W. Bion, D. Meltzer. Social and Individual Thought in Psychoanalysis

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Abstract

The purpose of this work is to focus on the psychoanalytical concepts which, after Freud, Ferenczi and M. Klein, were developed by Bion and Meltzer, who are the ones who continued their work.

Bion (1961) is usually identified as an author who, due to his great creativity, has conceptualized institutional and group phenomena. In his book about group experience, he clearly and accurately stated mental phenomena, which exist in every human group. As it has been already mentioned, Bion has assigned an important role to leadership within group phenomena, which will give form to a group mentality, which states a parallelism with a politics level.

Meltzer, inspired in M. Klein, will take an interest in spaces as we will see (more deeply) a little bit later. However, he is beginning to support the importance of spaces inside oneself, inside objects which will be relentlessly staged in the analytical process via the transference. Meltzer (1990) calls: the apprehension of beauty. The object is valued for what it is in its immanent reality, what it reflects that human being in different attitudes and situations.

The Clinical Dimension will be illustrated than Bion and Meltzer ideas.

Key words: neurosis, group culture, leader, transference, countertransference.
The purpose of this work is to focus on the psychoanalytical concepts which, after Freud, Ferenczi and M. Klein, were developed by Bion and Meltzer, who are the ones who continued their work.

This will be illustrated with a clinical case which will demonstrate that human suffering is influenced by both individual as well as social dimensions in every historical evolution.

**Bion’s Dimension of Human Development**

Bion (1961) is usually identified as an author who, due to his great creativity, has conceptualized institutional and group phenomena. In his book about group experience, he clearly and accurately stated mental phenomena, which exist in every human group.

We may say there is “a first” Bion, linked to the thoughts and development of group phenomena. This fact led him to write about that experience, at the beginning of the 60’s. Purporting to do so, he collected works from the 40’s, such as: *Intra-group Tensions in Therapy* (1943), *Experiences in Groups* (1948) and *Group Dynamics: a Review* (1952).

All these works have conformed the book *Experiences in Groups* (Bion, 1961), which showed the way this author was working on the mind’s dimension, associated with the inter-subjective and the trans-subjective, as it was named by I. Berenstein and J. Puget (1997), without leaving aside the intra-subjective aspect, a model which has influenced his latest developments.

To my understanding, this book was the result of a series of both institutional and personal vicissitudes in Bion’s life. Possibly, his first treatment with John
Rickman, who had been working on the analysis of psychosis and groups, influenced his way of thinking. It is important to distinguish the role of J. Rickman in the International psychoanalytical movement, who, probably, was influenced by Freud, Ferenczi and M. Klein, since he had been their patient.

E. Roudinesco and M. Plon (1997) have pointed out that Rickman, since he had been analysed by three of the most brilliant theoreticians of the psychoanalytical school, was able to keep an inner freedom which led him not to give in to any dogma. For that reason, he managed to hold an intellectual independence, characterised in certain moments by the sectarianism and idolatry towards Klein’s thinking. All these facts show the intellectual freedom he was based on when thinking.

In 1920’s, he participated in the controversy about which people were able to practise Psychoanalysis; whether they had to be only physicians or also professionals who belonged to other disciplines. These questions led him to wonder about psychoanalytical training. It was the same situation that led Freud to wonder: “Can laypeople practice Psychoanalysis?” (1926), among other issues which reflect this concern.

The trigger of this controversy had its origins in the accusation made in Vienna to T. Reik (1888-1969), a learned psychoanalytical who came from other fields such as literature and anthropology. He had written his thesis on The Temptation of St. Anthony, by G. Flaubert, getting an early approach to Freud, in 1911. He was accused by Vienna authorities of practising psychoanalysis without being a doctor. This situation generated certain division within the International Psychoanalytical Association during that decade and became relevant in many different places around the world.
Both J. Rickman and M. Klein had big influence on Bion. It was Klein, perhaps, who had some influence on him when he left his interests based on the social in order to study the mind in an intra-psychic way with both neurotic and psychotic patients. I will not focus on this issue, though I would like to point out the epistemological turn and the way of perceiving psyche Bion had when he met Klein.

In the introduction of his book about group phenomena, he thanks John Rickman for his cooperation. This situation shows his needs for being accompanied in his analyst evolution. He was not afraid of dependency; he knew it is creative as long as individual findings and interests are not restricted. He also thought that such individual findings and interest may present a possibility of interchange which generates new ideas.

