In *The Fire Next Time*, James Baldwin (1962, pp. 81–82) refers to the role of psychic change in the context of social conditions in this country: