

The mystic's and the psychoanalyst's experience under Bion's vertex

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Abstract

The author's proposal in this work is to explore the assertion that some mental conditions that permit the access to a mystic experience may be part of psychoanalytical practice. This approximation offers the psychoanalyst the possibility of using elements of some mystics' discipline to think about the experience of the session, without leveling both situations, or to label psychoanalysis a religious or mystic attitude.

Bion was aware of this approximation and affirmed that psychoanalytical facts may be adequately expressed taking the model of the mystics' experience. In doing so, he uses it as a provisional construction to signify facts observed in his experience with the patient.

From this methodological approximation and, taking as a model the notion of Negativity, Faith and the Experience of the Unspeakable that may be applied to Psychic Reality (The Unconscious) approach, the author recovers Bion's contributions to situate Psychoanalysis as an experience that is open to what is unknown in each session.

Psychoanalysis' aim is not to decipher the mind, but to place the analysand in contact with its mystery. This contact does not belong to the speech level, but constitutes an emotional experience of transformation experienced in the analytical relationship.

Key-words: summit, mystical, psychic reality, unconscious, faith.

Las ideas no son de nadie. Andan volando por ahi, como los angeles
(Ideas are nothing. They fly around like angels)
Gabriel Garcia Marques: *Del Amor y Otros Demonios* (1994)

Introduction

By "the mystics' experience" or "mystic experience" we understand a set of dispositions of affective basis that imply a peculiar state of consciousness, referring to the contact with "the sacred". To talk about mystic experience does not necessarily mean to talk about religion or mysticism.

Religion is a set of beliefs in the existence of supernatural powers; the manifestation of such beliefs is achieved through peculiar doctrines and rituals that involve, generally speaking, ethical precepts (*Dicionário Aurélio da Língua Portuguesa*). The word mysticism may have many meanings. It may refer to a movement towards

generalization, rationalization and ideologization of the mystic experience and it also may refer to private experiences, idiosyncratic dispositions that do not belong to any "ism" movement. In order to avoid the first meaning, which is of no interest at the moment, we preferred to mention only the "experiences that take place on the level of the sacred", or simply "mystic experiences".

When we mention these experiences, we are not necessarily giving them a religious connotation or interpretation. Mystic experience may be experienced by people who do not believe. The poet Jorge Luis Borges, who is an assumed agnostic, tells of mystic experiences twice in his life and gave us precious descriptions of them.

The realm of the sacred

I make Galimberti's (2003) words mine:

"Sacred" is a word of Indo-European origin that means "separated". Sacredness, therefore, is not a spiritual or moral condition, but an inherent quality to what is related and has contact with powers that man cannot dominate and considers as superior to himself and, as such, attributed to a dimension denominated "divine", considered "separated" and "another one" in relation to the human world.

The author adds that the human tendency towards the sacred is to keep a distance from it and, at the same time, to be attracted by it. Galimberti says that this ambiguity is the essence of all religions, once it is situated in the censure that guarantees, simultaneously, the separation and the contact, which are regulated by ritualistic practices that can avoid, on the one hand, the uncontrolled expansion of the sacred, and on the other hand, its inaccessibility.

Religion maintains the field of the sacred, at the same time separated and accessible to men. Christian Tradition, perhaps because it presents itself as the "official" representative of the arbitrating and pacifying force between the sacred and the profane (profane is that that develops itself outside the temple), has always made clear its attitude of suspicion towards the mystics whose voice was never receptive in relation to the rules established by the authorities.

Freud: an agnostic that penetrated the realm of the sacred.

This assertion does not mean that Freud was interested in mysticism or in mystic experiences. In his letters to Romain Rolland he affirmed that mysticism was not one of his themes. Freud thought that the sensation of "oceanic feeling" connected with "mystic experiences" was only the repetition of the egocentric feeling to amplify his limits, much in the same way of the fusion of primitive states with the mother. Therefore, the "oceanic feeling" was only a regressive state (Freud, 1930/1964b).

In spite of this reducing definition and his disinterest in this theme, Freud (1938/1964c), mentioned mysticism again, towards the end of his life, in a brief note: "Mysticism is the obscure self perception of the realm outside the ego, of the id."

We may be induced to think that, with this assertion, without an ampler and precise context, Freud tried to rescue the path of an extraordinary intuition he had many years

before, related to the perception of the dynamic unconscious and its formulation as a nucleus that structures the psyche. Freud decentralized the subject from his conscience and centered it in the realm of the so called Psychic Reality, where the unconscious and the pulsions are situated. In other words, Freud called our attention to "something" beyond the sensitive experiences, (better saying sensory experiences) and, with this, he pointed to what was already present but inaccessible to daily observation.

What has it to do with the sacred we have mentioned before? In a previous work (Mello Franco, 1998), I had the opportunity to approach this relationship, when I mentioned Bonford's essay (1990) in which he emphasizes a relevant parallel between the notion of the attributes of the Divinity formulated by Theology and the Freudian notion of the qualities of the Unconscious. Let's take a look at the following table (which I have slightly modified):

<i>Attributes of the Divinity</i>	<i>Attributes of the Unconscious</i>
Eternity	Timelessness
Infinity	Spacelessness
No- contradiction	Omnipotence
Indivisibility	Displacement/Condensation
Pure Act	Equivalence between Internal Reality and External Reality

As it can be implied by this comparison, there is an "equivalence of representations" between what is understood by Divinity and what Freud described as attributes of the Unconscious. Based on this equivalence of representations (which does not mean ontological identity), one may think that both notions refer to the realm of the sacred. Therefore, the so called Psychic Reality (Freud coined the expression, which contents points to the Unconscious) is situated in the same apparent decentralization where the notion of the sacred is situated, as something separated , constituted differently from the formal logic register. With this extraordinary intuition, Freud inserts our being at the core of an opaque reality in relation to the sensory and that, because it is ineffable (unspeakable), does not reach speech and is only accessible through experience.

However, these approximations do not exhaust at the level mentioned above. Eigen (1998, p. 33) calls our attention to the fact that, in many occasions, Freud used images taken from myths and from religion to express the creative process. The spontaneous use of mystic images to represent creative blocking, fight, agony, joy, effusion and discovery became part of the language of the clinical session.

It is remarkable, however, that the founder of Psychoanalysis went beyond the spontaneous use of these images that are commonplace in the considerations about the sacred. When he devised a method to approach Psychic Reality, he introduced conditions that present an extraordinary approximation with the so called "mystic way" of contact with the Ultimate Reality. Let's see:

a -The Psychoanalytical Method forwards the knowledge of Psychic Reality that originates in the experience of being. It is not to "know about", but to "live" the experience of the Unconscious during the session. Freud (1940/1964d), p 177) had already pointed out that: For a patient never forgets again what he has experienced in the form of transference; it carries a great force of conviction than anything he can acquire in other ways.

In the same way, mystic knowledge is not conveyed by doctrines and canonic rules. The mystic does not make speeches about the divinity (this is the theologians' prerogative). He experiences states of qualitative intuition, in which all his affectivity and, why not? all his sexuality is engaged. Nothing escapes from this plunge.

Rizzuto (1996, p.72) sums up the approximation between mystic experience and psychoanalytical experience saying that, both experiential psychoanalytical knowledge, in the context of a ritualized and deep relationship (our session) and the experiential and ineffable experience of the mystic, share human knowledge, in the most essential way.

b - In both psychoanalytical and mystic conditions, "knowledge by experience" is intrinsically connected to a transformation process. The analysand and the mystic are similar in relation to the fact that both suffer an irreversible transformation by the experience as a special being, no matter whether he is human or transcendent. Rizzuto, p. 85). Bion emphasized this aspect, which we will consider later.

c - Another connection between these experiences above mentioned, may be understood in Freud's well known recommendation to the analyst to always work in a state of evenly- suspended attention. This is the analyst's counterpart of the patient's free association with which Freud inaugurated his original method. Its aim was to maintain mental spaces at hand to follow up the movements of the Unconscious (his own and that of his patient) in the session, without bias and saturation by the "already known" or by that that "must be" perceived as an imposition of the analyst's own desires.