Bion states the group therapy from two different meanings which, according to him, takes place in this type of practice. The first one refers to a special treatment, with a certain number of individuals gathered to carry out that task. Here, he is already highlighting that it is about a clinical approach about “clinical suffering”, which presents a characteristic and a specificity different from that of the individual. The second meaning purports to discover the group structure which relatively eases a cooperative-like activity. Through this, he is conceding pre-eminence to a group mind which, sometimes, would take over the individual mind. This situation, in the best of the cases, will lead the group members to work in an inter-subjective way, where cooperation among them will be very important to develop the task they are about to do.

This “first Bion” will give relevance to neurosis in the group. At this moment, he considers this pathology leaves significant long term effects in human
psyche, both in everyday and group life. This is what he will consider in a chapter he names: “Intra-group sessions in therapy”, since he thinks that it is impossible that in every group development and thus, institutional, there are no tensions zones; that, if they are not processed, they will be compulsively repeated, hopelessly.

To his understanding, individual neurosis in a group context must be analysed, since a neurotic person obtains a secondary benefit out of his/her symptom. This situation is reedited in the group as well as in the societies. Societies repeat certain behaviour parameters which originally lead to individual neurosis of each member of the group as well as the whole society.

Regarding this, Bion started up a training experience, within the group he worked with in the army, to elaborate these neurotic patterns of each of the members. This way, such members started to mention the existence of something hidden within the institution and which they would call "la patraña". He considered these persecution aspects required a particular process of understanding. From an angle linked to thought, it was possible to process all the fantasy which was being controversially and pathologically developed in its very structure. Hence, it became intelligible to mental dimension, on an individual as well as on a group level.

This way, R. Moguillansky (2009), who has been dedicated to study these group phenomena, oriented to discover what happens and happened in psychoanalytical movement, can help understand the whole process. Purporting to do so, he highlights the concept of movement, which he mentions as a particular way of team-working, where there are "different parishes" built, which are developed in the psychoanalytical institutional
environment, like the case Bion had observed in the Army. Moguillansky observes that, within the psychoanalytical institution, when a parish evaluates another one, it usually does it in a very critical and hard way.

Getting back to Bion (1961), we can recognise his genius here, when he is able to consider the most primitive mental group phenomenon, which he managed to comprehend through scientific developments. This is illustrated by him when he states that it is important to focus on social and individual phenomena, as well as treating these pathological disorders with psychological resources.

Bion warns us about some controversial phenomena in psychoanalytical institutions, where there exists a power dispute that seems to be the only thing that matters. It is worth considering that this power dispute underlies any group-institution unconscious phenomena. This concept is extended to the entire society.

Bion points out that what leads to a good group functioning is the need of recognising a common task, to distinguish and take individual responsibilities and to recognise own limits within the group in relation with the other members. In every group, there is the need of developing the skill to receive new members and to let others migrate to new group-institutions. A special freedom should be built, which includes sub-groups formed within the group process, as well as the group and the individual himself. Moreover, every human being who is part of a group should be recognised by his/her group participation as well as count with a free environment to be able to manage within the institution where they belong to. The feeling of discontent should be recognised as genuine natural phenomena and, it is the group responsibility.
to develop ways of dealing with it. All this leads him to develop a series of conceptualizations, such as: group mentality, group culture, basic assumptions and leader.

About leadership, he starts a new thought remarking that there is a need in the group, from the very beginning, that Bion –as a therapist- develops a continent activity oriented to expectations which consist in their right of being provided of something. This group mental dimension starts to establish the idea that there should be a leader who processes group phenomena and, should this leader not exist; the group would find some way of leadership. All this mentioned above leads to the idea that individual phenomena within a group-institutional context are characterised by all individual phenomena which are materialized in the group, under the concept of “group mentality”.

For this level of group functioning, new attitudes and behaviours are developed among the members where, if the therapeutic leader does not respond to the requirements generated by the level of anxiety intra and inter group, the group itself rapidly tends to assign this role to another member. This author describes this phenomenon as the election of a leader by the group, though without the conviction of his/her leadership skills. This phenomenon is the result of mental forces which underlie the group structure and are apparently originated in a myth, where it is expected to have a member of the group (that being Bion) who has received the quality of authority, which contains itself unknown dimensions. In this sense, Bion interprets that the group requires a leader for the emotional survival of each of them.
All these group phenomena account for a functioning recently described as group mentality, where each of the members cooperate sharing their feelings and the well-known need for a leader. Basically, group mentality is significant because it brings into play and processes group tensions.

