Thoughts on Wholeness, Connection, and Healing: Moving Toward Complexity in the Analytic Space

Maxwell S. Sucharov, M.D.ⓘ

Interweaving the personal, clinical, and conceptual, this article considers complexity not only as an abstract conceptual discourse, but, more importantly, as a visceral lived reality playing itself out in the analytic space. The author suggests, with the help of case illustrations, that the move toward complexity in the psychoanalytic encounter is inextricably bound up with feelings of wholeness and connectedness, and is more likely to move the analytic process toward healing of trauma for both members of the dyad. The article argues for a more dynamic and fluid relationship between the abstract discourse of complexity systems theory and its lived form—a relationship where the tenets of complexity theory can be understood to be pointers to the experience of complexity.

Prologue: A Transformational Moment

May 8, 2007: Bretteville Sur Laise Canadian War Cemetery, Normandy, France

The day was surprisingly cold and windy. Given this was the 62nd anniversary of the German surrender and a national holiday in France, I was surprised that we were the only visitors to the cemetery. We checked the visitor book providing the row and number of the grave. Despite this, it seemed to take an eternity to find it. Eventually, my wife Rebecca beckoned me over and there I was, standing before the gravestone that read:

> FLYING OFFICERM. S. SUCHAROVROYAL CANADIAN AIR FORCE2ND DECEMBER 1944 AGE 29

The sobbing seemed uncontrollable, as I was overwhelmed with the enormity of the moment being the first family member to visit my Uncle Max's gravesite, 62 years after his untimely death. After spending a few moments in dialogue with the uncle I never knew, I said a *Kaddish* (Jewish memorial prayer), took a few pictures, and returned to our rented vehicle for the drive back to Paris. I would have been a 10-week-old fetus when the devastating news arrived at my grandmother's residence in Winnipeg, the major city in Canada's Midwest. And so, I came into this world on July 1, 1945 bearing the name of my Uncle Max, the much beloved youngest of my father's six surviving siblings.

My uncle was killed in a parachute mishap over France en route to a bombing raid on the German city of Hagen. The plane iced up and the pilot ordered the crew to evacuate. The flight engineer was too frightened to jump and my uncle took him down on his parachute. Sadly their combined weight was too much for the single parachute and they both perished in the fall. The pilot was able to land the plane safely and tell his story.

Aachen, Germany, October 1944

She was only 10 years old, a child running through a burning city. Although she had already experienced close to 100 bombing raids and almost 2,000 visits to air raid shelters, this last bombing was particularly

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Maxwell Sucharov, M.D., is a Canadian psychoanalytic psychiatrist in private practice in Vancouver, with a special interest in trauma and the socio-political dimension of emotional suffering. He is a Clinical Associate in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of British Columbia, a Member of the International Council for Psychoanalytic Self Psychology, and is on the editorial board of the *International Journal of Psychoanalytic Self Psychology*.

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devastating, destroying 65% of the city's residences. Years later, a few weeks before her death, she confided in her son, Rudolph, that she regretted not heeding his advice over the years to seek out psychotherapy, disclosing to him that whenever she smelled a barbeque, she would be reminded of running through the burning city of her childhood.

Rudolph was visiting his native Germany from Canada, a country to which he emigrated as a young man to pursue a career in the arts. A sensitive and vulnerable individual, he also was on a healing journey through psychotherapy. At the time of his visit to his dying mother he was deeply engaged in a psychoanalytic process with me, a therapist who bore the name of the navigator who may very well have dropped bombs on his mother's childhood city.

Complexity systems theory tells us that by virtue of our continuous being in the world, we all stand, at any given moment, at the center of a complex totality of experience that is informed by multiple and interweaving contextual relational systems. While one can say that every moment is sacred for its unique and irreducible complexity, there are certain moments in one's life that bring into the foreground hitherto unexamined connections. We cannot exhaustively describe each and every moment. We are left to choose pivotal moments that may evoke a taste of the unknowable whole.

The scene at my Uncle Max's grave in Normandy is one of those pivotal moments that brought together a triad of silences, all emerging out of the dissociation of painful traumas, silences that were themselves traumatizing. While the immediacy of my grief was for the uncle I never came to know, I was also giving emotional voice to a family compact of silence around a loss too painful to articulate. The wider historical context of my uncle's death also speaks to the silence of my postwar Jewish community around the horrors of the Holocaust. The destination of his ill-fated flight also speaks to a third collective silence, that of the German people around the horrors of allied bombing of German cities that took an estimated 600,000 civilian lives of which 15% were children.

The visit to my uncle's graveside, inspired by the research of a young cousin (also named after my Uncle Max) who provided me with both the details of his death and the site of his burial, situated me more widely and deeply in my life. I was encountering and connecting with my Uncle Max, my namesake, not as a subject of a flat narrative, "He was killed in the War," but as a real person buried in a real grave who died a real death in tragic and heroic circumstances in a real and terrible war that now

became *my* war, the family loss *my* loss, the holocaust tragedy *my* tragedy, and yes, even the suffering of the German citizens from the effects of relentless allied fire-bombing became *my* suffering. I was now more meaningfully connected to my family, to the community of my childhood, and to my numerous patients (and many others) who were affected, directly or indirectly, by the war. Rudolph's comment to me, uttered long before my pilgrimage to Normandy—"My life has been shaped by a war I have not experienced"—has now become not only a statement I can deeply resonate with, but also a statement that may speak, in part, for an entire postwar generation.

My lived personal world of experience was irrevocably transformed. *I had moved toward complexity.* And, with this move toward complexity, I felt more whole, more connected, and more healed.

Moving Toward Complexity: Pathway to Healing

Building on the prior personal narrative, this article considers complexity, not only as an abstract conceptual discourse, but, more important, as a visceral lived reality playing itself out in the analytic space—something we feel in our hearts, rather than thought about in our heads. I suggest, with the help of case illustrations, that the move toward complexity in the psychoanalytic encounter is inextricably bound up with feelings of wholeness and connectedness, and is more likely to move the analytic process toward healing of trauma for both members of the dyad.

I am using the expression "moving toward complexity" to denote both a dynamic relational process (itself complex) by which we deepen our awareness of complexity, as well as a description of this qualitative shift in our experiential world. The duality of meaning, with the attendant likelihood of ambiguity in my discourse, is purposive. As both a relational process and a dimension of awareness that is the outcome of that process, the expression can be seen to sit in the space between explanation and experience. My hope is to bring forth a more dynamic and fluid relationship between the abstract discourse of complexity systems theory and its lived form, a relationship where the tenets of complexity theory can be understood to be pointers to the experience of complexity.

A corollary to this is that a complexity theory sensibility, to be clinically useful, needs to be more than an intellectual support and, therefore,

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entails an experiential willingness to stay in complexity, to feel and embrace the irreducible complex totality of our interconnectedness, to feel the unknowability of that totality and to bear the inevitable anxiety and disorientation when that unknowability is in the foreground of our experiential landscape.

I am aware that any discussion of the relationship between complexity theory and the experience of complexity immediately raises the question of different meanings of the term complexity. What I am trying to bring forward is the notion that the everyday use of complexity as a descriptor of experience must somehow be connected, perhaps even intimately, to its more formal use in a theory of complex systems. In this linkage between formal and informal, this article continues a conversation that is gaining momentum within relational systems thinkers concerning the attempt to bring the lofty abstractions of complexity theory closer to the experiential ground (**Coburn, 2002**, 2007; **Pariser, 2007**; **Bonn, 2010**) whereby "the experiential value of [complexity] trumps its written definition" (**Bonn, 2010**,p. 6). In that context, I am using the notion of *lived theory* as an experiential term that will hopefully carry the previous conversation forward.

Lived Theory: Toward A Phenomenology of Complexity Theory

The highly abstract language of complexity systems theory presents a challenge to many relational clinicians who prefer theories that speak more directly to experience. It is a paradox that a theory that has such powerful explanatory power within the relational canon grates against the experiential sensibilities of relational clinicians. It, therefore, seems to me that if we are going to keep a complex systems approach to psychoanalysis firmly anchored in the waters of phenomenology, then we need to develop a phenomenology of complexity theory itself. A useful place to begin is to introduce the notion of lived theory to denote its experiential form. The idea of lived theory is, therefore, a term that converts the abstractions of complexity theory into a more user-friendly experiential currency.

Put another way, the lived form of complexity theory points to the place the theory, however abstract, occupies within our experiential worlds. In the opening personal narrative, I was *feeling* the dissolution of

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the distribution of traumatic dissociation of painful affects across generations. I was *feeling* more of the complex totality of interconnectedness that informs every moment of my life. In connecting with the experience of an entire postwar generation, I was *feeling* the complex systems idea that "all traumas are, to some extent, shared" (**Brothers, 2008**, p. 51). Moving toward complexity can now be understood as a relational process that transforms the *idea* of complexity into the *experience* of complexity.

The idea of a lived form of theory can also serve as a *marker of awareness* that all explanatory theories are emergent products of experiential worlds, both individual and collective, and remain connected to and embedded within those worlds. We will see that this marker of awareness can mitigate the intrinsic disconnecting effect of knowledge. An important corollary to this is that the separation of explanatory from experiential discourse is a provisional and temporary expedient that facilitates the conceptual development of a theory, and should not negate the continuous embeddedness of the explanatory within the experiential.

A rigorous development of a phenomenology of complexity or any other theory is an ambitious project, one that cuts across philosophy, linguistics, cognitive studies, and any other discipline that touches on the interface between language and experience.

This article is a modest contribution to this development, focusing primarily on clinical and personal applications. My hope is to encourage the reader to think of complexity theory in experiential terms and to begin to imagine what a phenomenology of complexity theory might look like.[1]

This article is also quite personal, interweaving as it does the personal, the clinical, and conceptual. It has occurred to me as I was completing my first draft that the paper can be read as a belated eulogy to my Uncle Max. My uncle forms the bookends of the article. And, the concluding metaphor I have drawn from the circumstances of his untimely death suggests that the inspiration I have drawn from my uncle strongly informs my central clinical and ethical thesis.

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[1] Kohut's 1959 paper on empathy and Stolorow and Atwood's (1979) *Faces in a Cloud* are both invaluable pioneering contributions to developing a phenomenology of psychoanalytic theory. In the former, Kohut translated some of the tenets of Freud's drive theory into experiential terms. In the latter, Stolorow and Atwood explored the emergence of major psychoanalytic theories from the experiential worlds of the theorist.

Moving Toward Complexity and Trauma: Fighting Against the Current of Reductionism

> We must fight to sustain the complexity. —Comment by a survivor of Rwandan genocide to Lynn Notage, author of the prize-winning play, *Ruined*

The connection between moving toward complexity and healing is a natural corollary to Doris Brothers' relational systems theory of trauma, whereby survivors of trauma are moved to restore shattered certainties pertaining to psychological survival by massively reducing the complexity of their personal worlds, a reduction mediated by dissociative processes (**Brothers, 2008**). One might say that the traumatic shattering of certainties goes hand in hand with the brutal explosion of complexity into an unprepared experiential world. In that context, moving toward complexity is a "leading edge" process that fights against the powerful currents of complexity reduction in relational fields dominated by trauma.

Moving toward complexity of experience is, therefore, not a given, but requires effort, hopefully shared, even though at the beginning phases of the therapeutic process, the analyst may have to bear the lion's share of that effort, keeping in mind that the pressure to reduce complexity comes from the relational field, a field shaped by the traumas of both patient and analyst. I suggest that this effort is an intentional act of consciousness and, therefore, constitutes an obligatory orientation on the part of the analyst, coexisting along with the obligation to be fully present, to invite genuine dialogue, and to meet the other fully and unconditionally. It is, therefore, embedded within the ethics and values of our work.

It will be obvious to the analyst immersed in relational systems thinking that moving toward complexity is interconnected with, overlaps with, and supports all the other relational processes that move the analytic encounter toward health and healing. So, genuine dialogue, presence, unconditional meeting, connectedness, empathic contact, selfobject relatedness and moving toward complexity are all mutually reinforcing.

By contrast, trauma, especially the prolonged and horrific, is a malignant relational process that shatters the relational supports that sustain complexity. At the clinical level, prescriptive interventions that are programmed and theory-driven may reflect the analyst's trauma-informed retreat from complexity, thereby colluding with his or her client's

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complexity-reduction tendencies and thereby anchoring the relational field in the comforting but rigid waters of simplification.

Moving toward complexity is, therefore, itself a complex relational process, rising and receding in the context of the ever-shifting relational field. There will, no doubt, be moments, especially when we have completely lost our way, that the pressures to stay in complexity may seem unbearable. Yet, these are often pivotal moments, tipping points, where transformation into new and healing areas of experience are possible (see **Bonn, 2010**;also see **Pariser, 2007**). If we can, therefore, sustain our faith in the process and refrain from slipping back into the comforting simplification of reductive theory or stereotyped interpretations, then surprising developments may unfold. Let us look at one such moment when remaining in the space of knowing nothing brought forth a heart-warming shift.

Forgetting How to Be an Analyst: Knowing Nothing, Playing in the Rubble, and Moving Toward Complexity

It was the Tuesday morning after the long weekend in May. I was standing over the desk in my waiting room with a gloomy and haunted air of foreboding as I faced a long day in my psychotherapeutic practice. I was feeling disoriented, in a state of knowing nothing about psychoanalysis, and certainly not ready to go back to work. I looked up and saw, through my glass door, Miroslav walking up the stairs that lead from the outside sidewalk to the second-floor mall that housed my office. We establish eye contact just before he reached the top of the stairs. He walked across the short expanse leading to my office and entered my waiting room. He asked me whether I was ok. As he approached me on the way to entering my therapy room to my left, I responded: "Actually, you are my first patient after the long weekend, and I have forgotten how to be a psychiatrist, and you are going to have to remind me how to do it." My response was said in a playful tone and was a continuation of a trend in recent sessions where I would open with some benign, informal, and playful self-disclosure that would have a decidedly vitalizing effect on what had been a stultifying relational process as I tried to engage with Miroslav's puzzling and tenacious traumatic paralysis.

His facial response indicated that he very much enjoyed my opening move. I was already feeling much calmer. We entered the interview

room and "began" our session. (Of course, the session had already begun at the moment of eye contact through the glass door.) And, what a session! Miroslav, who up to this point could hardly string together two sentences in his attempt to construct a coherent narrative of his troubled life, is transformed into the master raconteur as he recounts with poignant affect his lonely and confused days growing up in war-torn Poland.

He was able to recount that he was the oldest of three children born in close succession to a depressed and overwhelmed mother, herself traumatized by her years in a German labor camp. He was, therefore, farmed out to grandparents and then to daycare. He rendered a particularly poignant account of himself as a 7-year-old boy sitting at 7 a.m., without proper clothes, on the steps of his school in the cold Autumn air, waiting for the janitor to come and open the school. He had walked there on his own, an experience that was overwhelming for him: "I don't remember my father ever taking me to school … or my mother. … I remember wondering where she was … ."

In this forlorn state, he would ask himself: "What am I doing here? Where can I go?" Once the janitor let him in, he was able to bring forth a detailed description of the interior of the school and the meaning to him of those details: "This weird institution … uniform generic structure … endless hooks for shoes … endless benches … it felt like incarceration … school was boring … [even though] I did everything with my left hand I was forbidden to use my left hand to write."

Miroslav's gripping narrative transported the two of us with the expedience of Harry Potter's Portkey into the lived and troubled world of a 7-year-old Polish child of the early postwar years. We were able to link M's forlorn childhood experience with a longstanding feeling of not being part of the world, as well as to shed some light on his puzzling paralysis for the previous six years.

He indeed reminded me how to be a psychiatrist.

Discussion: Lived Complexity and the Playground for 7-Year-Olds

The apparent paradox of the prior brief vignette is that a complex and rich narrative, with an almost magical restoration of temporal coherence, emerged from an analytic space of disorientation, a space of knowing nothing. The vignette is an evocative example that the move toward complexity

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of the analytic experiential field often will begin, perhaps must begin, from that disarming moment of having completely lost our bearings.

But, of course, there is much more. I have found that a powerful facilitator of staying in a state of lived complexity, with the attendant uncertainties and unknowabilities, is to embrace that state playfully. And, with Miroslav, this playful spirit of engagement had become part of our routine, and served to deepen a shared sense of connection and safety. Furthermore, the notion of play had a special meaning for the two of us.

In an earlier session, in response to my inquiry as to what it was like growing up in war-torn Poland, he replied: "I grew up playing in the rubble." I resonated deeply with his poetic words, words that threw me back to the seemingly carefree days of playing with the neighborhood children in Winnipeg's old North End, a melting pot of Jews, Poles, Ukrainians, and other East European immigrants, many of them survivors of the war. I felt that I also grew up playing in the rubble, not the physical remnants of bombings, but the psychological rubble-the traumatic residue of a war, a residue that permeated the air with a nameless but palpable haunting. It was perhaps from that moment that Miroslav and I formed a dual identity, where the analyst–client dyad coexisted and interweaved with two 7-year-old playmates "playing in the rubble," where the traumatic remnants of the previous generation become the playthings of the next.

So, my opening comment was said in the spirit of playfulness and within a relational context of safety and connectedness. I knew that I could count on him to join me in a leap of faith into the abyss of the unknown and the forgotten. The analytic dyad may have lost its bearings, but 7-year-olds rarely forget how to play and are not daunted by unknowability; in fact, they relish it. A corollary to this, perhaps obvious to the relational analyst, nevertheless bears repeating. Moving toward complexity in the analytic field is more likely to occur within a trusting and secure sense of connectedness, and the move toward complexity in turn deepens the connection. Moving toward complexity and connectedness are mutually implicated.

The Body: Gateway to the Complex

It is a principle of complexity theory that we can never know the complex totality of our immediate situatedness. However, a sense of that totality is often felt in our bodies. Our bodies feel what we can never know and are, therefore, vital conduits to lived complexity. The importance of embodied experience in sustaining complexity may explain why survivors of trauma

often dissociate from their bodies, even in those situations where sexual or physical abuse is not the principle focus of their trauma. One might say that dissociation from the body is a way of dissociating from complexity *in toto* (i.e., from complexity as a supra-ordinate principle of organizing experience). It goes without saying that encouraging our patients to reconnect with their bodies goes hand in hand with the restoration of complexity, and may account for the shift in perception of body-based psychotherapies from their condescending relegation to "New Age fringe" to a respected place within the family of in depth psychotherapeutic approaches.

Let us look at a case vignette where a simple inquiry to the embodied dimension of a childhood experience transformed a repetitive flat narrative into a rich and complex version, where painful affects could be felt and integrated.

The Child Who Wet Her Pants

Marylyn is a middle-aged woman who has been in psychotherapy with me for a number of years. She has a longstanding pattern of disavowal of her own needs and accommodating to others. She conducts herself in a superficial cheerful demeanor, masking a deep underlying sadness. During the course of our work she had recounted on a number of occasions a childhood story, expressed with no affect, in fact almost with a cheerful tone, as if it were one of those humorous nostalgic episodes of childhood. The story involved an incident when she, as a 4-year-old, and two older brothers were playing outside with an old trunk. Marylyn would be locked inside, and the brothers would let her out. During the course of the game, the brothers inexplicably left the scene with Marilyn locked inside the trunk. After a few moments, she was banging on the trunk's walls, desiring release, and not understanding why her brothers were not releasing her. Thankfully, a caretaker eventually arrived, heard the knocking, and released her.

On the last recounting of the story to me, taking place near the end of a session, a question suddenly occurred to me that I put out to her: "Did you wet your pants?" My question seemed to have the effect of a thunderbolt. She looked stunned, and responded in an abrupt manner as she was leaving that she did not remember.

She arrived at the next session devoid of her usual superficial cheerfulness and informed me that I was the first person who had asked her how she felt about that episode, and that she indeed did wet her pants, made a

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bee-line to home and mother, and was thoroughly humiliated and shamed for having wet herself. Needless to say, any impulse to share her terrifying experience was shut down. She also added that bedwetting was a problem until she was 9 years old. She also recovered memories of an older sister abusing her sexually by administering oral sex in the bathtub.

This session marked a transformative shift in our work, allowing Marilyn to own her feelings, develop a sense of agency and entitlement, and to recognize at a feeling level that she was just a child and not responsible for the various abuses she endured. She was eventually able to begin letting go of her traumatic past by placing her mother's abusive behavior in the context of the mother's abuse at the hands of her own mother.

Discussion

The case of Marilyn exemplifies the move toward complexity by the transformation of a flat narrative into a more complex version, disclosing vital details of the traumatizing atmosphere surrounding Marilyn's childhood. The route to this move toward complexity seemed to be an inquiry into the embodied dimension of the narrative, possibly breaking through the dissociation of the body from her experiential landscape. (This dissociation no doubt contributed to Marilyn's considerable chronic obesity.) I would also suggest that Marilyn's felt complexity, with all the associated affects of the narrative, resided in her body—a body that was dissociatively split off from the center of her experiential world.

