

Bion & Gould

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Summary

Bion and Gould's thought, respectively in psychoanalysis and music, shows significant and interesting concordance.

Both men are considered mystics, in the sense of supporters of highly innovative ideas (messianic), namely for their ability to approach the "truth" and to influence culture and the establishment in a revolutionary manner.

They favour the rule of improvisation, thanks to which the transition from a formal/executive function to a creative one is carried out. The technique, in turn, should never be separated from the content outside logical awareness: by focusing on both aspects simultaneously, a new point of view may arise. Yet, the technique should not impose itself on the interpretation, rather it should stay "in the background". For this to happen is also necessary to approach the unknown, something definitely not knowable that each analytical session (musical piece) proposes thanks to the ever renewed relationship between the patient (listener) and the therapist (interpreter).

Key words: music, analysis, improvisation, interpretation, mystical experience and revolutionary

Résumé

La pensée de Bion et celle de Gould, respectivement dans la psychanalyse et la musique, présente des concordances importantes et intéressantes.

Les deux Bion et Gould sont considérés comme mystiques, dans le sens de partisans d'idées très innovantes (messianiques) capable de s'approcher de la «vérité» et affecter sur la culture et l'establishment d'une manière révolutionnaire.

L'un et l'autre favorisent le rôle de l'improvisation en vertu de laquelle il s'agit de la transition d'une fonction formel/exécutif à un cadre créatif. La technique, à son tour, ne peut jamais être séparée de contenu en dehors de la conscience logique: se concentrant simultanément sur les deux aspects peut naître un nouveau point de vue. Encore la technique ne doit pas s'imposer à l'interprétation au lieu de rester "sur le fond". Pour que cela se produise est également nécessaire d'aborder l'inconnu, d'approcher quelque chose certainement pas connaissable que chaque séance analytique (morceau musical), grâce à la relation sans cesse renouvelée entre le patient (écoute) et le thérapeute (interprète), propose.

Introduction

Wilfred Bion and Glenn Gould are two extraordinary men who, despite having

worked in such different fields as are psychoanalysis and music, significantly influenced their cultural milieu. In spite of their commitment to a distinct field, in my opinion, some connections actually do exist between the thoughts they expressed over a similar period of time, i.e., in the second half of the 1900s. In fact, Bion's first important contribution (Experiences in groups) was influenced by his activity as a military physician in World War II, and it includes writings from 1948 onwards, while Gould's recording of the well-known piano piece, the "Goldberg Variations" by Bach, which led to his international reputation, dates back to 1955. Both men died in the early '80s when they had long since "disappeared from the scene". After years of being at the top of the British Psychoanalytical Society, Bion moved to Los Angeles in 1968. In 1964, Gould's last public concert was held in Los Angeles after which he devoted himself exclusively to studio recordings of his interpretations. In order to highlight these coincidences, I will comment on the findings of a comparison between the writings by, and about, the two authors.

How to make music and do analysis: a mystical experience

According to Bazzana (2003), the author of a detailed biography on Gould, the Canadian pianist possessed some peculiar qualities, including an out-of-the-ordinary predisposition for musical performance, as well as a particular attitude towards the technique required to play a piece.

Bazzana writes: "Playing the piano had always come to Gould as naturally as breathing, the process of translating musical ideas into physical acts had never been a problem for him" (Bazzana, 2003, p. 423). However, he also adds: "But he could not explain how he did what he did at the piano: his brilliant technique was largely a mystery to him. Though he prized reason in most things, he was compelled to retain an almost mystical faith in his gift, and did not want to risk jinxing them. He did not like to reflect consciously on technical matters, which is why pianistic shop talk made him anxious ... " (id). And again (quoting Schoenberg): "I don't want to think too much about my playing... or I'll get like that centipede who was asked which foot he moved first and became paralysed, just thinking about it" (id).

Two fundamental aspects of Gould's personality can be gleaned from these words: an inclination towards mysticism (Bazzana id, p. 335) and his particular approach to "playing" music (Bazzana, id, p. 428).

The first element seems to propose Gould in the role of an individual "initiated" into the transcendent, far from logic and on the contrary, close to a supernatural dimension. A mystic (in the religious connotation) is in fact one who is "illuminated" by the deity that he tends to approach and join. Through their shared etymological root, the words mystic and mystery are related to the Greek word "myein" which

means “closed”, referring to the eyes and mouth of the adept who is the only one that can observe the sacred rites, but that must not tell others about them and must keep the secret.

However, I feel that the definition of “mystic” proposed in psychoanalysis by Bion (1970) is more suited to Gould. In this sense, Gould (like Bion) would correspond to the "exceptional individual", the mystic or genius. Indeed, this person is the one who has the power, unlike other individuals, to be the bearer of a new idea (the messianic idea) meant as mental content, the one who tries to get as close as possible to the truth. In this perspective, the mystic is also able to avoid being overwhelmed by the anxiety and feelings of persecution that are determined by contact with the new idea, thus causing the opposite reaction of avoidance and removal by the majority of other individuals (Bion, 1970).

What is significant is how the mystic then calls into question the positions of the establishment (in Gould's case the musical establishment), challenging its preferences and rules and causing its reaction, while not being deceived by his/her own conceptions although he/she may see them as harbingers of destructiveness, of a “catastrophic” change in the group he/she belongs to (Bléandonu, 1994). As pointed out by Neri (1987, p. 197, lit.tr.), although in the context of psychoanalysis : " ... the appearance of the ' mystic ' does not seem to aim at denying the scientific validity of the practice of psychoanalysis through the adoption of ascetic procedures aimed at making contact with the truth of absolute order, but rather it is an attempt at dismantling everything (expectations , beliefs, learned and ritualized theories) that is opposed to a creative knowledge of the human personality, and to propose new mental attitudes that allow to maintain (or restore) a genuine and beneficial relationship between thought and the primitive world of emotions and fantasies". So we can consider how Gould's (well-known) "eccentricities" further highlight his genius. Returning to Bion's statement (1970, p. 63): "It's been said that genius is akin to madness. It would be more true to say that psychotic mechanisms require a genius to manipulate them in a manner adequate to promote growth or life (which is synonymous with growth)". Gould shocked the music world on several occasions, especially when he retired from public performances to devote himself to the recording studio. And it is in this innovative vision that when Gould speaks of a different kind of listener, an "interactive" listener, who participates more directly in the musical composition, he is actually talking about himself. In fact he says of this hypothetical listener: "He is also, of course, a threat, a potential usurper of power, an uninvited guest at the banquet of the arts, one whose presence threatens the familial hierarchical setting of the musical establishment" (Gould, 1984, p. 347).

How to make music and do analysis: improvisation and interpretation

The concept of "improvisation" is certainly one that is drawn from the artistic dimension, including the musical one. In music improvisation is: "A performance that is spontaneous, on inventive whim, rather than one given from a written or printed score or from memory. Improvisation, however, usually involves the imaginative reworking of a given theme or other musical material" (Latham, 2004, p.87). Gould says that his approach to a piece is usually relaxed and entrusted to improvisation, to an open tendency to improvise when dealing with pieces of music "out of the repertoire" in which the "performer" is also urged to be the "elaborator" of the proposed music (Gould, 1992, p. 24). Bazzana (2003, p. 209) then tells us Gould claimed that " ... a performer should be true to *himself* before even the score or the composer ... " and " ... it was a belief that a performer was a creative force not bound by the limits of the composer's wishes" (Bazzana, id., p. 252). On this topic Hafner (2008, p. 92), Gould's biographer, also quotes the position of Schnabel, one of Gould's favourite pianists: "In his endeavour to satisfy the technical demands of his instrument [the musician] can easily neglect the creative task, to the extent of obliterating the imaginative side of the music, for which even the quintessence of dexterity and an infallible apparatus cannot serve as substitutes". Gould, on the other hand, says: "I have nothing against orthodoxy in itself, nevertheless I consider it essential, when making a recording, to contribute to a new vision of things, essentially recreating the work, transforming the act of interpretation into a creative act" (Gould, 1986, p. 115, lit. tr.)

Bazzana (2003, p. 177) shows how the public performance of Bach's Goldberg Variations (Salzburg Festival in 1959) " ... is plagued by the sort of seat-of-the-pants interpretive gimmickry that Gould always disdained. The piece seems often on the verge of getting away from him technically, and sheer nerves lead him to the sort of devices... that he never used when he was thinking clearly". However, his performances in front of an audience had a particular impact on the listeners: what he considered "nervous, superficial, over-projected, out of control" (Bazzana, id, p.177) was exactly what the audience admired because the concerts were "brash and brilliant and exciting" (Bazzana, id.). In this regard, Schneider says (1989, p. 57, lit.tr.): "Gould was wrong in claiming the absolute superiority of the recording-room. The live record gives, e.g. to the Op. 110 Sonata played in Stockholm, a density, a tension against time, as if there was something stolen, which leaves you to imagine what could have been the interpretation of the same piece in Chicago, in his last public concert. A sort of absolute necessity, as in games of chess, in which the *Zeitnot* refines the gesture and accelerates the thought. There's always enough time in the recording room, you can run through it again in all directions. It is a great freedom, but it has its cost". Bion (1967, p. 146) considers how the analyst should be able to "improvise and adapt" his/her psychic apparatus while he/she is faced with the most difficult clinical situations. Ogden (2007) proposes using "talking-as-dreaming", a technique based on improvisation with patients who are unable to bring their

daydreams to the session. This methodology (Ogden, 2007, p. 575, 577) allows for the development of a free structured conversation (apparently "non-analytical") between the patient and the analyst that arises from the therapist's proposal of a topic that is unrelated to the content of the session. More specifically, on several occasions when referring to "talking-as-dreaming", Ogden (id, p. 586-7) uses a terminology that is relevant to music. In this context, he identifies the need to replace, within the analytic session, what he calls "play the notes" with "make the music", which involves the transition from the role of executor to that of able interpreter. In the analytic work, it represents the difference between an "erudite" applying a textbook interpretation, without seeing the meaning it has in that context (Bion, 1975, p. 15), with respect to a therapist who is placed in an attitude that fosters the discovery of a creative meaning to the material that the session offers.

Ogden feels that the "music of the session " (p. 586) : "... lies in tone of voice, rhythm of speech, 'oversounds' [Frost, 1942, p. 308] of words and phrases, and so on").

Grotstein (2009, p. 93) reiterates this position by stating that the analytic session should be carried out in "...an improvisational passion play ... ", in which "... both participants are encouraged to be as spontaneous as possible in their respective free associations".

Gabbard and Ogden (2009), state that the analyst should be asked to have the courage to improvise the unconscious elements of the session and to use this ability and willingness to keep the analysis "alive". Thus, the "nature of music" can be very different from one patient to another and from one transference-countertransference experience to another. Finally, Gould's idea of involving the public more in listening to the music is commented by Di Gennaro as follows (1995, p. 57, lit. tr.): "The attempt is, once again, to put the listener in the centre of the work, namely to give him the opportunity to develop actively, choosing his/her own path from among the many possible ones". You may think that in psychoanalysis this is determined when the patient feels that some interpretations are better suited to him/her than others, and the analyst him/herself recognizes this propensity, and together they set a shared evolutionary path.

How to make music and do analysis: "dis-tract/es-trange" and "binocular vision"

The second element that distinguishes Gould is his own specific vision on how to make music, which is in his case, first of all, by playing the piano.

He understands this practice, in fact, as the result of a combination between what is known and what is not known and he seems to put forward the idea that if a similar set becomes too accessible to awareness, the result would be an irretrievable and non-resettable breakdown, such as to endanger his own interpretive skills.

This may, in my opinion, explain a peculiar pattern of behaviour that characterizes Gould's piano work, namely his propensity to sing during an interpretation, a characteristic he has never been able to do without since his youth.

Schneider (1989, p. 75-6, lit. tr.) comments upon this subject: "He did not want to dwell too much, to reflect on the possible meanings of that accompaniment song. He said that the question was frightening, that it threatened to reduce him to impotence and that if he stopped singing he could no longer concentrate. ' A distraction (it is known that to dis-tract the match, etymologically, to be drawn by, ed.). It's something that I myself hate and I would criticize another musician who abandons him/herself to these excesses. What I do know, however, is that I need this voice processing. If I do not sing I play worse'. But we can grope to get closer to this song ... Gould himself said that it must be an unconscious effort to overcome the difficulties of the piano, its mechanical shortcomings, and instead to produce a perfectly articulated sound, the sound that you would want to hear ". Again: "Gould himself says that when he starts to sing, it means that the piano has become extraneous to him ... " (id. p. 78, lit. tr.). Through this way of playing the unaware processing of something takes place, even just the singing, where the "duet" may correspond to an ideal phrasing during the execution that is never reached in real life (Hafner, 2008, p. 26).

Gould's singing indeed seems to announce the time in which technical and musical performance have merged with each other and are therefore no longer individually identifiable (the piano, symbol of the technique, becomes "foreign") giving rise to the creative possibility of the interpretation.

You may notice here, as before when Bazzana (2003) referred to the mystical experience and to not consciously reflect, as Gould returns to the fear of breaking down the two planes: that of awareness from that, of course, of unawareness. I believe what is proposed by Gould once again approaches Bion's thought and, in particular, his concept of binocular vision (Bion, 1962).

What characterizes binocular vision is how, for example, the analyst's "eye" is in the patient's conscious dimension while the other eye is in the unconscious one: what happens is similar to when two different senses are used simultaneously (integration) and this leads to a better overall perception (Bion, 1992, p. 10).

The analyst's task is to focus on the two perspectives, so that one is not dominating the other, to be able to properly observe the (psychoanalytic) object (Bion, 1962, p. 86).

Sandler (2005, p. 83) clears up that: "In clinical practice this model helps to elicit the latent content from the unfolding conscious material, not unlike a musical counterpoint". This is the concept for which, in counterpoint, other lines branch off from a main melody, thereby allowing them their own self-development.

An important step has thus been taken here, like in music, for the interpretation (in this case clearly analytic) (Bion, 2005, p. 23).

Overall, the result is something that brings together and transforms: "The marriage of two points of view produces a third that is neither the first nor the second, which creates something new and, thus, unknown" (Sandler, 2005, 84).

In the psychoanalytic field, this idea of Gould's regarding musical performance is still reflected through what Sandler himself reports when referring to Bion's *Learning from experience* about the analyst in session (2005, p. 188). To ensure optimal functioning, the analyst must in fact follow a free swinging movement between conscious and unconscious, through what Bion (1977) names the contact barrier (a flexible, semi-permeable boundary between the two levels), finding him/herself in the condition that Freud called free-floating attention (1912, p. 112) and Bion referred to as (1997, p. 27) thinking in search of a thinker (wild thinking).

To describe this mode that involves the analyst, Sandler (2005, p. 188) proposes a musical metaphor, namely that of a musician practising the scales: something that is initially done in a rather conscious way, and that is connected to learning the technique, but later performed "without thinking", i.e., almost unconsciously.

How to make music and do analysis: to contrast the "seduction of technique" and the "memory, desire and knowledge"

To support these positions, yet still in the context relative to the execution-interpretation, Gould (1992, p. 69) emphasizes how, despite his attitude toward music, playing requires a good deal of willingness to give up those qualities which he describes as the "fascination" of the piano.

So he tries to implement their depersonalization and undoing through his physical approach to the keyboard, as if he is at one with the instrument (Di Gennaro, 1995, p. 25). In fact, Gould feels that: "Part of the secret in playing the piano is to separate yourself from the instrument in every possible way" (Bazzana, 2003, p. 428). This is confirmed in a sentence by Gould himself: "I have to find a way of standing outside myself while at the same time being totally committed to what I'm doing" (id).

Gould therefore promises an interpretative solution where the player should simultaneously be in a dimension outside the instrument (i.e., far from his/her theoretical and technical knowledge) and inside it (i.e., into the music). Thus, referring to Monteverdi (Claudio Monteverdi, 1567-1643, a famous Italian composer, singer and gambist, ed.), Gould (1984, p. 12) points out that this musician distanced himself from "the reasoned appeals of Renaissance technique" in order to approach a genre of music that had perhaps never previously been made and to which Gibbons (English composer, virginalist and organist of the late Tudor and early Jacobean periods, ed.) later contributed, as follows: "And so, once in a while, when the spirit moved him and the context seemed appropriate, he would engender some weird, ambivalent conflict between the voices, some last-minute detour around all that was most precise and compact and 'progressive' in the texture" (id., p.13).

What comes from such experience is counterpoint. Counterpoint configures the existence, next to a main melody, of one or more independent melodic lines that "contrast" with the first in a musical composition. With regard to the importance Gould assigns to counterpoint, Di Gennaro comments (1995, p. 45, lit. tr.) : "Gould is not affected by the linearity, the smoothness: he is attracted, as always, by the counterpoint (defined in this case in its etymological sense of *contra punctum*), the extreme differentiation, whether the timbral [instrumental execution) or conceptual (in the spoken reasoning) order".

This is why Gould greatly appreciates Bach. The fugue form that Bach expresses in many of his compositions is probably the maximum of contrapuntal elaboration. So it is understandable that Gould's aversion to romantic music has to do precisely with these ideas: it would make it possible to more easily show the technique (virtuosity) at the expense of the musical substance by focusing on a restricted and already too well known repertoire (Hafner, 2008, p. 91) and giving priority to the exterior, to the appearance over the substance (Pagliari, 2012).

"And I had often had, because one *cheats* in giving concerts. You don't explore very much new repertoire. You play the same old tired pieces that you've tried out on your recorded public as well as on other, public publics... And there is an incredible lack of imagination that sets in; there's no longer a need to rely particularly on imagination. And one grows old very quickly" (Bazzana, 2003, p. 176).

And again (id., p. 261): "I think that if there's any excuse at all for making a recording it's to do it differently, to approach the work from a totally recreative point of view, that one is going to perform this particular work as it has never been heard before. And if one can't quite do that, I would say abandon it, forget about it, move on to something else where you *can* feel a little differently about it... " ... "This sounds a very strange thing to say, but I have in many cases come to studio without the least notion of how I was going to approach the work that we were to play that day" (id.). With regard to these considerations, Di Gennaro writes (1995, p. 74, lit. tr.): "Yes, because whenever Gould felt that his performance - as iconoclastic as it could be -, was turning into custom, he radically changed it, overexposing some detail, even at the expense of other important elements, so as not to be 'indifferent' to those who listened to him, that is - as Luigi Pestalozza wrote- 'to not fall into monotony' ". And Bazzana (2003, p. 260) adds: "He (Gould) compared himself to soap-opera actors who learn and forget lines on a daily basis".

Gould states directly (1986, p. 152-3, lit.tr.): "It's dangerous, at least for me, to arrive at recording too prepared... If you go into the recording-room with a 'fait accompli' or too pronounced state of mind, it is very likely that you are disappointed". Schneider writes (1989, p. 10, lit. tr.): "(Gould) would stay awake, he would have started the music from the beginning, from the beginning each time, forgetting everything he knew to find it intact ". And again (id., p. 96): "... his first precept would be to forget that you are playing the piano... Keep aside to be more sensitive to

the touch“. "He, who had an extraordinary memory, played like without memories " (id., p. 155).

In the song "I know you want to write a fugue?" written by Gould, one of the verses says: "Pay no mind to what we've told you, give no heed to what we've told you, just forget all that we've told you and the theory that you've read" (Gould, 1984, p. 235). Schneider states (1989, p. 159, lit. tr.): "What attracts irresistibly in most of Gould's interpretations, is the certainty that the listener has of being led to a place where everything happens for the first time, to attend the birth of the work".

I don't understand interaction between the performer and the instrument, the latter must not impose itself, i.e., the technique (and theory) should not overwhelm the interpretation.

The theme that Gould highlights is, in fact, one for which in some cases the technique can be an end in itself that drives and leads the musician to align and join formal and widely accepted school models, thus making them more "reassuring". The risk is, however, that in such circumstances one is then faced with an execution (a term whose root has to do with keeping behind, or going after someone [latin: ex-sequi: to follow to the end]) rather than an interpretation (which brings us back to the concept of "mediation" [latin: inter: "between" and pretium: "price", i.e. who interposes him/herself between the seller and buyer, to determine the value of an object]).

Linking back to the sphere of psychoanalysis, the connection between what we have just expressed and the concept of "avoidance of memory, desire and knowledge" (Bion, 1970, p. 34), becomes evident. And the latter is something which, if not implemented, prevents the analyst from performing his/her therapeutic function.

This is basically due to two reasons. The first is because in such cases the analyst becomes a sort of "vestal" of psychoanalytic knowledge so as to intrude into the idea of being able to control reality, losing instead the ability to learn from experience and to get closer to the truth ("... the psycho-analyst's armoury has been correspondingly deficient in observations of omnipotence and omniscience" [Bion, 1967, p. 144]).

The second is because in such conditions he/she is no longer able to receive additional information provided by the patient ("The analyst who knows and remembers everything is not able to learn, instead he would appear as a saturated element unable to absorb anything else" [Lopez-Corvo, 2002, p. 174]). So, Bion (1970, p. 34 and ff.) proposes a "discipline" that leads to the suppression of these aspects, which allows, in turn, the ability to "exercise the free-floating attention, freedom, intuition" (Sandler, 2005, p. 208), i.e., to provide him/herself with an endowment aimed at fostering the communication and understanding with the patient in session. This condition of receptivity is based on experiences that involve the analyst's tolerance of not knowing in addition to the "catastrophe" caused by the change that involves the therapist-patient couple (Bion, 1979, p. 35-6). Bion states (Sandler, 2005, p. 187-8) that the accurate scrutiny of his/her own mind that the analyst implements in his work requires two types of "intervention".

On the one hand, his/her adoption of a "technical tool of preparation", namely the "Grid" described by Bion that "...provides practice, analogous to the musician's scales and exercises, to sharpen and develop intuition" (Bion, 1963, p. 73). On the other hand, a "mental attitude" (active during the session) able to bring out essential aspects: the ability to "dream" what is happening, the development of intuition, the contact with the "madness", a profession of faith in the analytical method, the ability to communicate understandably with the patient: all of which, however, must be placed in a dimension that spills over from the conscious to the unconscious. Thus, once again the approach to music comes back to the technique that the performer has to know well, but also to the interpretative qualities that are the result of the creative experience that he/she has achieved.

How to make music and do analysis: approaching the border areas, getting yourself in unison with "O" (at-one-ment)

Gould also shows another lively passion, that is for Schoenberg, i.e., one who is considered the inventor of twelve-tone music.

Gould says that Schoenberg "...typified the dilemma of the contemporary musical situation in a very special way" (Gould, 1984, p. 107).

He adds (id): "Within the fifty years of his creative life he produced a remarkable series of works which initially accepted and fed upon the traditional musical premise of his time, then challenged it and came perilously close to anarchical reaction, and then, confronted by the terror of anarchy, became almost over-organised, over-legislated by superimposed rules, and finally ended by attempting to coordinate the systems of legislation which he had developed with aspects of the tradition which he had, many years before, abandoned. And so, in this cycle of acceptance, rejection, and reconciliation, we have not only a spectacular chronological development but also the basic pattern for much of what has taken place in the first half of the twentieth century".

Coming directly back to Gould, one can note that there are precise coincidences between him and Schoenberg. Di Gennaro points out (1995, p. 48-9, lit. tr.): "The Canadian artist, curiously calling himself *a fin de siècle* character, says he feels attracted 'by the transition states, namely the music strategies in front of the abyss. These transient states can represent an entire era or just a moment in the creative evolution of a particular artist'".

Schoenberg is a composer who, like Gould (1984, p. 115) writes, in an age of transition from tonal to twelve-tone music: "... (he) was committing himself to a language which he had no means to govern except through his innate musicality"... "What a temptation it must have been to return to the solid ground that had supported him only a few years before ? What a temptation it must have been to forsake the terror of this unknown world of sound ?".

So the twelve-tone series (a succession of twelve tones in a row) must remain detached from the melodic unit and "...simply be a source of reference to which the composer's invention would apply", "...a mysterious, unborn specimen" that the composer can utilize in a creative sense "...by contemplating and pondering it, by inventing certain numbers of variations upon it..." (id., p. 116).

Gould thinks that it is just by "pushing" the interpretation beyond its limits, namely the fidelity to the text, that one can unleash its ideal and transcendental potentiality, thus determining a creative act that is opening "a window onto uncharted territory" (Leroux, 2010, p. 43).

According to Bion approaching a psychoanalytic vertex, i.e. what you need to get ahead with a real growth of the patient in analysis, corresponds to going up to, to focusing on "O" (Bion, 1967, p. 145).

"O" represents the unknown, the ultimate reality, something that is not known but also not definitively knowable (Bion, 1965, p. 140), that may surface in the course of the analytical session or artistic creation or a state of "enlightenment" (Lopez-Corvo, 2002, p. 197).

Says Sandler (2009, p. 166): "*Approaching* must be differentiated from *reaching*... The approaches are made through perceiving and tolerating, ultimately insoluble paradoxes of the human condition".

Getting in touch, merging with "O" together with the patient ("at-one-ment" [Bion, 1965, p. 163]) can be implemented effectively only if the influence of memory, desire and knowledge are abolished. The interpretation must in turn be based on clearing what is highlighted by the contact with this being in unison, leading to a revelation, opening a space for understanding the unconscious (unknown/unbewubt).

Conclusions

The attitude that Bion and Gould manifest, respectively, towards psychoanalysis and music, includes a number of features that emphasize the similarities.

Their adhering to non-conformist ideas, even "disruptive" ideas as regards the consolidated knowledge, put both in contrast, even considerably so, with the establishment to which they belong (Sandler, 2005, p. 18, 59; Leroux, 2010, p. 71).

But both Bion and Gould tolerate this condition and in their role as "mysticals" they continue to maintain their positions with conviction and to express themselves through unconventional (psychoanalytic and musical) language (Bion, 1965, p. 147).

What they identify is how the interpretation becomes profitable if it deviates from the theoretical criteria and approaches desire and knowledge as much as possible, thanks to the abandonment of memory, desire and knowledge, that is through improvisation, the unknowable ("O").

Going to any analytic session "well-prepared" (with all the baggage of reflections and forecasts) is therefore analogous to going to a concert after too many rehearsals.

At the opposite end we have "dis-tract" or "es-trange" i.e., putting the technique behind (which should not be forgotten but kept in the background), with all its requests, the same way you would interpret building a "bridge" between the conscious and unconscious (binocular vision).

We can, in this context, consider that the term "improvisation" has the same root as "improve" (from latin *providere* with the suffix-in [negative]: "does not anticipate", in turn from the greek *apronoetos* "without worrying about"): to improvise can then have the meaning of to start the improvement in function of spontaneity (creative) and, therefore, it represents an important contribution to interpretation.

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