As it has been already mentioned, Bion has assigned an important role to leadership within group phenomena, which will give form to a group mentality, which states a parallelism with a politics level. It is impossible not to think that mental phenomena are not correlated to a political representation. To illustrate this, he turns to Aristotle, who conceptualizes men as a political animal. Thus, the human being needs to function in groups and to develop a political activity inherent in their very essence. This leads us to what Freud had already remarked about our gregarious condition, due to our initial dependence on our mother, through that first satisfaction experience which is originated in and for the need for help. We are subjected to a social, group network because of our human subjects’ own originality, which is the initial neglect. The work the group carries out will result in the creation of a typical and original way of behaviour of that group or subgroup, and will also be different from other groups. This is related to thoughts and objects exchange. This will result in the *group culture*, according to Bion, and it takes central relevance. That is to say that, in order for a group to survive, it needs to create, establish institutions, which will necessarily require an “organization” to make them meaningful. This group culture will be generated in the conflict inherent in group mentality as well as each individual’s wishes. The importance of the organization every group presents as a model of functioning is the result of the mentioned conflict.
This inter-game between the need for adopting and counting on a leader, which was originated by group mentality and culture, will lead Bion to think this is all the result of what he calls basic assumption. This was the product he had observed in the group, which was based on an <<a priori that would mark the existence of a type of leadership. This kind of leadership materializes a basic and necessary concept for individual and group functioning. It is that which must be taken into account as constitutive, as <<basic>> when considering either a group or an institution.

He suggests the existence of three basic groups. They will acquire their particularities according to their leader. They are classified as: fight-flight, which is led by a subject with paranoid-characteristics; pairing, which is led by a couple who are going to give life to the future messiah –who, himself, will save the group-; and lastly, dependency, whose leadership is based on a subject that everybody depends on because he meets all their necessities. Moreover, as it has been mentioned before, he states that every basic assumption group will develop a group mentality and culture. All this will be linked to the emotional conditions of their members.

Bion argues that it is pathologic for the group members to permanently function based on the mental leadership of one of these basic assumptions, since they are exposed to unstable emotional situations which function with partial aspects. Thus, the need of becoming work group is expected. This will allow the group to carry out a task, which will be accomplished in the most appropriate way since they are not going to be urged by divided leaders, as the ones mentioned in the basic assumptions, and they will also include them as a contribution. They will take into account the task to carry out in a productive
way, i.e. genital, which is the one that produces and gives rise to learning as well as interactive and not disruptive emotional experience.

Furthermore, Bion dealt with the complex topic of rivalry, the same way it was re-taken by Marta S. Martínez and Darío Sor (2004). They highlight men’s need for conflicts, rivalry and victory. These authors consider rivalry in Bion’s work refers to K-link, i.e. no knowledge, since hatred feelings towards others take people to strip reality of its truth component, transforming it into any other thing which can be digestible, because success or wisdom of other member of the group becomes unacceptable.

Moreover, Bion will develop an interesting hypothesis, not only to think neurotic or psychotic functioning when acquiring the pathology, as a result of the groups’ activity which functions with basic assumption leaders; but also to think the organic pathology, what today is called psychosomatic, due to the existence of protomental phenomena within the group. To his understanding, there is no difference between the organic and the psychological at this functioning level. When this occurs in the group, basic assumptions function chaotically. They are very primitive states of human activity which lead to organic diseases within the group.

Purporting to focus on the current practice, I wish to remark that the concept of <<protomental>> provides the foundations of a solid theoretical-clinical background for the psychoanalytical approach to human suffering, not only linked to group works but also to what today is called psychosomatic diseases. Such diseases do not present either neurotic or psychotic functioning, but it is the body as a whole that is damaged and requires these kinds of conceptualizations to be dealt with.
Bion defined <<protomental>> early in his theoretical developments. It would be located in an undifferentiated zone between the psyche and the organic. It is difficult to delimit the border but it has consequences for the states of mind. It is not easy to locate it in the thoughts level and it brings about pathological consequences at some level. In this sense, it may be stated that Bion, at the beginning of his work, studied group and institutional phenomena, but also dealt with what we have already mentioned in I. Berenstein and J. Puget’s cooperation (1997) which was called intra-subjective, inter and trans-subjective.