The transformative shift in our therapeutic process over an extended time exemplifies the enduring nature of Marilyn's increased capacity to bear complexity, as she gradually constructed a more balanced and complex narrative of her life story. Moving toward complexity tends to be cumulative.

Heisenberg's Universe and the Paradox of Knowledge

Lived complexity, at its deepest level connects us to a sense of undivided wholeness akin to Zen states. Werner Heisenberg, the German physicist who formalized uncertainty in the quantum world captured this wholeness by depicting the universe as "a complicated tissue of events, in which connections of different kinds alternate or overlap or combine and thereby determine the texture of the whole" (**Heisenberg, 1958**, p. 107). By virtue

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of our situatededness inside the universe, observation and knowledge can only be obtained by severing some of the connections, thereby fracturing the whole (**Sucharov, 1994**).

The paradox of knowledge is that it of necessity fractures and violates the very wholeness we are trying to understand. Knowledge, especially if it is held tightly, pulls us away from complexity. At the experiential level we run the risk of violating our clients' precarious sense of wholeness, thereby falling out of connection.

Knowledge, especially if clung to, is inherently disconnecting. It is, therefore, very difficult to stay in complexity. It would not be a stretch to suggest that every time I open my mouth, the ensuing utterance more often than not is pulling me out of complexity. The previous vignettes are, therefore, those rare and fortuitous moments when words bring forward a shift toward complexity. The fight to stay in complexity as a mantra for the analytic encounter is perhaps more aptly depicted as the fight to return to complexity within a relational process where a disconnecting fall from complexity is inevitable and frequent. I think this is the deeper meaning of Bion's (1970) call to begin each session anew by eschewing memory and desire and return to a deep state of felt complexity, a state of knowing nothing.

The challenge we face is, therefore, to preserve a sense of healing connectedness and wholeness within a dialogic process whereby new understandings, by virtue of fracturing our irreducible wholeness, at both the individual and relational dimension, may be experienced by the patient as a disruptive and disconnecting violation.[2]

It is here where we are called on to deepen our experience of lived complexity. And, in that context, I am bringing forth some conceptual metaphors that may point us in that direction, devices that allow us to keep moving between explanatory and lived forms of knowledge, so as not to cling to and get stuck on any piece of knowledge however illuminating it may seem. If we consider T to be the explanatory version of a given theory (or knowledge), then we denote *(T ...)* as the lived form of the theory,

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[2] This potentially violating nature of knowledge is an important theme in the thought of Emmanuel Levinas, the Lithuanian Jewish philosopher, who proposed the priority of ethics as foundational, grounded in his big idea of our encounter with the face of the other—an encounter that demands of us an irreducible and radically asymmetrical obligation. **Orange (2010)**, in recent writings, brought forth a Levinasian ethics as foundational to the analytic encounter—a point of view that defines psychoanalysis as vocation, rather than profession.

whereby the ellipsis reminds us that the lived form is always more than the explanatory form T, and the brackets specify the lived form.[3] Please note that T is inside the bracket, reminding us that the explanatory form is embedded within the richer and more encompassing lived form. The brackets, therefore, serve as a marker of awareness that our theories and knowledge, however abstract, emerge from and remain embedded in experiential worlds. I am suggesting that this awareness mitigates against the potential violating nature of knowledge by preserving a background sense of irreducibility and wholeness. It is this kind of awareness that allows us to hold theory and knowledge lightly.

To restate and expand on the clinical importance of this, my expressed concern about the fracturing nature of knowledge is intended to enhance our mindfulness of the double-edged sword of explanation. There is, however, no implication that provision of understanding *per se* is incompatible with the preservation of wholeness. What we need to guard against are preprogrammed, theory-informed explanations that may have more to do with the analyst's trauma informed retreat from unbearable complexity than with contributing to the patient's sense of being understood. I am suggesting that understanding is more likely to support wholeness if it is imparted with a transparent background mindfulness of complexity and a deep respect for the undivided wholeness of our patients. A corollary of this is that embracing complexity and embracing wholeness are mirror images of the same sensibility.