This is a discipline the mystics know too well when they develop a receptive state that directs them to new spaces in the experienced psychic expansion. Taking this into consideration, mystic experience is made of cognitive experience that operates at some non-ordinary levels of consciousness. On this subject, it is worthwhile to remember Freud's recommendation in a letter to Lou Andréas-Salomé: We must artificially blind ourselves until we reach a beam of light in the darkness. This is an assertion that might sound familiar to S. John of the Cross from his experiences of the "dark nights", as a condition to the approximation with the divinity. Not only for the analyst but also for the mystic, truth comes in the core of a paradox: only in darkness we can capture light.

A Brief Reflexion

Rites, doctrines, theories (linguistic mediations), religions, analytical setting .., which is the role of these intermediations? Do we need them to get into contact with our inner selves? The answer is, at certain extent, "yes", because we look for a reality that simultaneously approaches us and moves away from us. It is separated and, at the same time, constitutes ourselves and breaks into our daily routine. This was Freud's remarkable intuition that permitted him to formulate the notion of the unconscious. This is the nature of the sacred: present and separated. In a certain way, the sacred seems separated because we need it this way. He holds a light (for the mystics) and an emotional turbulence (for the psychoanalysts) which intensity we could not bear. At this level, the limits between sanity and insanity are subtle.

On the other hand, we are attracted to this infinite realm as by a tropism. The solution to this dilemma, engendered at this boundary, has been attempted by religion and by Psychoanalysis. As far as religions are concerned, not only the doctrines but also the cults work as transitional processes (according to Winnicott) in contact with the Divinity. In Psychoanalysis, this transitional process takes place in the analytical session, presented as a set of emotional experiences lived in the intimate privacy of analyst-analysand, being these experiences represented afterwards by the interpretive word. Without these mediations, both the mystic and the common religious individual, including ourselves, could get lost in the turbulence of this territory.

In spite of all these forms of approximation, we still don't know ourselves; before these especial experiences, we only have slight flashes of our reality. In our core we are ineffable to our own selves, no matter which "ways" we take toward approximation. I think that it was in this respect that Winnicott used the word sacred to point to the incommunicable core of self that shines through unintegration (mentioned by Eigen, p.47) or what for the mystics expresses obscurity that is, at the same time, excess of light. There is no mysticism or psychoanalysis that can expand itself without tolerating this paradox.

Bion and the Mystic Model in the Approach to Psychic Reality

Maybe no other analyst except Bion has used the mystic model to talk of what happens during an analysis session, of the relationship between the analyst's and the analysand's minds. It is clear that Bion's concern is not with the religious disclosures of the mystics' experiences, but with the mystic experience as a model to think about in psychoanalysis, together with other models (scientific, artistic), with the same objective.

Concerning Psychoanalysis, he makes another distinction, among these three models, asserting that religious formulations (here the word "mystic" was not used) satisfy in a better way the requirements for the evolution of the contact with the core of Psychic Reality (Transformations from K to O, as he denominates this experience) than mathematical formulations (Bion, 1965,p.156)

Bion's assertion is coherent with the fact that he takes, as a starting point, the assertion that psychic qualities with which Psychoanalysis deal are not detected by the senses. In other words, the facts of psychoanalytical experience belong basically, not to a Sensorial Reality, but to a Psychic Reality, referring to unconscious processes that operate in an area of non-concreteness, infinite, not measurable, indescribable (Bion, 1970, p.26). To refer to this reality, Bion created the symbol "O" that denotes the numinous realm of the unconscious, where the human and individual truth resides - ultimate reality, absolute truth . (Sandler, 2005, p.527). "O" is the starting point of this truth that is accessible only through its transformations. This starting point has been translated in many languages: Ultimate Reality, Divinity, Thing in Itself (Kant), etc. "O" is a word intentionally empty, coined not to be saturated with reductive meanings.