These first conceptualizations show how power is settled in the groups and in every member of it, which leads to either a pathologic or creative functioning. The first kind is linked to group activity characterised by basic assumption, while the second kind is characterised by work group. When members function with a very distinguished group mentality (where there prevail authoritarian leaders or leaders who carry out messianic projects or who do not respond to the interests of the group), confusing institutional states are generated. Such states would be present on the base of the functioning of the groups characterised by the basic assumption.

This leads us to suggest the idea of a <<second>> W. Bion who, based on the writing and sharing his own practice not only with patients in therapeutic groups but also in individual treatments, will propose new theoretical developments, thus, showing his distinguished creativity, which, at the same time, makes him fund his own school within the theoretical corpus of psychoanalysis. His concepts regarding neurotic and psychotic aspects of mind, continent-content relationship, alpha function, alpha and beta elements,
contact- barrier and its relationship with the bizarre object have been some of the pillars of his theory.

It is Bion who shows the depressive position from his double-way formulation from the schizoid-paranoid position and vice versa (PS<---->D), as mental functioning from an initial object division. Then it is integrated and, suddenly, disintegrated and, again, re-integrated in a constant back and forth. This is a differentiation of M. Klein, who had established more static positions. They now function in a kaleidoscopic way and very dynamically. The neurotic subject may sometimes function divided but, suddenly, he/she is integrated.

This conceptualization leads him to formulate the idea that the mind is a continent which presents contents, thoughts generated from very primitive elements, which are alpha and beta elements. He calls beta elements those which are not linked to mental current; they are not digestible by mind. From Kant’s point of view, they are things themselves; while alpha elements are those which allow the mind the development of thoughts. All this is presented under the aegis of alpha function, which commands this mental activity.

To his understanding, the mind functions with neurotic and psychotic aspects and, according to the predominance of the former over the latter or vice versa, mental pathology is stated. In his writings about group functioning, Bion (1957) still did not deal with M. Klein’s conceptualization about projective identification. This concept is, then, considered and enriched in his works about psychosis. This leads him to think about the existence of a primitive thought which is called pre-verbal and, whose main psychic mechanism is massive projective identification. In this stage of life, that functioning leads the subject to a distorted introjection of the object. This situation originates an
unarticulated mental conformation where the bond to the object acquires a so-called "mingled" shape, which generates a distortion of thoughts. This implies a mental deficiency structure and, according to me, confusing.

What was mentioned above shows the existence of an object of bizarre quality. This leads Bion to consider how the psychotic patient - through a massive projective identification, which implies a splitting of the object in multiple parts - generates the need of getting rid of it, since presenting these characteristics itself becomes unbearable. This operation involves the Self, slatted in multiple particles, to function in a mental world linked to beta elements, which cannot be digested by psyche. These aspects are perceived in those patients who suffer from confusional mental states.

The central concepts of continent and content are involved in all this structure. The former is primarily represented in the baby by the maternal figure, as the first continent of his/her projections. When these emotional contents of the baby are digested through the maternal reverie function, beta elements are transformed into alpha elements and, thus, permit the development of thoughts. If the mother primarily fails in this function, the baby is fed with beta elements. He/she enters in confusional states, which may generate organic diseases or a border mental state between neurosis and psychosis.

With the contribution of the continent-content pair, W. Bion has warned us even more about the depths of the mind. Currently, we count on these concepts which make us think of the institutional, where the institution can function as the continent that can or cannot digest the emotional states of its members. Likewise, they can suffer from turbulent states as a result of their leaders’ minds’ activity. These unstable states may lead to chaos, functioning
with confusional states which are harmful for all the individual and social structure.

Likewise, Bion coined the concept of *catastrophic change* which has to do with the conceptualizations of *continent* and *content*. It is connected to the mental states of psychosis and neurosis. In psychosis, every change is seen as a change of mental contents which cannot be received and controlled by the psychotic subject, while in neurosis, the continent is better structured, more permeable to contents changes, where the subject is favored from the acquisition of new contents-thoughts, which lead him to be enriched by the introduced changes. All this structure has to do with the three linking dimensions which he calls L (love), H (hatred) and K (knowledge).