Moving to Complexity: Encountering the Infinite

I have already alluded to a connection between lived complexity and Zen-like states. In that context, it may occur to readers with meditative practices that a background mindfulness of complexity and wholeness is akin to the openness and stillness of nondual states of consciousness realized during deep meditation. More to the point, the same readers may also sense the implicit presence of transpersonal themes in the subtext of my narrative. It may very well be that a not so hidden agenda in the writing of this article is to bring questions of faith and the transpersonal

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3 The notation *(...)* is used by **Gendlin (2003)** in a similar fashion to distinguish the lived implicit from his philosophy of the implicit.

into psychoanalytic discourse. What I am suggesting is that when we fully embrace complexity and wholeness, we encounter a glimpse of the infinite totality of which we are a part. Moving toward complexity, therefore, goes hand in hand with the move toward realms of experience that have been more the purview of the contemplative traditions than of psychoanalysis.

Therefore, an important implication of this article is that when we shift our focus from complexity as explanatory discourse to complexity as lived experience, we inevitably bump up against and perhaps blur the boundary between psychoanalytic and transpersonal domains. This situation raises interesting questions about the role of the spiritual in the psychoanalytic enterprise. A full consideration of these questions is beyond the scope of this article. I just suggest that to fully embrace complexity, to stand in a place where we let go of all knowledge, even our psychoanalytic identity, constitutes an act of faith. It is the faith that this stance of surrender will provide the openness for healing forms of connection and understanding to emerge. This may have been the kind of faith that had formed between Miroslav and myself—a special faith in our connection that allowed both of us to stand in a place of disorientation.

In closing, I need to dispel what I believe to be a Westernized misconception of nondual states as esoteric experiences of a solitary mystic or enlightened guru and of being beyond relationality. These states are accessible to all of us. Furthermore, they emerge from and are supported by caring relational processes. While these states dissolve dualities (mind/body, inner/outer, and self/world), *they do not dissolve relationships.* Rather, they dissolve the barriers that impede genuine connectedness and wholeness. When we move toward complexity and nonduality, we, therefore, move to the very heart of relationality, to a place of wonder and mystery, where mutual empathic contact reaches its most deep and authentic level.[4]

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[4] My discussion of nondual states and relationality draws heavily on the work of Judith Blackstone (2002, 2007), who has integrated the realization of nondual consciousness with intersubjectivity theory, and has written extensively on the intertwining of spiritual growth and relational intimacy. The mutuality between experience of complexity and the awareness of nonduality derives from the work of **Pariser (2007)**.

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Epilogue: The Leap of Faith and Staying Connected

December 7 1942: Flying Over France

It was his seventh bombing mission. They were in the friendly skies over France on their way to the German city of Hagen. The plane was icing up and veering out of control. The pilot ordered the crew to evacuate the aircraft. The navigator, my Uncle Max, fastened his parachute and moved toward the open door where he encountered a terrified flight engineer clutching the sides of the opening in static paralysis. Without hesitation my uncle grabbed his terrified comrade and jumped out of the aircraft into the blustery and cold air. He pulled his chord and his parachute opened, breaking the speed of their plunge.

But not by enough.

The parachute was having difficulty supporting their combined weight, creating a sober recognition that they might not survive the jump. A terrible possibility flashed before my uncle. If he let go of his comrade, releasing him to certain death, his own chances for survival were decent. He had perhaps six linear seconds, a duration that became a lived eternity during which the most difficult decision of his 29 years would have to be made. He chose to hold on to his compatriot, hoping against hope that the single parachute would eventually cut their speed of descent enough for a safe landing. Sadly, his hope was not realized, and they both perished.

But, they died in connection.

My imaginative reconstruction of the final moments of my uncle's life can provide us with a powerful metaphor for the ethical challenge we face in the psychoanalytic encounter. Can we take the leap of faith with a terrified patient into the abyss of the unknown, initially bearing alone the hope and faith that the power of a yet unrealized mutual connection will sustain the two of us during the difficult times, especially during those moments when we may feel our own psychological survival is at stake? Can we stay in complexity and resist the temptation to let go, a letting go that can take many forms—from outright dismissal, to the grasping for the reassuring simplifications of theory —at the cost of reducing and violating the wholeness of our clients, leaving them emotionally abandoned?