The characteristics of this Reality (or "O" in Bion's terminology) raise a methodological question that is, simultaneously, a challenge to Psychoanalysis: how to access a Reality that is infinite, unspeakable? Bion tries to answer and suggests: the analyst has to give up the safety of the time-space frames, depriving him of the exercise of some conscious, functions. This is the moment of the mystical model that we are going to describe.

A Starting Point

The exposition of the Mystic Model may begin negatively:

It is not a religious attitude

It is not contemplative meditation

It is not an attempt at "illumination"

It is not "inspiration" of elected people

It is not a psychoanalytical version of any "ism", that is, a tendency to make assertions in terms of personal opinions (I think that.etc, etc.)

This series of negations permits us to introduce the model's central idea that is Negativity.

Negativity (also present in the mystic's attitude) appears in Bion's works as a method of knowledge, as an epistemological way and not a religious one. He brought Negativity to its ultimate consequences in his proposal that asserted that the analyst should work without memory, without desire, without comprehension. Its contents are: in analysis the essential thing is the possibility to live with close association with the frustration of not knowing . The aim is to create an internal space to live the experience and only afterwards translate it into words that will not saturate it with finished formulations.

For Bion, the presence of the following factors: memory, desire, comprehension is connected with the necessity of discharges dominated by the Principle of Pleasure and representing resistances. The abolition (in the analytical situation) of the use of memory and desire of comprehension, or of cure, is a condition that will permit the

evenly- suspended attention, praised by Freud. According to Rezende (1993, p.256), memory and desire keep the analyst away from the contact with the emotional experience of the present. They dissociate the mind of the analyst when they intend a possession of the past (through memory) and of the future (through desire). Bion's aim with this discipline was the partial rupture with reality, decreasing contact with what is sensorial, in order to give a new psychic dimension to reality. His intention is the development of the analyst's sensibility.

I will use negation once more to ask some questions that may arise concerning Bion's proposal.

- These formulations imply neither an apology of ignorance, nor minimize the importance of the theories. The proposal contains a criticism of knowledge that dismisses observation, finding support in the authority of the texts, on what is already known and seen.

- "Without memory" has nothing to do with "forgetfulness". It is the control by means of a discipline over the presence of remembrances, theories, what has already been said or heard. The famous and even comic stereotype of the analyst with his note pad behind the divan is not considered in Psychoanalysis.

- "Without memory" does not mean total rejection of any image, dream, idea or past experience that will emerge spontaneously to the analyst during a session. Criticism is not directed to memory but it is an attempt at remembering.

- "Without desire" does not suggest the elimination of the marks of affect during the session. It is an attempt at the voluntary exclusion of all desire of cure, comprehension, superiority, analytical power over the patient or over the colleagues that can be intense and persecutory, to the point of substituting the ties with that particular experience. The preservation of these ties decreases the analyst's risk of surrendering to a hallucinatory activity that is the outcome of desire, under the patronage of the Principle of Pleasure.

- "Without comprehension" does not imply to give up meaning but it implies criticism about precipitation in obtaining meaning and filling it with premature ideas. What Bion criticizes is an artificially falsified comprehension that does not respect experience and the data it can offer us.

- Is it possible for the analyst to completely attain the proposed "exemptions"? The answer is: Probably, not. Not aiming at omnipotent results, exemptions are situated in the area of necessary tendencies, to be more or less attained, according to the condition that will discuss now.

Negative Capability

In order to access the mystical vertex and to experience the condition of without memory, without desire ...according to Bion, it is necessary to develop Negative Capability. These words were borrowed from Keats when he referred to Shakespeare as being capable of living uncertainties, mysteries, doubt without any irritating attempt at reaching fact and reason. This capacity tolerates deconstruction of what is

known in order to face the unknown, until new possibilities of meaning appear. It depends on the analyst's personality that enables him to tolerate questions. This discipline foretells our next issue.

Faith

Bion (1970, p.31) says that:

It may be wondered what state of mind is welcome if desire and memories are not. A term that would express approximately what I need to express is "faith" - faith that there is an ultimate reality and truth - the unknown, unknowable, 'formless infinite'.

With the abolishment of memory, desire, etc, a space is open for the realization of acts of Faith. Faith is a mental state in which the contact with "O", in the experience (one should emphasize this word) may evolve to an approximation that will never be complete. In short, Faith involves the safety (but not certainty) that a supposition or an intuition will find a counterpart in real experience. The outcome of this encounter, if there is one, will not be absolute truth, but an expanding thought that is open to new reformulations.

It is inevitable to admit that the use of the word Faith , because it is loaded with religious connotation, may lead to misunderstanding and suspicion of transforming the analytical field in common religious practice; however, Bion intends to refer to an operative mental state exactly in the scientific field. He is not the only author to make this reference, as we will see later on.

Another possible misunderstanding is related to Belief. Faith has nothing to do with Belief, according to Rezende. Belief is an attempt at substituting real experience; it precedes science and dispenses with it, supposing it has already got there. Faith, is a way to live experience under the angle of negativity , in other words, admitting that everything was not completely attained and it will never be. Faith is a starting point and not the point of arrival, in relation to "O".

At-one-ment

The "O" experience evolves from the mental states of faith. This is not an intellectual operation of knowledge. The contact with "O" in Psychoanalysis is an affective experience; in other words, it is experienced by means of the affect in the analytical relationship. It is not an experience of knowledge but of being . Bion describes this situation as "At-tone-ment" that could be understood as a mental state in which the analyst is transformed by the "O" experience as a condition to know it (or, better saying, to transform it in knowledge). At-tone-ment may also be expressed as communion, be-one-with, being connected to Ultimate Reality. This contact is a modifier, and it is only possible when one tolerates frustration and pain; it becomes an experience of being.

This transformation condition as a way of approaching reality is not a methodological "option" but an imposition of the nature of the field. Bion (1965, p.148) tells us why:

It is not knowledge of reality that is at stake, nor yet the human equipment for knowing. The belief that reality is or could be known is mistaken because reality is not something which lends itself to being known. It is impossible to know reality for the same reason that makes it impossible to sing potatoes; they may be grown, or pulled, or eaten, but not sung. Reality has to be "been": there should be a transitive verb "to be" expressly for use with the term "reality".

In short, for Bion, ultimate real experience can only be experienced being. In this line of thought, Real Psychoanalysis is the one that forwards this experience of being, according to the real . It is realized (in the sense it is used in English) as an experience of "something" that gives meaning to what was experienced in the bi-personal relationship.

This "something" is Truth, in psychoanalytical terms. To be psychoanalyzed is to live this experience what is not the same thing as to know about psychoanalysis .

What all this has to do with Mystique

These considerations are caused by the fact that Bion was aware of the great epistemological importance of the mystical formulations in many cultures. Some mystics teach us that the founding elements of mystical experience are Faith and Void (negativity).

Negativity was best synthesized in the Christian tradition by Master Eckhart (XIII Century), who was an exponent in Negative Theology. It could be summed up in these words : It is truer what we deny of God than all affirmations that we make about him .

Eckhart has a proposition of great epistemological value summed up in the following words: We can not see except in blindness, we can not know except through non - knowledge, we can not understand except by non-reason. Nicolau de Cusa (XV century), in this same trend of thought proposed an "educated ignorance" to reach God: we have to find ways to forget everything we learned that separates us from the perception of deep truth.

Applying these assertions to the psychoanalytical model we have: if the core of Psychic Reality is unspeakable, if the Unconscious (its essential expression, according to Freud) is beyond the names we designate it (or imprison it), this negativity makes us conscious of the great gap that exists between what we say about the mind and the mind itself. Therefore, to talk about the mind is not the same thing as to feel it.

Bion (1965, p. 158) also mentions S. John of the Cross (XVI Century) as a model to approach the analytical experience. The evolution of the psyche in psychoanalysis undergoes transformations similar to those of the soul in search of the divine union. These transformations operate in the beginning in the line of Negativity, of deprivation and of Faith on what is unknown or not present by sensibility. Comparing the mystic experiences in S. John of the Cross's Dark Nights and the psychoanalytical experience as proposed by Bion we can establish the following relationship:

First Night

For S. John, it is a starting point. It is the night of the senses, of privation of immediate satisfactions. It is about not having and depriving oneself of having.

For Bion, it is related to the discipline of privation of memory and desire that precedes the operation of Faith, as it is understood in Psychoanalysis and other sciences.

Second Night

For S. John, it has to do with the path the soul takes, in a state of Faith, to the union with God. As a negative attitude for understanding, it is also a dark night.

For Bion, it is the exercise of the act of Faith as an epistemological attitude.

Third Night

For Saint John, it has to do with the point one walks to: God that is equally a dark point in this life.

For Bion, it has to do with the "O" experience, not reached by the senses, unspeakable through language.

In both authors, three situations converge. The first one refers to privation as a condition of availability. The second one is affliction that is present when one tries to reach the abandonment of ties or definition. Bion's word that corresponds to this affliction is emotional turbulence. The third point of convergence is that, for both authors, this trip towards the mystic union (with God, for S. John and with "O", for Bion) does not happen through words but through the experience of being. In other words, we reach the Ultimate Reality (deity for the mystic and Psychic Reality for Psychoanalyst) not through theology or psychoanalytical theories, but through knowledge of experience that touches Negation and Faith.

We find in Saint Thomas Aquinas' (XIII century) Summa Theologica a similar assertion: mysticism is God's knowledge through experience.

Hinduism and other mystic theories present some precious approximation to the theme of negativism: emptying as a condition of fulfillment by mystic experience.

What awaits the psychoanalytical couple in this "dark" way.

Let's go back to emotional turbulence.

According to Bion, the phenomenological element that ties psychoanalytical experience to mystic experience is turbulence, meaning annihilation, panic, fragmentation and threat from bizarre objects. Man facing himself, living a horrifying mental collapse. May be nobody else has already described these conditions with so much passion as Bion did because he had lived them intensely in the course of his life (Eigen, p.34).

The encounter with "O" does not happen in the placidity of Nirvana but in the turbulence experienced as catastrophe. "Insanity" would be the closest notion to the conditions mentioned above. The contact area with "O", both in the mystic

experience and the psychoanalytical insight is very close to insanity. Both contain a vortex of sensations and emotions that haul the self to a whirlwind that, at the same time, leads to a void, to unknown formlessness.

The difference between the psychotic and the psychoanalyst, or the mystic, is that the psychotic gets lost in this void and does not recover. The mystic and the psychoanalyst, thanks to Negative Capability, have the opportunity to rescue themselves from this near annihilation and live it in an ego experience. We come to the conclusion that the experienced turbulence may contain experiences of destruction as well as construction.

Clinically, this paradox leads the patient to a dilemma. According to Bion (1965, p. 166), if he is trying to collaborate, he has two choices. On the one hand, he may choose "sanity" that is powerful and destructive. On the other hand he may elect creativity that is impotent and "insane".