To Bion, a subject with a psychotic functioning will have the H dimension exacerbated since he will hate knowledge. That is the reason why, without noticing, he will reject any change, in his person as well as in his environment, while a patient with neurotic functioning will give importance to knowledge (K) and will assimilate the changes that occur in his life in a more open-minded way. To put it coarsely, he will be on the right side of love (L) to new thoughts rather than of hatred (H) to such thoughts.

Because of this theoretical and clinical development, Bion has stood out within psychoanalysis as an original thinker who provided concepts that help us understand the suffering of both our individual and group patients. Besides, may be because of the sum of all these characteristics, he had a very important shareholding stake in the psychoanalytical society of post-war London.

Regarding what has been said and this last paragraph above all, Bion (1974) says psychoanalysts should get used to work with open and no closed theories.
in order to turn them into a scientific and esthetic thought. We could think that psychoanalysis was highly enriched by Bion’s thought, and to my understanding, it will be D. Meltzer who will continue this job because of his deep historical and genealogical roots within the so called English school.

In this sense, I would like to outline a sort of genealogy of certain concepts within the psychoanalytical corpus that could help us think why Meltzer reached his developments. He has said psychoanalysis is a method that is essentially historic. There is no sense in talking about it unless from a historic dimension and in continuous change. In order to think of this, it is nodal the concept of **introjection**, a term that belongs to S. Ferenczi (1909), who in one of his earliest works, works on the concept of transference where he agrees with Freud that the neurotic, in the relationship with his/her analyst, updates his/her entire life and the latter happens to represent the characters from the past of the afflicted subject. But it will be added that this not only occurs because of the projection but also because of the introjection in his/her mind of those significant characters from the past.

**Meltzer’s Dimension of Human Development**

D. Meltzer drinks from these Ferenczi’s waters in order to incorporate them in his future developments. Freud (1913), in Totem and Taboo, will develop the concept of object choice, since in that psychic operation there is a gain of pleasure because the subject takes his/her own body as an object, and links it with autoeroticism. This leads him/her to the concept of narcissism where the sexual drives, which have been separated, get the format of unit and the subject is disguised as an object.
In his theoretical and clinical developments, Meltzer (1974) gives greater importance to the concepts of identification, the transference-countransference pair and interjection. To Freud, Meltzer did not pay enough attention to what is at issue in the object choice. He says that inside the subject, upon introjecting an object, an important intra-psychic space is inaugurated, and to his understanding, it is M. Klein who knows the importance of this psychic phenomenon, inspired by the theoretical developments of her two analysts, Ferenczi and Abraham.

From what can be considered as a specifically Meltzer’s thought, it looks similar to M. Klein’s, who paid close attention to what she observed in children, where they talked about internal spaces as an extension of what they thought and felt was happening in the mother’s body. Our author returns to Freud as how he understands the mental development of little Hans, and how this child -via his father- talked about the same things, i.e. the weather, his little sister and that he was also going to have children, and he dramatized it as what he observed in ducks. The founder of psychoanalysis did not seem interested in this issue though it did the brilliant children's analyst.

So Meltzer, inspired in M. Klein, will take an interest in spaces as we will see (more deeply) a little bit later. However, he is beginning to support the importance of spaces inside oneself, inside objects which will be relentlessly staged in the analytical process via the transference.

All this will lead us to a new way of thinking psychic, as D. Meltzer (1974) is going to develop. This way, he will resume M. Klein’s work, linked to internal spaces within the mother’s body, the early Oedipus complex of pregenital
characteristics and partial objects (the father’s penis-feces-children), in addition to the development of children’s analysis where the game box is placed as a core technical characteristic (as a symbol of the mother’s body). She will now be able to take a leap in her theory and her great contribution to the concept of projective identification. Regarding the topic of internal spaces and the value of incorporation via interjection, Freud, after his second topic’s conceptualization and the tripartite structure of the mind in the id-Ego-Superego, is going to say that the ethical and moral instance given by the heir to the Oedipus complex, that is to say the Superego, corresponds to parents’ interjection within the human subject’s mind.