Having said this, I do not for a moment equate the courage of the devoted analyst with the courageous actions of my Uncle Max along with tens of thousands of similar actions of self-sacrifice taken during the course

of that terrible war, not to mention the heroes of Vietnam, 9/11, the Balkans, Haiti, and all the other giant events of indescribable tragedy and horror. But, that is the point. Part of lived complexity is to hold in awareness the larger picture that envelops both participants. The challenges of analysis, as difficult they may be, pale in comparison to the challenges where physical survival (our own and that of our loved ones) hangs in the balance. For myself, my Uncle Max's courage is now a vital piece of my lived complexity that serves as a guiding beacon in my daily work.

But, if I can muster up even a tiny fraction of my namesake's courage, then it is more likely that Max Sucharov the psychoanalytic therapist can, like Max Sucharov the Flying Officer, take the leap of faith and stay in connection, stay in complexity.

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Translations of Abstract

Entremezclando lo personal, lo clínico y lo conceptual, este artículo considera la complejidad no sólo como un discurso conceptual abstracto, sino lo que es más importante, como una realidad vivenciada a nivel visceral que se despliega en el espacio analítico. El autor sugiere, con la ayuda de ilustraciones clínicas, que el movimiento hacia la complejidad en el encuentro psicoanalítico está inextricablemente ligado a sentimientos de totalidad y de conectividad, y lo probable es que el proceso se dirija hacia la curación del trauma en los dos participantes de la díada. El artículo propone una relación más dinámica y fluida entre el discurso abstracto de la teoría de los sistemas complejos y su forma más vivencial, una relación en la que los principios de la teoría de la complejidad pueden ser entendidos como indicadores de la experiencia de complejidad.

Entremêlant le personnel, le clinique, et le conceptuel, cet article considère la complexité, non seulement comme un discours conceptuel abstrait, mais surtout, comme une réalité viscéralement vécue qui se joue dans l'espace analytique. À l'aide d'illustrations cliniques, l'auteur suggère que le mouvement vers la complexité dans la rencontre psychanalytique est inextricablement lié à des sentiments de complétude et de connectivité, et est plus susceptible de faire avancer le processus analytique curatif du traumatisme chez les deux membres de la dyade. L'article plaide en faveur d'une relation plus fluide et dynamique entre le discours abstrait de la théorie des systèmes complexes et ses formes vécues, une relation où les principes de la théorie de la complexité peuvent être vues comme des indicateurs de l'expérience de la complexité.

Intrecciando la dimensione personale, quella clinica e quella concettuale il lavoro prende in considerazione la complessità, non solo come concezione astratta, ma in modo assai più significativo, come realtà vissuta visceralmente che si manifesta nello spazio analitico. L'Autore prospetta, con l'aiuto della esemplificazione clinica, che nell'incontro psicoanalitico l'accesso alla complessità è inestricabilmente legato con sentimenti di pienezza e di connessione emotiva, ed è in grado di portare più facilmente il processo analitico alla

guarigione del trauma per entrambe i membri della diade. Nell'articolo si sostiene la necessità di un rapporto più dinamico e scorrevole tra il discorso sulla complessità della teoria dei sistemi e la sua forma vissuta, un rapporto in cui i capisaldi della teoria della complessità possano essere compresi come indicatori della esperienza della complessità.

Das Persönliche, das Klinische und das Konzeptuelle verwebend betrachtet dieser Beitrag Komplexität nicht nur als einen abstrakten konzeptionellen Diskurs, sondern als eine unmittelbar erlebte Realität, die im analytischen Raum zum Tragen kommt. Der Autor schlägt anhand klinischer Beispiele vor, dass die Bewegung hin zu mehr Komplexität in der psychoanalytischen Begegnung untrennbar mit den Gefühlen des Ganzseins und der Verbindung verknüpft ist, und besonders geeignet ist, den analytischen Prozess für beide Mitglieder der Dyade in Richtung zu Heilung von Traumata voranzubringen. Der Beitrag spricht sich für eine dynamischere und flexiblere Beziehung zwischen dem abstrakten Diskurs der systemischen Komplexitäts-Theorie und ihrer gelebten Form aus, einer Beziehung, in der Grundsätze der Komplexitäts-Theorie als Hinweise auf die Erfahrung von Komplexität verstanden werden.

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