How is this construction considered in face of violence? It refers to the awakening of Consciousness (or Insight). It is an experience of contact with "O", with truth. In Psychoanalysis it is a contact with truth about oneself. Why would this result in such turbulent effects? Sandler (2001), paraphrasing Bion answers: Truth is too heavy a load for the desirous beast to carry. We may detect in man an impulse for the search of truth as well as an impulse to get away from it. This is an ever present paradox. Experience attests that man may sustain his insanity in order not to contact reality or become insane because he got in contact with it. This condition, which is always marked by violence, is part of every analytical hour. Taking this into consideration, Bion warns: Making the best from a bad job. (Bion, 1979).

Question: Can Bion's Psychoanalysis lead to Mysticism?

My answer is: No. If this will happen, it will be more the fault of anxious readers than of Bion himself. The option for the mystic vertex in the observation of the analytical experience, the mentioning of the mystics, the use of words such as Faith, Absolute do not mean that Bion has given neither a religious connotation to Psychoanalysis nor that he has given the psychoanalytical object the same ontological statute that religion attributes to the notion of divinity.

In fact, Bion's works do not suggest that he has treated the subject "O" of religion (Eigen, p.83). Bion's main concern is Psychoanalysis. The "O" of Psychoanalysis is Psychic Reality, in the Freudian perspective. For Bion, the mystic vertex is a methodological position to access the experiences of Psychic Reality.

To this purpose, one may say that the notions of Faith and Negativity that are present in this method, are not notions restricted to the religious sphere. They are also presently explicit in many areas although they have never been considered religious. Let's make some considerations about the subject:

In the area of Philosophy, Francis Bacon (XVI Century) asserted that knowledge depends on the annulment of all beliefs, except that of the most accurate observation. Jakob, a German philosopher, Kant's disciple, who lived in the XVIII and XIX centuries, already had a notion of Faith connected to immediate knowledge. For

Hume (XVII Century), Faith is a way to experience facts. An accurate research in this area could detect the presence of this definition in other authors.

In the sciences, memorable figures such as Albert Einstein, Erwin Schrödinger, Werner Heisenberg, mathematicians like Alfred N. Whitehead, according to Sandler (1997), touched and explicitly joined mystic experience but were not considered mystics. Einstein refers to the scientist's mental state that is part of his search for truth and understanding. He says that one of the sources of this feeling is Faith in the possibility that the regulations that are valid for existence be rational, that is to day, comprehensible to reason (Maturity Writings).

In the Arts, the artist's sensibility has led him to appreciate the importance of the Negative for the apprehension of things, like Keats said of Shakespeare. Humberto Eco's notion of Open Work goes in this direction. It points out to multiple meanings, many solutions but none of them intend to exhaust these questions.

Symbolist poets saw in the image of a desert a metaphor for creation or a condition of creativity.

The mystic vertex we have approached is also present in Rilke's intuition : "God is infinite obscurity that contains everything in him".

For Adélia Prado, a Brazilian poet, the theme of silence refers to darkness as a condition for revelation: Darkness is God that forces to escape from my inner self. The devil is Lucifer – light.

Question: Is the proposal of suppression of memory and desire an attempt that, besides being impossible, adopts out of fashion, epistemological pretensions of a return to the so called observer's Neutrality?

In this perspective, my answer is, no.

Bion's thought does not intend to rescue neutrality and objectivity. These terms are not shared by Psychoanalysis.

The same thing could be said of Freud. Although the neutrality of the analyst has been attributed to him, Freud never used in his works the German word for neutrality. The term he used was (Indifference), close in meaning to exemption of results. It may also mean "unbiased reception of the analytical material". (Freud, 1964/1926a).

All these meanings have to do with Bion's recommendation about the suppression of desire. Bion was not naïve. He knew how our minds are full of pre-established notions and tendencies to hallucinate (Principle of Pleasure) instead of observing. We are aware that a work of total mental asepsis is impossible. May be it is possible to have a discipline that tends to suppress the effects of what we already know , so that we may open ourselves to what we don't know. This is respect for the unknown.