In this sense Freud (1924), regarding this position of parents within the human subject’s mind, will highlight that Superego owes its existence to the interjection in the Ego of the first objects, mental support of the first identifications, via the Id and to the internalized parental couple. From this point of Freud’s conceptualizations, it can be stated that now those parents who were once external objects belonging to the external material reality, now belong to the inner world, are internalized objects and have their origin within the subject. Freud (1925) recreates this internal-external dialectical reality by saying that it is no longer about something perceived in the world, external to the subject, but it has become internal by introjection and, it also exists in the world as something real. This internal-external dialectics will be extremely important to the construction of human psyche in M. Klein’s developments. To her understanding, interiority has a very strong specific weight in the field of unconscious fantasy. In her opinion, phantasy is the representation emerging from the biological body, and will achieve a development in two directions, one for the change introduced by the organs development linked to

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the external reality’s perception, and the other for the emergence of the culture’s symbolic world from the body’s primary world and where, by introjection, they become internal objects with life.

D. Meltzer (1974) has said about M. Klein’s thought that the projective identification is essential since there is a narcissistic construction linked to an omnipotent dimension of splitting of the object, where a part of the very own subject that carries it out is projected, both in an internal and external object.

The topic of splitting is of great importance within the English school’s conceptualization, since in the theory related to positions, the object can be splitted into good and bad as it occurs in the paranoid-schizoid position.

Meltzer (1995) will give a very important space to his theoretical developments. This is pointed out when he says that M. Klein, in her article of 1946, describes the processes of splitting in the same way as Freud did in 1938, based on a sadistic aspect turned towards the very own person who, in service of a primitive defense, makes the splitting. Meltzer then develops his own thinking where he sees the object's splitting as a primitive defense mechanism that will be composed of an upper/lower, front/rear, or good/bad part, and this secondarily results in an object’s splitting.

Here Meltzer is developing his own theory about splitting. He differs from M. Klein in that not only is the splitted object good and bad, but also upper/lower, front/rear. As pointed out before, this has to do with the child’s perception of the mother where, on one hand, perceives an upper part linked to breasts-nipples, eyes and mouth and thus her mind and, on the other hand, a lower part as a toilet function, in connection with the buttocks. The child also perceives the mother from the front as well as from the back, and in the baby’s mind; it
works as a splitted body and not complete or integrated.

Meltzer (1967) reflects on how a psychoanalytical process, focused on the transference relationships established between patient and analyst, is developed. This process has <<a natural history>> that is specific to that bond. It makes the patient go through different periods. He calls the first one <<the gathering of the transference>>. In this period, the analyst must be patient, pay attention, and be sympathetic and not intrusive in his/her interventions. He/She should have freedom of understanding of the clinical material the patient provides in the session. This period will be marked by the massive projective identification where the patient faces a constant confusion between the subject and the object. The second period will be linked to geographical confusions. It talks about the geography of the mind. It means that the subject lives in different places of his/her unconscious mental life. In this period, the analyst controls the patient’s massive projections and helps him/her gradually distinguish what belongs and does not belong to him/her. This way, a sort of “no confusion” emerges, due to the fact that the analyst controls the projected parts. The patient considers the analyst a <<chest-toilet>> as it serves to discharge his/her suffering. Then, when geographical confusions are reduced, a period of greater discrimination begins: introjection mechanisms arise and the locations of the weekend’s separation are more likely to appear. This way, it will begin a period of <<ordering of zonal confusions>> linked to the various erogenous zones. The introjective dependence is tolerated and there is a reduction of arrogance in the child. This will make possible that the importance of parents start being recognized. Then, the <<threshold of the depressive position>> will occur. Here, there is a fluctuation between the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions. There is
higher object integration; the adult starts having pre-eminence and begins to think about the end of the analysis. This is a painful period for both patient and analyst. As temporary regressions will arise, the latter should be tolerant during this period, since the constant splittings that arise must be worked out. Then, it comes the period of the end of the analysis that Meltzer calls "weaning". Here is where the introjective identification is developed in its entire splendor which consequently brings pre-eminence of the adult part in the analyzed patient's daily life.

It is the space Meltzer (1990) calls: the apprehension of beauty. The object is valued for what it is in its immanent reality, what it reflects that human being in different attitudes and situations. According to the author who brings us together, this historized life is developed in the analytical process, in which different productions, marked by the mind unconscious functioning, are observed, from the massive projective identification that leads to subject-object discrimination, until reaching the introjective identification. Meltzer (1990) says about the mind and its link with beauty: "the mind is the metaphors-generating function the great computer uses to write its poetry and paint its pictures of a glowing world of meanings. And meaning is, in the first place, the essential expression of the passions that relate to the world’s beauty" (1).

