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Contributors


**Werner Bohleber**: DPhil, psychoanalyst in private practice in Frankfurt, Germany. Training and Supervising Analyst. Former president of the German Psychoanalytical Association. Editor of the German psychoanalytical journal *PSYCHE*. Member of the EPF Working Party on Theory. Author of several books and numerous articles. His main research subjects are trauma; adolescence and identity; psychoanalytic theory; xenophobia and anti-Semitism; and terrorism.


**Peter Fonagy**: PhD, FBA, Freud Memorial Professor of Psychoanalysis and Director of the Sub-Department of Clinical Health Psychology at University College London. Chief Executive of the Anna Freud Centre, London. Consultant to the Child and Family Program at the Menninger Department of Psychiatry, Baylor College of Medicine. Clinical Psychologist and Training and Supervising Analyst in the British Psycho-Analytical Society in child and adult analysis. His clinical interests centre on issues of borderline psychopathology, violence and early attachment relationships. His work seeks to integrate empirical research with psychoanalytic theory. He holds a number of important positions, which include co-chairing the Research Committee of the International Psychoanalytic Association, and Fellowship of the British Academy. He

**William I. Grossman:** MD, Training and Supervising Analyst, New York Psychoanalytic Society & Institute, Inc. Formerly Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, New York. A selection of his papers was recently published on the internet by the Internet Press for Psychoanalysis.

**Gail S. Reed:** PhD, psychoanalyst in private practice in New York City and Salisbury, CT. Training and Supervisory Analyst and Faculty at the Training Institute of the New York Freudian Society. Founding Member and Faculty, the Berkshire Psychoanalytic Institute; Faculty, Cleveland Psychoanalytic Center. Member of the Editorial Board, *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, Associate Editor (Foreign Books), *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*. Author of *Transference Neurosis and Psychoanalytic Experience: Perspectives on Contemporary Clinical Experience* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994); and *Clinical Experience* (Northvale, NJ: Aronson, 1996).


**Samuel Zysman:** MD, Faculty of Medicine, Buenos Aires University. After practising as a paediatrician, he moved into child psychiatry and went for psychoanalytical training at the Argentine Psychoanalytical Association. Currently Training Analyst and Professor at the Psychoanalytic Institute of the Buenos Aires Psychoanalytical Association. He teaches the
theory of psychoanalytical technique and child analysis. He has written 30 papers, on these subjects and others at the interface of psychoanalysis with ethics and with literature. His current focus is on the psychoanalytic study of actions, especially on psychoanalysis, cognitive processes and the meta-psychological status of scientific theories.
After the first hundred years of its history, psychoanalysis has matured into a serious, independent intellectual tradition, which has notably retained its capacity to challenge established truths in most areas of our culture. The biological psychiatrist today is called to task by psychoanalysis, as much as was the specialist in nervous diseases in Freud’s time, in turn-of-the-century Vienna. Today’s cultural commentators, whether for or against psychoanalytic ideas, are forced to pay attention to considerations of unconscious motivation, defences, early childhood experience and the myriad other discoveries which psychoanalysts brought to twentieth-century culture. Above all, psychoanalytic ideas have spawned an approach to the treatment of mental disorders, psychodynamic psychotherapy, which has become the dominant tradition in most countries, at least in the Western world.

Little wonder that psychoanalytic thinking continues to face detractors, individuals who dispute its epistemology and its conceptual and clinical claims. While disappointing in one way, this is a sign that psychoanalysis may be unique in its capacity to challenge and provoke. Why should this be? Psychoanalysis is unrivalled in the depth of its questioning of human motivation, and whether its answers are right or wrong, the epistemology of psychoanalysis allows it to confront the most difficult problems of human experience. Paradoxically, our new understanding concerning the physical basis of our existence – our genes, nervous system and endocrine functioning – rather than finally displacing psychoanalysis, has created a pressing need for a complementary discipline which considers the memories, desires and meanings which are beginning to be recognized as influencing human adaptation even at the biological level. How else, other than through the study of subjective experience, will we understand the expression of the individual’s biological destiny, within the social environment?

It is not surprising, then, that psychoanalysis continues to attract some of the liveliest intellects in our culture. These individuals are by no means all psychoanalytic clinicians or psychotherapists. They are distinguished scholars in an almost bewildering range of disciplines, from the study of mental disorders with their biological determinants to the disciplines of
literature, art, philosophy and history. There will always be a need to explicate the meaning of experience. Psychoanalysis, with its commitment to understanding subjectivity, is in a premier position to fulfil this intellectual and human task. We are not surprised at the surge of interest in psychoanalytic studies in universities in many countries. The books in this series are aimed at addressing the same intellectual curiosity that has made these educational projects so successful.

We are proud that the Whurr Series in Psychoanalysis has been able to attract some of the most interesting and creative minds in the field. Our commitment is to no specific orientation, to no particular professional group, but to the intellectual challenge to explore the questions of meaning and interpretation systematically, and in a scholarly way. Nevertheless, we would be glad if this series particularly spoke to the psychotherapeutic community, to those individuals who use their own minds and humanity to help others in distress.

Our focus in this series is to communicate the intellectual excitement which we feel about the past, present and future of psychoanalytic ideas. We hope that our work with the authors and editors in the series will help to make these ideas accessible to an ever-increasing and worldwide group of students, scholars and practitioners.

Peter Fonagy
Mary Target
University College London
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