"Without-Memory, Without-Desire" does not mean to despise theories. It is only a way of establishing a relationship with them. Psychoanalysis does not need to be reinvented every day. What Bion praised was the analyst's necessity to be always receptive to pick up experience. This is respect for the value of experience as source of knowledge. In his work "Caesura", Bion (1977, p.56) recommended the essay to be read and forgotten, until a patient's association will bring it back to conscience, in order to be reformulated in a new language. This way, he is emphasizing the

importance of the deprivation of a type of sensorial memory (connected to discharge through the principle of pleasure), but, at the same time, he calls our attention to the fact that that deprivation permits the creation of a space for the emergence, under uncontrolled conditions, of a "dream memory" that expresses an oniric contact ("O" evolution) with the emotional experience of the session, without aspiring omniscience.

Final Considerations

1. The approach to psychoanalytical experience, from the mystic point of view, does not equal Psychoanalysis to "Mysticism." Psychoanalysis dialogues with the many areas of human knowledge but is not reduced to any of them. The experience in Psychoanalysis is unique.

2. As a human activity, Psychoanalysis does not intend to explain the mind. It is a mystery in its own and, in this sense, it belongs to the realm of the sacred that we have mentioned at the beginning of this paper. The psychoanalyst shares with the mystic the knowledge that our essence is ineffable.

3. Therefore, we conclude that Psychoanalysis can not contain the mind. In clinical terms, it means that no theory, no interpretation can exhaust the diversity of meanings an emotional experience can hold. Bion (1975/1991, p.112) in one of the dialogues that he creates between two characters, refers to the relationship between Psychoanalysis and Reality : Psychoanalysis itself is just a stripe on the coat of the Tiger - Ultimately it may meet the Tiger - The Thing Itself - " O". (the underlining is mine)

4. If psychoanalysis is a particular experience through affect, lived in a bi-personal relationship, it is possible to differ between Psychoanalytical discourse and being psychoanalyzed. An obvious conclusion is that, in order to be a psychoanalyst, one has to be psychoanalyzed. The mind's psychoanalytical function (that is present in varying degrees, both in the analyst and the analysand) expands itself as an experience of the being- with -Psychic Reality . Due to its inexhaustible, infinite character, this experience places the analysts in the position of a psychoanalyst-to-be. This may sound familiar to the mystic.

5. The ethical space of the analyst is Faith, directed towards Truth.

Faith, as already mentioned before, must be understood as a mental state that has nothing to do with certainties but with intuition that may or not be realized (this word should be understood as becoming real like in English) in the on going experience. The ethical analyst is he who settles and maintains this mental state in respect to the patient's "O", without mixing it up with his own values, pre-knowledge, bias and desire for power or cure. Under the conditions mentioned above, the emergence of Truth is possible. Truth is what accounts for the representation of the "O" of that emotional experience. Placed in the symbolic level (once the core of the analytical experience is not part of the sensorial, concrete level), it is always incomplete and transient. Neither the analyst nor the patient has the last word about it.

These considerations coincide with the observation Freud made in 1914, in a letter to Putnam, the American ambassador: The great ethical element in psychoanalysis is truth and, truth again .

At the end of these considerations, it is appropriate to mention Bion's observation on the work of Melanie Klein's, in one of his conferences: What Melanie Klein tried to say made things so much clearer that it revealed ampler visions in darkness of areas not yet illuminated . In Psychoanalysis we are always revealing more and more dominions of ignorance, darkness and emptiness.

This observation suggests that Psychoanalysis is not an answer but a question. It sustains itself in silence, in the cesure of a question that has not been answered yet and it presupposes an act of Faith and basic tolerance. This perspective approximates the psychoanalysts, the mystics, the poets and scientists in general.

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