The Clinical Dimension

Isabel, a 65 year-old set designer, asked about her ailment 10 years ago. Said ailment was located into two dimensions. The first one referred to her maternal concern since her son had recently had a psychotic break of paranoid...
characteristic. The second one was that she had lost a lawsuit. Thus, she could not have any property in her name. This was because she had been guarantor of a fellow set designer in an apartment rent. This way, she began an analysis which would have a temporary development over a five-year period. From the beginning of the analysis and from her life’s story, it had came up that from the bond with her mother, of depressive characteristic, she experienced a confusing, hard and destructuring relationship. Whereas with her father, the relationship was different since he had tried to lead the family group, taking an omnipotent position, keeping both the maternal and paternal aspect.

Isabel admitted that her father had passed on her the love for plastic art upon buying two paintings from an unknown painter. These paintings were displayed on one of the walls of her childhood’s house.

Over time, these paintings became part of the scenery of different plays, showing her inner world’s beauty. The difficult years of the dictatorship from 1976 to 1983, characterized by the genocide which we were exposed to, had led her to an internal exile within one of the country’s most deprived provinces. This allowed her to survive together with her two children, who were the result of a temporary relationship with two men, who had disappeared from her daily life. She, like her father, had taken material responsibility for her children’s food, housing and education. At the same time, she had an alcohol addiction which, on one hand, sometimes allowed her to grumble about the inner and outer material reality, achieving certain <<happiness>> in her life. But on the other hand, she developed physical symptoms such as arthritis and metabolic disorders related to digestion.

Her need for love had led her to be guarantor of a man who then, throughout
her analysis, would appear as the hatred directed to herself, since she had suspected that her decision would lead her to a problematic situation, rejecting what she had perceived. This situation adhered to the identification with her mother, confusing and depressing. She could relate her son’s psychotic break to her life and vicissitudes, which enabled her to make contact with her own psychotic aspects. She accompanied him materially and affectively in both his analysis and pharmacological treatment. As a result, she achieved a greater emotional stability, not only with him but also with herself. Isabel was supportive of the distorted contents that she was object of by her son; this enabled her to mend her childhood's images in her dimension of daughter as well as mother. This way, she gradually came to her senses and thus permitted a work group to lead her mind. Instead of omnipotent leaders, she allowed messianic, fight-flight or great dependence.

When she could order her geographical and zonal confusions, beauty emerged from deep down inside. She accessed to a mental dimension of development of thoughts over the action which led her to lessen her physical symptoms and enjoy her life to the fullest, having the judicative ability of knowing when she functioned in a confusing or non-confusing way. So, one day it appeared, as we can find in Meltzer’s words: «<the essential expression of the passions that relate to the world’s beauty>», and the greatest knowledge of herself in Bion’s dimensions of L, H and K when she said: «<The director who I so much love, admire and recognize, has just asked me to be his set designer. There, I will paint a feminine bow rudder from where fresh and salt water flows, while a couple is sighted on the boat>». In Isabel, we can detect what Meltzer, continuing with Bion’s ideas, developed about the psychotic and neurotic aspects, the mental changes produced from the group towards the
individual that allow to infer the size of the contents and the continent specificity containing these physical and mental dimensions in every human being. These dimensions are carried out in an analysis process, where the transference the patient establishes with the analyst, grants him/her <<a natural history>> that is specific to that bond, leading the patient to integrate the different periods of his/her life.

A Provisional Conclusion

In this sense, if we take into account this <<natural history>> in patients and within the psychoanalysis’ theoretical structure, we can understand how Freud, Ferenczi, M. Klein, Bion and Meltzer have left us a history about the evolution of ideas and premises of a psychoanalysis that understands the human’s suffering in depth. That eternal dialectical between what was inherited and acquired, between the internal and the external, provides us with theoretical instruments that encourage our current practice's understanding. This leads us to believe our role of psychoanalysts as a beautiful one since it allows us to develop the minds of our patients, who in turn help us to carry on deepening our knowledge, which still has the emotional and intellectual mark of what they transmit to us, and invites us not to ignore our own human dimension.

Notes

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