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[www.psychomedia.it/rapaport-klein/june2019.htm](http://www.psychomedia.it/rapaport-klein/june2019.htm)

June 8, 2019, 10.30 am

## **Introduction to Prof. Bruce Wampold**

*Paolo Migone*

Our Group has always shown great interest in empirical research and in testing theoretical hypotheses, in the tradition of David Rapaport and George S. Klein. Even if this group is interdisciplinary, and we discussed papers also on philosophy, history, sociology, and at times art (an example is tomorrow's presentation by Deborah Browning), we could say that one of the most important aspects of the identity of the *Rapaport-Klein Study Group* is research.

Bruce E. Wampold is undoubtedly one of the most interesting voices in psychotherapy research today, one that has been at the center of the most important issues regarding research in psychotherapy methodology and outcome, in other words at the center of the *The Great Psychotherapy Debate*, as he titled his book published in its first edition in 2001, and 15 years later, in 2015, in a second edition written with Zac E. Imel.

The issues that Bruce Wampold tackles are at the heart of the difficulties of doing research in psychotherapy, and especially of what we mean by "science" in this complex field. As it is well known, psychotherapy has tried to follow the so-called "medical model", based on RCTs, "randomized controlled trials" (based on double-blind conditions, placebo, etc. – what has been called the gold standard of "true" science) and a lot has been said on the difficulties of applying this model to psychotherapy. As a matter of fact, this kind of research has often brought stalemates, such as the Dodo bird verdict. Wampold suggests a different model, that he calls "contextual model", in which not only the specific techniques are considered (as in the medical model), but also the therapist's personality and the therapeutic relationship, as in the debate on the so-called "common factors". An interesting aspect of Wampold's approach is his great interest in the history of medicine and of psychotherapy, and of the philosophical implications of our way of doing research (for example he has been influenced by Imre Lakatos concept of "research programs").

Of course this brief introduction cannot do justice of all Wampold's ideas, that he will better clarify for us. I will list only some of his many academic honors. Bruce E. Wampold is Director of the Research Institute at *Modum Bad Psychiatric Center* in Vikersund, Norway, Emeritus Professor of Counseling Psychology at the *University of Wisconsin-Madison*, and Chief Scientist, *Theravue Inc.*, an electronic platform for therapist improvement. He is Fellow of the *American Psychological Association* (Divisions 12, 17, 29, 45), Board Certified in Counseling Psychology by the *American Board of Professional Psychology*, and the recipient of the 2007 Distinguished Professional Contributions to Applied Research Award from the *American Psychological Association* and the 2015 Distinguished Research Career Award from the *Society for Psychotherapy Research (SPR)*. He currently serves as President-Elect of the *Society for Psychotherapy Research*. His book mentioned before, *The Great Psychotherapy Debate: The Evidence for What Makes Psychotherapy Work*, presents an understanding of psychotherapy from empirical, historical, social, medical, and anthropological perspectives.